Thousand Nights and a Night

Author: Richard F. Burton

Produced by: J.C. Byers. Proofreaders were: J.C. Byers, Norm Wolcott, Dianne Doefler and Charles Wilson
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The Stories of 1001 Nights

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RAISE BE TO ALLAH ✿ THE BENEFICENT KING ✿ THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE ✿ LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS ✿ WHO SET UP THE FIRMAMENT WITHOUT PILLARS IN ITS STEAD ✿ AND WHO STRETCHED OUT THE EARTH EVEN AS A BED ✿ AND GRACE, AND PRAYER-BLESSING BE UPON OUR LORD MOHAMMED ✿ LORD OF APOSTOLIC MEN ✿ AND UPON HIS FAMILY AND COMPANION-TRAIN ✿ PRAYER AND BLESSINGS ENDURING AND GRACE WHICH UNTO THE DAY OF DOOM SHALL REMAIN ✿ AMEN! ✿ O THOU OF THE THREE WORLDS SOVEREIGN!

And afterwards. Verily the works and words of those gone before us have become instances and examples to men of our modern day, that folk may view what admonishing chances befel other folk and may therefrom take warning; and that they may peruse the annals of antique peoples and all that hath betided them, and be thereby ruled and restrained:—Praise, therefore, be to Him who hath made the histories of the Past an admonition unto the Present! Now of such instances are the tales called "A Thousand Nights and a Night," together with their far-famed legends and [2]wonders. Therein it is related (but Allah is All-knowing of His hidden things and All-ruling and All-honoured and All-giving and All-gracious and All-merciful![1]) that,

Story of King Shahryar and His Brother

In tide of yore and in time long gone before, there was a King of the Kings of the Banu Sásán in the Islands of India and China, a Lord of armies and guards and servants and dependents.[2] He left only two sons, one in the prime of manhood and the other yet a youth, while both were Knights and Braves, albeit the elder was a doughtier horseman than the younger. So he succeeded to the empire; when he ruled the land and lorded it over his lieges with justice so exemplary that he was beloved by all the peoples of his capital and of his kingdom. His name was King Shahryár,[3] and he made his younger brother, Shah Zamán hight, King of Samarcand in Barbarian-land. These two ceased not to abide in their several realms and the law was ever carried out in their dominions; and each ruled his own kingdom, with equity and fair-dealing to his subjects, in extreme solace and enjoyment; and this condition continually endured for a score of years. But at the end of the twentieth twelvemonth the elder King yearned for a sight of his younger brother and felt that he must look upon him once more. So he took counsel with his Wazir[4] about visiting him, but the 3 Minister, finding the project unadvisable, recommended that a letter be written and a present be sent under his charge to the younger brother with an invitation to visit the elder. Having accepted this advice the King forthwith bade prepare handsome gifts, such as horses with saddles of gem-encrusted gold; Mamelukes, or white slaves; beautiful handmaids, high-breasted virgins, and splendid stuffs and costly. He then wrote a letter to Shah Zaman expressing his warm love and great wish to see him, ending with these words, "We therefore hope of the favour and affection of the beloved brother that he will condescend to bestir himself and turn his face us-wards. Furthermore we have sent our Wazir to make all ordinance for the march, and our one and only desire is to see thee ere we die; but if thou delay or disappoint us we shall not survive the blow. Wherewith peace be upon thee!" Then King Shahryar, having sealed the missive and given it to the Wazir with the offerings aforementioned, commanded him to shorten his skirts and strain his strength and make all expedition in going and returning. "Harkening and obedience!" quoth the Minister, who fell to making ready without stay and packed up his loads and prepared all his requisites without delay. This occupied him three days, and on the dawn of the fourth he took leave of his King and marched right away, over desert and hill-way, stony waste and pleasant lea without halting by night or by day. But whenever he entered a realm

whose ruler was subject to his Suzerain, where he was greeted with magnificent gifts of gold and silver and all manner of presents fair and rare, he would tarry there three days,[5] the term of the guest-rite; and, when he left on the fourth, he would be honourably escorted for a whole day's march. As soon as the Wazir drew near Shah Zaman's court in Samarcand he despatched to report his arrival one of his high officials, who presented himself before the King; and, kissing ground between his hands, delivered his message. Hereupon the King commanded sundry of his Grandees and Lords of his realm to fare forth and meet his brother's Wazir at the distance of a full day's journey; which they did, greeting him respectfully and wishing him all prosperity and forming an escort and a procession. When he entered the city he proceeded straightway to the palace, where he presented himself in the royal presence; and, after kissing 4ground and praying for the King's health and happiness and for victory over all his enemies, he informed him that his brother was yearning to see him, and prayed for the pleasure of a visit. He then delivered the letter which Shah Zaman took from his hand and read: it contained sundry hints and allusions which required thought; but, when the King had fully comprehended its import, he said, "I hear and I obey the commands of the beloved brother!" adding to the Wazir, "But we will not march till after the third day's hospitality." He appointed for the Minister fitting quarters of the palace; and, pitching tents for the troops, rationed them with whatever they might require of meat and drink and other necessaries. On the fourth day he made ready for wayfare and got together sumptuous presents befitting his elder brother's majesty, and stablished his chief Wazir viceroy of the land during his absence. Then he caused his tents and camels and mules to be brought forth and encamped, with their bales and loads, attendants and guards, within sight of the city, in readiness to set out next morning for his brother's capital. But when the night was half spent he bethought him that he had forgotten in his palace somewhat which he should have brought with him, so he returned privily and entered his apartments, where he found the Queen, his wife, asleep on his own carpet-bed, embracing with both arms a black cook of loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grime. When he saw this the world waxed black before his sight and he said, "If such case happen while I am yet within sight of the city what will be the doings of this damned whore during my long absence at my brother's court?" So he drew his scymitar and, cutting the two in four pieces with a single blow, left them on the carpet and returned presently to his camp without letting anyone know of what had happened. Then he gave orders for immediate departure and set out at once and began his travel; but he could not help thinking over his wife's treason and he kept ever saying to himself, "How could she do this deed by me? How could she work her own death?," till excessive grief seized him, his colour changed to yellow, his body waxed weak and he was threatened with a dangerous malady, such an one as bringeth men to die. So the Wazir shortened his stages and tarried long at the watering-stations and did his

best to solace the King. Now when Shah Zaman drew near the capital of his brother he despatched vaunt-couriers and messengers of glad 5tidings to announce his arrival, and Shahryar came forth to meet him with his Wazirs and Emirs and Lords and Grandees of his realm; and saluted him and joyed with exceeding joy and caused the city to be decorated in his honour. When, however, the brothers met, the elder could not but see the change of complexion in the younger and questioned him of his case whereto he replied, ""Tis caused by the travails of wayfare and my case needs care, for I have suffered from the change of water and air! but Allah be praised for reuniting me with a brother so dear and so rare!" On this wise he dissembled and kept his secret, adding, "O King of the time and Caliph of the tide, only toil and moil have tinged my face yellow with bile and hath made my eyes sink deep in my head." Then the two entered the capital in all honour; and the elder brother lodged the younger in a palace overhanging the pleasure garden; and, after a time, seeing his condition still unchanged, he attributed it to his separation from his country and kingdom. So he let him wend his own ways and asked no questions of him till one day when he again said, "O my brother, I see that art grown weaker of body and yellower of colour." "O my brother," replied Shah Zaman "I have an internal wound:"[6] still he would not tell him what he had witnessed in his wife. Thereupon Shahryar summoned doctors and surgeons and bade them treat his brother according to the rules of art, which they did for a whole month; but their sherbets and potions naught availed, for he would dwell upon the deed of his wife, and despondency, instead of diminishing, prevailed, and leechcraft treatment utterly failed. One day his elder brother said to him, "I am going forth to hunt and course and to take my pleasure and pastime; maybe this would lighten thy heart." Shah Zaman, however, refused, saying, "O my brother, my soul yearneth for naught of this sort and I entreat thy favour to suffer me tarry quietly in this place, being wholly taken up with my malady." So King Shah Zaman passed his night in the palace and, next morning, when his brother had fared forth, he removed from his room and sat him down at one of the lattice-windows overlooking the pleasure grounds; and there he abode thinking with saddest thought over his wife's betrayal and burning sighs issued from his tortured breast. And as he continued in this case lo! a postern of the 6palace, which was carefully kept private, swung open and out of it came twenty slave girls surrounding his brother's wife who was wondrous fair, a model of beauty and comeliness and symmetry and perfect loveliness and who paced with the grace of a gazelle which panteth for the cooling stream. Thereupon Shah Zaman drew back from the window, but he kept the bevy in sight espying them from a place whence he could not be espied. They walked under the very lattice and advanced a little way into the garden till they came to a jetting fountain amiddlemost a great basin of water; then they stripped off their clothes and behold, ten of them were women, concubines of the King, and the other ten were white slaves. Then they all paired off, each with each: but the Queen, who was left alone, presently cried out

in a loud voice, "Here to me, O my lord Saeed!" and then sprang with a drop-leap from one of the trees a big slobbering blackamoor with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight.[7] He walked boldly up to her and threw his arms round her neck while she embraced him as warmly; then he bussed her and winding his legs round hers, as a button-loop clasps a button, he threw her and enjoyed her. On like wise did the other slaves with the girls till all had satisfied their passions, and they ceased not from kissing and clipping, coupling and carousing till day began to wane; when the Mamelukes rose from the damsels' bosoms and the blackamoor slave dismounted from the Queen's breast; the men resumed their disguises and all, except the negro who swarmed up the tree, entered the palace and closed the postern-door as before. Now, when Shah Zaman saw this conduct of his sister-in-law he said in himself, "By Allah, my calamity is lighter than this! My brother is a greater King among the kings than I am, yet this infamy goeth on in his very palace, and his wife is in love with that filthiest of filthy slaves. But this only showeth that they all do it[8] and that there is no woman but who cuckoldeth her husband, then the curse of Allah upon one and all and upon the fools who lean against them for support or who place the reins of conduct in their hands. So he put away his melancholy and despondency, regret and repine, and allayed his sorrow by constantly repeating those words, adding "'Tis my conviction that no man in this world is safe from their malice!" When supper-time came they brought him the trays and he ate with voracious appetite, for he had long refrained from meat, feeling unable to touch any dish however dainty. Then he returned grateful thanks to Almighty Allah, praising Him and blessing Him, and he spent a most restful night, it having been long since he had savoured the sweet food of sleep. Next day he broke his fast heartily and began to recover health and strength, and presently regained excellent condition. His brother came back from the chase ten days after, when he rode out to meet him and they saluted each other; and when King Shahryar looked at King Shah Zaman he saw how the hue of health had returned to him, how his face had waxed ruddy and how he ate with an appetite after his late scanty diet. He wondered much and said, "O my brother, I was so anxious that thou wouldst join me in hunting and chasing, and wouldst take thy pleasure and pastime in my dominion!" He thanked him and excused himself; then the two took horse and rode into the city and, when they were seated at their ease in the palace, the food-trays were set before them and they ate their sufficiency. After the meats were removed and they had washed their hands, King Shahryar turned to his brother and said, "My mind is overcome with wonderment at thy condition. I was desirous to carry thee with me to the chase but I saw thee changed in hue, pale and wan to view, and in sore trouble of mind too. But now Alhamdolillah—glory be to God!—I see thy natural colour hath returned to thy face and that thou art again in the best of case. It was my belief that thy sickness came of severance from thy family and friends, and absence from capital and country, so I refrained from troubling thee with

further questions. But now I beseech thee to expound to me the cause of thy complaint and thy change of colour, and to explain the reason of thy recovery and the return to the ruddy hue of health which I am wont to view. So speak out and hide naught! 8When Shah Zaman heard this he bowed ground-wards awhile his head, then raised it and said, "I will tell thee what caused my complaint and my loss of colour; but excuse my acquainting thee with the cause of its return to me and the reason of my complete recovery: indeed I pray thee not to press me for a reply." Said Shahryar, who was much surprised by these words, "Let me hear first what produced thy pallor and thy poor condition." "Know, then, O my brother," rejoined Shah Zaman, "that when thou sentest thy Wazir with the invitation to place myself between thy hands, I made ready and marched out of my city; but presently I minded me having left behind me in the palace a string of jewels intended as a gift to thee. I returned for it alone and found my wife on my carpet-bed and in the arms of a hideous black cook. So I slew the twain and came to thee, yet my thoughts brooded over this business and I lost my bloom and became weak. But excuse me if I still refuse to tell thee what was the reason of my complexion returning." Shahryar shook his head, marvelling with extreme marvel, and with the fire of wrath flaming up from his heart, he cried, "Indeed, the malice of woman is mighty!" Then he took refuge from them with Allah and said, "In very sooth, O my brother, thou hast escaped many an evil by putting thy wife to death,[9] and right excusable were thy wrath and grief for such mishap which never yet befel crowned King like thee. By Allah, had the case been mine, I would not have been satisfied without slaying a thousand women and that way madness lies! But now praise be to Allah who hath tempered to thee thy tribulation, and needs must thou acquaint me with that which so suddenly restored to thee complexion and health, and explain to me what causeth this concealment." "O King of the Age, again I pray thee excuse my so doing!" "Nay, but thou must." "I fear, O my brother, lest the recital cause thee more anger and sorrow than afflicted me." "That were but a better reason," quoth Shahryar, "for telling me the whole history, and I conjure thee by Allah not to keep back aught from me." Thereupon Shah Zaman told him all he had seen, from commencement to conclusion, ending with these words, "When I beheld thy calamity and the treason of thy wife, O my brother, and I reflected that thou art in years my senior and in sovereignty my superior, mine own sorrow was belittled by the comparison, and my mind recovered tone and temper: so throwing off melancholy 9and despondency, I was able to eat and drink and sleep, and thus I speedily regained health and strength. Such is the truth and the whole truth." When King Shahryar heard this he waxed wroth with exceeding wrath, and rage was like to strangle him; but presently he recovered himself and said, "O my brother, I would not give thee the lie in this matter, but I cannot credit it till I see it with mine own eyes." "An thou wouldst look upon thy calamity," quoth Shah Zaman, "rise at once and make ready again for hunting and coursing,[10] and then hide thyself with me, so shalt

thou witness it and thine eyes shall verify it." "True," quoth the King; whereupon he let make proclamation of his intent to travel, and the troops and tents fared forth without the city, camping within sight, and Shahryar sallied out with them and took seat amidmost his host, bidding the slaves admit no man to him. When night came on he summoned his Wazir and said to him, "Sit thou in my stead and let none wot of my absence till the term of three days." Then the brothers disguised themselves and returned by night with all secrecy to the palace, where they passed the dark hours: and at dawn they seated themselves at the lattice overlooking the pleasure grounds, when presently the Queen and her handmaids came out as before, and passing under the windows made for the fountain. Here they stripped, ten of them being men to ten women, and the King's wife cried out, "Where art thou, O Saeed?" The hideous blackamoor dropped from the tree straightway; and, rushing into her arms without stay or delay, cried out, "I am Sa'ad al-Din Saood!"[11] The lady laughed heartily, and all fell to satisfying their lusts, and remained so occupied for a couple of hours, when the white slaves rose up from the handmaidens' breasts and the blackamoor dismounted from the Queen's bosom: then they went into the basin and, after performing the Ghusl, or complete ablution, donned their dresses and retired as they had done before. When King Shahryar saw this infamy of his wife and concubines he became as one distraught and he cried out, "Only in utter solitude can man be safe from the doings of this vile world! By Allah, life is naught but one great wrong." Presently he added, 10"Do not thwart me, O my brother, in what I propose;" and the other answered, "I will not." So he said, "Let us up as we are and depart forthright hence, for we have no concern with Kingship, and let us over-wander Allah's earth, worshipping the Almighty till we find some one to whom the like calamity hath happened; and if we find none then will death be more welcome to us than life." So the two brothers issued from a second private postern of the palace; and they never stinted wayfaring by day and by night, until they reached a tree a-middle of a meadow hard by a spring of sweet water on the shore of the salt sea. Both drank of it and sat down to take their rest; and when an hour of the day had gone by, lo! they heard a mighty roar and uproar in the middle of the main as though the heavens were falling upon the earth; and the sea brake with waves before them, and from it towered a black pillar, which grew and grew till it rose sky-wards and began making for that meadow. Seeing it, they waxed fearful exceedingly and climbed to the top of the tree, which was a lofty; whence they gazed to see what might be the matter. And behold, it was a Jinni,[12] huge of height and burly of breast and bulk, broad of brow and black of blee, bearing on his head a coffer of crystal. He strode to land, wading through the deep, and coming to the tree whereupon were the two Kings, seated himself beneath it. He then set down the coffer on its bottom and out of it drew a casket, with seven padlocks of steel, which he unlocked with seven keys of steel he took from beside his thigh, and out of it a young lady to come was seen, white-skinned and of winsomest

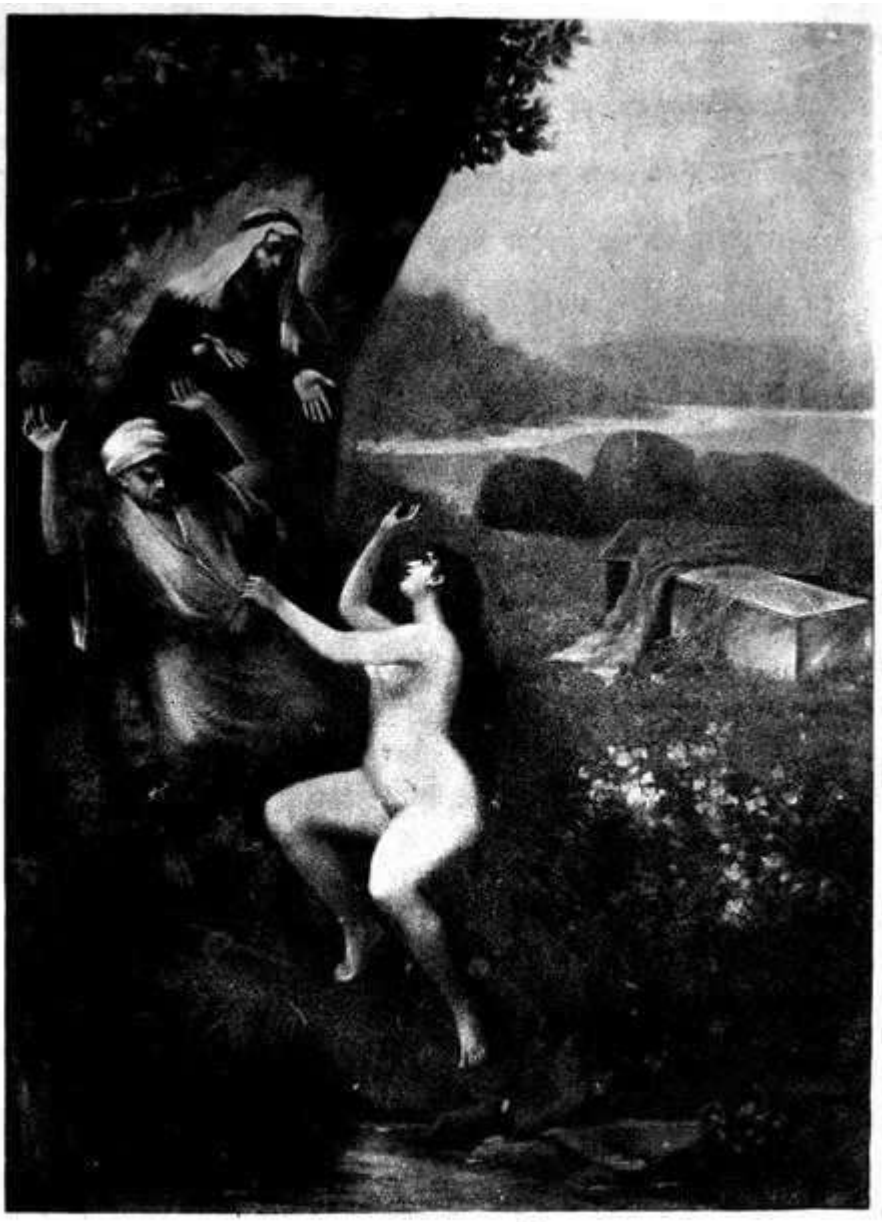
mien, of stature fine and thin, and bright as though a moon of the fourteenth [11] night she had been, or the sun raining lively sheen. Even so the poet Utayyah hath excellently said:—

She rose like the morn as she shone through the night ✿ And she gilded the grove with her gracious sight:

From her radiance the sun taketh increase when ✿ She unveileth and shameth the moonshine bright.

Bow down all beings between her hands ✿ As she showeth charms with her veil undight.

And she floodeth cities[13] with torrent tears ✿ When she flasheth her look of leven-light.





The Jinni seated her under the tree by his side and looking at her said, "O choicest love of this heart of mine! O dame of noblest line, whom I snatched away on thy bride night that none might prevent me taking thy maidenhead or tumble thee before I did, and whom none save myself hath loved or hath enjoyed: O my sweetheart! I would lief sleep a little while." He then laid his head upon the lady's thighs; and, stretching out his legs which extended down to the sea, slept and snored and snarked like the roll of thunder. Presently she raised her head towards the tree-top and saw the two Kings

perched near the summit; then she softly lifted off her lap the Jinni's pate which she was tired of supporting and placed it upon the ground; then standing upright under the tree signed to the Kings, "Come ye down, ye two, and fear naught from this Ifrít."[14] They were in a terrible fright when they found that she had seen them and answered her in the same manner, "Allah upon thee[15] and by thy modesty, O lady, excuse us from coming down!" But she rejoined by saying, "Allah upon you both that ye come down forthright, and if ye come not, I will rouse upon you my husband, this Ifrit, and he shall do you to die by the illest of deaths;" and she continued making signals to them. So, being afraid, they came down to her and she rose before them and said, "Stroke me a strong stroke, without stay or delay, otherwise 12 will I arouse and set upon you this Ifrit who shall slay you straightway." They said to her, "O our lady, we conjure thee by Allah, let us off this work, for we are fugitives from such and in extreme dread and terror of this thy husband. How then can we do it in such a way as thou desirest?" "Leave this talk: it needs must be so;" quoth she, and she swore them by Him[16] who raised the skies on high, without prop or pillar, that, if they worked not her will, she would cause them to be slain and cast into the sea. Whereupon out of fear King Shahryar said to King Shah Zaman, "O my brother, do thou what she biddeth thee do;" but he replied, "I will not do it till thou do it before I do." And they began disputing about futtering her. Then quoth she to the twain, "How is it I see you disputing and demurring; if ye do not come forward like men and do the deed of kind ye two, I will arouse upon you the Ifrit." At this, by reason of their sore dread of the Jinni, both did by her what she bade them do; and, when they had dismounted from her, she said, "Well done!" She then took from her pocket a purse and drew out a knotted string, whereon were strung five hundred and seventy[17] seal rings, and asked, "Know ye what be these?" They answered her saying, "We know not!" Then quoth she; "These be the signets of five hundred and seventy men who have all futtered me upon the horns of this foul, this foolish, this filthy Ifrit; so give me also your two seal rings, ye pair of brothers. When they had drawn their two rings from their hands and given them to her, she said to them, "Of a truth this Ifrit bore me off on my bride-night, and put me into a casket and set the casket in a coffer and to the coffer he affixed seven strong padlocks of steel and deposited me on the deep bottom of the sea that raves, dashing and clashing with waves; and guarded me so that I might remain chaste and honest, quotha! that none save himself might have connexion with me. But I have lain under as many of my kind as I please, and this wretched Jinni wotteth not that Destiny may 13 not be averted nor hindered by aught, and that whatso woman willeth the same she fulfilleth however man nilleth. Even so saith one of them:—

Rely not on women; ✿ Trust not to their hearts,

Whose joys and whose sorrows ✿ Are hung to their parts!

Lying love they will swear thee ✿ Whence guile ne'er departs:

Take Yusuf[18] for sample ✿ 'Ware sleights and 'ware smarts!

Iblis[19] ousted Adam ✿ (See ye not?) thro' their arts.

And another saith:—

"Stint thy blame, man! 'Twill drive to a passion without bound; ✿ My fault is not so heavy as fault in it hast found.

If true lover I become, then to me there cometh not ✿ Save what happened unto many in the by-gone stound.

For wonderful is he and right worthy of our praise ✿ Who from wiles of female wits kept him safe and kept him sound."

Hearing these words they marvelled with exceeding marvel, and she went from them to the Ifrit and, taking up his head on her thigh as before, said to them softly, "Now wend your ways and bear yourselves beyond the bounds of his malice." So they fared forth saying either to other, "Allah! Allah!" and, "There be no Majesty and there be no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great; and with Him we seek refuge from women's malice and sleight, for of a truth it hath no mate in might. Consider, O my brother, the ways of this marvellous lady with an Ifrit who is so much more powerful than we are. Now since there hath happened to him a greater mishap than that which befel us and which should bear us abundant consolation, so return we to our countries and capitals, and let us decide never to intermarry with womankind and presently we will show them what will be our action." Thereupon they rode back to the tents of King Shahryar, which they reached on the morning of the third day; and, having mustered 14 the Wazirs and Emirs, the Chamberlains and high officials, he gave a robe of honour to his Viceroy and issued orders for an immediate return to the city. There he sat him upon his throne and sending for the Chief Minister, the father of the two damsels who (Inshallah!) will presently be mentioned, he said, "I command thee to take my wife and smite her to death; for she hath broken her plight and her faith." So he carried her to the place of execution and did her die. Then King Shahryar took brand in hand and repairing to the Serraglio slew all the concubines and their Mamelukes.[20] He also sware himself by a binding oath that whatever wife he married he would abate her maidenhead at night and slay her next morning to make sure of his honour; "For," said he, "there never was nor is there one chaste woman upon the face of earth." Then Shah Zaman prayed for permission to fare homewards; and he went forth equipped and escorted and travelled till he reached his own country. Meanwhile Shahryar commanded his Wazir to bring him the bride of the night that he might go in to her; so he produced a most beautiful girl, the daughter of one of the Emirs and the King went in unto her at eventide and when morning dawned he bade his Minister strike off her head; and the Wazir did accordingly for fear of the Sultan. On this wise he continued for the space of three years; marrying a maiden every night and killing her the next morning, till folk raised an outcry against him and cursed him, praying Allah utterly to destroy him and his rule; and women made an uproar and mothers wept and parents fled with their daughters till there remained not in the city a young person fit for carnal copulation. Presently the King ordered his Chief Wazir, the same

who was charged with the executions, to bring him a virgin as was his wont; and the Minister went forth and searched and found none; so he returned home in sorrow and anxiety fearing for his life from the King. Now he had two daughters, Shahrázád and Dunyázád hight,[21] of whom the 15 elder had perused the books, annals and legends of preceding Kings, and the stories, examples and instances of by-gone men and things; indeed it was said that she had collected a thousand books of histories relating to antique races and departed rulers. She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart; she had studied philosophy and the sciences, arts and accomplishments; and she was pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred. Now on that day she said to her father, "Why do I see thee thus changed and laden with cark and care? Concerning this matter quoth one of the poets:—

Tell whoso hath sorrow ✿ Grief never shall last:

E'en as joy hath no morrow ✿ So woe shall go past."

When the Wazir heard from his daughter these words he related to her, from first to last, all that had happened between him and the King. Thereupon said she, "By Allah, O my father, how long shall this slaughter of women endure? Shall I tell thee what is in my mind in order to save both sides from destruction?" "Say on, O my daughter," quoth he, and quoth she, "I wish thou wouldst give me in marriage to this King Shahryar; either I shall live or I shall be a ransom for the virgin daughters of Moslems and the cause of their deliverance from his hands and thine."[22] "Allah upon thee!" cried he in wrath exceeding that lacked no feeding, "O scanty of wit, expose not thy life to such peril! How durst thou address me in words so wide from wisdom and un-far from foolishness? Know that one who lacketh experience in worldly matters readily falleth into misfortune; and whoso considereth not the end keepeth not the world to friend, and the vulgar say:—I was lying at mine ease: nought but my officiousness brought me unease." "Needs must thou," she broke in, "make me a doer of this good deed, and let him kill me an he will: I shall only die a ransom for others." "O my daughter," asked he, "and how shall that profit thee when thou shalt have thrown away thy life?" and she answered, "O my father it must be, come of it what will!" The Wazir was again moved to fury and blamed and reproached her, ending with, "In very deed I fear lest the same befal thee which befel the Bull and the Ass with the Husbandman." "And 16 what," asked she, "befel them, O my father?" Whereupon the Wazir began the

TALE OF THE BULL[23] AND THE ASS.

Know, O my daughter, that there was once a merchant who owned much money and many men, and who was rich in cattle and camels; he had also a wife and family and he dwelt in the country, being experienced in husbandry and devoted to agriculture.

Now Allah Most High had endowed him with understanding the tongues of beasts and birds of every kind, but under pain of death if he divulged the gift to any. So he kept it secret for very fear. He had in his cowhouse a Bull and an Ass each tethered in his own stall one hard by the other. As the merchant was sitting near hand one day with his servants and his children were playing about him, he heard the Bull say to the Ass, "Hail and health to thee O Father of Waking![24] for that thou enjoyest rest and good ministering; all under thee is clean-swept and fresh-sprinkled; men wait upon thee and feed thee, and thy provaunt is sifted barley and thy drink pure spring-water, while I (unhappy creature!) am led forth in the middle of the night, when they set on my neck the plough and a something called Yoke; and I tire at cleaving the earth from dawn of day till set of sun. I am forced to do more than I can and to bear all manner of ill-treatment from night to night; after which they take me back with my sides torn, my neck flayed, my legs aching and mine eyelids sored with tears. Then they shut me up in the byre and throw me beans and crushed-straw,[25] mixed with dirt and chaff; and I lie in dung and filth and foul stinks through the livelong night. But thou art ever in a place swept and sprinkled and cleansed, and thou art always lying at ease, save when it happens (and seldom enough!) that the master 17 hath some business, when he mounts thee and rides thee to town and returns with thee forthright. So it happens that I am toiling and distrest while thou takest thine ease and thy rest; thou sleepest while I am sleepless; I hunger still while thou eatest thy fill, and I win contempt while thou winnest good will." When the Bull ceased speaking, the Ass turned towards him and said, "O Broad-o'-Brow,[26] O thou lost one! he lied not who dubbed thee Bull-head, for thou, O father of a Bull, hast neither forethought nor contrivance; thou art the simplest of simpletons,[27] and thou knowest naught of good advisers. Hast thou not heard the saying of the wise:—

For others these hardships and labours I bear ✿ And theirs is the pleasure and mine is the care;

As the bleacher who blacketh his brow in the sun ✿ To whiten the raiment which other men wear."[28]

But thou, O fool, art full of zeal and thou toilest and molest before the master; and thou tearest and wearest and slayest thyself for the comfort of another. Hast thou never heard the saw that saith, None to guide and from the way go wide? Thou wendest forth at the call to dawn-prayer and thou returnest not till sundown; and through the livelong day thou endurest all manner hardships; to wit, beating and belabouring and bad language. Now hearken to me, Sir Bull! when they tie thee to thy stinking manger, thou pawest the ground with thy forehand and lashest out with thy hind hoofs and pushest with thy horns and bellowest aloud, so they deem thee contented. And when they throw thee thy fodder thou fallest on it with greed and hastenest to line thy fair fat paunch. But if thou accept my advice it will be better for thee and thou wilt lead an easier life even than mine. When thou goest a-field and they lay the thing called Yoke on thy neck, lie down and rise not again though haply they swinge thee; and, if thou rise, lie down a second time; and when they bring thee

home and offer thee thy beans, fall backwards and only sniff at thy meat and withdraw thee and taste it not, and be satisfied with thy crushed straw and chaff; and on this wise feign thou 18art sick, and cease not doing thus for a day or two days or even three days, so shalt thou have rest from toil and moil." When the Bull heard these words he knew the Ass to be his friend and thanked him, saying, "Right is thy rede;" and prayed that all blessings might requite him, and cried, "O Father Wakener![29] thou hast made up for my failings." (Now[30] the merchant, O my daughter, understood all that passed between them.) Next day the driver took the Bull, and settling the plough on his neck,[31] made him work as wont; but the Bull began to shirk his ploughing, according to the advice of the Ass, and the ploughman drubbed him till he broke the yoke and made off; but the man caught him up and leathered him till he despaired of his life. Not the less, however, would he do nothing but stand still and drop down till the evening. Then the herd led him home and stabled him in his stall: but he drew back from his manger and neither stamped nor ramped nor butted nor bellowed as he was wont to do; whereat the man wondered. He brought him the beans and husks, but he sniffed at them and left them and lay down as far from them as he could and passed the whole night fasting. The peasant came next morning; and, seeing the manger full of beans, the crushed-straw untasted and the ox lying on his back in sorriest plight, with legs outstretched and swollen belly, he was concerned for him, and said to himself, "By Allah, he hath assuredly sickened and this is the cause why he would not plough yesterday." Then he went to the merchant and reported, "O my master, the Bull is ailing; he refused his fodder last night; nay more, he hath not tasted a scrap of it this morning." Now the merchant-farmer understood what all this meant, because he had overheard the talk between the Bull and the Ass, so quoth he, "Take that rascal donkey, and set the yoke on his neck, and bind him to the plough and make him do Bull's work." Thereupon the ploughman took the Ass, and worked him through the livelong day at the Bull's task; and, when he failed for weakness, he made him eat stick till his ribs were sore and his sides were sunken and his neck was flayed by the yoke; and when he came home in the evening he could hardly drag his limbs along, either forehand or hind-legs. But as for the Bull, he had passed the day lying at full length and 19had eaten his fodder with an excellent appetite, and he ceased not calling down blessings on the Ass for his good advice, unknowing what had come to him on his account. So when night set in and the Ass returned to the byre the Bull rose up before him in honour, and said, "May good tidings gladden thy heart, O Father Wakener! through thee I have rested all this day and I have eaten my meat in peace and quiet." But the Ass returned no reply, for wrath and heart-burning and fatigue and the beating he had gotten; and he repented with the most grievous of repentance; and quoth he to himself: "This cometh of my folly in giving good counsel; as the saw saith, I was in joy and gladness, nought save my officiousness

brought me this sadness. But I will bear in mind my innate worth and the nobility of my nature; for what saith the poet?

Shall the beautiful hue of the Basil[32] fail ✿ Tho' the beetle's foot o'er the Basil crawl?

And though spider and fly be its denizens ✿ Shall disgrace attach to the royal hall?

The cowrie,[33] I ken, shall have currency ✿ But the pearl's clear drop, shall its value fall?

And now I must take thought and put a trick upon him and return him to his place, else I die." Then he went aweary to his manger, while the Bull thanked him and blessed him. And even so, O my daughter, said the Wazir, thou wilt die for lack of wits; therefore sit thee still and say naught and expose not thy life to such stress; for, by Allah, I offer thee the best advice, which cometh of my affection and kindly solicitude for thee. "O my father," she answered, "needs must I go up to this King and be married to him." Quoth he, "Do not this deed;" and quoth she, "Of a truth I will:" whereat he rejoined, "If thou be not silent and bide still, I will do with thee even what the merchant did with his wife." "And what did he?" asked she. Know then, answered the 20 Wazir, that after the return of the Ass the merchant came out on the terrace-roof with his wife and family, for it was a moonlit night and the moon at its full. Now the terrace overlooked the cowhouse and presently, as he sat there with his children playing about him, the trader heard the Ass say to the Bull, "Tell me, O father Broad o' Brow, what thou purposest to do to-morrow?" The Bull answered, "What but continue to follow thy counsel, O Aliboron? Indeed it was as good as good could be and it hath given me rest and repose; nor will I now depart from it one tittle: so, when they bring me my meat, I will refuse it and blow out my belly and counterfeit crank." The Ass shook his head and said, "Beware of so doing, O Father of a Bull!" The Bull asked, "Why," and the Ass answered, "Know that I am about to give thee the best of counsel, for verily I heard our owner say to the herd, If the Bull rise not from his place to do his work this morning and if he retire from his fodder this day, make him over to the butcher that he may slaughter him and give his flesh to the poor, and fashion a bit of leather[34] from his hide. Now I fear for thee on account of this. So take my advice ere a calamity befal thee; and when they bring thee thy fodder eat it and rise up and bellow and paw the ground, or our master will assuredly slay thee: and peace be with thee!" Thereupon the Bull arose and lowed aloud and thanked the Ass, and said, "To-morrow I will readily go forth with them;" and he at once ate up all his meat and even licked the manger. (All this took place and the owner was listening to their talk.) Next morning the trader and his wife went to the Bull's crib and sat down, and the driver came and led forth the Bull who, seeing his owner, whisked his tail and brake wind, and frisked about so lustily that the merchant laughed a loud laugh and kept laughing till he fell on his back. His wife asked him, "Whereat laughest thou with such loud laughter as this?"; and he answered her, "I laughed at a secret something which I have heard and seen but cannot say lest I die my death." She returned, "Perforce thou must discover it to me, and disclose the cause of thy laughing even if

thou come by thy death!" But he rejoined, "I cannot reveal what beasts and birds say in their lingo for fear I die. Then quoth she, "By Allah, thou liest! this is a mere pretext: thou laughest at none save me, and now thou wouldest hide somewhat from me. But by the Lord of [21]the Heavens! an thou disclose not the cause I will no longer cohabit with thee: I will leave thee at once." And she sat down and cried. Whereupon quoth the merchant, "Woe betide thee! what means thy weeping? Fear Allah and leave these words and query me no more questions." "Needs must thou tell me the cause of that laugh," said she, and he replied, "Thou wottest that when I prayed Allah to vouchsafe me understanding of the tongues of beasts and birds, I made a vow never to disclose the secret to any Under pain of dying on the spot." "No matter," cried she, "tell me what secret passed between the Bull and the Ass and die this very hour an thou be so minded;" and she ceased not to importune him till he was worn out and clean distraught. So at last he said, "Summon thy father and thy mother and our kith and kin and sundry of our neighbours," which she did; and he sent for the Kazi[35] and his assessors, intending to make his will and reveal to her his secret and die the death; for he loved her with love exceeding because she was his cousin, the daughter of his father's brother, and the mother of his children, and he had lived with her a life of an hundred and twenty years. Then, having assembled all the family and the folk of his neighbourhood, he said to them, "By me there hangeth a strange story, and 'tis such that if I discover the secret to any, I am a dead man." Therefore quoth every one of those present to the woman, "Allah upon thee, leave this sinful obstinacy and recognise the right of this matter, lest haply thy husband and the father of thy children die." But she rejoined, "I will not turn from it till he tell me, even though he come by his death." So they ceased to urge her; and the trader rose from amongst them and repaired to an outhouse to perform the Wuzu-ablution,[36] and he purposed thereafter to return and to tell them his secret and to die. Now, daughter Shahrazad, that merchant had in his out-houses some fifty hens under one cock, and whilst making ready to farewell his folk he heard one of his many farm-dogs thus address in his own tongue the Cock, who was flapping his wings and crowing lustily and jumping from one hen's back to another and treading all in turn, saying "O Chanticleer! how mean is thy wit and how shameless is thy conduct! Be he disappointed who [22]brought thee up?[37] Art thou not ashamed of thy doings on such a day as this?" "And what," asked the Rooster, "hath occurred this day?," when the Dog answered, "Dost thou not know that our master is this day making ready for his death? His wife is resolved that he shall disclose the secret taught to him by Allah, and the moment he so doeth he shall surely die. We dogs are all a-mourning; but thou clappest thy wings and clarionest thy loudest and treadest hen after hen. Is this an hour for pastime and pleasuring? Art thou not ashamed of thyself?"[38] "Then by Allah," quoth the Cock, "is our master a lack-wit and a man scanty of sense: if he cannot manage matters with a single wife, his life is not worth prolonging. Now I have some fifty Dame Partlets; and I please this and

provoke that and starve one and stuff another; and through my good governance they are all well under my control. This our master pretendeth to wit and wisdom, and he hath but one wife, and yet knoweth not how to manage her." Asked the Dog, "What then, O Cock, should the master do to win clear of his strait?" "He should arise forthright," answered the Cock, "and take some twigs from yon mulberry-tree and give her a regular back-basting and rib-roasting till she cry:—I repent, O my lord! I will never ask thee a question as long as I live! Then let him beat her once more and soundly, and when he shall have done this he shall sleep free from care and enjoy life. But this master of ours owns neither sense nor judgment." "Now, daughter Shahrazad," continued the Wazir, "I will do to thee as did that husband to that wife." Said Shahrazad, "And what did he do?" He replied, "When the merchant heard the wise words spoken by his Cock to his Dog, he arose in haste and sought his wife's chamber, after cutting for her some mulberry-twigs and hiding them there; and then he called to her, "Come into the closet that I may tell thee the secret while no one seeth me and then die." She entered with him and he locked the door and came down upon her with so sound a beating of back and shoulders, ribs, arms and legs, saying the while, "Wilt thou ever be asking questions about what concerneth thee not?" that she was well nigh senseless. Presently she cried out, "I am of the repentant! By Allah, I will ask thee no more questions, and indeed I repent sincerely and wholesomely." [23]Then she kissed his hand and feet and he led her out of the room submissive as a wife should be. Her parents and all the company rejoiced and sadness and mourning were changed into joy and gladness. Thus the merchant learnt family discipline from his Cock and he and his wife lived together the happiest of lives until death. And thou also, O my daughter! continued the Wazir, "Unless thou turn from this matter I will do by thee what that trader did to his wife." But she answered him with much decision, "I will never desist, O my father, nor shall this tale change my purpose. Leave such talk and tattle. I will not listen to thy words and, if thou deny me, I will marry myself to him despite the nose of thee. And first I will go up to the King myself and alone and I will say to him:—I prayed my father to wive me with thee, but he refused, being resolved to disappoint his lord, grudging the like of me to the like of thee." Her father asked, "Must this needs be?" and she answered, "Even so." Hereupon the Wazir being weary of lamenting and contending, persuading and dissuading her, all to no purpose, went up to King Shahryar and, after blessing him and kissing the ground before him, told him all about his dispute with his daughter from first to last and how he designed to bring her to him that night. The King wondered with exceeding wonder; for he had made an especial exception of the Wazir's daughter, and said to him, "O most faithful of Counsellors, how is this? Thou wottest that I have sworn by the Raiser of the Heavens that after I have gone into her this night I shall say to thee on the morrow's morning:—Take her and slay her! and, if thou slay her not, I will slay thee in her stead without fail." "Allah guide thee to glory

and lengthen thy life, O King of the age," answered the Wazir, "it is she that hath so determined: all this have I told her and more; but she will not hearken to me and she persisteth in passing this coming night with the King's Majesty." So Shahryar rejoiced greatly and said, "'Tis well; go get her ready and this night bring her to me." The Wazir returned to his daughter and reported to her the command saying, "Allah make not thy father desolate by thy loss!" But Shahrazad rejoiced with exceeding joy and gat ready all she required and said to her younger sister, Dunyazad, "Note well what directions I entrust to thee! When I have gone into the King I will send for thee and when thou comest to me and seest that he hath had his carnal will of me, do thou say to me:—O my sister, an thou be not sleepy, relate to me some new story, delectable and delightsome, [24] the better to speed our waking hours;" and I will tell thee a tale which shall be our deliverance, if so Allah please, and which shall turn the King from his blood-thirsty custom." Dunyazad answered "With love and gladness." So when it was night their father the Wazir carried Shahrazad to the King who was gladdened at the sight and asked, "Hast thou brought me my need?" and he answered, "I have." But when the King took her to his bed and fell to toying with her and wished to go in to her she wept; which made him ask, "What aileth thee?" She replied, "O King of the age, I have a younger sister and lief would I take leave of her this night before I see the dawn." So he sent at once for Dunyazad and she came and kissed the ground between his hands, when he permitted her to take her seat near the foot of the couch. Then the King arose and did away with his bride's maidenhead and the three fell asleep. But when it was midnight Shahrazad awoke and signalled to her sister Dunyazad who sat up and said, "Allah upon thee, O my sister, recite to us some new story, delightsome and delectable, wherewith to while away the waking hours of our latter night."[39] "With joy and goodly gree," answered Shahrazad, "if this pious and auspicious King permit me." "Tell on," quoth the King who chanced to be sleepless and restless and therefore was pleased with the prospect of hearing her story. So Shahrazad rejoiced; and thus, on the first night of the Thousand Nights and a Night, she began with the

1- TALE OF THE TRADER AND THE JINNI.

It is related, O auspicious King, that there was a merchant of the merchants who had much wealth, and business in various cities. Now on a day he mounted horse and went forth to recover monies in certain towns, and the heat sore oppressed him; so he sat beneath a tree and, putting his hand into his saddle-bags, took thence some broken bread and dry dates and began to break his fast. When he had ended eating the dates he threw away the stones with force and lo! an Ifrit appeared, huge of stature and brandishing a drawn sword, wherewith he approached the merchant and said, "Stand up that I may slay thee, even as thou slewest my 25 son!" Asked the merchant, "How have I slain thy son?" and he answered, "When thou atest dates and threwest away the stones they struck my son full in the breast as he was walking by, so that he died forthwith."[40] Quoth the merchant, "Verily from Allah we proceeded and unto Allah are we returning. There is no Majesty, and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! If I slew thy son, I slew him by chance medley. I pray thee now pardon me." Rejoined the Jinni, "There is no help but I must slay thee." Then he seized him and dragged him along and, casting him to the earth, raised the sword to strike him; whereupon the merchant wept, and said, "I commit my case to Allah," and began repeating these couplets:—

Containeth Time a twain of days, this of blessing that of bane ✿ And holdeth Life a twain of halves, this of pleasure that of pain.

See'st not when blows the hurricane, sweeping stark and striking strong ✿ None save the forest giant feels the suffering of the strain?

How many trees earth nourisheth of the dry and of the green ✿ Yet none but those which bear the fruits for cast of stone complain.

See'st not how corpses rise and float on the surface of the tide ✿ While pearls o' price lie hidden in the deepest of the main!

In Heaven are unnumberèd the many of the stars ✿ Yet ne'er a star but Sun and Moon by eclipse is overta'en.

Well judgest thou the days that saw thy faring sound and well ✿ And countedst not the pangs and pain whereof Fate is ever fain.

The nights have kept thee safe and the safety brought thee pride ✿ But bliss and blessings of the night are 'genderers of bane!

When the merchant ceased repeating his verses the Jinni said to him, "Cut thy words short, by Allah! needs must I slay thee." But the merchant spake him thus, "Know, O thou Ifrit, that I have debts due to me and much wealth and children and a wife and many pledges in hand; so permit me to go home and discharge to every claimant his

claim; and I will come back to thee at the head of the new year. Allah be my testimony and surety that I will return to thee; and then thou mayest do with me as thou wilt and Allah is witness to what I say." The Jinni took sure promise of him and let him go; so he returned to his own city and transacted his business and rendered to all men their dues and after 26 informing his wife and children of what had betided him, he appointed a guardian and dwelt with them for a full year. Then he arose, and made the Wuzu-ablution to purify himself before death and took his shroud under his arm and bade farewell to his people, his neighbours and all his kith and kin, and went forth despite his own nose.[41] They then began weeping and wailing and beating their breasts over him; but he travelled until he arrived at the same garden, and the day of his arrival was the head of the New Year. As he sat weeping over what had befallen him, behold, a Shaykh,[42] a very ancient man, drew near leading a chained gazelle; and he saluted that merchant and wishing him long life said, "What is the cause of thy sitting in this place and thou alone and this be a resort of evil spirits?" The merchant related to him what had come to pass with the Ifrit, and the old man, the owner of the gazelle, wondered and said, "By Allah, O brother, thy faith is none other than exceeding faith and thy story right strange; were it graven with gravers on the eye-corners, it were a warner to whoso would be warned." Then seating himself near the merchant he said, "By Allah, O my brother, I will not leave thee until I see what may come to pass with thee and this Ifrit." And presently as he sat and the two were at talk the merchant began to feel fear and terror and exceeding grief and sorrow beyond relief and ever-growing care and extreme despair. And the owner of the gazelle was hard by his side; when behold, a second Shaykh approached them, and with him were two dogs both of greyhound breed and both black. The second old man after saluting them with the salam, also asked them of their tidings and said "What causeth you to sit in this place, a dwelling of the Jánn?"[43] So they told him the tale from beginning to end, 27 and their stay there had not lasted long before there came up a third Shaykh, and with him a she-mule of bright bay coat; and he saluted them and asked them why they were seated in that place. So they told him the story from first to last: and of no avail, O my master, is a twice-told tale! There he sat down with them, and lo! a dust-cloud advanced and a mighty sand-devil appeared amidmost of the waste. Presently the cloud opened and behold, within it was that Jinni hending in hand a drawn sword, while his eyes were shooting fire-sparks of rage. He came up to them and, haling away the merchant from among them, cried to him, "Arise that I may slay thee, as thou slewest my son, the life-stuff of my liver."[44] The merchant wailed and wept, and the three old men began sighing and crying and weeping and wailing with their companion. Presently the first old man (the owner of the gazelle) came out from among them and kissed the hand of the Ifrit and said, "O Jinni, thou Crown of the Kings of the Jann! were I to tell thee the story of me and this gazelle and thou shouldst consider it wondrous wouldst thou give me a third part of this merchant's

blood?" Then quoth the Jinni "Even so, O Shaykh! if thou tell me this tale, and I hold it a marvellous, then will I give thee a third of his blood." Thereupon the old man began to tell

THE FIRST SHAYKH'S STORY.

Know O Jinni! that this gazelle is the daughter of my paternal uncle, my own flesh and blood, and I married her when she was a young maid, and I lived with her well-nigh thirty years, yet was I not blessed with issue by her. So I took me a concubine,[45] who 28 brought to me the boon of a male child fair as the full moon, with eyes of lovely shine and eyebrows which formed one line, and limbs of perfect design. Little by little he grew in stature and waxed tall; and when he was a lad fifteen years old, it became needful I should journey to certain cities and I travelled with great store of goods. But the daughter of my uncle (this gazelle) had learned gramarye and egromancy and clerkly craft[46] from her childhood; so she bewitched that son of mine to a calf, and my handmaid (his mother) to a heifer, and made them over to the herdsman's care. Now when I returned after a long time from my journey and asked for my son and his mother, she answered me, saying "Thy slave-girl is dead, and thy son hath fled and I know not whither he is sped." So I remained for a whole year with grieving heart, and streaming eyes until the time came for the Great Festival of Allah.[47] Then sent I to my herdsman bidding him choose for me a fat heifer; and he brought me one which was the damsel, my handmaid, whom this gazelle had ensorcelled. I tucked up my sleeves and skirt and, taking a knife, proceeded to cut her throat, but she lowed aloud and wept bitter tears. Thereat I marvelled and pity seized me and I held my hand, saying to the herd, "Bring me other than this." Then cried my cousin, "Slay her, for I have not a fatter nor a fairer!" Once more I went forward to sacrifice her, but she again lowed aloud, upon which in ruth I refrained and commanded the herdsmen to slay her and flay her. He killed her and skinned her but found in her neither fat nor flesh, only hide and bone; and I repented when penitence availed me naught. I gave her to the herdsman and said to him, "Fetch me a fat calf;" so he brought my son ensorcelled. When the calf saw me, he brake his tether and ran to me, and fawned upon me and wailed and shed tears; so that I took pity on him and said to the herdsman, "Bring me a heifer and let this calf go!" Thereupon my cousin (this gazelle) called aloud at me, saying, "Needs must thou kill this calf; this is a holy day and a blessed, 29 whereon naught is slain save what be perfect-pure; and we have not amongst our calves any fatter or fairer than this!" Quoth I, "Look thou upon the condition of the heifer which I slaughtered at thy bidding and how we turn from her in disappointment and she profited us on no wise; and I repent with an exceeding repentance of having killed her: so this time I will not obey thy bidding for the sacrifice of this calf." Quoth she, "By Allah the Most Great, the Compassionating, the

Compassionate! there is no help for it; thou must kill him on this holy day, and if thou kill him not to me thou art no man and I to thee am no wife." Now when I heard those hard words, not knowing her object I went up to the calf, knife in hand——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.[48] Then quoth her sister to her, "How fair is thy tale, and how grateful, and how sweet and how tasteful!" And Shahrazad answered her, "What is this to that I could tell thee on the coming night, were I to live and the King would spare me?" Then said the King in himself, "By Allah, I will not slay her, until I shall have heard the rest of her tale." So they slept the rest of that night in mutual embrace till day fully brake. Then the King went forth to his audience-hall[49] and the Wazir went up with his daughter's shroud under his arm. The King issued his orders, and promoted this and deposed that, until the end of the day; and he told the Wazir no whit of what had happened. But the Minister wondered thereat with exceeding wonder; and when the Court broke up King Shahryar entered his palace.

Now when it was the Second Night,

said Dunyazad to her sister Shahrazad, "O my sister, finish for us that story of the Merchant and the Jinni;" and she answered, "With joy and goodly gree, if the King permit me." Then quoth 30 the King, "Tell thy tale;" and Shahrazad began in these words: It hath reached me, O auspicious King and Heaven-directed Ruler! that when the merchant purposed the sacrifice of the calf but saw it weeping, his heart relented and he said to the herdsman, "Keep the calf among my cattle." All this the old Shaykh told the Jinni who marvelled much at these strange words. Then the owner of the gazelle continued:—O Lord of the Kings of the Jann, this much took place and my uncle's daughter, this gazelle, looked on and saw it, and said, "Butcher me this calf, for surely it is a fat one;" but I bade the herdsman take it away and he took it and turned his face homewards. On the next day as I was sitting in my own house, lo! the herdsman came and, standing before me said, "O my master, I will tell thee a thing which shall gladden thy soul, and shall gain me the gift of good tidings."[50] I answered, "Even so." Then said he, "O merchant, I have a daughter, and she learned magic in her childhood from an old woman who lived with us. Yesterday when thou gavest me the calf, I went into the house to her, and she looked upon it and veiled her face; then she wept and laughed alternately and at last she said:—O my father, hath mine honour become so cheap to thee that thou bringest in to me strange men? I asked her:—Where be these strange men and why wast thou laughing, and crying?; and she answered, Of a truth this calf which is with thee is the son of our master, the merchant; but he is ensorcelled by his stepdame who bewitched both him and his mother: such is the cause of my laughing; now the reason of his weeping is his mother, for that his father slew her unawares. Then I marvelled at this with exceeding marvel and hardly made sure that day had dawned before I came to tell thee." When I heard, O Jinni, my herdsman's words, I went out with him, and I was drunken without

wine, from the excess of joy and gladness which came upon me, until I reached his house. There his daughter welcomed me and kissed my hand, and forthwith the calf came and fawned upon me as before. Quoth I to the herdsman's daughter, "Is this true that thou sayest of this calf?" Quoth she, "Yea, O my master, he is thy son, the very core of thy heart." I rejoiced and said to her, "O maiden, if thou wilt release him thine shall be whatever cattle and property of mine are under thy father's 31 hand." She smiled and answered, "O my master, I have no greed for the goods nor will I take them save on two conditions; the first that thou marry me to thy son and the second that I may bewitch her who bewitched him and imprison her, otherwise I cannot be safe from her malice and malpractices." Now when I heard, O Jinni, these, the words of the herdsman's daughter, I replied, "Beside what thou askest all the cattle and the household stuff in thy father's charge are thine and, as for the daughter of my uncle, her blood is lawful to thee." When I had spoken, she took a cup and filled it with water: then she recited a spell over it and sprinkled it upon the calf, saying, "If Almighty Allah created thee a calf, remain so shaped, and change not; but if thou be enchanted, return to thy whilom form, by command of Allah Most Highest!" and lo! he trembled and became a man. Then I fell on his neck and said, "Allah upon thee, tell me all that the daughter of my uncle did by thee and by thy mother." And when he told me what had come to pass between them I said, "O my son, Allah favoured thee with one to restore thee, and thy right hath returned to thee." Then, O Jinni, I married the herdsman's daughter to him, and she transformed my wife into this gazelle, saying:—Her shape is a comely and by no means loathsome. After this she abode with us night and day, day and night, till the Almighty took her to Himself. When she deceased, my son fared forth to the cities of Hind, even to the city of this man who hath done to thee what hath been done;[51] and I also took this gazelle (my cousin) and wandered with her from town to town seeking tidings of my son, till Destiny drove me to this place where I saw the merchant sitting in tears. Such is my tale! Quoth the Jinni, "This story is indeed strange, and therefore I grant thee the third part of his blood." Thereupon the second old man, who owned the two greyhounds, came up and said, "O Jinni, if I recount to thee what befel me from my brothers, these two hounds, and thou see that it is a tale even more wondrous and marvellous than what thou hast heard, wilt thou grant to me also the third of this man's blood?" Replied the Jinni, "Thou hast my word for it, if thine adventures be more marvellous and wondrous." Thereupon he thus began

32

THE SECOND SHAYKH'S STORY.

Know, O lord of the Kings of the Jann! that these two dogs are my brothers and I am the third. Now when our father died and left us a capital of three thousand gold

pieces,[52] I opened a shop with my share, and bought and sold therein, and in like guise did my two brothers, each setting up a shop. But I had been in business no long while before the elder sold his stock for a thousand dinars, and after buying outfit and merchandise, went his ways to foreign parts. He was absent one whole year with the caravan; but one day as I sat in my shop, behold, a beggar stood before me asking alms, and I said to him, "Allah open thee another door!"[53] Whereupon he answered, weeping the while, "Am I so changed that thou knowest me not?" Then I looked at him narrowly, and lo! it was my brother, so I rose to him and welcomed him; then I seated him in my shop and put questions concerning his case. "Ask me not," answered he; "my wealth is awaste and my state hath waxed un-stated!" So I took him to the Hammám-bath[54] and clad him in a suit of my own and gave him lodging in my house. Moreover, after looking over the accounts of my stock-in-trade and the profits of my business, I found that industry had gained me one thousand dinars, while my principal, the head of my wealth, amounted to two thousand. So I shared the whole with him, saying, "Assume that thou hast made no journey abroad but hast remained at home; and be not cast down by thine ill-luck." He took the share in great glee and opened for himself a 33 shop; and matters went on quietly for a few nights and days. But presently my second brother (yon other dog), also setting his heart upon travel, sold off what goods and stock-in-trade he had, and albeit we tried to stay him he would not be stayed: he laid in an outfit for the journey, and fared forth with certain wayfarers. After an absence of a whole year he came back to me, even as my elder brother had come back; and when I said to him, "O my brother, did I not dissuade thee from travel?" he shed tears and cried, "O my brother, this be destiny's decree: here I am a mere beggar, penniless[55] and without a shirt to my back." So I led him to the bath, O Jinni, and clothing him in new clothes of my own wear, I went with him to my shop and served him with meat and drink. Furthermore I said to him, "O my brother, I am wont to cast up my shop-accounts at the head of every year, and whatso I shall find of surplusage is between me and thee."[56] So I proceeded, O Ifrit, to strike a balance and, finding two thousand dinars of profit, I returned praises to the Creator (be He extolled and exalted!) and made over one half to my brother, keeping the other to myself. Thereupon he busied himself with opening a shop and on this wise we abode many days. After a time my brothers began pressing me to travel with them; but I refused, saying, "What gained ye by your voyage that I should gain thereby?" As I would not give ear to them we went back each to his own shop where we bought and sold as before. They kept urging me to travel for a whole twelvemonth, but I refused to do so till full six years were past and gone when I consented with these words, "O my brothers, here am I, your companion of travel: now let me see what monies you have by you." I found, however, that they had not a doit, having squandered their substance in high diet and drinking and carnal delights. Yet I spoke not a word of reproach; so far from it I looked over my shop accounts once more, and sold what goods and stock-in trade were mine; and, finding myself the owner of six thousand

ducats, I gladly proceeded to divide that 34sum into halves, saying to my brothers, "These three thousand gold pieces are for me and for you to trade withal," adding, "Let us bury the other moiety underground that it may be of service in case any harm befal us, in which case each shall take a thousand wherewith to open shops." Both replied, "Right is thy recking;" and I gave to each one his thousand gold pieces, keeping the same sum for myself, to wit, a thousand dinars. We then got ready suitable goods and hired a ship and, having embarked our merchandise, proceeded on our voyage, day following day, a full month, after which we arrived at a city, where we sold our venture; and for every piece of gold we gained ten. And as we turned again to our voyage we found on the shore of the sea a maiden clad in worn and ragged gear, and she kissed my hand and said, "O master, is there kindness in thee and charity? I can make thee a fitting return for them." I answered, "Even so; truly in me are benevolence and good works, even though thou render me no return." Then she said, "Take me to wife, O my master, and carry me to thy city, for I have given myself to thee; so do me a kindness and I am of those who be meet for good works and charity: I will make thee a fitting return for these and be thou not shamed by my condition." When I heard her words, my heart yearned towards her, in such sort as willed it Allah (be He extolled and exalted!); and took her and clothed her and made ready for her a fair resting-place in the vessel, and honourably entreated her. So we voyaged on, and my heart became attached to her with exceeding attachment, and I was separated from her neither night nor day, and I paid more regard to her than to my brothers. Then they were estranged from me, and waxed jealous of my wealth and the quantity of merchandise I had, and their eyes were opened covetously upon all my property. So they took counsel to murder me and seize my wealth, saying, "Let us slay our brother and all his monies will be ours;" and Satan made this deed seem fair in their sight; so when they found me in privacy (and I sleeping by my wife's side) they took us both up and cast us into the sea. My wife awoke startled from her sleep and, forthright becoming an Ifritah,[57] she bore me up and carried me to an island and disappeared for a short time; but she returned in the morning and said "Here am I, thy faithful slave, who hath made thee due recompense; for I bore thee up in the waters and saved 35thee from death by command of the Almighty. Know that I am a Jinniyah, and as I saw thee my heart loved thee by will of the Lord, for I am a believer in Allah and in His Apostle (whom Heaven bless and preserve!). Thereupon I came to thee conditioned as thou sawest me and thou didst marry me, and see now I have saved thee from sinking. But I am angered against thy brothers and assuredly I must slay them." When I heard her story I was surprised and, thanking her for all she had done, I said, "But as to slaying my brothers this must not be." Then I told her the tale of what had come to pass with them from the beginning of our lives to the end, and on hearing it quoth she, "This night will I fly as a bird over them and will sink their ship and slay them." Quoth I, "Allah upon thee, do not thus, for the proverb saith, O thou

who doest good to him that doth evil, leave the evil doer to his evil deeds. Moreover they are still my brothers." But she rejoined, "By Allah, there is no help for it but I slay them." I humbled myself before her for their pardon, whereupon she bore me up and flew away with me till at last she set me down on the terrace-roof of my own house. I opened the doors and took up what I had hidden in the ground; and after I had saluted the folk I opened my shop and bought me merchandise. Now when night came on I went home, and there I saw these two hounds tied up; and, when they sighted me, they arose and whined and fawned upon me; but ere I knew what happened my wife said, "These two dogs be thy brothers!" I answered, "And who hath done this thing by them?" and she rejoined, "I sent a message to my sister and she entreated them on this wise, nor shall these two be released from their present shape till ten years shall have passed." And now I have arrived at this place on my way to my wife's sister that she may deliver them from this condition, after their having endured it for half a score of years. As I was wending onwards I saw this young man, who acquainted me with what had befallen him, and I determined not to fare hence until I should see what might occur between thee and him. Such is my tale! Then said the Jinni, "Surely this is a strange story and therefor I give thee the third portion of his blood and his crime." Thereupon quoth the third Shaykh, the master of the mare-mule, to the Jinni, "I can tell thee a tale more wondrous than these two, so thou grant me the remainder of his blood and of his offence," and the Jinni answered, "So be it!" Then the old man began

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THE THIRD SHAYKH'S STORY.

Know, O Sultan and head of the Jann, that this mule was my wife. Now it so happened that I went forth and was absent one whole year; and when I returned from my journey I came to her by night, and saw a black slave lying with her on the carpet-bed, and they were talking, and dallying, and laughing, and kissing and playing the close-buttock game. When she saw me, she rose and came hurriedly at me with a gugglet[58] of water; and, muttering spells over it, she besprinkled me and said, "Come forth from this thy shape into the shape of a dog;" and I became on the instant a dog. She drove me out of the house, and I ran through the doorway nor ceased running until I came to a butcher's stall, where I stopped and began to eat what bones were there. When the stall-owner saw me, he took me and led me into his house, but as soon as his daughter had sight of me she veiled her face from me, crying out, "Dost thou bring men to me and dost thou come in with them to me?" Her father asked, "Where is the man?"; and she answered, "This dog is a man whom his wife hath ensorcelled and I am able to release him." When her father heard her words, he said, "Allah upon thee, O my daughter, release him." So she took a gugglet of water and, after uttering words over it, sprinkled upon me a few drops, saying, "Come forth from

that form into thy former form." And I returned to my natural shape. Then I kissed her hand and said, "I wish thou wouldest transform my wife even as she transformed me." Thereupon she gave me some water, saying, "As soon as thou see her asleep, sprinkle this liquid upon her and speak what words thou heardest me utter, so shall she become whatsoever thou desirest." I went to my wife and found her fast asleep; and, while sprinkling the water upon her, I said, "Come forth from that form into the form of a mare-mule." So she became on the instant a she-mule, and she it is whom thou seest with thine eyes, O Sultan 37and head of the Kings of the Jann! Then the Jinni turned towards her and said, "Is this sooth?" And she nodded her head and replied by signs, "Indeed, 'tis the truth: for such is my tale and this is what hath befallen me." Now when the old man had ceased speaking the Jinni shook with pleasure and gave him the third of the merchant's blood.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say. Then quoth Dunyazad, "O, my sister, how pleasant is thy tale, and how tasteful; how sweet and how grateful!" She replied, "And what is this compared with that I could tell thee, the night to come, if I live and the King spare me?"[59] Then thought the King, "By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the rest of her tale, for truly it is wondrous." So they rested that night in mutual embrace until the dawn. After this the King went forth to his Hall of Estate, and the Wazir and the troops came in and the court was crowded, and the King gave orders and judged and appointed and deposed, bidding and forbidding during the rest of the day. Then the Divan broke up, and King Shahryar entered his palace.

Now when it was the Third Night,

And the King had had his will of the Wazir's daughter, Dunyazad, her sister, said to her, "Finish for us that tale of thine;" and she replied, "With joy and goodly gree! It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the third old man told a tale to the Jinni more wondrous than the two preceding, the Jinni marvelled with exceeding marvel; and, shaking with delight, cried, "Lo! I have given thee the remainder of the merchant's punishment and for thy sake have I released him." Thereupon the merchant embraced the old men and thanked them, and these Shaykhs wished him joy on being saved and fared forth each one for his own city. Yet this tale is not more wondrous than the fisherman's story." Asked the King, "What is the fisherman?s story?" And she answered by relating the tale of

2- THE FISHERMAN AND THE JINNI.

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there was a Fisherman well stricken in years who had a wife and three children, and withal was of poor condition. Now it was his custom to cast his net every day four times, and no more. On a day he went forth about noontide to the sea shore, where he laid down his basket; and, tucking up his shirt and plunging into the water, made a cast with his net and waited till it settled to the bottom. Then he gathered the cords together and haled away at it, but found it weighty; and however much he drew it landwards, he could not pull it up; so he carried the ends ashore and drove a stake into the ground and made the net fast to it. Then he stripped and dived into the water all about the net, and left not off working hard until he had brought it up. He rejoiced thereat and, donning his clothes, went to the net, when he found in it a dead jackass which had torn the meshes. Now when he saw it, he exclaimed in his grief, "There is no Majesty, and there is no Might save in Allah the Glorious, the Great!" Then quoth he, "This is a strange manner of daily bread;" and he began reciting in extempore verse:—

O toiler through the glooms of night in peril and in pain ✿ Thy toiling stint for daily bread comes not by might and main!

Seest thou not the fisher seek afloat upon the sea ✿ His bread, while glimmer stars of night as set in tangled skein.

Anon he plungeth in despite the buffet of the waves ✿ The while to sight the bellying net his eager glances strain;

Till joying at the night's success, a fish he bringeth home ✿ Whose gullet by the hook of Fate was caught and cut in twain.

When buys that fish of him a man who spent the hours of night ✿ Reckless of cold and wet and gloom in ease and comfort fain,

Laud to the Lord who gives to this, to that denies his wishes ✿ And dooms one toil and catch the prey and other eat the fishes.[60]

Then quoth he, "Up and to it; I am sure of His beneficence, Inshallah!" So he continued:—

When thou art seized of Evil Fate, assume ✿ The noble soul's long-suffering: 'tis thy best:

Complain not to the creature; this be 'plaint ✿ From one most Ruthful to the ruthlessest.

39 The Fisherman, when he had looked at the dead ass, got it free of the toils and wrung out and spread his net; then he plunged into the sea, saying, "In Allah's name!" and made a cast and pulled at it, but it grew heavy and settled down more firmly than the first time. Now he thought that there were fish in it, and he made it fast, and

doffing his clothes went into the water, and dived and haled until he drew it up upon dry land. Then found he in it a large earthen pitcher which was full of sand and mud; and seeing this he was greatly troubled and began repeating these verses[61]:—

Forbear, O troubles of the world, ✿ And pardon an ye nill forbear:

I went to seek my daily bread ✿ I find that breadless I must fare:

For neither handcraft brings me aught ✿ Nor Fate allots to me a share:

How many fools the Pleiads reach ✿ While darkness whelms the wise and ware.

So he prayed pardon of Allah and, throwing away the jar, wrung his net and cleansed it and returned to the sea the third time to cast his net and waited till it had sunk. Then he pulled at it and found therein potsherds and broken glass; whereupon he began to speak these verses:—

He is to thee that daily bread thou canst nor loose nor bind ✿ Nor pen nor writ avail thee aught thy daily bread to find:

For joy and daily bread are what Fate deigneth to allow; ✿ This soil is sad and sterile ground, while that makes glad the hind.

The shafts of Time and Life bear down full many a man of worth ✿ While bearing up to high degree wights of ignoble mind.

So come thou, Death! for verily life is not worth a straw ✿ When low the falcon falls withal the mallard wings the wind:

No wonder 'tis thou seest how the great of soul and mind ✿ Are poor, and many a losel carle to height of luck designed.

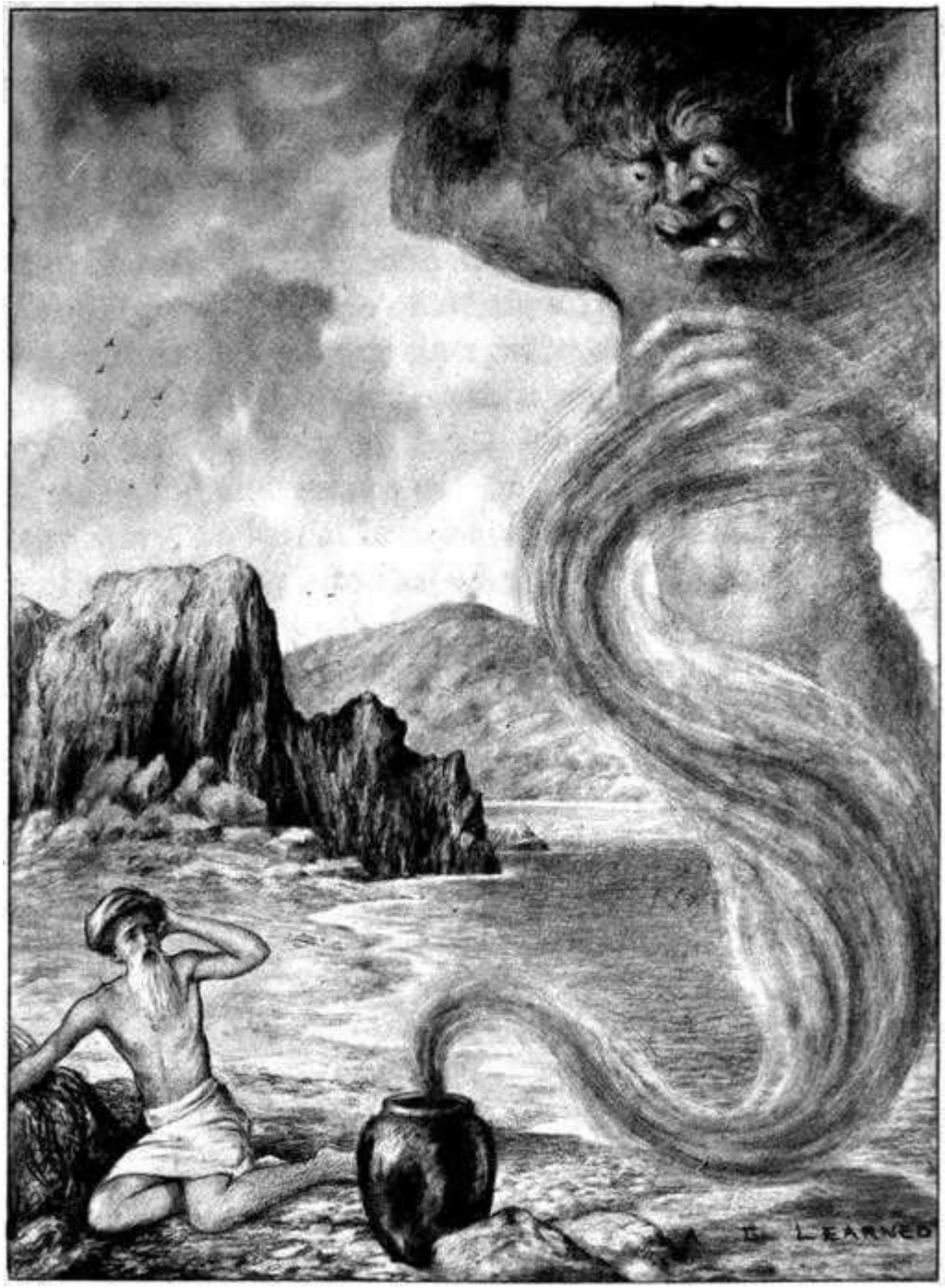
This bird shall overfly the world from east to furthest west ✿ And that shall win her every wish though ne'er she leave the nest.

Then raising his eyes heavenwards he said, "O my God!"[62] verily 40 Thou wottest that I cast not my net each day save four times;[63] the third is done and as yet Thou hast vouchsafed me nothing. So this time, O my God, deign give me my daily bread. Then, having called on Allah's name,[64] he again threw his net and waited its sinking and settling; whereupon he haled at it but could not draw it in for that it was entangled at the bottom. He cried out in his vexation "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" and he began reciting:—

Fie on this wretched world, an so it be ✿ I must be whelmed by grief and misery:

Tho' gladsome be man's lot when dawns the morn ✿ He drains the cup of woe ere eve he see:

Yet was I one of whom the world when asked ✿ "Whose lot is happiest?" oft would say "'Tis he!"



Thereupon he stripped and, diving down to the net, busied himself with it till it came to land. Then he opened the meshes and found therein a cucumber-shaped jar of yellow copper,[651] evidently full of something, whose mouth was made fast with a leaden cap, stamped with the seal-ring of our Lord Sulayman son of David (Allah accept the twain!). Seeing this the Fisherman rejoiced and said, "If I sell it in the brass-bazar 'tis worth ten golden dinars." He shook it and finding it heavy continued, "Would to Heaven I knew what is herein. But I must and will open it and look to its

contents and store it in my bag and sell it in the brass-market." And taking out a knife he worked at the lead till he had loosened it from the jar; then he laid the cup on the ground and shook the vase to pour out whatever might be inside. He found nothing in it; whereat he marvelled with an exceeding marvel. But presently there came forth from the jar a smoke which spired heavenwards into æther (whereat he again marvelled with mighty marvel), and which trailed along earth's surface till presently, having reached its full height, the thick vapour condensed, and 41 became an Ifrit, huge of bulk, whose crest touched the clouds while his feet were on the ground. His head was as a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs long as masts and his mouth big as a cave; his teeth were like large stones, his nostrils ewers, his eyes two lamps and his look was fierce and lowering. Now when the fisherman saw the Ifrit his side muscles quivered, his teeth chattered, his spittle dried up and he became blind about what to do. Upon this the Ifrit looked at him and cried, "There is no god but *the* God, and Sulayman is the prophet of God;" presently adding, "O Apostle of Allah, slay me not; never again will I gainsay thee in word nor sin against thee in deed."[66] Quoth the Fisherman, "O Márid,[67] diddest thou say, Sulayman the Apostle of Allah; and Sulayman is dead some thousand and eight hundred years ago,[68] and we are now in the last days of the world! What is thy story, and what is thy account of thyself, and what is the cause of thy entering into this cucurbit?" Now when the Evil Spirit heard the words of the Fisherman, quoth he; "There is no god but *the* God: be of good cheer, O Fisherman!" Quoth the Fisherman, "Why biddest thou me to be of good cheer?" and he replied, "Because of thy having to die an ill death in this very hour." Said the Fisherman, "Thou deservest for thy good tidings the withdrawal of Heaven's protection, O thou distant one![69] Wherefore shouldest thou kill me and what thing have I done to deserve death, I who freed thee from the jar, and saved thee from the depths of the sea, and brought thee up on the dry land?" Replied the Ifrit, "Ask of me only what mode of death thou wilt die, and by what manner of slaughter shall I slay thee." Rejoined the Fisherman, "What is my crime and wherefore such retribution?"

42 Quoth the Ifrit, "Hear my story, O Fisherman!" and he answered, "Say on, and be brief in thy saying, for of very sooth my life-breath is in my nostrils."[70] Thereupon quoth the Jinni, "Know, that I am one among the heretical Jann and I sinned against Sulayman, David-son (on the twain be peace!) I together with the famous Sakhr al-Jinni;[71] whereupon the Prophet sent his minister, Asaf son of Barkhiyá, to seize me; and this Wazir brought me against my will and led me in bonds to him (I being downcast despite my nose) and he placed me standing before him like a suppliant. When Sulayman saw me, he took refuge with Allah and bade me embrace the True Faith and obey his behests; but I refused, so sending for this cucurbit[72] he shut me up therein, and stopped it over with lead whereon he impressed the Most High Name, and gave his orders to the Jann who carried me off, and cast me into the midmost of the ocean. There I abode an hundred years, during which I said in my heart, "Whoso

shall release me, him will I enrich for ever and ever." But the full century went by and, when no one set me free, I entered upon the second five score saying, "Whoso shall release me, for him I will open the hoards of the earth." Still no one set me free and thus four hundred years passed away. Then quoth I, "Whoso shall release me, for him will I fulfil three wishes." Yet no one set me free. Thereupon I waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and said to myself, "Whoso shall release me from this time forth, him will I slay and I will give him choice of what death he will die; and now, as thou hast released me, I give thee full choice of deaths." The Fisherman, hearing the words of the Ifrit, said, "O Allah! 43 the wonder of it that I have not come to free thee save in these days!" adding, "Spare my life, so Allah spare thine; and slay me not, lest Allah set one to slay thee." Replied the Contumacious One, "There is no help for it; die thou must; so ask me by way of boon what manner of death thou wilt die." Albeit thus certified the Fisherman again addressed the Ifrit saying, "Forgive me this my death as a generous reward for having freed thee;" and the Ifrit, "Surely I would not slay thee save on account of that same release." "O Chief of the Ifrits," said the Fisherman, "I do thee good and thou requitest me with evil! in very sooth the old saw lieth not when it saith:—

We wrought them weal, they met our weal with ill; ✿ Such, by my life! is every bad man's labour:

To him who benefits unworthy wights ✿ Shall hap what hapt to Ummi-Amir's neighbour.[73]

Now when the Ifrit heard these words he answered, "No more of this talk, needs must I kill thee." Upon this the Fisherman said to himself, "This is a Jinni; and I am a man to whom Allah hath given a passably cunning wit, so I will now cast about to compass his destruction by my contrivance and by mine intelligence; even as he took counsel only of his malice and his frowardness."[74] He began by asking the Ifrit, "Hast thou indeed resolved to kill me?" and, receiving for all answer, "Even so," he cried, "Now in the Most Great Name, graven on the seal-ring of Sulayman the Son of David (peace be with the holy twain!), an I question thee on a certain matter wilt thou give me a true answer?" The Ifrit replied "Yea;" but, hearing mention of the Most Great Name, his wits were troubled and he said with trembling, "Ask and be brief." Quoth the Fisherman, "How didst thou fit into this bottle which would not hold thy hand; no, nor even thy foot, and how came it to be large enough to contain the whole of thee?" Replied the Ifrit, "What! dost not believe that I was all there?" and the Fisherman rejoined, "Nay! I will never believe it until I see thee inside with my own eyes."— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

44 Now when it was the Fourth Night,

Her sister said to her, "Please finish us this tale, an thou be not sleepy!" so she resumed:—It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Fisherman said to the Ifrit, "I will never and nowise believe thee until I see thee inside it with mine own eyes;" the Evil Spirit on the instant shook[75] and became a vapour, which condensed, and entered the jar little and little, till all was well inside when lo! the Fisherman in

hot haste took the leaden cap with the seal and stoppered therewith the mouth of the jar and called out to the Ifrit, saying, "Ask me by way of boon what death thou wilt die! By Allah, I will throw thee into the sea[76] before us and here will I build me a lodge; and whoso cometh hither I will warn him against fishing and will say:—In these waters abideth an Ifrit who giveth as a last favour a choice of deaths and fashion of slaughter to the man who saveth him!" Now when the Ifrit heard this from the Fisherman and saw himself in limbo, he was minded to escape, but this was prevented by Solomon's seal; so he knew that the Fisherman had cozened and outwitted him, and he waxed lowly and submissive and began humbly to say, "I did but jest with thee." But the other answered, "Thou liest, O vilest of the Ifrits, and meanest and filthiest!" and he set off with the bottle for the sea side; the Ifrit calling out "Nay! Nay!" and he calling out "Aye! Aye!" Thereupon the Evil Spirit softened his voice and smoothed his speech and abased himself, saying, "What wouldest thou do with me, O Fisherman?" "I will throw thee back into the sea," he answered; "where thou hast been housed and homed for a thousand and eight hundred years; and now I will leave thee therein till Judgment-day: did I not say to thee:—Spare me and Allah shall spare thee; and slay me not lest Allah slay thee? yet thou spurnedst my supplication and hadst no intention save to deal ungraciously by me, and Allah hath now thrown thee into my hands and I am cunninger than thou." Quoth the Ifrit, "Open for me that I may bring thee weal." Quoth the Fisherman, "Thou liest, thou accursed! my case with thee is that of the Wazir of 45 King Yúnán with the sage Dúbán."[77] "And who was the Wazir of King Yunan and who was the sage Duban; and what was the story about them?" quoth the Ifrit, whereupon the Fisherman began to tell

THE TALE OF THE WAZIR AND THE SAGE DUBAN.

"Know, O thou Ifrit, that in days of yore and in ages long gone before, a King called Yunan reigned over the city of Fars of the land of the Roum."[78] He was a powerful ruler and a wealthy, who had armies and guards and allies of all nations of men; but his body was afflicted with a leprosy which leaches and men of science failed to heal. He drank potions and he swallowed powders and he used unguents, but naught did him good and none among the host of physicians availed to procure him a cure. At last there came to his city a mighty healer of men and one well stricken in years, the sage Duban hight. This man was a reader of books, Greek, Persian, Roman, Arabian, and Syrian; and he was skilled in astronomy and in leechcraft, the theorick as well as the practick; he was experienced in all that healeth and that hurteth the body; conversant with the virtues of every plant, grass and herb, and their benefit and bane; and he understood philosophy and had compassed the whole range of medical science

and other branches of the knowledge-tree. Now this physician passed but few days in the city, ere he heard of the King's malady and all his bodily sufferings through the leprosy with which Allah had smitten him; and how all the doctors and wise men had failed to heal him. Upon this he sat up through the night in deep thought and, when broke the dawn and appeared the morn and light was again born, and the Sun greeted the Good whose beauties the world adorn,[79] he donned his handsomest dress and going in to King Yunan, he kissed the ground before him: then he prayed for the endurance 46 of his honour and prosperity in fairest language and made himself known saying, "O King, tidings have reached me of what befel thee through that which is in thy person; and how the host of physicians have proved themselves unavailing to abate it; and lo! I can cure thee, O King; and yet will I not make thee drink of draught or anoint thee with ointment." Now when King Yunan heard his words he said in huge surprise, "How wilt thou do this? By Allah, if thou make me whole I will enrich thee even to thy son's son and I will give thee sumptuous gifts; and whatso thou wishest shall be thine and thou shalt be to me a cup-companion[80] and a friend." The King then robed him with a dress of honour and entreated him graciously and asked him, "Canst thou indeed cure me of this complaint without drug and unguent?" and he answered, "Yes! I will heal thee without the pains and penalties of medicine." The King marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, "O physician, when shall be this whereof thou speakest, and in how many days shall it take place? Haste thee, O my son!" He replied, "I hear and I obey; the cure shall begin to-morrow." So saying he went forth from the presence, and hired himself a house in the city for the better storage of his books and scrolls, his medicines and his aromatic roots. Then he set to work at choosing the fittest drugs and simples and he fashioned a bat hollow within, and furnished with a handle without, for which he made a ball; the two being prepared with consummate art. On the next day when both were ready for use and wanted nothing more, he went up to the King; and, kissing the ground between his hands bade him ride forth on the parade ground[81] there to play at pall and mall. He was accompanied by his suite, Emirs and Chamberlains, Wazirs and Lords of the realm and, ere he was 47 seated, the sage Duban came up to him, and handing him the bat said, "Take this mall and grip it as I do; so! and now push for the plain and leaning well over thy horse drive the ball with all thy might until thy palm be moist and thy body perspire: then the medicine will penetrate through thy palm and will permeate thy person. When thou hast done with playing and thou feelest the effects of the medicine, return to thy palace, and make the Ghusl-ablution[82] in the Hammam-bath, and lay thee down to sleep; so shalt thou become whole; and now peace be with thee!" Thereupon King Yunan took the bat from the Sage and grasped it firmly; then, mounting steed, he drove the ball before him and gallopped after it till he reached it, when he struck it with all his might, his palm gripping the bat handle the while; and he ceased not malling the ball till his hand waxed moist and his skin, perspiring,

imbibed the medicine from the wood. Then the sage Duban knew that the drugs had penetrated his person and bade him return to the palace and enter the Hammam without stay or delay; so King Yunan forthright returned and ordered them to clear for him the bath. They did so, the carpet spreaders making all haste, and the slaves all hurry and got ready a change of raiment for the King. He entered the bath and made the total ablution long and thoroughly; then donned his clothes within the Hammam and rode therefrom to his palace where he lay him down and slept. Such was the case with King Yunan, but as regards the sage Duban, he returned home and slept as usual and when morning dawned he repaired to the palace and craved audience. The King ordered him to be admitted; then, having kissed the ground between his hands, in allusion to the King he recited these couplets with solemn intonation:—

Happy is Eloquence when thou art named her sire ✿ But mourns she whenas other man the title claimed.

O Lord of fairest presence, whose illuming rays ✿ Clear off the fogs of doubt aye veiling deeds high famed,

Ne'er cease thy face to shine like Dawn and rise of Morn ✿ And never show Time's face with heat of ire inflamed!

Thy grace hath favoured us with gifts that worked such wise ✿ As rain-clouds raining on the hills by wolds enframed:

Freely thou lavishedst thy wealth to rise on high ✿ Till won from Time the heights whereat thy grandeur aimed.



Now when the Sage ceased reciting, the King rose quickly to 48 his feet and fell on his neck; then, seating him by his side he bade dress him in a sumptuous dress; for it had so happened that when the King left the Hammam he looked on his body and saw no trace of leprosy: the skin was all clean as virgin silver. He joyed thereat with exceeding joy, his breast broadened[83] with delight and he felt thoroughly happy. Presently, when it was full day he entered his audience-hall and sat upon the throne of his kingship whereupon his Chamberlains and Grandees flocked to the presence and

with them the sage Duban. Seeing the leach the King rose to him in honour and seated him by his side; then the food trays furnished with the daintiest viands were brought and the physician ate with the King, nor did he cease companying him all that day. Moreover, at nightfall he gave the physician Duban two thousand gold pieces, besides the usual dress of honour and other gifts galore, and sent him home on his own steed. After the Sage had fared forth King Yunan again expressed his amazement at the leach's art, saying, "This man medicined my body from without nor anointed me with aught of ointments: by Allah, surely this is none other than consummate skill! I am bound to honour such a man with rewards and distinction, and take him to my companion and my friend during the remainder of my days." So King Yunan passed the night in joy and gladness for that his body had been made whole and had thrown off so pernicious a malady. On the morrow the King went forth from his Serraglio and sat upon his throne, and the Lords of Estate stood about him, and the Emirs and Wazirs sat as was their wont on his right hand and on his left. Then he asked for the Sage Duban, who came in and kissed the ground before him, when the King rose to greet him and, seating him by his side, ate with him and wished him long life. Moreover he robed him and gave him gifts, and ceased not conversing with him until night approached. Then the King ordered him, by way of salary, five dresses of honour and a thousand dinars.[84] The physician returned to his own house full of gratitude to the King. Now when next morning dawned the King repaired to his 49audience-hall, and his Lords and nobles surrounded him and his Chamberlains and his Ministers, as the white encloseth the black of the eye.[85] Now the King had a Wazir among his Wazirs, unsightly to look upon, an ill-omened spectacle; sordid, ungenerous, full of envy and evil will. When this Minister saw the King place the physician near him and give him all these gifts, he jaloused him and planned to do him a harm, as in the saying on such subject, "Envy lurks in every body;" and the saying, "Oppression hideth in every heart: power revealeth it and weakness concealeth it." Then the Minister came before the King and, kissing the ground between his hands, said, "O King of the age and of all time, thou in whose benefits I have grown to manhood, I have weighty advice to offer thee, and if I withhold it I were a son of adultery and no true-born man; wherefore an thou order me to disclose it I will so do forthwith." Quoth the King (and he was troubled at the words of the Minister), "And what is this counsel of thine?" Quoth he, "O glorious monarch, the wise of old have said:—Whoso regardeth not the end, hath not Fortune to friend; and indeed I have lately seen the King on far other than the right way; for he lavisheth largesse on his enemy, on one whose object is the decline and fall of his kingship: to this man he hath shown favour, honouring him with over honour and making of him an intimate. Wherefore I fear for the King's life." The King, who was much troubled and changed colour, asked, "Whom dost thou suspect and anent whom doest thou hint?" and the Minister answered, "O King, an thou be asleep, wake up! I point to the

physician Duban." Rejoined the King, "Fie upon thee! This is a true friend who is favoured by me above all men, because he cured me with something which I held in my hand, and he healed my leprosy which had baffled all physicians; indeed he is one whose like may not be found in these days—no, not in the whole world from furthest east to utmost west! And it is of such a man thou sayest such hard sayings. Now from this day forward I allot him a settled solde and allowances, every month a thousand gold pieces; and, were I to share with him my realm 'twere but a little matter. Perforce I must suspect that thou speakest on this wise from mere envy and jealousy as they relate of the King Sindibad."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased saying her permitted say.

50 Then quoth Dunyazad, "O my sister, how pleasant is thy tale, and how tasteful, how sweet, and how grateful!" She replied, "And where is this compared with what I could tell thee on the coming night if the King deign spare my life?" Then said the King in himself, "By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the rest of her tale, for truly it is wondrous." So they rested that night in mutual embrace until the dawn. Then the King went forth to his Hall of Rule, and the Wazir and the troops came in, and the audience-chamber was thronged; and the King gave orders and judged and appointed and deposed and bade and forbade during the rest of that day till the Court broke up, and King Shahryar returned to his palace.

Now when it was the Fifth Night,

Her sister said, "Do finish for us thy story if thou be not sleepy," and she resumed:—It hath reached me, O auspicious King and mighty Monarch, that King Yunan said to his Minister, "O Wazir, thou art one whom the evil spirit of envy hath possessed because of this physician, and thou plottest for my putting him to death, after which I should repent me full sorely, even as repented King Sindibad for killing his falcon." Quoth the Wazir, "Pardon me, O King of the age, how was that?" So the King began the story of

KING SINDIBAD AND HIS FALCON.

It is said (but Allah is All-knowing![86]) that there was a King of the Kings of Fars, who was fond of pleasuring and diversion, especially coursing and hunting. He had reared a falcon which he carried all night on his fist, and whenever he went a-chasing he took with him this bird; and he bade make for her a golden cup-let hung round her neck to give her drink therefrom. One day as the King was sitting quietly in his palace, behold, the high falconer of the household suddenly addressed him, "O King of the age, this is indeed a day fit for birding." The King gave orders accordingly and set out taking the hawk on fist; and they fared merrily 51 forwards till they made a Wady[87] where they planted a circle of nets for the chase; when lo! a gazelle came within the toils and the King cried, "Whoso alloweth yon gazelle to spring over his

head and loseth her, that man will I surely slay." They narrowed the nets about the gazelle when she drew near the King's station; and, planting herself on her hind quarter, crossed her forehand over her breast, as if about to kiss the earth before the King. He bowed his brow low in acknowledgment to the beast; when she bounded high over his head and took the way of the waste. Thereupon the King turned towards his troops and, seeing them winking and pointing at him, he asked, "O Wazir, what are my men saying?" and the Minister answered, "They say thou didst proclaim that whoso alloweth the gazelle to spring over his head, that man shall be put to death." Quoth the King, "Now, by the life of my head! I will follow her up till I bring her back." So he set off galloping on the gazelle's trail and gave not over tracking till he reached the foot-hills of a mountain-chain where the quarry made for a cave. Then the King cast off at it the falcon which presently caught it up and, swooping down, drove her talons into its eyes, bewildering and blinding it;[88] and the King drew his mace and struck a blow which rolled the game over. He then dismounted; and, after cutting the antelope's throat and flaying the body, hung it to the pommel of his saddle. Now the time was that of the siesta[89] and the wold was parched and dry, nor was any water to be found anywhere; and the King thirsted and his horse also; so he went about searching till he saw a tree dropping water, as it were melted butter, from its boughs. Thereupon the King who wore gauntlets of skin to guard him against poisons took the cup from the hawk's neck, and filling it with the water set it before the bird, and lo! the falcon struck it with her pounces and upset the liquid. The King filled it a second time with the dripping drops, thinking his hawk was thirsty; but the bird again struck at the cup with her talons and overturned it. Then the King 52 waxed wroth with the hawk and filling the cup a third time offered it to his horse: but the hawk upset it with a flirt of wings. Quoth the King, "Allah confound thee, thou unluckiest of flying things! thou keepest me from drinking, and thou deprivest thyself also, and the horse." So he struck the falcon with his sword and cut off her wing; but the bird raised her head and said by signs, "Look at that which hangeth on the tree!" The King lifted up his eyes accordingly and caught sight of a brood of vipers, whose poison-drops he mistook for water; thereupon he repented him of having struck off his falcon's wing, and mounting horse, fared on with the dead gazelle, till he arrived at the camp, his starting place. He threw the quarry to the cook saying, "Take and broil it," and sat down on his chair, the falcon being still on his fist when suddenly the bird gasped and died; whereupon the King cried out in sorrow and remorse for having slain that falcon which had saved his life. Now this is what occurred in the case of King Sindibad; and I am assured that were I to do as thou desirest I should repent even as the man who killed his parrot. Quoth the Wazir, "And how was that?" And the King began to tell

THE TALE OF THE HUSBAND AND THE PARROT.[90]

A certain man and a merchant to boot had married a fair wife, a woman of perfect beauty and grace, symmetry and loveliness, of whom he was mad-jealous, and who contrived successfully to keep him from travel. At last an occasion compelling him to leave her, he went to the bird-market and bought him for one hundred gold pieces a she-parrot which he set in his house to act as duenna, expecting her to acquaint him on his return with what had passed during the whole time of his absence; for the bird was kenning 53 and cunning and never forgot what she had seen and heard. Now his fair wife had fallen in love with a young Turk,[91] who used to visit her, and she feasted him by day and lay with him by night. When the man had made his journey and won his wish he came home; and, at once causing the Parrot be brought to him, questioned her concerning the conduct of his consort whilst he was in foreign parts. Quoth she, "Thy wife hath a man-friend who passed every night with her during thine absence." Thereupon the husband went to his wife in a violent rage and bashed her with a bashing severe enough to satisfy any body. The woman, suspecting that one of the slave-girls had been tattling to the master, called them together and questioned them upon their oaths, when all swore that they had kept the secret, but that the Parrot had not, adding, "And we heard her with our own ears." Upon this the woman bade one of the girls to set a hand-mill under the cage and grind therewith and a second to sprinkle water through the cage-roof and a third to run about, right and left, flashing a mirror of bright steel through the livelong night. Next morning when the husband returned home after being entertained by one of his friends, he bade bring the Parrot before him and asked what had taken place whilst he was away. "Pardon me, O my master," quoth the bird, "I could neither hear nor see aught by reason of the exceeding murk and the thunder and lightning which lasted throughout the night." As it happened to be the summer-tide the master was astounded and cried, "But we are now in mid Tammúz,[92] and this is not the time for rains and storms." "Ay, by Allah," rejoined the bird, "I saw with these eyes what my tongue hath told thee." Upon this the man, not knowing the case nor smoking the plot, waxed exceeding wroth; and, holding that his wife had been wrongously accused, put forth his hand and pulling the Parrot from her cage dashed her upon the ground with such force that he killed her on the spot. Some days afterwards one of his slave-girls confessed to him the whole truth,[93] yet would he not believe it till he saw the 54 young Turk, his wife's lover, coming out of her chamber, when he bared his blade[94] and slew him by a blow on the back of the neck; and he did the same by the adulteress; and thus the twain, laden with mortal sin, went straightways to Eternal Fire. Then the merchant knew that the Parrot had told him the truth anent all she had seen and he mourned grievously for her loss, when mourning availed him not. The Minister, hearing the words of King Yunan, rejoined, "O Monarch, high in dignity, and what harm have I done him, or what evil have I seen from him that I should compass his death? I would not do this thing, save to serve thee, and soon shalt thou sight that it is right; and if thou accept my advice thou shalt

be saved, otherwise thou shalt be destroyed even as a certain Wazir who acted treacherously by the young Prince." Asked the King, "How was that?" and the Minister thus began

THE TALE OF THE PRINCE AND THE OGRESS.

A certain King, who had a son over much given to hunting and coursing, ordered one of his Wazirs to be in attendance upon him whithersoever he might wend. One day the youth set out for the chase accompanied by his father's Minister; and, as they jogged on together, a big wild beast came in sight. Cried the Wazir to the King's son, "Up and at yon noble quarry!" So the Prince followed it until he was lost to every eye and the chase got away from him in the waste; whereby he was confused and he knew not which way to turn, when lo! a damsel appeared ahead and she was in tears. The King's son asked, "Who art thou?" and she answered, "I am daughter to a King among the Kings of Hind, and I was travelling with a caravan in the desert when drowsiness overcame me, and I fell from my beast unwittingly; whereby I am cut off from my people and sore bewildered." The Prince, hearing these words, pitied her case and, mounting her on his horse's crupper, travelled until he passed by an old ruin,[95] when the damsel said to him, "O my master, I wish to obey a call of nature": he therefore set her down at the ruin where she delayed so long that the King's son thought that she was only wasting time; 55 so he followed her without her knowledge and behold, she was a Ghúlah,[96] a wicked Ogress, who was saying to her brood, "O my children, this day I bring you a fine fat youth[97] for dinner;" whereto they answered, "Bring him quick to us, O our mother, that we may browse upon him our bellies full." The Prince hearing their talk, made sure of death and his side-muscles quivered in fear for his life, so he turned away and was about to fly. The Ghulah came out and seeing him in sore affright (for he was trembling in every limb) cried, "Wherefore art thou afraid?" and he replied, "I have hit upon an enemy whom I greatly fear." Asked the Ghulah, "Diddest thou not say:—I am a King's son?" and he answered, "Even so." Then quoth she, "Why dost not give thine enemy something of money and so satisfy him?" Quoth he, "He will not be satisfied with my purse but only with my life, and I mortally fear him and am a man under oppression." She replied, "If thou be so distressed, as thou deemest, ask aid against him from Allah, who will surely protect thee from his ill-doing and from the evil whereof thou art afraid." Then the Prince raised his eyes heavenwards and cried, "O Thou who answerest the necessitous when he calleth upon Thee and dispellest his distress; O my God! grant me victory over my foe and turn him from me, for Thou over all things art Almighty." The Ghulah, hearing his prayer, turned away from him, and the Prince returned to his father, and told him the tale of the Wazir; whereupon the King summoned the Minister to his presence and then and there slew him. "Thou likewise, O King, if thou continue to trust this leach, shalt be

made to die the worst of deaths. He verily thou madest much of and whom thou entreatedest as an intimate, will work thy destruction. Seest thou not how he healed the disease from outside thy body by something grasped in thy hand? Be not assured that he will not destroy thee by something held in like manner!" Replied King Yunan, "Thou hast spoken sooth, O Wazir, it may well be as thou hintest [56] O my well-advising Minister; and belike this Sage hath come as a spy searching to put me to death; for assuredly if he cured me by a something held in my hand, he can kill me by a something given me to smell." Then asked King Yunan, "O Minister, what must be done with him?" and the Wazir answered, "Send after him this very instant and summon him to thy presence; and when he shall come strike him across the neck; and thus shalt thou rid thyself of him and his wickedness, and deceive him ere he can deceive thee." "Thou hast again spoken sooth, O Wazir," said the King and sent one to call the Sage who came in joyful mood for he knew not what had appointed for him the Compassionate; as a certain poet saith by way of illustration:—

O Thou who fearest Fate, confiding fare, ✿ Trust all to Him who built the world, and wait:

What Fate saith "Be" perforce must be, my lord! ✿ And safe art thou from th' undecreed of Fate.

As Duban the physician entered he addressed the King in these lines:—

An fail I of my thanks to thee nor thank thee day by day ✿ For whom composed I prose and verse, for whom my say and lay?

Thou lavishedst thy generous gifts ere they were craved by me ✿ Thou lavishedst thy boons unsought sans pretext or delay

How shall I stint my praise of thee, how shall I cease to laud ✿ The grace of thee in secresy and patentest display?

Nay; I will thank thy benefits, for aye thy favours lie ✿ Light on my thought and tongue, though heavy on my back they weigh.

And he said further on the same theme:—

Turn thee from grief nor care a jot! ✿ Commit thy needs to Fate and Lot!

Enjoy the Present passing well ✿ And let the Past be clean forgot;

For whatso haply seemeth worse ✿ Shall work thy weal as Allah wot:

Allah shall do whate'er He wills ✿ And in His will oppose Him not.

And further still:—

To th' All-wise Subtle One trust worldly things ✿ Rest thee from all whereto the worldling clings:

Learn wisely well naught cometh by thy will ✿ But e'en as willeth Allah, King of Kings.

[57] And lastly:—

Gladsome and gay forget thine every grief ✿ Full often grief the wisest hearts outwore:

Thought is but folly in the feeble slave ✿ Shun it and so be savèd evermore.

Said the King for sole return, "Knowest thou why I have summoned thee?" and the Sage replied, "Allah Most Highest alone kenneth hidden things!" But the King rejoined, "I summoned thee only to take thy life and utterly to destroy thee." Duban

the Wise wondered at this strange address with exceeding wonder and asked, "O King, and wherefore wouldest thou slay me, and what ill have I done thee?" and the King answered, "Men tell me thou art a spy sent hither with intent to slay me; and lo! I will kill thee ere I be killed by thee;" then he called to his Sworder, and said, "Strike me off the head of this traitor and deliver us from his evil practices." Quoth the Sage, "Spare me and Allah will spare thee; slay me not or Allah shall slay thee." And he repeated to him these very words, even as I to thee, O Ifrit, and yet thou wouldst not let me go, being bent upon my death. King Yunan only rejoined, "I shall not be safe without slaying thee; for, as thou healedst me by something held in hand, so am I not secure against thy killing me by something given me to smell or otherwise." Said the physician, "This then, O King, is thy requital and reward; thou returnest only evil for good." The King replied, "There is no help for it; die thou must and without delay." Now when the physician was certified that the King would slay him without waiting, he wept and regretted the good he had done to other than the good. As one hath said on this subject:—

Of wit and wisdom is Maymúnah[98] bare ✿ Whose sire in wisdom all the wits outstrippeth:

Man may not tread on mud or dust or clay ✿ Save by good sense, else trippeth he and slippeth.

Hereupon the Sworder stepped forward and bound the Sage Duban's eyes and bared his blade, saying to the King, "By thy leave;" while the physician wept and cried, "Spare me and Allah 58 will spare thee, and slay me not or Allah shall slay thee," and began repeating:—

I was kind and 'scapèd not, they were cruel and escaped; ✿ And my kindness only led me to Ruination Hall;

If I live I'll ne'er be kind; if I die, then all be damned ✿ Who follow me, and curses their kindliness befal.

"Is this," continued Duban, "the return I meet from thee? Thou givest me, meseems, but crocodile-boon." Quoth the King, "What is the tale of the crocodile?", and quoth the physician, "Impossible for me to tell it in this my state; Allah upon thee, spare me, as thou hopest Allah shall spare thee." And he wept with exceeding weeping. Then one of the King's favourites stood up and said, "O King! grant me the blood of this physician; we have never seen him sin against thee, or doing aught save healing thee from a disease which baffled every leach and man of science." Said the King, "Ye wot not the cause of my putting to death this physician, and this it is. If I spare him, I doom myself to certain death; for one who healed me of such a malady by something held in my hand, surely can slay me by something held to my nose; and I fear lest he kill me for a price, since haply he is some spy whose sole purpose in coming hither was to compass my destruction. So there is no help for it; die he must, and then only shall I be sure of my own life." Again cried Duban, "Spare me and Allah shall spare thee; and slay me not or Allah shall slay thee." But it was in vain. Now when the physician, O Ifrit, knew for certain that the King would kill him, he said, "O King, if there be no help but I must die, grant me some little delay that I may go down to my house and release myself from mine obligations and direct my folk and my

neighbours where to bury me and distribute my books of medicine. Amongst these I have one, the rarest of rarities, which I would present to thee as an offering: keep it as a treasure in thy treasury." "And what is in the book?" asked the King and the Sage answered, "Things beyond compt; and the least of secrets is that if, directly after thou hast cut off my head, thou open three leaves and read three lines of the page to thy left hand, my head shall speak and answer every question thou deignest ask of it." The King wondered with exceeding wonder and shaking[99] 59with delight at the novelty, said, "O physician, dost thou really tell me that when I cut off thy head it will speak to me?" He replied, "Yes, O King!" Quoth the King, "This is indeed a strange matter!" and forthwith sent him closely guarded to his house, and Duban then and there settled all his obligations. Next day he went up to the King's audience hall, where Emirs and Wazirs, Chamberlains and Nabobs, Grandees and Lords of Estate were gathered together, making the presence-chamber gay as a garden of flower-beds. And lo! the physician came up and stood before the King, bearing a worn old volume and a little étui of metal full of powder, like that used for the eyes.[100] Then he sat down and said, "Give me a tray." So they brought him one and he poured the powder upon it and levelled it and lastly spake as follows: "O King, take this book but do not open it till my head falls; then set it upon this tray, and bid press it down upon the powder, when forthright the blood will cease flowing. That is the time to open the book." The King thereupon took the book and made a sign to the Sworder, who arose and struck off the physician's head, and placing it on the middle of the tray, pressed it down upon the powder. The blood stopped flowing, and the Sage Duban unclosed his eyes and said, "Now open the book, O King!" The King opened the book, and found the leaves stuck together; so he put his finger to his mouth and, by moistening it, he easily turned over the first leaf, and in like way the second, and the third, each leaf opening with much trouble; and when he had unstuck six leaves he looked over them and, finding nothing written thereon, said, "O physician, there is no writing here!" Duban replied, "Turn 60over yet more;" and he turned over three others in the same way. Now the book was poisoned; and before long the venom penetrated his system, and he fell into strong convulsions and he cried out, "The poison hath done its work!" Whereupon the Sage Duban's head began to improvise:—

There be rulers who have ruled with a foul tyrannic sway ✿ But they soon became as though they had never, never been:

Just, they had won justice: they oppressed and were opprest ✿ By Fortune, who requited them with ban and bane and teen:

So they faded like the morn, and the tongue of things repeats ✿ "Take this for that, nor vent upon Fortune's ways thy spleen."

No sooner had the head ceased speaking than the King rolled over dead. Now I would have thee know, O Ifrit, that if King Yunan had spared the Sage Duban, Allah would have spared him; but he refused so to do and decreed to do him dead, wherefore Allah slew him; and thou too, O Ifrit, if thou hadst spared me, Allah would have spared

thee.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say: then quoth Dunyazad, "O my sister, how pleasant is thy tale and how tasteful; how sweet, and how grateful!" She replied, "And where is this compared with what I could tell thee this coming night, if I live and the King spare me?" Said the King in himself, "By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the rest of her story, for truly it is wondrous." They rested that night in mutual embrace until dawn: then the King went forth to his Darbar; the Wazirs and troops came in and the audience-hall was crowded; so the King gave orders and judged and appointed and deposed and bade and forbade the rest of that day, when the court broke up, and King Shahryar entered his palace.

Now when it was the Sixth Night,

Her sister, Dunyazad, said to her. "Pray finish for us thy story;" and she answered, "I will if the King give me leave." "Say on," quoth the King. And she continued:—It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Fisherman said to the Ifrit, "If thou hadst spared me I would have spared thee, but nothing would satisfy thee save my death; so now I will do thee die by jailing thee in this jar, and I will hurl thee into this sea." Then the Marid roared aloud and cried, "Allah upon thee, O Fisherman [61] don't! Spare me, and pardon my past doings; and, as I have been tyrannous, so be thou generous, for it is said among sayings that go current:—O thou who doest good to him who hath done thee evil, suffice for the ill-doer his ill-deeds, and do not deal with me as did Umamah to 'Atikah."[101] Asked the Fisherman, "And what was their case?" and the Ifrit answered, "This is not the time for story-telling and I in this prison; but set me free and I will tell thee the tale." Quoth the Fisherman, "Leave this language: there is no help but that thou be thrown back into the sea nor is there any way for thy getting out of it for ever and ever. Vainly I placed myself under thy protection,[102] and I humbled myself to thee with weeping, while thou soughtest only to slay me, who had done thee no injury deserving this at thy hands; nay, so far from injuring thee by any evil act, I worked thee nought but weal in releasing thee from that jail of thine. Now I knew thee to be an evil-doer when thou diddest to me what thou didst, and know, that when I have cast thee back into this sea, I will warn whomsoever may fish thee up of what hath befallen me with thee, and I will advise him to toss thee back again; so shalt thou abide here under these waters till the End of Time shall make an end of thee." But the Ifrit cried aloud, "Set me free; this is a noble occasion for generosity and I make covenant with thee and vow never to do thee hurt and harm; nay, I will help thee to what shall put thee out of want." The Fisherman accepted his promises on both conditions, not to trouble him as before, but on the contrary to do him service; and, after making firm the plight and swearing him a solemn oath by Allah Most Highest he opened the cucurbit. Thereupon the pillar of smoke rose up till all of it was fully out; then it thickened and once more became an Ifrit of hideous presence, who forthright administered a kick to the bottle and sent it

flying into the sea. The Fisherman, seeing how the cucurbit was treated and making sure of his own death, piddled in his clothes and said to himself, "This promiseth badly;" but he fortified his heart, and cried, "O Ifrit, Allah hath said"[103]:—Perform your covenant; for the performance of your covenant shall be 62inquired into hereafter. Thou hast made a vow to me and hast sworn an oath not to play me false lest Allah play thee false, for verily he is a jealous God who respiteth the sinner, but letteth him not escape. I say to thee as said the Sage Duban to King Yunan, "Spare me so Allah may spare thee!" The Ifrit burst into laughter and stalked away, saying to the Fisherman, "Follow me;" and the man paced after him at a safe distance (for he was not assured of escape) till they had passed round the suburbs of the city. Thence they struck into the uncultivated grounds, and crossing them descended into a broad wilderness, and lo! in the midst of it stood a mountain-tarn. The Ifrit waded in to the middle and again cried, "Follow me;" and when this was done he took his stand in the centre and bade the man cast his net and catch his fish. The Fisherman looked into the water and was much astonished to see therein vari-coloured fishes, white and red, blue and yellow; however he cast his net and, hauling it in, saw that he had netted four fishes, one of each colour. Thereat he rejoiced greatly and more when the Ifrit said to him, "Carry these to the Sultan and set them in his presence; then he will give thee what shall make thee a wealthy man; and now accept my excuse, for by Allah at this time I wot none other way of benefiting thee, inasmuch I have lain in this sea eighteen hundred years and have not seen the face of the world save within this hour. But I would not have thee fish here save once a day." The Ifrit then gave him Godspeed, saying, "Allah grant we meet again;"[104] and struck the earth with one foot, whereupon the ground clove asunder and swallowed him up. The Fisherman, much marvelling at what had happened to him with the Ifrit, took the fish and made for the city; and as soon as he reached home he filled an earthen bowl with water and therein threw the fish which began to struggle and wriggle about. Then he bore off the bowl upon his head and, repairing to the King's palace (even as the Ifrit had bidden him) laid the fish before the presence; and the King wondered with exceeding wonder at the sight, for never in his lifetime had he seen fishes like these in quality or in conformation. So he said, "Give those fish to the stranger slave-girl who now cooketh 63for us," meaning the bond-maiden whom the King of Roum had sent to him only three days before, so that he had not yet made trial of her talents in the dressing of meat. Thereupon the Wazir carried the fish to the cook and bade her fry them,[105] saying, "O damsel, the King sendeth this say to thee:—I have not treasured thee, O tear o' me! save for stress-time of me; approve, then, to us this day thy delicate handiwork and thy savoury cooking; for this dish of fish is a present sent to the Sultan and evidently a rarity." The Wazir, after he had carefully charged her, returned to the King, who commanded him to give the Fisherman four hundred dinars: he gave them accordingly, and the man took them to his bosom and ran off home stumbling and falling and rising again and

deeming the whole thing to be a dream. However, he bought for his family all they wanted and lastly he went to his wife in huge joy and gladness. So far concerning him; but as regards the cookmaid, she took the fish and cleansed them and set them in the frying-pan, basting them with oil till one side was dressed. Then she turned them over and, behold, the kitchen wall clave asunder, and therefrom came a young lady, fair of form, oval of face, perfect in grace, with eyelids which Kohl-lines enchase.[106] Her dress was a silken head-kerchief fringed and tasseled with blue: a large ring hung from either ear; a pair of bracelets adorned her wrists; rings with bezels of priceless gems were on her fingers; and she hent in hand a long rod of rattan-cane which she thrust into the frying-pan, saying, "O fish! O fish! be ye constant to your covenant?" When the cook-maiden saw this apparition she swooned away. The young lady repeated her words a second time and a third time, and at last the fishes raised their heads from the pan, and saying in articulate speech "Yes! Yes!" began with one voice to recite:—

Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I! ✿ And if ye fain forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!

64 After this the young lady upset the frying-pan and went forth by the way she came in and the kitchen wall closed upon her. When the cook-maiden recovered from her fainting-fit, she saw the four fishes charred black as charcoal, and crying out, "His staff brake in his first bout,"[107] she again fell swooning to the ground. Whilst she was in this case the Wazir came for the fish, and looking upon her as insensible she lay, not knowing Sunday from Thursday, shoved her with his foot and said, "Bring the fish for the Sultan!" Thereupon recovering from her fainting-fit she wept and informed him of her case and all that had befallen her. The Wazir marvelled greatly and exclaiming, "This is none other than a right strange matter!", he sent after the Fisherman and said to him, "Thou, O Fisherman, must needs fetch us four fishes like those thou broughtest before." Thereupon the man repaired to the tarn and cast his net; and when he landed it, lo! four fishes were therein exactly like the first. These he at once carried to the Wazir, who went in with them to the cook-maiden and said, "Up with thee and fry these in my presence, that I may see this business." The damsel arose and cleansed the fish, and set them in the frying-pan over the fire; however they remained there but a little while ere the wall clave asunder and the young lady appeared, clad as before and holding in hand the wand which she again thrust into the frying-pan, saying, "O fish! O fish! be ye constant to your olden covenant?" And behold, the fish lifted their heads, and repeated "Yes! Yes!" and recited this couplet:

Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I! ✿ But if ye fain forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the fishes spoke, and the young lady upset the frying-pan with her rod, and went forth by the way she came and the wall closed up, the Wazir cried out, "This is a thing not to be hidden from the

King," So he went and told him what had happened, whereupon quoth the King, "There is no help for it but that I see this 65with mine own eyes." Then he sent for the Fisherman and commanded him to bring four other fish like the first and to take with him three men as witnesses. The Fisherman at once brought the fish: and the King, after ordering them to give him four hundred gold pieces, turned to the Wazir and said, "Up and fry me the fishes here before me!" The Minister, replying "To hear is to obey," bade bring the frying-pan, threw therein the cleansed fish and set it over the fire; when lo! the wall clave asunder, and out burst a black slave like a huge rock or a remnant of the tribe Ad[108] bearing in hand a branch of a green tree; and he cried in loud and terrible tones, "O fish! O fish! be ye all constant to your antique covenant?" whereupon the fishes lifted their heads from the frying-pan and said, "Yes! Yes! we be true to our vow;" and they again recited the couplet:

Come back and so will I! Keep faith and so will I! ✿ But if ye fain forsake, I'll requite till quits we cry!

Then the huge blackamoor approached the frying-pan and upset it with the branch and went forth by the way he came in. When he vanished from their sight the King inspected the fish; and, finding them all charred black as charcoal, was utterly bewildered and said to the Wazir, "Verily this is a matter whereanent silence cannot be kept, and as for the fishes, assuredly some marvellous adventure connects with them." So he bade bring the Fisherman and asked him, saying "Fie on thee, fellow! whence come these fishes?" and he answered, "From a tarn between four heights lying behind this mountain which is in sight of thy city." Quoth the King, "How many days' march?" Quoth he, "O our lord the Sultan, a walk of half hour." The King wondered and, straightway ordering his men to march and horsemen to mount, led off the Fisherman who went before as guide, privily damning the Ifrit. They fared on till they had climbed the mountain and descended unto a great desert which they had never seen during all their lives; and the Sultan and his merry men marvelled much at the wold set in the midst of four mountains, and the tarn and its fishes of four colours, red and white, yellow and blue. The King stood fixed to the spot in wonderment and asked his troops and all present, "Hath any one among you ever seen this piece of 66water before now?" and all made answer, "O King of the age, never did we set eyes upon it during all our days." They also questioned the oldest inhabitants they met, men well stricken in years, but they replied, each and every, "A lakelet like this we never saw in this place." Thereupon quoth the King, "By Allah I will neither return to my capital nor sit upon the throne of my forbears till I learn the truth about this tarn and the fish therein." He then ordered his men to dismount and bivouac all around the mountain; which they did; and summoning his Wazir, a Minister of much experience, sagacious, of penetrating wit and well versed in affairs, said to him, "'Tis in my mind to do a certain thing, whereof I will inform thee; my heart telleth me to fare forth alone this night and root out the mystery of this tarn and its fishes. Do thou take thy seat at my tent-door, and say to the Emirs and Wazirs, the Nabobs and the

Chamberlains, in fine to all who ask thee:—The Sultan is ill at ease, and he hath ordered me to refuse all admittance;[109] and be careful thou let none know my design." And the Wazir could not oppose him. Then the King changed his dress and ornaments and, slinging his sword over his shoulder, took a path which led up one of the mountains and marched for the rest of the night till morning dawned; nor did he cease wayfaring till the heat was too much for him. After his long walk he rested for a while, and then resumed his march and fared on through the second night till dawn, when suddenly there appeared a black point in the far distance. Hereat he rejoiced and said to himself, "Haply some one here shall acquaint me with the mystery of the tarn and its fishes." Presently, drawing near the dark object he found it a palace built of swart stone plated with iron; and, while one leaf of the gate stood wide open, the other was shut. The King's spirits rose high as he stood 67 before the gate and rapped a light rap; but hearing no answer he knocked a second knock and a third; yet there came no sign. Then he knocked his loudest but still no answer, so he said, "Doubtless 'tis empty." Thereupon he mustered up resolution, and boldly walked through the main gate into the great hall and there cried out aloud, "Holla, ye people of the palace! I am a stranger and a wayfarer; have you aught here of victual?" He repeated his cry a second time and a third but still there came no reply; so strengthening his heart and making up his mind he stalked through the vestibule into the very middle of the palace and found no man in it. Yet it was furnished with silken stuffs gold-starred; and the hangings were let down over the door-ways. In the midst was a spacious court off which set four open saloons each with its raised daïs, saloon, facing saloon; a canopy shaded the court and in the centre was a jetting fount with four figures of lions made of red gold, spouting from their mouths water clear as pearls and diaphanous gems. Round about the palace birds were let loose and over it stretched a net of golden wire, hindering them from flying off; in brief there was everything but human beings. The King marvelled mightily thereat, yet felt he sad at heart for that he saw no one to give him an account of the waste and its tarn, the fishes, the mountains and the palace itself. Presently as he sat between the doors in deep thought behold, there came a voice of lament, as from a heart grief-spent and he heard the voice chanting these verses:—

I hid what I endured of him[110] and yet it came to light, ✿ And nightly sleep mine eyelids fled and changed to sleepless night:

Oh world! Oh Fate! withhold thy hand and cease thy hurt and harm ✿ Look and behold my hapless sprite in dolour and affright:

Wilt ne'er show ruth to highborn youth who lost him on the way ✿ Of Love, and fell from wealth and fame to lowest basest wight.

Jealous of Zephyr's breath was I as on your form he breathed ✿ But whenas Destiny descends she blindeth human sight,[111]

What shall the hapless archer do who when he fronts his foe ✿ And bends his bow to shoot the shaft shall find his string undight?

When cark and care so heavy bear on youth[112] of generous soul ✿ How shall he 'scape his lot and where from Fate his place of flight?

68 Now when the Sultan heard the mournful voice he sprang to his feet; and, following the sound, found a curtain let down over a chamber-door. He raised it and saw behind it a young man sitting upon a couch about a cubit above the ground; and he fair to the sight, a well shaped wight, with eloquence dight; his forehead was flower-white, his cheek rosy bright, and a mole on his cheek-breadth like an ambergris-mite; even as the poet doth indite:—

A youth slim-waisted from whose locks and brow ✿ The world in blackness and in light is set.

Throughout Creation's round no fairer show ✿ No rarer sight thine eye hath ever met:

A nut-brown mole sits throned upon a cheek ✿ Of rosiest red beneath an eye of jet.[113]

The King rejoiced and saluted him, but he remained sitting in his caftan of silken stuff purfled with Egyptian gold and his crown studded with gems of sorts; but his face was sad with the traces of sorrow. He returned the royal salute in most courteous wise adding, "O my lord, thy dignity demandeth my rising to thee; and my sole excuse is to crave thy pardon."[114] Quoth the King, "Thou art excused, O youth; so look upon me as thy guest come hither on an especial object. I would thou acquaint me with the secrets of this tarn and its fishes and of this palace and thy loneliness therein and the cause of thy groaning and wailing." When the young man heard these words he wept with sore weeping;[115] till his bosom was drenched with tears and began reciting:—

Say him who careless sleeps what while the shaft of Fortune flies ✿ How many doth this shifting world lay low and raise to rise?

Although thine eye be sealed in sleep, sleep not th' Almighty's eyes ✿ And who hath found Time ever fair, or Fate in constant guise?

Then he sighed a long-fetched sigh and recited:—

Confide thy case to Him, the Lord who made mankind; ✿ Quit cark and care and cultivate content of mind;

Ask not the Past or how or why it came to pass: ✿ All human things by Fate and Destiny were designed!

69 The King marvelled and asked him, "What maketh thee weep, O young man?" and he answered, "How should I not weep, when this is my case!" Thereupon he put out his hand and raised the skirt of his garment, when lo! the lower half of him appeared stone down to his feet while from his navel to the hair of his head he was man. The King, seeing this his plight, grieved with sore grief and of his compassion cried, "Alack and well-away! in very sooth, O youth, thou heapest sorrow upon my sorrow. I was minded to ask thee the mystery of the fishes only: whereas now I am concerned to learn thy story as well as theirs. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great.[116] Lose no time, O youth, but tell me forthright thy whole tale." Quoth he, "Lend me thine ears, thy sight and thine insight;" and quoth the King, "All are at thy service!" Thereupon the youth began, "Right wondrous and marvellous is my case and that of these fishes; and were it graven with gravers upon

the eye-corners it were a warner to whoso would be warned." "How is that?" asked the King, and the young man began to tell

THE TALE OF THE ENSORCELLED PRINCE.

Know then, O my lord, that whilome my sire was King of this city, and his name was Mahmúd, entitled Lord of the Black Islands, and owner of what are now these four mountains. He ruled threescore and ten years, after which he went to the mercy of the Lord and I reigned as Sultan in his stead. I took to wife my cousin, the daughter of my paternal uncle,[117] and she loved me with such abounding love that whenever I was absent she ate not 70 and she drank not until she saw me again. She cohabited with me for five years till a certain day when she went forth to the Hammam bath; and I bade the cook hasten to get ready all requisites for our supper. And I entered this palace and lay down on the bed where I was wont to sleep and bade two damsels to fan my face, one sitting by my head and the other at my feet. But I was troubled and made restless by my wife's absence and could not sleep; for although my eyes were closed my mind and thoughts were wide awake. Presently I heard the slave-girl at my head say to her at my feet, "O Mas'údah, how miserable is our master and how wasted in his youth and oh! the pity of his being so betrayed by our mistress, the accursed whore!"[118] The other replied, "Yes indeed: Allah curse all faithless women and adulterous; but the like of our master, with his fair gifts, deserveth something better than this harlot who lieth abroad every night." Then quoth she who sat by my head, "Is our lord dumb or fit only for bubbling that he questioneth her not!" and quoth the other, "Fie on thee! doth our lord know her ways or doth she allow him his choice? Nay, more, doth she not drug every night the cup she giveth him to drink before sleep-time, and put Bhang[119] into it? So he sleepeth 71 and wotteth not whither she goeth, nor what she doeth; but we know that, after giving him the drugged wine, she donneth her richest raiment and perfumeth herself and then she fareth out from him to be away till break of day; then she cometh to him, and burneth a pastile under his nose and he awaketh from his deathlike sleep." When I heard the slave-girls' words, the light became black before my sight and I thought night would never fall. Presently the daughter of my uncle came from the baths; and they set the table for us and we ate and sat together a fair half-hour quaffing our wine as was ever our wont. Then she called for the particular wine I used to drink before sleeping and reached me the cup; but, seeming to drink it according to my wont, I poured the contents into my bosom; and, lying down, let her hear that I was asleep. Then, behold, she cried, "Sleep out the night, and never wake again: by Allah, I loathe thee and I loathe thy whole body, and my soul turneth in disgust from cohabiting with thee; and I see not the moment when

Allah shall snatch away thy life!" Then she rose and donned her fairest dress and perfumed her person and slung my sword over her shoulder; and, opening the gates of the palace, went her ill way. I rose and followed her as she left the palace and she threaded the streets until she came to the city gate, where she spoke words I understood not, and the padlocks dropped of themselves as if broken and the gate-leaves opened. She went forth (and I after her without her noticing aught) till she came at last to the outlying mounds[120] and a reed fence built about a round-roofed hut of mud-bricks. As she entered the door, I climbed upon the roof which commanded a view of the interior. And lo! my fair cousin had gone in to a hideous negro slave with his upper lip like the cover of a pot, and his lower like an open pot; lips which might sweep up sand from the gravel-floor of the cot. He was to boot a leper and a paralytic, lying upon a strew of sugar-cane trash and wrapped, in an old blanket and the foulest rags and tatters. She kissed the earth before him, and he raised his head so as to see her and said, "Woe to thee! what call hadst thou to stay away all this time? Here have been with me sundry of the black brethren, who drank their wine and each had his young lady, and I was not content to drink because of thine absence." Then she, "O my lord, my heart's love and coolth of 72 my eyes,[121] knowest thou not that I am married to my cousin whose very look I loathe, and hate myself when in his company? And did not I fear for thy sake, I would not let a single sun arise before making his city a ruined heap wherein raven should croak and howlet hoot, and jackal and wolf harbour and loot; nay I had removed its very stones to the back side of Mount Káf."[122] Rejoined the slave, "Thou liest, damn thee! Now I swear an oath by the valour and honour of blackamoor men (and deem not our manliness to be the poor manliness of white men), from to-day forth if thou stay away till this hour, I will not keep company with thee nor will I glue my body with thy body and strum and belly-bump. Dost play fast and loose with us, thou cracked pot, that we may satisfy thy dirty lusts? stinkard! bitch! vilest of the vile whites!" When I heard his words, and saw with my own eyes what passed between these two wretches, the world waxed dark before my face and my soul knew not in what place it was. But my wife humbly stood up weeping before and wheedling the slave, and saying, "O my beloved, and very fruit of my heart, there is none left to cheer me but thy dear self; and, if thou cast me off who shall take me in, O my beloved, O light of my eyes?" And she ceased not weeping and abasing herself to him until he deigned be reconciled with her. Then was she right glad and stood up and doffed her clothes, even to her petticoat-trousers, and said, "O my master what hast thou here for thy handmaiden to eat?" "Uncover the basin," he grumbled, "and thou shalt find at the bottom the broiled bones of some rats we dined on; pick at them, and then go to that slop-pot where thou shalt find some leavings of beer[123] which thou mayest drink." So she ate and drank 73 and washed her hands, and went and lay down by the side of the slave, upon the cane-trash and, stripping herself stark naked, she crept in with him under his foul coverlet and his

rags and tatters. When I saw my wife, my cousin, the daughter of my uncle, do this deed[1124] "I clean lost my wits, and climbing down from the roof, I entered and took the sword which she had with her and drew it, determined to cut down the twain. I first struck at the slave's neck and thought that the death decree had fallen on him:"—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young ensorcelled Prince said to the King, "When I smote the slave with intent to strike off his head, I thought that I had slain him; for he groaned a loud hissing groan, but I had cut only the skin and flesh of the gullet and the two arteries! It awoke the daughter of my uncle, so I sheathed the sword and fared forth for the city; and, entering the palace, lay upon my bed and slept till 74 morning when my wife aroused me and I saw that she had cut off her hair and had donned mourning garments. Quoth she:—O son of my uncle, blame me not for what I do; it hath just reached me that my mother is dead, and my father hath been killed in holy war, and of my brothers one hath lost his life by a snake-sting and the other by falling down some precipice; and I can and should do naught save weep and lament. When I heard her words I refrained from all reproach and said only:—Do as thou list; I certainly will not thwart thee. She continued sorrowing, weeping and wailing one whole year from the beginning of its circle to the end, and when it was finished she said to me:—I wish to build me in thy palace a tomb with a cupola, which I will set apart for my mourning and will name the House of Lamentations."[125] Quoth I again:—Do as thou list! Then she builded for herself a cenotaph wherein to mourn, and set on its centre a dome under which showed a tomb like a Santon's sepulchre. Thither she carried the slave and lodged him; but he was exceeding weak by reason of his wound, and unable to do her love-service; he could only drink wine and from the day of his hurt he spake not a word, yet he lived on because his appointed hour[126] was not come. Every day, morning and evening, my wife went to him and wept and wailed over him and gave him wine and strong soups, and left not off doing after this manner a second year; and I bore with her patiently and paid no heed to her. One day, however, I went in to her unawares; and I found her weeping and beating her face and crying:—Why art thou absent from my sight, O my heart's delight? Speak to me, O my life; talk with me, O my love? Then she recited these verses:—

For your love my patience fails and albeit you forget ✿ I may not; nor to other love my heart can make reply:

75 Bear my body, bear my soul wheresoever you may fare ✿ And where you pitch the camp let my body buried lie:

Cry my name above my grave, and an answer shall return ✿ The moaning of my bones responsive to your cry.[127]

Then she recited, weeping bitterly the while:—

The day of my delight is the day when draw you near ✿ And the day of mine affright is the day you turn away:

Though I tremble through the night in my bitter dread of death ✿ When I hold you in my arms I am free from all affray.

Once more she began reciting:—

Though a-morn I may awake with all happiness in hand ✿ Though the world all be mine and like Kisra-kings[128] I reign;

To me they had the worth of the winglet of the gnat ✿ When I fail to see thy form, when I look for thee in vain.

When she had ended for a time her words and her weeping I said to her:—O my cousin, let this thy mourning suffice, for in pouring forth tears there is little profit! Thwart me not, answered she, in aught I do, or I will lay violent hands on myself! So I held my peace and left her to go her own way; and she ceased not to 76 cry and keen and indulge her affliction for yet another year. At the end of the third year I waxed aweary of this longsome mourning, and one day I happened to enter the cenotaph when vexed and angry with some matter which had thwarted me, and suddenly I heard her say:—O my lord, I never hear thee vouchsafe a single word to me! Why dost thou not answer me, O my master? and she began reciting:—

O thou tomb! O thou tomb! be his beauty set in shade ✿ Hast thou darkened that countenance all-sheeny as the noon?

O thou tomb! neither earth nor yet heaven art to me ✿ Then how cometh it in thee are conjoined my sun and moon?

When I heard such verses as these rage was heaped upon my rage; I cried out:—Well-away! how long is this sorrow to last? and I began repeating:—

O thou tomb! O thou tomb! be his horrors set in blight? ✿ Hast thou darkenèd his countenance that sickeneth the soul?

O thou tomb! neither cess-pool nor pipkin art to me ✿ Then how cometh it in thee are conjoinèd soil and coal?

When she heard my words she sprang to her feet crying:—Fie upon thee, thou cur! all this is of thy doings; thou hast wounded my heart's darling and thereby worked me sore woe and thou hast wasted his youth so that these three years he hath lain abed more dead than alive! In my wrath I cried:—O thou foulest of harlots and filthiest of whores ever futtered by negro slaves who are hired to have at thee![129] Yes indeed it was I who did this good deed; and snatching up my sword I drew it and made at her to cut her down. But she laughed my words and mine intent to scorn crying: To heel, hound that thou art! Alas[130] for the past which shall no more come to pass nor shall any one avail the dead to raise. Allah hath indeed now given into my hand him who did to me this thing, a deed that hath burned my heart with a fire which died not and a flame which might not be quenched! Then she stood up; and, pronouncing some words to me unintelligible, she said:—By virtue of my egromancy become thou half stone and half man; 77 whereupon I became what thou seest, unable to rise or to sit, and neither dead nor alive. Moreover she ensorcelled the city with all its streets and garths, and she turned by her gramarye the four islands into four mountains around the tarn whereof thou questionest me; and the citizens, who were of four different faiths, Moslem, Nazarene, Jew and Magian, she transformed by her enchantments into fishes; the Moslems are the white, the Magians red, the Christians blue and the Jews yellow.[131] "And every day she tortureth me and scourgeth me with an hundred stripes, each of which draweth floods of blood and cutteth the skin of my shoulders to strips; and lastly she clotheth my upper half with a hair-cloth and then throweth over them these robes." Hereupon the young man again shed tears and began reciting:—

In patience, O my God, I endure my lot and fate; ✿ I will bear at will of Thee whatsoever be my state:

They oppress me; they torture me; they make my life a woe ✿ Yet haply Heaven's happiness shall compensate my strait:

Yea, straitened is my life by the bane and hate o' foes ✿ But Mustapha and Murtazá[132] shall ope me Heaven's gate.

After this the Sultan turned towards the young Prince and said, "O youth, thou hast removed one grief only to add another grief; but now, O my friend, where is she; and where is the mausoleum wherein lieth the wounded slave?" "The slave lieth under yon dome," quoth the young man, "and she sitteth in the chamber fronting yonder door. And every day at sunrise she cometh forth, and first strippeth me, and whippeth me with an hundred strokes of the leathern scourge, and I weep and shriek; but there is no 78 power of motion in my lower limbs to keep her off me. After ending her tormenting me she visiteth the slave, bringing him wine and boiled meats. And to-morrow at an early hour she will be here." Quoth the King, "By Allah, O youth, I will assuredly do thee a good deed which the world shall not willingly let die, and an act of derring-do which shall be chronicled long after I am dead and gone by." Then the King sat him by the side of the young Prince and talked till nightfall, when he lay down and slept; but, as soon as the false dawn[133] showed, he arose and doffing his outer garments[134] bared his blade and hastened to the place wherein lay the slave. Then was he ware of lighted candles and lamps, and the perfume of incenses and unguents; and, directed by these, he made for the slave and struck him one stroke killing him on the spot: after which he lifted him on his back and threw him into a well that was in the palace. Presently he returned and, donning the slave's gear, lay down at length within the mausoleum with the drawn sword laid close to and along his side. After an hour or so the accursed witch came; and, first going to her husband, she stripped off his clothes and, taking a whip, flogged him cruelly while he cried out, "Ah! enough for me the case I am in! take pity on me, O my cousin!" But she replied, "Didst thou take pity on me and spare the life of my true love on whom I doated?" Then she drew the cilice over his raw and bleeding skin and threw the robe upon all and went down to the slave with a goblet of wine and a bowl of meat-broth in her hands. She entered under the dome weeping and wailing, "Well-away!" and crying, "O my lord! speak a word to me! O my master! talk awhile with me!" and began to recite these couplets:—

How long this harshness, this unlove, shall bide? ✿ Suffice thee not tear-floods thou hast espied?

Thou dost prolong our parting purposely ✿ And if wouldst please my foe, thou'rt satisfied!

Then she wept again and said, "O my lord! speak to me, talk with me!" The King lowered his voice and, twisting his tongue, spoke 79 after the fashion of the blackamoors and said "'lack! 'lack! there be no Ma'esty and there be no Might save in Allauh, the Gloriose, the Greät!" Now when she heard these words she shouted for joy, and fell to the ground fainting; and when her senses returned she asked, "O my

lord, can it be true that thou hast power of speech?" and the King making his voice small and faint answered, "O my cuss! dost thou deserve that I talk to thee and speak with thee?" "Why and wherefore?" rejoined she; and he replied "The why is that all the livelong day thou tormentest thy hubby; and he keeps calling on 'eaven for aid until sleep is strange to me even from evenin' till mawnin', and he prays and damns, cussing us two, me and thee, causing me disquiet and much bother: were this not so, I should long ago have got my health; and it is this which prevents my answering thee." Quoth she, "With thy leave I will release him from what spell is on him;" and quoth the King, "Release him and let's have some rest!" She cried, "To hear is to obey;" and, going from the cenotaph to the palace, she took a metal bowl and filled it with water and spake over it certain words which made the contents bubble and boil as a cauldron seetheth over the fire. With this she sprinkled her husband saying, "By virtue of the dread words I have spoken, if thou becamest thus by my spells, come forth out of that form into thine own former form." And lo and behold! the young man shook and trembled; then he rose to his feet and, rejoicing at his deliverance, cried aloud, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God, and in very truth Mohammed is His Apostle, whom Allah bless and keep!" Then she said to him, "Go forth and return not hither, for if thou do I will surely slay thee;" screaming these words in his face. So he went from between her hands; and she returned to the dome and, going down to the sepulchre, she said, "O my lord, come forth to me that I may look upon thee and thy goodliness!" The King replied in faint low words, "What[135] thing hast thou done? Thou hast rid me of the branch but not of the root." She asked, "O my darling! O my negroling! what is the root?" And he answered, "Fie on thee, O my cuss! The people of this city and of the four islands every night when it's half passed lift their heads from the tank in which thou hast turned them to fishes and cry to Heaven and call down its anger on me and thee; and this is the reason 80 why my body's baulked from health. Go at once and set them free; then come to me and take my hand, and raise me up, for a little strength is already back in me." When she heard the King's words (and she still supposed him to be the slave) she cried joyously, "O my master, on my head and on my eyes be thy command, Bismillah[136]!" So she sprang to her feet and, full of joy and gladness, ran down to the tarn and look a little of its water In the palm of her hand—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the young woman, the sorceress, took in hand some of the tarn-water and spake over it words not to be understood, the fishes lifted their heads and stood up on the instant like men, the spell on the people of the city having been removed. What was the lake again became a crowded capital; the bazars were thronged with folk who bought and sold; each citizen was occupied with his own calling and the four hills became islands as they were whilome. Then the young woman, that wicked sorceress, returned to the King

and (still thinking he was the negro) said to him, "O my love! stretch forth thy honoured hand that I may assist thee to rise." "Nearer to me," quoth the King in a faint and feigned tone. She came close as to embrace him when he took up the sword lying hid by his side and smote her across the breast, so that the point showed gleaming behind her back. Then he smote her a second time and cut her in twain and cast her to the ground in two halves. After which he fared forth and found the young man, now freed from the spell, awaiting him and gave him joy of his happy release while the Prince kissed his hand with abundant thanks. Quoth the King, "Wilt thou abide in this city or go with me to my capital?" Quoth the youth, "O King of the age, wottest thou not what journey is between thee and thy city?" "Two days and a half," answered he; whereupon said the other, "An thou be sleeping, O King, awake! Between thee and thy city is a year's march for a well-girt walker, and thou haddest not come hither in two days and a half save that the city was under enchantment. And I, O King, will never part from thee; no, not 81 even for the twinkling of an eye." The King rejoiced at his words and said, "Thanks be to Allah who hath bestowed thee upon me! From this hour thou art my son and my only son, for that in all my life I have never been blessed with issue." Thereupon they embraced and joyed with exceeding great joy; and, reaching the palace, the Prince who had been spell-bound informed his lords and his grandees that he was about to visit the Holy Places as a pilgrim, and bade them get ready all things necessary for the occasion. The preparations lasted ten days, after which he set out with the Sultan, whose heart burned in yearning for his city whence he had been absent a whole twelvemonth. They journeyed with an escort of Mamelukes[137] carrying all manners of precious gifts and rarities, nor stinted they wayfaring day and night for a full year until they approached the Sultan's capital, and sent on messengers to announce their coming. Then the Wazir and the whole army came out to meet him in joy and gladness, for they had given up all hope of ever seeing their King; and the troops kissed the ground before him and wished him joy of his safety. He entered and took seat upon his throne and the Minister came before him and, when acquainted with all that had befallen the young Prince, he congratulated him on his narrow escape. When order was restored throughout the land the King gave largesse to many of his people, and said to the Wazir, "Hither the Fisherman who brought us the fishes!" So he sent for the man who had been the first cause of the city and the citizens being delivered from enchantment and, when he came into the presence, the Sultan bestowed upon him a dress of honour, and questioned him of his condition and whether he had children. The Fisherman gave him to know that he had two daughters and a son, so the King sent for them and, taking one daughter to wife, gave the other to the young Prince and made the son his head-treasurer. Furthermore he invested his Wazir with the Sultanate 82 of the City in the Black Islands whilome belonging to the young Prince, and dispatched with him the escort of fifty armed slaves together with dresses of honour for all the Emirs and Grandees. The Wazir

kissed hands and fared forth on his way; while the Sultan and the Prince abode at home in all the solace and the delight of life; and the Fisherman became the richest man of his age, and his daughters wived with the Kings, until death came to them. And yet, O King! this is not more wondrous than the story of

3- THE PORTER AND THE THREE LADIES OF BAGHDAD.

Once upon a time there was a Porter in Baghdad, who was a bachelor and who would remain unmarried. It came to pass on a certain day, as he stood about the street leaning idly upon his crate, behold, there stood before him an honourable woman in a mantilla of Mosul[138] silk, broidered with gold and bordered with brocade; her walking-shoes were also purfled with gold and her hair floated in long plaits. She raised her face-veil[139] and, showing two black eyes fringed with jetty lashes, whose glances were soft and languishing and whose perfect beauty was ever blandishing, she accosted the Porter and said in the suavest tones and choicest language, "Take up thy crate and follow me." The Porter was so dazzled he could hardly believe that he heard her aright, but he shouldered his basket in hot haste saying in himself, "O day of good luck! O day of Allah's grace!" and walked after her till she stopped at the door of a house. There she rapped, and presently came out to her an old man, a Nazarene, to whom she gave a gold piece, receiving from him in return what she required of strained wine clear as olive oil; and she set it safely in the hamper, saying, "Lift and follow." Quoth the Porter, "This, by Allah, is indeed an auspicious day, a day propitious for the granting of all a man wisheth." He again hoisted up the crate and followed her; till she 83 stopped at a fruiterer's shop and bought from him Shámi[140] apples and Osmáni quinces and Omani[141] peaches, and cucumbers of Nile growth, and Egyptian limes and Sultáni oranges and citrons; besides Aleppine jasmine, scented myrtle berries, Damascene nenuphars, flower of privet[142] and camomile, blood-red anemones, violets, and pomegranate-bloom, eglantine and narcissus, and set the whole in the Porter's crate, saying, "Up with it." So he lifted and followed her till she stopped at a butcher's booth and said, "Cut me off ten pounds of mutton." She paid him his price and he wrapped it in a banana-leaf, whereupon she laid it in the crate and said "Hoist, O Porter." He hoisted accordingly, and followed her as she walked on till she stopped at a grocer's, where she bought dry fruits and pistachio-kernels, Tihámah raisins, shelled almonds and all wanted for dessert, and said to the Porter, "Lift and follow me." So he up with his hamper and after her till she stayed at the confectioner's, and she bought an earthen platter, and piled it with all kinds of sweetmeats in his shop, open-worked tarts and fritters scented with musk and "soap-cakes," and lemon-loaves and melon-preserves,[143] and "Zaynab's combs," and

"ladies' fingers," and "Kazi's tit-bits" and goodies of every description; and placed the platter in the Porter's 84 crate. Thereupon quoth he (being a merry man), "Thou shouldest have told me, and I would have brought with me a pony or a she-camel to carry all this market-stuff." She smiled and gave him a little cuff on the nape saying, "Step out and exceed not in words for (Allah willing!) thy wage will not be wanting." Then she stopped at a perfumer's and took from him ten sorts of waters, rose scented with musk, orange-flower, water-lily, willow flower, violet and five others; and she also bought two loaves of sugar, a bottle for perfume-spraying, a lump of male incense, aloe-wood, ambergris and musk, with candles of Alexandria wax; and she put the whole into the basket, saying, "Up with thy crate and after me." He did so and followed until she stood before the greengrocer's, of whom she bought pickled safflower and olives, in brine and in oil; with tarragon and cream-cheese and hard Syrian cheese; and she stowed them away in the crate saying to the Porter, "Take up thy basket and follow me." He did so and went after her till she came to a fair mansion fronted by a spacious court, a tall, fine place to which columns gave strength and grace: and the gate thereof had two leaves of ebony inlaid with plates of red gold. The lady stopped at the door and, turning her face-veil sideways, knocked softly with her knuckles whilst the Porter stood behind her, thinking of naught save her beauty and loveliness. Presently the door swung back and both leaves were opened, whereupon he looked to see who had opened it; and behold, it was a lady of tall figure, some five feet high; a model of beauty and loveliness, brilliance and symmetry and perfect grace. Her forehead was flower-white; her cheeks like the anemone ruddy bright; her eyes were those of the wild heifer or the gazelle, with eyebrows like the crescent-moon which ends Sha'abán and begins Ramazán;[144] her mouth was the ring of Sulayman,[145] her lips coral-red, and her teeth like a line of strung pearls or of camomile petals. Her throat recalled the antelope's, and her breasts, like two pomegranates of even size, stood at bay as it were;[146] her body rose and fell in waves below her dress like the rolls of a piece of brocade, and her navel[147] would hold an 85 ounce of benzoin ointment. In fine she was like her of whom the poet said:—

On Sun and Moon of palace cast thy sight ✿ Enjoy her flower-like face, her fragrant light:

Thine eyes shall never see in hair so black ✿ Beauty encase a brow so purely white:

The ruddy rosy cheek proclaims her claim ✿ Though fail her name whose beauties we indite:

As sways her gait I smile at hips so big ✿ And weep to see the waist they bear so slight.

When the Porter looked upon her his wits were waylaid, and his senses were stormed so that his crate went nigh to fall from his head, and he said to himself, "Never have I in my life seen a day more blessed than this day!" Then quoth the lady-portress to the lady-cateress, "Come in from the gate and relieve this poor man of his load." So the provisioner went in followed by the portress and the Porter and went on till they reached a spacious ground-floor hall,[148] built with admirable skill and beautified with all manner colours and carvings; with upper balconies and groined arches and

galleries and cupboards and recesses whose curtains hung before them. In the midst stood a great basin full of water surrounding a fine fountain, and at the upper end on the raised dais was a couch of juniper-wood set with gems and pearls, with a canopy like mosquito-curtains of red satin-silk looped up with pearls as big as filberts and bigger. Thereupon sat a lady bright of blee, with brow beaming brilliancy, the dream of philosophy, whose eyes were fraught with Babel's gramarye[149] and her eyebrows were arched as for archery; her breath breathed ambergris and perfumery and her lips were sugar to taste and carnelian to see. Her stature was straight as the letter Alif[150] and her face shamed the noon-sun's radiancy; 86 and she was even as a galaxy, or a dome with golden marquetry or a bride displayed in choicest finery or a noble maid of Araby.[151] Right well of her sang the bard when he said:—

Her smiles twin rows of pearls display ✿ Chamomile-buds or rimey spray

Her tresses stray as night let down ✿ And shames her light the dawn o' day.

[152] The third lady rising from the couch stepped forward with graceful swaying gait till she reached the middle of the saloon, when she said to her sisters, "Why stand ye here? take it down from this poor man's head!" Then the cateress went and stood before him, and the portress behind him while the third helped them, and they lifted the load from the Porter's head; and, emptying it of all that was therein, set everything in its place. Lastly they gave him two gold pieces, saying, "Wend thy ways, O Porter." But he went not, for he stood looking at the ladies and admiring what uncommon beauty was theirs, and their pleasant manners and kindly dispositions (never had he seen goodlier); and he gazed wistfully at that good store of wines and sweet-scented flowers and fruits and other matters. Also he marvelled with exceeding marvel, especially to see no man in the place and delayed his going; whereupon quoth the eldest lady, "What aileth thee that goest not; haply thy wage be too little?" And, turning to her sister the cateress, she said, "Give him another dinar!" But the Porter answered, "By Allah, my lady, it is not for the wage; my hire is never more than two dirhams; but in very sooth my heart and my soul are taken up with you and your condition. I wonder to see you single with ne'er a man about you and not a soul to bear you company; and well you wot that the minaret toppleth o'er unless it stand upon four, and you want this same fourth; and women's pleasure without man is short of measure, even as the poet said:—

Seest not we want for joy four things all told ✿ The harp and lute, the flute and flageolet;

And be they companied with scents four-fold ✿ Rose, myrtle, anemone and violet;

Nor please all eight an four thou wouldst withhold ✿ Good wine and youth and gold and pretty pet.

87 You be three and want a fourth who shall be a person of good sense and prudence; smart witted, and one apt to keep careful counsel." His words pleased and amused them much; and they laughed at him and said, "And who is to assure us of that? We are maidens and we fear to entrust our secret where it may not be kept, for we have read in a certain chronicle the lines of one Ibn al-Sumam:—

Hold fast thy secret and to none unfold ✿ Lost is a secret when that secret's told:

An fail thy breast thy secret to conceal ✿ How canst thou hope another's breast shall hold?

And Abu Nowás[153] said well on the same subject:—

Who trusteth secret to another's hand ✿ Upon his brow deserveth burn of brand!"

When the Porter heard their words he rejoined, "By your lives! I am a man of sense and a discreet, who hath read books and perused chronicles; I reveal the fair and conceal the foul and I act as the poet adviseth:—

None but the good a secret keep ✿ And good men keep it unrevealed:

It is to me a well-shut house ✿ With keyless locks and door ensealed."[154]

When the maidens heard his verse and its poetical application addressed to them they said, "Thou knowest that we have laid out all our monies on this place. Now say, hast thou aught to offer us in return for entertainment? For surely we will not suffer thee to sit in our company and be our cup-companion, and gaze upon our faces so fair and so rare without paying a round sum.[155] Wottest thou not the saying:—

Sans hope of gain

Love's not worth a grain?"

Whereto the lady-portress added, "If thou bring anything thou art a something; if no thing, be off with thee, thou art a nothing;" but the procuratrix interposed, saying, "Nay, O my sisters, leave 88 teasing him, for by Allah he hath not failed us this day, and had he been other he never had kept patience with me, so whatever be his shot and scot I will take it upon myself." The Porter, overjoyed, kissed the ground before her and thanked her saying, "By Allah, these monies are the first fruits this day hath given me." Hearing this they said, "Sit thee down and welcome to thee," and the eldest lady added, "By Allah, we may not suffer thee to join us save on one condition, and this it is, that no questions be asked as to what concerneth thee not, and frowardness shall be soundly flogged." Answered the Porter, "I agree to this, O my lady, on my head and my eyes be it! Lookye, I am dumb, I have no tongue." Then arose the provisioneress and tightening her girdle set the table by the fountain and put the flowers and sweet herbs in their jars, and strained the wine and ranged the flasks in row and made ready every requisite. Then sat she down, she and her sisters, placing amidst them the Porter who kept deeming himself in a dream; and she took up the wine flagon, and poured out the first cup and drank it off, and likewise a second and a third.[156] After this she filled a fourth cup which she handed to one of her sisters; and, lastly, she crowned a goblet and passed it to the Porter, saying:—

Drink the dear draught, drink free and fain ✿ What healeth every grief and pain.

He took the cup in his hand and, louting low, returned his best thanks and improvised:—

Drain not the bowl save with a trusty friend ✿ A man of worth whose good old blood all know:

For wine, like wind, sucks sweetness from the sweet ✿ And stinks when over stench it haply blow:

Adding:—

Drain not the bowl, save from dear hand like thine ✿ The cup recalls thy gifts; thou, gifts of wine.

89 After repeating this couplet he kissed their hands and drank and was drunk and sat swaying from side to side and pursued:—

All drinks wherein is blood the Law unclean ✿ Doth hold save one, the bloodshed of the vine:

Fill! fill! take all my wealth bequeathed or won ✿ Thou fawn! a willing ransom for those eyne.

Then the cateress crowned a cup and gave it to the portress, who took it from her hand and thanked her and drank. Thereupon she poured again and passed to the eldest lady who sat on the couch, and filled yet another and handed it to the Porter. He kissed the ground before them; and, after drinking and thanking them, he again began to recite:—

Here! Here! by Allah, here! ✿ Cups of the sweet, the dear!

Fill me a brimming bowl ✿ The Fount o' Life I speer

Then the Porter stood up before the mistress of the house and said, "O lady, I am thy slave, thy Mameluke, thy white thrall, thy very bondsman;" and he began reciting:—

A slave of slaves there standeth at thy door ✿ Lauding thy generous boons and gifts galore:

Beauty! may he come in awhile to 'joy ✿ Thy charms? for Love and I part nevermore!

She said to him, "Drink; and health and happiness attend thy drink." So he took the cup and kissed her hand and recited these lines in sing-song:—

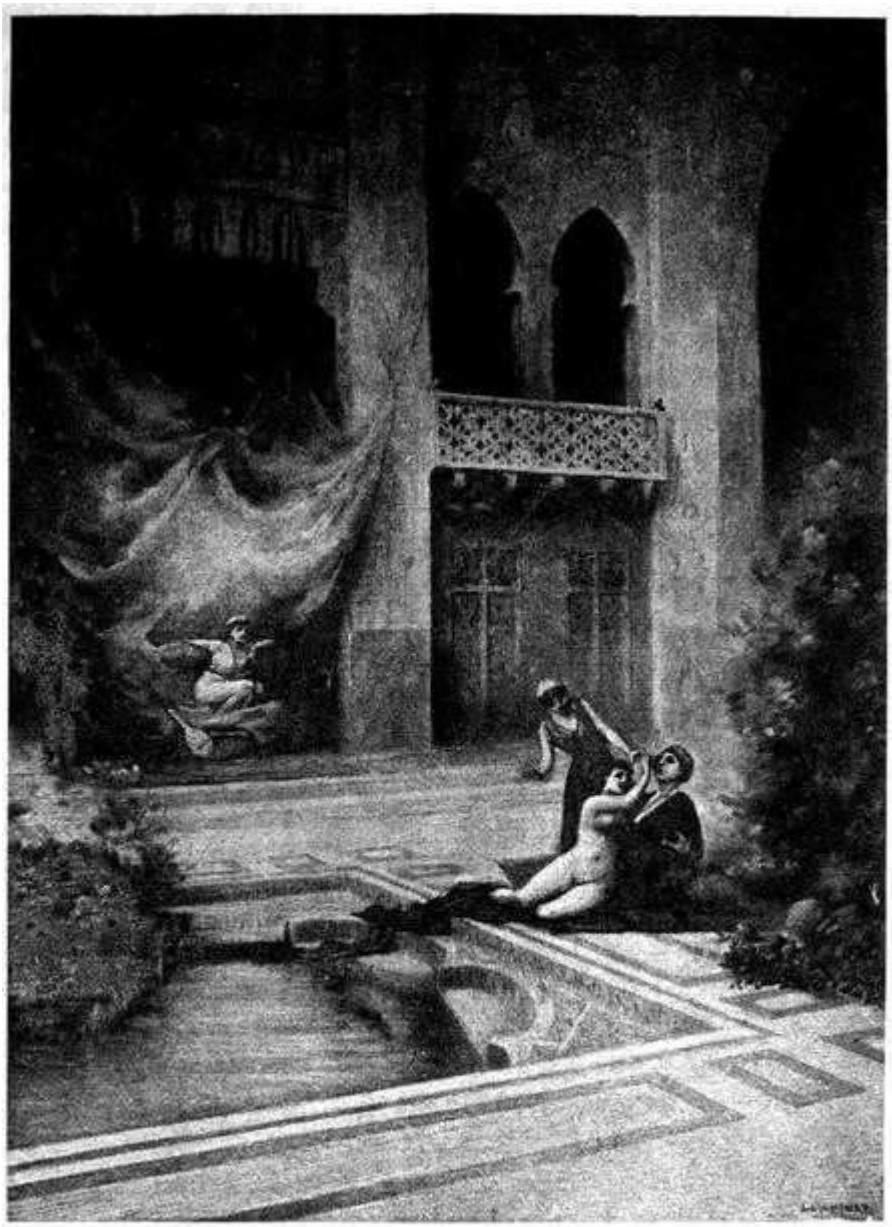
I gave her brave old wine that like her cheeks ✿ Blushed red or flame from furnace flaring up:

She bussed the brim and said with many a smile ✿ How durst thou deal folk's cheek for folk to sup?

"Drink!" (said I) "these are tears of mine whose tinct ✿ Is heart-blood sighs have boilèd in the cup."

She answered him in the following couplet:—

"An tears of blood for me, friend, thou hast shed ✿ Suffer me sup them, by thy head and eyes!"



Then the lady took the cup, and drank it off to her sisters' health, 90 and they ceased not drinking (the Porter being in the midst of them), and dancing and laughing and reciting verses and singing ballads and ritornellos. All this time the Porter was carrying on with them, kissing, toying, biting, handling, groping, fingering; whilst one thrust a dainty morsel in his mouth, and another slapped him; and this cuffed his cheeks, and that threw sweet flowers at him; and he was in the very paradise of pleasure, as though he were sitting in the seventh sphere among the Houris[157] of

Heaven. They ceased not doing after this fashion until the wine played tricks in their heads and worsted their wits; and, when the drink got the better of them, the portress stood up and doffed her clothes till she was mother-naked. However, she let down her hair about her body by way of shift, and throwing herself into the basin disported herself and dived like a duck and swam up and down, and took water in her mouth, and spurted it all over the Porter, and washed her limbs, and between her breasts, and inside her thighs and all around her navel. Then she came up out of the cistern and throwing herself on the Porter's lap said, "O my lord, O my love, what callest thou this article?" pointing to her slit, her solution of continuity. "I call that thy cleft," quoth the Porter, and she rejoined, "Wah! wah! art thou not ashamed to use such a word?" and she caught him by the collar and soundly cuffed him. Said he again, "Thy womb, thy vulva;" and she struck him a second slap crying, "O fie, O fie, this is another ugly word; is there no shame in thee?" Quoth he, "Thy coynte;" and she cried, "O thou! art wholly destitute of modesty?" and thumped him and bashed him. Then cried the Porter, "Thy clitoris,"[158] whereat the eldest lady came down upon him with a yet sorer beating, and said, "No;" and he said, "'Tis so," and the Porter went on calling the same commodity by sundry other names, but whatever he said they beat him more and more till his neck ached and swelled with the blows he had gotten; and on this wise they made him a butt and a laughing-stock. At last he turned upon them asking, "And what do you women call this article?" Whereto 91 the damsel made answer, "The basil of the bridges."[159] Cried the Porter, "Thank Allah for my safety: aid me and be thou propitious, O basil of the bridges!" They passed round the cup and tossed off the bowl again, when the second lady stood up; and, stripping off all her clothes, cast herself into the cistern and did as the first had done; then she came out of the water and throwing her naked form on the Porter's lap pointed to her machine and said, "O light of mine eyes, do tell me what is the name of this concern?" He replied as before, "Thy slit;" and she rejoined, "Hath such term no shame for thee?" and cuffed him and buffeted him till the saloon rang with the blows. Then quoth she, "O fie! O fie! how canst thou say this without blushing?" He suggested, "The basil of the bridges;" but she would not have it and she said, "No! no!" and struck him and slapped him on the back of the neck. Then he began calling out all the names he knew, "Thy slit, thy womb, thy coynte, thy clitoris;" and the girls kept on saying, "No! no!" So he said, "I stick to the basil of the bridges;" and all the three laughed till they fell on their backs and laid slaps on his neck and said, "No! no! that's not its proper name." Thereupon he cried, "O my sisters, what *is* its name?" and they replied, "What sayest thou to the husked sesame-seed?" Then the cateress donned her clothes and they fell again to carousing, but the Porter kept moaning, "Oh! and Oh!" for his neck and shoulders, and the cup passed merrily round and round again for a full hour. After that time the eldest and handsomest lady stood up and stripped off her garments, whereupon the Porter took his neck in hand, and rubbed and shampoo'd it, saying, "My neck and

shoulders are on the way of Allah!"[160] Then she threw herself into the basin, and swam and dived, sported and washed; and the Porter looked at her naked figure as though she had been a slice of the moon[161] and at her face with the sheen of Luna when at full, or like the dawn when it brighteneth, and he noted her noble stature and shape, and those 92 glorious forms that quivered as she went; for she was naked as the Lord made her. Then he cried "Alack! Alack!" and began to address her, versifying in these couplets:—

"If I liken thy shape to the bough when green ✿ My likeness errs and I sore mistake it;
For the bough is fairest when clad the most ✿ And thou art fairest when mother-naked."

When the lady heard his verses she came up out of the basin and, seating herself upon his lap and knees, pointed to her genitory and said, "O my lordling, what be the name of this?" Quoth he, "The basil of the bridges;" but she said, "Bah, bah!" Quoth he, "The husked sesame;" quoth she, "Pooh, pooh!" Then said he, "Thy womb;" and she cried, "Fie, Fie! art thou not ashamed of thyself?" and cuffed him on the nape of the neck. And whatever name he gave declaring "'Tis so," she beat him and cried "No! no!" till at last he said, "O my sisters, and what *is* its name?" She replied, "It is entitled the Khan[162] of Abu Mansur;" whereupon the Porter replied, "Ha! ha! O Allah be praised for safe deliverance! O Khan of Abu Mansur!" Then she came forth and dressed and the cup went round a full hour. At last the Porter rose up, and stripping off all his clothes, jumped into the tank and swam about and washed under his bearded chin and armpits, even as they had done. Then he came out and threw himself into the first lady's lap and rested his arms upon the lap of the portress, and reposed his legs in the lap of the cateress and pointed to his prickle[163] and said, "O my mistresses, what is the name of this article?" All laughed at his words till they fell on their backs, and one said, "Thy pintle!" But he replied, "No!" and gave each one of them a bite by way of forfeit. Then said they, "Thy pizzle!" but he cried "No," and gave each of them a hug;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

93 Now when it was the Tenth Night,

Quoth her sister Dunyazad, "Finish for us thy story;" and she answered, "With joy and goodly gree." It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsels stinted not saying to the Porter "Thy prickle, thy pintle, thy pizzle," and he ceased not kissing and biting and hugging until his heart was satisfied, and they laughed on till they could no more. At last one said, "O our brother, what, then, is it called?" Quoth he, "Know ye not?" Quoth they, "No!" "Its veritable name," said he, "is mule Burst-all, which browseth on the basil of the bridges, and muncheth the husked sesame, and nighteth in the Khan of Abu Mansur." Then laughed they till they fell on their backs, and returned to their carousal, and ceased not to be after this fashion till night began to fall. Thereupon said they to the Porter, "Bismillah,[164] O our master, up and on with those sorry old shoes of thine and turn thy face and show us the breadth of thy

shoulders!" Said he, "By Allah, to part with my soul would be easier for me than departing from you: come let us join night to day, and to-morrow morning we will each wend our own way." "My life on you," said the procuratrix, "suffer him to tarry with us, that we may laugh at him: we may live out our lives and never meet with his like, for surely he is a right merry rogue and a witty."[165] So they said, "Thou must not remain with us this night save on condition that thou submit to our commands, and that whatso thou seest, thou ask no questions thereanent, nor enquire of its cause." "All right," rejoined he, and they said, "Go read the writing over the door." So he rose and went to the entrance and there found written in letters of gold wash; "WHOSO SPEAKETH OF WHAT CONCERNETH HIM NOT, SHALL HEAR WHAT PLEASETH HIM NOT!"[166] The Porter said, "Be ye witnesses against me that I 94will not speak on whatso concerneth me not." Then the cateress arose, and set food before them and they ate; after which they changed their drinking-place for another, and she lighted the lamps and candles and burned ambergris and aloes-wood, and set on fresh fruit and the wine service, when they fell to carousing and talking of their lovers. And they ceased not to eat and drink and chat, nibbling dry fruits and laughing and playing tricks for the space of a full hour when lo! a knock was heard at the gate. The knocking in no wise disturbed the seance, but one of them rose and went to see what it was and presently returned, saying, "Truly our pleasure for this night is to be perfect." "How is that?" asked they; and she answered, "At the gate be three Persian Kalandars[167] with their beards and heads and eyebrows shaven; and all three blind of the left eye—which is surely a strange chance. They are foreigners from Roum-land with the mark of travel plain upon them; they have just entered Baghdad, this being their first visit to our city; and the cause of their knocking at our door is simply because they cannot find a lodging. Indeed one of them said to me:—Haply the owner of this mansion will let us have the key of his stable or some old outhouse wherein we may pass this night; for evening had surprised them and, being strangers in the land, they knew none who would give them shelter. And, O my sisters, each of them is a figure o' fun after his own fashion; and if we let them in we shall have matter to make sport of." She gave not over persuading them till they said to her, "Let them in, and make thou the usual condition with them that they speak not of what concerneth them not, lest they hear what pleaseth them not." So she rejoiced and going to the door presently returned with the three monoculars 95whose beards and mustachios were clean shaven.[168] They salam'd and stood afar off by way of respect; but the three ladies rose up to them and welcomed them and wished them joy of their safe arrival and made them sit down. The Kalandars looked at the room and saw that it was a pleasant place, clean swept and garnished with flowers; and the lamps were burning and the smoke of perfumes was spiring in air; and beside the dessert and fruits and wine, there were three fair girls who might be maidens; so they exclaimed with one voice, "By Allah, 'tis good!" Then they turned to the Porter and saw that he was a merry-faced wight, albeit he was

by no means sober and was sore after his slappings. So they thought that he was one of themselves and said, "A mendicant like us! whether Arab or foreigner."[169] But when the Porter heard these words, he rose up, and fixing his eyes fiercely upon them, said, "Sit ye here without exceeding in talk! Have you not read what is writ over the door? surely it befitteth not fellows who come to us like paupers to wag your tongues at us." "We crave thy pardon, O Fakír,"[170] rejoined they, "and our heads are between thy hands." The ladies laughed consumedly at the squabble; and, making peace between the Kalandars and the Porter, seated the new guests before meat and they ate. Then they sat together, and the portress served them with drink; and, as the cup went round merrily, quoth the Porter to the askers, "And you, O brothers mine, have ye no story or rare adventure to amuse us withal?" Now the warmth of wine having mounted to their heads they called for musical instruments; and the portress brought them a tambourine of Mosul, and a lute of Irák, and a Persian harp; and each mendicant took one and tuned it; this the tambourine and those the lute and the harp, and struck up a merry tune while the ladies sang so lustily that there was a great noise.[171] And whilst they were carrying on, behold, some one knocked at the gate, and the portress went to see what was the matter there. Now the cause of that knocking, O King (quoth Shahrazad) was this, the Caliph, Hárún al-Rashíd, had gone forth from the palace, as was his wont 96 now and then, to solace himself in the city that night, and to see and hear what new thing was stirring; he was in merchant's gear, and he was attended by Ja'afar, his Wazir, and by Masrúr his Sworder of Vengeance.[172] As they walked about the city, their way led them towards the house of the three ladies; where they heard the loud noise of musical instruments and singing and merriment; so quoth the Caliph to Ja'afar, "I long to enter this house and hear those songs and see who sing them." Quoth Ja'afar, "O Prince of the Faithful; these folk are surely drunken with wine, and I fear some mischief betide us if we get amongst them." "There is no help but that I go in there," replied the Caliph, "and I desire thee to contrive some pretext for our appearing among them." Ja'afar replied, "I hear and I obey;"[173] and knocked at the door, whereupon the portress came out and opened. Then Ja'afar came forward and kissing the ground before her said, "O my lady, we be merchants from Tiberias-town: we arrived at Baghdad ten days ago; and, alighting at the merchants' caravanserai, we sold all our merchandise. Now a certain trader invited us to an entertainment this night; so we went to his house and he set food before us and we ate: then we sat at wine and wassail with him for an hour or so when he gave us leave to depart; and we went out from him in the shadow of the night and, being strangers, we could not find our way back to our Khan. So haply of your kindness and courtesy you will suffer us to tarry with you this night, and Heaven will reward you!"[174] The portress looked upon them and seeing them dressed like merchants and men of grave looks and solid, she returned to her sisters and repeated to them Ja'afar's story; and they took compassion upon the strangers and said to her, "Let them enter."

She opened the door to them, when said they to her, "Have we thy leave to come in?" "Come in," quoth she; and the Caliph entered followed by Ja'afar and Masrur; and when the girls saw them they stood up to them in respect and made them sit down and looked to their wants, saying, "Welcome, and well come and good cheer to the guests, but with 97one condition!" "What is that?" asked they, and one of the ladies answered, "Speak not of what concerneth you not, lest ye hear what pleaseth you not." "Even so," said they; and sat down to their wine and drank deep. Presently the Caliph looked on the three Kalandars and, seeing them each and every blind of the left eye, wondered at the sight; then he gazed upon the girls and he was startled and he marvelled with exceeding marvel at their beauty and loveliness. They continued to carouse and to converse and said to the Caliph, "Drink!" but he replied, "I am vowed to Pilgrimage;"[175] and drew back from the wine. Thereupon the portress rose and spreading before him a table-cloth worked with gold, set thereon a porcelain bowl into which she poured willow flower water with a lump of snow and a spoonful of sugar-candy. The Caliph thanked her and said in himself, "By Allah, I will recompense her to-morrow for the kind deed she hath done." The others again addressed themselves to conversing and carousing; and, when the wine gat the better of them, the eldest lady who ruled the house rose and making obeisance to them took the cateress by the hand, and said, "Rise, O my sister and let us do what is our devoir." Both answered "Even so!" Then the portress stood up and proceeded to remove the table-service and the remnants of the banquet; and renewed the pastiles and cleared the middle of the saloon. Then she made the Kalandars sit upon a sofa at the side of the estrade, and seated the Caliph and Ja'afar and Masrur on the other side of the saloon; after which she called the Porter, and said, "How scant is thy courtesy! now thou art no stranger; nay, thou art one of the household." So he stood up and, tightening his waist-cloth, asked, "What would ye I do?" and she answered, "Stand in thy place." Then the procuratrix rose and set in the midst of the saloon a low chair and, opening a closet, cried to the Porter, "Come help me," So he went to help her and saw two black bitches with chains round their necks; and she said to him, "Take hold of them;" and he took them and led them into the middle of the saloon. Then the lady of the house arose and tucked up her sleeves above her wrists and, seizing a scourge, said to the Porter, "Bring forward one of the bitches." He brought, her forward, dragging her by the chain, while the bitch wept, and shook 98her head at the lady who, however, came down upon her with blows on the sconce; and the bitch howled and the lady ceased not beating her till her forearm failed her. Then, casting the scourge from her hand, she pressed the bitch to her bosom and, wiping away her tears with her hands, kissed her head. Then said she to the Porter, "Take her away and bring the second;" and, when he brought her, she did with her as she had done with the first. Now the heart of the Caliph was touched at these cruel doings; his chest straitened and he lost all patience in his desire to know why the two bitches were so beaten. He

threw a wink at Ja'afar wishing him to ask, but the Minister turning towards him said by signs, "Be silent!" Then quoth the portress to the mistress of the house, "O my lady, arise and go to thy place that I in turn may do my devoir."[176] She answered, "Even so"; and, taking her seat upon the couch of juniper-wood, pargetted with, gold and silver, said to the portress and cateress, "Now do ye what ye have to do." Thereupon the portress sat upon a low seat by the couch side; but the procuratrix, entering a closet, brought out of it a bag of satin with green fringes and two tassels of gold. She stood up before the lady of the house and shaking the bag drew out from it a lute which she tuned by tightening its pegs; and when it was in perfect order, she began to sing these quatrains:—

Ye are the wish, the aim of me ✿ And when, O love, thy sight I see[177]
The heavenly mansion openeth;[178] ✿ But Hell I see when lost thy sight.
From thee comes madness; nor the less ✿ Comes highest joy, comes ecstasy:
Nor in my love for thee I fear ✿ Or shame and blame, or hate and spite.
When Love was throned within my heart ✿ I rent the veil of modesty;
And stints not Love to rend that veil ✿ Garring disgrace on grace to alight;
The robe of sickness then I donned ✿ But rent to rags was secrecy:
Wherefore my love and longing heart ✿ Proclaim your high supremest might;
The tear-drop railing adown my cheek ✿ Telleth my tale of ignomy:
And all the hid was seen by all ✿ And all my riddle ree'd aright.
99 Heal then my malady, for thou ✿ Art malady and remedy!
But she whose cure is in thy hand ✿ Shall ne'er be free of bane and blight;
Burn me those eyne that radiance rain ✿ Slay me the swords of phantasy;
How many hath the sword of Love ✿ Laid low, their high degree despite?
Yet will I never cease to pine ✿ Nor to oblivion will I flee.
Love is my health, my faith, my joy ✿ Public and private, wrong or right.
O happy eyes that sight thy charms ✿ That gaze upon thee at their gree!
Yea, of my purest wish and will ✿ The slave of Love I'll aye be hight.

When the damsel heard this elegy in quatrains she cried out "Alas! Alas!" and rent her raiment, and fell to the ground fainting; and the Caliph saw scars of the palm-rod[179] on her back and welts of the whip; and marvelled with exceeding wonder. Then the portress arose and sprinkled water on her and brought her a fresh and very fine dress and put it on her. But when the company beheld these doings their minds were troubled, for they had no inkling of the case nor knew the story thereof; so the Caliph said to Ja'afar, "Didst thou not see the scars upon the damsel's body? I cannot keep silence or be at rest till I learn the truth of her condition and the story of this other maiden and the secret of the two black bitches." But Ja'afar answered, "O our lord, they made it a condition with us that we speak not of what concerneth us not, lest we come to hear what pleaseth us not." Then said the portress, "By Allah, O my sister,

come to me and complete this service for me." Replied the procuratrix, "With joy and goodly gree;" so she took the lute; and leaned it against her breasts and swept the strings with her finger-tips, and began singing:—

Give back mine eyes their sleep long ravishèd ✿ And say me whither be my reason fled:
I learnt that lending to thy love a place ✿ Sleep to mine eyelids mortal foe was made.
They said, "We held thee righteous, who waylaid ✿ Thy soul?" "Go ask his glorious eyes," I said.
I pardon all my blood he pleased to spill ✿ Owning his troubles drove him blood to shed.
On my mind's mirror sun-like sheen he cast ✿ Whose keen reflection fire in vitals bred
Waters of Life let Allah waste at will ✿ Suffice my wage those lips of dewy red:
An thou address my love thou'lt find a cause ✿ For plaint and tears or ruth or lustihed.
In water pure his form shall greet your eyne ✿ When fails the bowl nor need ye drink of wine.[180]

Then she quoted from the same ode:—

I drank, but the draught of his glance, not wine; ✿ And his swaying gait swayed to sleep these eyne:
'Twas not grape-juice gript me but grasp of Past ✿ 'Twas not bowl o'erbowled me but gifts divine:
His coiling curl-lets my soul ennetted ✿ And his cruel will all my wits outwitted.[181]

After a pause she resumed:—

If we 'plain of absence what shall we say? ✿ Or if pain afflict us where wend our way?
An I hire a truchman[182] to tell my tale ✿ The lovers' plaint is not told for pay:
If I put on patience, a lover's life ✿ After loss of love will not last a day:
Naught is left me now but regret, repine ✿ And tears flooding cheeks for ever and aye:
O thou who the babes of these eyes[183] hast fled ✿ Thou art homed in heart that shall never stray;
Would heaven I wot hast thou kept our pact ✿ Long as stream shall flow, to have firmest fay?
Or hast forgotten the weeping slave ✿ Whom groans afflict and whom griefs waylay?
Ah, when severance ends and we side by side ✿ Couch, I'll blame thy rigours and chide thy pride!

Now when the portress heard her second ode she shrieked aloud and said, "By Allah! 'tis right good!"; and laying hands on her garments tore them, as she did the first time, and fell to the ground fainting. Thereupon the procuratrix rose and brought her a second change of clothes after she had sprinkled water on her. She recovered and sat upright and said to her sister the cateress, 101"Onwards, and help me in my duty, for there remains but this one song." So the provisioneress again brought out the lute and began to sing these verses:—

How long shall last, how long this rigour rife of woe ✿ May not suffice thee all these tears thou seest flow?
Our parting thus with purpose fell thou dost prolong ✿ Is't not enough to glad the heart of envious foe?
Were but this lying world once true to lover-heart ✿ He had not watched the weary night in tears of woe:
Oh pity me whom overwhelmed thy cruel will ✿ My lord, my king, 'tis time some ruth to me thou show:
To whom reveal my wrongs, O thou who murdered me? ✿ Sad, who of broken troth the pangs must undergo!
Increase wild love for thee and phrenzy hour by hour ✿ And days of exile minute by so long, so slow;

O Moslems, claim *vendetta*[184] for this slave of Love ✿ Whose sleep Love ever wastes, whose patience Love lays low:

Doth law of Love allow thee, O my wish! to lie ✿ Lapt in another's arms and unto me cry "Go!"?

Yet in thy presence, say, what joys shall I enjoy ✿ When he I love but works my love to overthrow?

When the portress heard the third song she cried aloud; and, laying hands on her garments, rent them down to the very skirt and fell to the ground fainting a third time, again showing the scars of the scourge. Then said the three Kalandars, "Would Heaven we had never entered this house, but had rather nighted on the mounds and heaps outside the city! for verily our visit hath been troubled by sights which cut to the heart." The Caliph turned to them and asked, "Why so?" and they made answer, "Our minds are sore troubled by this matter." Quoth the Caliph, "Are ye not of the household?" and quoth they, "No; nor indeed did we ever set eyes on the place till within this hour." Hereat the Caliph marvelled and rejoined, "This man who sitteth by you, would he not know the secret of the matter?" and so saying he winked and made signs at the Porter. So they questioned the man but he replied, "By the All-might of Allah, in love all are alike![185] I am the growth of Baghdad, yet never in my born days did I darken these doors till to-day and my companying with 102 them was a curious matter." "By Allah," they rejoined, "we took thee for one of them and now we see thou art one like ourselves." Then said the Caliph, "We be seven men, and they only three women without even a fourth to help them; so let us question them of their case; and, if they answer us not, fain we will be answered by force." All of them agreed to this except Ja'afar who said,[186] "This is not my recking; let them be; for we are their guests and, as ye know, they made a compact and condition with us which we accepted and promised to keep: wherefore it is better that we be silent concerning this matter; and, as but little of the night remaineth, let each and every of us gang his own gait." Then he winked at the Caliph and whispered to him, "There is but one hour of darkness left and I can bring them before thee to-morrow, when thou canst freely question them all concerning their story." But the Caliph raised his head haughtily and cried out at him in wrath, saying, "I have no patience left for my longing to hear of them: let the Kalandars question them forthright." Quoth Ja'afar, "This is not my rede." Then words ran high and talk answered talk; and they disputed as to who should first put the question, but at last all fixed upon the Porter. And as the jangle increased the house-mistress could not but notice it and asked them, "O ye folk! on what matter are ye talking so loudly?" Then the Porter stood up respectfully before her and said, "O my lady, this company earnestly desire that thou acquaint them with the story of the two bitches and what maketh thee punish them so cruelly; and then thou fallest to weeping over them and kissing them; and lastly they want to hear the tale of thy sister and why she hath been bastinado'd with palm-sticks like a man. These are the questions they charge me to put, and peace be with thee."[187] Thereupon quoth she who was the lady of the house to the guests, "Is this true that he saith on

your part?" and all replied, "Yes!" save Ja'afar who kept silence. When she heard these words she cried, "By Allah, ye have wronged us, O our guests, with grievous wronging; for when you came before us we made compact and condition with you, that whoso should [103]speak of what concerneth him not should hear what pleaseth him not. Sufficeth ye not that we took you into our house and fed you with our best food? But the fault is not so much yours as hers who let you in." Then she tucked up her sleeves from her wrists and struck the floor thrice with her hand crying, "Come ye quickly;" and lo! a closet door opened and out of it came seven negro slaves with drawn swords in hand to whom she said, "Pinion me those praters' elbows and bind them each to each." They did her bidding and asked her, "O veiled and virtuous! is it thy high command that we strike off their heads?"; but she answered, "Leave them awhile that I question them of their condition, before their necks feel the sword." "By Allah, O my lady!" cried the Porter, "slay me not for other's sin; all these men offended and deserve the penalty of crime save myself. Now by Allah, our night had been charming had we escaped the mortification of those monocular Kalandars whose entrance into a populous city would convert it into a howling wilderness." Then he repeated these verses:—

How fair is ruth the strong man deigns not smother! ✿ And fairest fair when shown to weakest brother:

By Love's own holy tie between us twain, ✿ Let one not suffer for the sin of other.

When the Porter ended his verse the lady laughed——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lady, after laughing at the Porter despite her wrath, came up to the party and spake thus, "Tell me who ye be, for ye have but an hour of life; and were ye not men of rank and, perhaps, notables of your tribes, you had not been so froward and I had hastened your doom." Then said the Caliph, "Woe to thee, O Ja'afar, tell her who we are lest we be slain by mistake; and speak her fair before some horror befal us." "'Tis part of thy deserts," replied he; whereupon the Caliph cried out at him saying, "There is a time for witty words and there is a time for serious work." Then the lady accosted the three Kalandars and asked them, "Are ye [104]brothers?"; when they answered, "No, by Allah, we be naught but Fakirs and foreigners." Then quoth she to one among them, "Wast thou born blind of one eye?"; and quoth he, "No, by Allah, 'twas a marvellous matter and a wondrous mischance which caused my eye to be torn out, and mine is a tale which, if it were written upon the eye-corners with needle-gravers, were a warner to whoso would be warned."[188] She questioned the second and third Kalandar; but all replied like the first, "By Allah, O our mistress, each one of us cometh from a different country, and we are all three the sons of Kings, sovereign Princes ruling over suzerains and capital cities." Thereupon she turned towards them and said, "Let each and every of you tell me his tale in due order and explain the cause of his coming to our place; and if his story

please us let him stroke his head[189] and wend his way." The first to come forward was the Hammál, the Porter, who said, "O my lady, I am a man and a porter. This dame, the cateress, hired me to carry a load and took me first to the shop of a vintner; then to the booth of a butcher; thence to the stall of a fruiterer; thence to a grocer who also sold dry fruits; thence to a confectioner and a perfumer-cum-druggist and from him to this place where there happened to me with you what happened. Such is my story and peace be on us all!" At this the lady laughed and said, "Rub thy head and wend thy ways!"; but he cried, "By Allah, I will not stump it till I hear the stories of my companions." Then came forward one of the Monoculars and began to tell her

THE FIRST KALANDAR'S TALE.

Know, O my lady, that the cause of my beard being shorn and my eye being out-torn was as follows. My father was a King and he had a brother who was a King over another city; and it came to pass that I and my cousin, the son of my paternal uncle, were· 105 both born on one and the same day. And years and days rolled on; and, as we grew up, I used to visit my uncle every now and then and to spend a certain number of months with him. Now my cousin and I were sworn friends; for he ever entreated me with exceeding kindness; he killed for me the fattest sheep and strained the best of his wines, and we enjoyed long conversing and carousing. One day when the wine had gotten the better of us, the son of my uncle said to me, "O my cousin, I have a great service to ask of thee; and I desire that thou stay me not in whatso I desire to do!" And I replied, "With joy and goodly will." Then he made me swear the most binding oaths and left me; but after a little while he returned leading a lady veiled and richly apparelled with ornaments worth a large sum of money. Presently he turned to me (the woman being still behind him) and said, "Take this lady with thee and go before me to such a burial ground" (describing it, so that I knew the place), "and enter with her into such a sepulchre[190] and there await my coming." The oaths I swore to him made me keep silence and suffered me not to oppose him; so I led the woman to the cemetery and both I and she took our seats in the sepulchre; and hardly had we sat down when in came my uncle's son, with a bowl of water, a bag of mortar and an adze somewhat like a hoe. He went straight to the tomb in the midst of the sepulchre and, breaking it open with the adze set the stones on one side; then he fell to digging into the earth of the tomb till he came upon a large iron plate, the size of a wicket-door; and on raising it there appeared below it a staircase vaulted and winding. Then he turned to the lady and said to her, "Come now and take thy final choice!" She at once went down by the staircase and disappeared; then quoth he to me, "O son of my uncle, by way of completing thy kindness, when I shall have descended into this place, restore the trap-door to where it was, and heap back the earth upon it as it lay before; and then of thy great goodness mix this unslaked lime which is in the bag with

this water which is in the bowl and, after building up the stones, plaster the outside so that none looking upon it shall say:—This is 106 a new opening in an old tomb. For a whole year have I worked at this place whereof none knoweth but Allah, and this is the need I have of thee;" presently adding, "May Allah never bereave thy friends of thee nor make them desolate by thine absence, O son of my uncle, O my dear cousin!" And he went down the stairs and disappeared for ever. When he was lost to sight I replaced the iron plate and did all his bidding till the tomb became as it was before; and I worked almost unconsciously for my head was heated with wine. Returning to the palace of my uncle, I was told that he had gone forth a-sporting and hunting; so I slept that night without seeing him; and, when the morning dawned, I remembered the scenes of the past evening and what happened between me and my cousin; I repented of having obeyed him when penitence was of no avail, I still thought, however, that it was a dream. So I fell to asking for the son of my uncle; but there was none to answer me concerning him; and I went out to the grave-yard and the sepulchres, and sought for the tomb under which he was, but could not find it; and I ceased not wandering about from sepulchre to sepulchre, and tomb to tomb, all without success, till night set in. So I returned to the city, yet I could neither eat nor drink; my thoughts being engrossed with my cousin, for that I knew not what was become of him; and I grieved with exceeding grief and passed another sorrowful night, watching until the morning. Then went I a second time to the cemetery, pondering over what the son of mine uncle had done; and, sorely repenting my hearkening to him, went round among all the tombs, but could not find the tomb I sought. I mourned over the past, and remained in my mourning seven days, seeking the place and ever missing the path. Then my torture of scruples[191] grew upon me till I well nigh went mad, and I found no way to dispel my grief save travel and return to my father. So I set out and journeyed homeward; but as I was entering my father's capital a crowd of rioters sprang upon me and pinioned me.[192] I wondered thereat with all wonderment, seeing that I was the son of the Sultan, and these men were my father's subjects and amongst them were some of my own slaves. A great fear fell 107 upon me, and I said to my soul,[193] "Would heaven I knew what hath happened to my father!" I questioned those that bound me of the cause of their so doing, but they returned me no answer. However, after a while one of them said to me (and he had been a hired servant of our house), "Fortune hath been false to thy father; his troops betrayed him and the Wazir who slew him now reigneth in his stead and we lay in wait to seize thee by the bidding of him." I was well-nigh distraught and felt ready to faint on hearing of my father's death; when they carried me off and placed me in presence of the usurper. Now between me and him there was an olden grudge, the cause of which was this. I was fond of shooting with the stone-bow,[194] and it befel one day, as I was standing on the terrace-roof of the palace, that a bird lighted on the top of the Wazir's house when he happened to be

there. I shot at the bird and missed the mark; but I hit the Wazir's eye and knocked it out as fate and fortune decreed. Even so saith the poet:—

We tread the path where Fate hath led ✿ The path Fate writ we fain must tread:

And man in one land doomed to die ✿ Death no where else shall do him dead.

And on like wise saith another:—

Let Fortune have her wanton way ✿ Take heart and all her words obey:

Nor joy nor mourn at anything ✿ For all things pass and no things stay.

Now when I knocked out the Wazir's eye he could not say a single word, for that my father was King of the city; but he hated me ever after and dire was the grudge thus caused between us twain. So when I was set before him hand-bound and pinioned, he straightway gave orders for me to be beheaded. I asked, "For what crime wilt thou put me to death?"; whereupon he answered, "What crime is greater than this?" pointing the while to the place [108] where his eye had been. Quoth I, "This I did by accident not of malice prepense;" and quoth he, "If thou didst it by accident, I will do the like by thee with intention."[195] Then cried he, "Bring him forward," and they brought me up to him, when he thrust his finger into my left eye and gouged it out; whereupon I became one-eyed as ye see me. Then he bade bind me hand and foot, and put me into a chest and said to the sworder, "Take charge of this fellow, and go off with him to the waste lands about the city; then draw thy scymitar and slay him, and leave him to feed the beasts and birds." So the headsman fared forth with me and when he was in the midst of the desert, he took me out of the chest (and I with both hands pinioned and both feet fettered) and was about to bandage my eyes before striking off my head. But I wept with exceeding weeping until I made him weep with me and, looking at him I began to recite these couplets:—

I deemed you coat-o'-mail that should withstand ✿ The foeman's shafts; and you proved foeman's brand;

I hoped your aidance in mine every chance ✿ Though fail my left to aid my dexter hand:

Aloof you stand and hear the railer's gibe ✿ While rain their shafts on me the giber-band:

But an ye will not guard me from my foes ✿ Stand clear, and succour neither these nor those!

And I also quoted:—

I deemed my brethren mail of strongest steel ✿ And so they were—from foes to fend my dart!

I deemed their arrows surest of their aim; ✿ And so they were—when aiming at my heart!

When the headsman heard my lines (he had been sworder to my sire and he owed me a debt of gratitude) he cried, "O my lord, what can I do, being but a slave under orders?" presently adding, [109] "Fly for thy life and nevermore return to this land, or they will slay thee and slay me with thee, even as the poet said:—

Take thy life and fly whenas evils threat; ✿ Let the ruined house tell its owner's fate:

New land for the old thou shalt seek and find ✿ But to find new life thou must not await.

Strange that men should sit in the stead of shame, ✿ When Allah's world is so wide and great!

And trust not other, in matters grave ✿ Life itself must act for a life beset:
Ne'er would prowl the lion with maned neck, ✿ Did he reckon on aid or of others reck."

Hardly believing in my escape, I kissed his hand and thought the loss of my eye a light matter in consideration of my escaping from being slain. I arrived at my uncle's capital; and, going in to him, told him of what had befallen my father and myself; whereat he wept with sore weeping and said, "Verily thou addest grief to my grief, and woe to my woe; for thy cousin hath been missing these many days; I wot not what hath happened to him, and none can give me news of him." And he wept till he fainted. I sorrowed and condoled with him; and he would have applied certain medicaments to my eye, but he saw that it was become as a walnut with the shell empty. Then said he, "O my son, better to lose eye and keep life!" After that I could no longer remain silent about my cousin, who was his only son and one dearly loved, so I told him all that had happened. He rejoiced with extreme joyance to hear news of his son and said, "Come now and show me the tomb;" but I replied, "By Allah, O my uncle, I know not its place, though I sought it carefully full many times, yet could not find the site." However, I and my uncle went to the grave-yard and looked right and left, till at last I recognised the tomb and we both rejoiced with exceeding joy. We entered the sepulchre and loosened the earth about the grave; then, upraising the trap-door, descended some fifty steps till we came to the foot of the staircase when lo! we were stopped by a blinding smoke. Thereupon said my uncle that saying whose sayer shall never come to shame, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" and we advanced till we suddenly came upon a saloon, whose floor was strewed with flour and grain and provisions and all manner necessaries; and in the midst of it stood a canopy sheltering a couch. Thereupon my uncle went up to the couch and inspecting it found 110 his son and the lady who had gone down with him into the tomb, lying in each other's embrace; but the twain had become black as charred wood; it was as if they had been cast into a pit of fire. When my uncle saw this spectacle, he spat in his son's face and said, "Thou hast thy deserts, O thou hog![196] this is thy judgment in the transitory world, and yet remaineth the judgment in the world to come, a durer and a more enduring."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twelfth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kalandar thus went on with his story before the lady and the Caliph and Ja'afar:—My uncle struck his son with his slipper[197] as he lay there a black heap of coal. I marvelled at his hardness of heart, and grieving for my cousin and the lady, said, "By Allah, O my uncle, calm thy wrath: dost thou not see that all my thoughts are occupied with this misfortune, and how sorrowful I am for what hath befallen thy son, and how horrible it is that naught of him remaineth but a black heap of charcoal? And is not that enough, but thou must smite him with thy slipper?" Answered he, "O son of my brother, this youth from his

boyhood was madly in love with his own sister;[198] and often and often I forbade him 111 from her, saying to myself:—They are but little ones. However, when they grew up sin befel between them; and, although I could hardly believe it, I confined him and chided him and threatened him with the severest threats; and the eunuchs and servants said to him:—Beware of so foul a thing which none before thee ever did, and which none after thee will ever do; and have a care lest thou be dishonoured and disgraced among the Kings of the day, even to the end of time. And I added:—Such a report as this will be spread abroad by caravans, and take heed not to give them cause to talk or I will assuredly curse thee and do thee to death. After that I lodged them apart and shut her up; but the accursed girl loved him with passionate love, for Satan had got the mastery of her as well as of him and made their foul sin seem fair in their sight. Now when my son saw that I separated them, he secretly built this souterrain and furnished it and transported to it victuals, even as thou seest; and, when I had gone out a-sporting, came here with his sister and hid from me. Then His righteous judgment fell upon the twain and consumed them with fire from Heaven; and verily the last judgment will deal them durer pains and more enduring!" Then he wept and I wept with him; and he looked at me and said, "Thou art my son in his stead." And I bethought me awhile of the world and of its chances, how the Wazir had slain my father and had taken his place and had put out my eye; and how my cousin had come to his death by the strangest chance: and I wept again and my uncle wept with me. Then we mounted the steps and let down the iron plate and heaped up the earth over it; and, after restoring the tomb to its former condition, we returned to the palace. But hardly had we sat down ere we heard the tom-toming of the kettle-drum and tantara of trumpets and clash of cymbals; and the rattling of war-men's lances; and the clamours of assailants and the clanking of bits and the neighing of steeds; while the world was canopied with dense dust and sand-clouds raised by the horses' hoofs.[199] We were amazed at sight and sound, knowing not what could be the matter; so we asked and were told us that the Wazir who had usurped my father's kingdom had marched his men; and that after levying his soldiery and 112 taking a host of wild Arabs[200] into service, he had come down upon us with armies like the sands of the sea; their number none could tell and against them none could prevail. They attacked the city unawares; and the citizens, being powerless to oppose them, surrendered the place: my uncle was slain and I made for the suburbs saying to myself, "If thou fall into this villain's hands he will assuredly kill thee." On this wise all my troubles were renewed; and I pondered all that had betided my father and my uncle and I knew not what to do; for if the city people or my father's troops had recognised me they would have done their best to win favour by destroying me; and I could think of no way to escape save by shaving off my beard and my eyebrows. So I shore them off and, changing my fine clothes for a Kalandar's rags, I fared forth from my uncle's capital and made for this city; hoping that peradventure some one would assist me to the presence of

the Prince of the Faithful,[201] and the Caliph who is the Viceregent of Allah upon 113earth. Thus have I come hither that I might tell him my tale and lay my case before him. I arrived here this very night, and was standing in doubt whither I should go, when suddenly I saw this second Kalandar; so I salam'd to him, saying:—I am a stranger! and he answered:—I too am a stranger! And as we were conversing behold, up came our companion, this third Kalandar, and saluted us saying:—I am a stranger! And we answered:—We too be strangers! Then we three walked on and together till darkness overtook us and Destiny drave us to your house. Such, then, is the cause of the shaving of my beard and mustachios and eyebrows; and the manner of my losing my right eye. They marvelled much at this tale and the Caliph said to Ja'afar, "By Allah, I have not seen nor have I heard the like of what hath happened to this Kalandar!" Quoth the lady of the house, "Rub thy head and wend thy ways;" but he replied, "I will not go, till I hear the history of the two others." Thereupon the second Kalandar came forward; and, kissing the ground, began to tell

THE SECOND KALANDAR'S TALE.

Know, O my lady, that I was not born one-eyed and mine is a strange story; an it were graven with needle-graver on the eye-corners, it were a warner to whoso would be warned. I am a King, son of a King, and was brought up like a Prince. I learned intoning the Koran according the seven schools;[202] and I read all manner books, and held disputations on their contents with the doctors and men of science; moreover I studied star-lore and the fair sayings of poets and I exercised myself in all branches of learning until I surpassed the people of my time; my skill in calligraphy exceeded that of all the scribes; and my fame was bruited abroad over all climes and cities, and all the kings learned to know my name. Amongst others the King of Hind heard of me and sent to my father to invite me to his court, with offerings and presents and rarities such as befit royalties. So my father fitted out six ships for me and my people; and we put to sea and sailed 114for the space of a full month till we made the land. Then we brought out the horses that were with us in the ships; and, after loading the camels with our presents for the Prince, we set forth inland. But we had marched only a little way, when behold, a dust-cloud up-flew, and grew until it walled[203] the horizon from view. After an hour or so the veil lifted and discovered beneath it fifty horsemen, ravening lions to the sight, in steel armour dight. We observed them straightly and lo! they were cutters-off of the highway, wild as wild Arabs. When they saw that we were only four and had with us but the ten camels carrying the presents, they dashed down upon us with lances at rest. We signed to them, with our fingers, as it were saying, "We be messengers of the great King of Hind, so harm us not!" but they answered on like wise, "We are not in his dominions to obey nor are we subject to his sway." Then they set upon us and slew some of my slaves and put the lave to flight;

and I also fled after I had gotten a wound, a grievous hurt, whilst the Arabs were taken up with the money and the presents which were with us. I went forth unknowing whither I went, having become mean as I was mighty; and I fared on until I came to the crest of a mountain where I took shelter for the night in a cave. When day arose I set out again, nor ceased after this fashion till I arrived at a fair city and a well-filled. Now it was the season when Winter was turning away with his rime and to greet the world with his flowers came Prime, and the young blooms were springing and the streams flowed ringing, and the birds were sweetly singing, as saith the poet concerning a certain city when describing it:—

A place secure from every thought of fear ✿ Safety and peace for ever lord it here:

Its beauties seem to beautify its sons ✿ And as in Heaven its happy folk appear.

115 I was glad of my arrival for I was wearied with the way, and yellow of face for weakness and want; but my plight was pitiable and I knew not whither to betake me. So I accosted a Tailor sitting in his little shop and saluted him; he returned my salam, and bade me kindly welcome and wished me well and entreated me gently and asked me of the cause of my strangerhood. I told him all my past from first to last; and he was concerned on my account and said, "O youth, disclose not thy secret to any: the King of this city is the greatest enemy thy father hath, and there is blood-wit[204] between them and thou hast cause to fear for thy life." Then he set meat and drink before me; and I ate and drank and he with me; and we conversed freely till nightfall, when he cleared me a place in a corner of his shop and brought me a carpet and a coverlet. I tarried with him three days; at the end of which time he said to me, "Knowest thou no calling whereby to win thy living, O my son?" "I am learned in the law," I replied, "and a doctor of doctrine; an adept in art and science, a mathematician and a notable penman." He rejoined, "Thy calling is of no account in our city, where not a soul understandeth science or even writing or aught save money-making." Then said I, "By Allah, I know nothing but what I have mentioned;" and he answered, "Gird thy middle and take thee a hatchet and a cord, and go and hew wood in the wold for thy daily bread, till Allah send thee relief; and tell none who thou art lest they slay thee." Then he bought me an axe and a rope and gave me in charge to certain woodcutters; and with these guardians I went forth into the forest, where I cut fuel-wood the whole of my day and came back in the evening bearing my bundle on my head. I sold it for half a dinar, with part of which I bought provision and laid by the rest. In such work I spent a whole year and when this was ended I went out one day, as was my wont, into the wilderness; and, wandering away from my companions, I chanced on a thickly grown lowland[205] 116 in which there was an abundance of wood. So I entered and I found the gnarled stump of a great tree and loosened the ground about it and shovelled away the earth. Presently my hatchet rang upon a copper ring; so I cleared away the soil and behold, the ring was attached to a wooden trap-door. This I raised and there appeared beneath it a staircase. I descended the steps to the

bottom and came to a door, which I opened and found myself in a noble hall strong of structure and beautifully built, where was a damsel like a pearl of great price, whose favour banished from my heart all grief and cark and care; and whose soft speech healed the soul in despair and captivated the wise and ware. Her figure measured five feet in height; her breasts were firm and upright; her cheek a very garden of delight; her colour lively bright; her face gleamed like dawn through curly tresses which gloomed like night, and above the snows of her bosom glittered teeth of a pearly white.[206] As the poet said of one like her:—

Slim-waisted loveling, jetty hair-encrowned ✿ A wand of willow on a sandy mound:

And as saith another:—

Four things that meet not, save they here unite ✿ To shed my heart-blood and to rape my sprite:

Brilliantest forehead; tresses jetty bright; ✿ Cheeks rosy red and stature beauty-dight.

When I looked upon her I prostrated myself before Him who had created her, for the beauty and loveliness He had shaped in her, and she looked at me and said, "Art thou man or Jinni?" "I am a man," answered I, and she, "Now who brought thee to this place where I have abided five-and-twenty years without even yet seeing man in it." Quoth I (and indeed I found her words wonder-sweet, and my heart was melted to the core by them), "O my lady, my good fortune led me hither for the dispelling of my cark and care." Then I related to her all my mishap from first to last, and my case appeared to her exceeding grievous; so she wept and said, "I will tell thee my story in my turn. I am the daughter of the King Ifitamus, lord of the Islands of Abnús,[207] who married me to my cousin, the son of my paternal uncle; but on my wedding 117 night an Ifrit named Jirjís[208] bin Rajmús, first cousin that is, mother's sister's son, of Iblís, the Foul Fiend, snatched me up and, flying away with me like a bird, set me down in this place, whither he conveyed all I needed of fine stuffs, raiment and jewels and furniture, and meat and drink and other else. Once in every ten days he comes here and lies a single night with me, and then wends his way, for he took me without the consent of his family; and he hath agreed with me that if ever I need him by night or by day, I have only to pass my hand over yonder two lines engraved upon the alcove, and he will appear to me before my fingers cease touching. Four days have now passed since he was here; and, as there remain six days before he come again, say me, wilt thou abide with me five days, and go hence the day before his coming?" I replied "Yes, and yes again! O rare, if all this be not a dream!" Hereat she was glad and, springing to her feet, seized my hand and carried me through an arched doorway to a Hammam-bath, a fair hall and richly decorate. I doffed my clothes, and she doffed hers; then we bathed and she washed me; and when this was done we left the bath, and she seated me by her side upon a high divan, and brought me sherbet scented with musk. When we felt cool after the bath, she set food before me and we ate and fell to talking; but presently she said to me, "Lay thee down and take thy rest, for surely thou must be weary." So I thanked her, my lady, and lay down and slept soundly,

forgetting all that had happened to me. When I awoke I found her rubbing and shampooing my feet;[209] so I again thanked her and blessed her and we sat for a while talking. Said she, "By Allah, I was sad at heart, for that I have dwelt alone underground for these five-and-twenty years; and praise be to Allah, who hath sent me some one with whom I can converse!" Then she asked, "O youth, what sayest thou to wine?" and I answered, "Do as thou wilt." Whereupon she went to a cupboard and took out a sealed flask of right old wine and set off the table with flowers and scented herbs and began to sing these lines:—

Had we known of thy coming we fain had dispread ✿ The cores of our hearts or the balls of our eyes;

Our cheeks as a carpet to greet thee had thrown ✿ And our eyelids had strown for thy feet to betread.

118 Now when she finished her verse I thanked her, for indeed love of her had gotten hold of my heart and my grief and anguish were gone. We sat at converse and carousal till nightfall, and with her I spent the night—such night never spent I in all my life! On the morrow delight followed delight till midday, by which time I had drunken wine so freely that I had lost my wits, and stood up, staggering to the right and to the left, and said "Come, O my charmer, and I will carry thee up from this underground vault and deliver thee from the spell of thy Jinni." She laughed and replied "Content thee and hold thy peace: of every ten days one is for the Ifrit and the other nine are thine." Quoth I (and in good sooth drink had got the better of me), "This very instant will I break down the alcove whereon is graven the talisman and summon the Ifrit that I may slay him, for it is a practise of mine to slay Ifrits!" When she heard my words her colour waxed wan and she said, "By Allah, do not!" and she began repeating:—

This is a thing wherein destruction lies ✿ I rede thee shun it an thy wits be wise.

And these also:—

O thou who seekest severance, draw the rein ✿ Of thy swift steed nor seek o'ermuch t' advance;

Ah stay! for treachery is the rule of life, ✿ And sweets of meeting end in severance.

I heard her verse but paid no heed to her words, nay, I raised my foot and administered to the alcove a mighty kick——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the second Kalandar thus continued his tale to the lady:—But when, O my mistress, I kicked that alcove with a mighty kick, behold, the air starkened and darkened and thundered and lightened; the earth trembled and quaked and the world became invisible. At once the fumes of wine left my head: I cried to her, "What is the matter?" and she replied, "The Ifrit is upon us! did I not warn thee of this? By Allah, thou hast brought ruin upon me; but fly for thy 119 life and go up by the way thou camest down!" So I fled up the staircase; but, in the excess of my fear, I forgot sandals and hatchet. And when I had mounted two

steps I turned to look for them, and lo! I saw the earth cleave asunder, and there arose from it an Ifrit, a monster of hideousness, who said to the damsel, "What trouble and pother be this wherewith thou disturbest me? What mishap hath betided thee?" "No mishap hath befallen me" she answered, "save that my breast was straitened[210] and my heart heavy with sadness: so I drank a little wine to broaden it and to hearten myself; then I rose to obey a call of Nature, but the wine had gotten into my head and I fell against the alcove." "Thou liest, like the whore thou art!" shrieked the Ifrit; and he looked around the hall right and left till he caught sight of my axe and sandals and said to her, "What be these but the belongings of some mortal who hath been in thy society?" She answered, "I never set eyes upon them till this moment: they must have been brought by thee hither cleaving to thy garments." Quoth the Ifrit, "These words are absurd; thou harlot! thou strumpet!" Then he stripped her stark naked and, stretching her upon the floor, bound her hands and feet to four stakes, like one crucified;[211] and set about torturing and trying to make her confess. I could not bear to stand listening to her cries and groans; so I climbed the stair on the quake with fear; and when I reached the top I replaced the trap-door and covered it with earth. Then repented I of what I had done with penitence exceeding; and thought of the lady and her beauty and loveliness, and the tortures she was suffering at the hands of the accursed Ifrit, after her quiet life of five-and-twenty years; and how all that had happened to her was for cause of me. I bethought me of my father and his kingly estate and how I had become a woodcutter; and how, after my time had been awhile serene, the world had again waxed turbid and troubled to me. So I wept bitterly and repeated this couplet:—

What time Fate's tyranny shall most oppress thee ✿ Perpend! one day shall joy thee, one distress thee!

Then I walked till I reached the home of my friend, the Tailor, 120 whom I found most anxiously expecting me; indeed he was, as the saying goes, on coals of fire for my account. And when he saw me he said, "All night long my heart hath been heavy, fearing for thee from wild beasts or other mischances. Now praise be to Allah for thy safety!" I thanked him for his friendly solicitude and, retiring to my corner, sat pondering and musing on what had befallen me; and I blamed and chided myself for my meddlesome folly and my frowardness in kicking the alcove. I was calling myself to account when behold, my friend, the Tailor, came to me and said, "O youth, in the shop there is an old man, a Persian,[212] who seeketh thee: he hath thy hatchet and thy sandals which he had taken to the woodcutters,[213] saying, I was going out at what time the Mu'azzin began the call to dawn-prayer, when I chanced upon these things and know not whose they are; so direct me to their owner. The woodcutters recognised thy hatchet and directed him to thee: he is sitting in my shop, so fare forth to him and thank him and take thine axe and sandals." When I heard these words I turned yellow with fear and felt stunned as by a blow; and, before I could recover myself, lo! the floor of my private room clove asunder, and out of it rose the Persian who was the

Ifrit. He had tortured the lady with exceeding tortures, natheless she would not confess to him aught; so he took the hatchet and sandals and said to her, "As surely as I am Jirjis of the seed of Iblis, I will bring thee back the owner of this and these!"[214] Then he went to the woodcutters with the pretence aforesaid and, being directed to me, after waiting a while in the shop till the fact was confirmed, he suddenly snatched me up as a hawk snatcheth a mouse and flew high in air; but presently descended and plunged with me under the earth (I being aswoon the while), and lastly set me down in the subterranean palace wherein I had passed that blissful night. And there I saw the lady stripped to the skin, her limbs bound to four stakes and blood welling from her sides. At the sight my eyes ran over with tears; but the Ifrit covered her person and said, "O wanton, is 121 not this man thy lover?" She looked upon me and replied, "I wot him not nor have I ever seen him before this hour!" Quoth the Ifrit, "What! this torture and yet no confessing;" and quoth she, "I never saw this man in my born days, and it is not lawful in Allah's sight to tell lies on him." "If thou know him not," said the Ifrit to her, "take this sword and strike off his head."[215] She hent the sword in hand and came close up to me; and I signalled to her with my eyebrows, my tears the while flowing adown my cheeks. She understood me and made answer, also by signs, "How couldest thou bring all this evil upon me?" and I rejoined after the same fashion, "This is the time for mercy and forgiveness." And the mute tongue of my case[216] spake aloud saying:—

Mine eyes were dragomans for my tongue betied ✿ And told full clear the love I fain would hide:

When last we met and tears in torrents railed ✿ For tongue struck dumb my glances testified:

She signed with eye-glance while her lips were mute ✿ I signed with fingers and she kenned th' implied:

Our eyebrows did all duty 'twixt us twain; ✿ And we being speechless Love spake loud and plain.

Then, O my mistress, the lady threw away the sword and said, "How shall I strike the neck of one I wot not, and who hath done me no evil? Such deed were not lawful in my law!" and she held her hand. Said the Ifrit, "'Tis grievous to thee to slay thy lover; and, because he hath lain with thee, thou endurest these torments and obstinately refusest to confess. After this it is clear to me that only like loveth and pitieth like." Then he turned to me and asked me, "O man, haply thou also dost not know this woman;" whereto I answered, "And pray who may she be? assuredly I never saw her till this instant." "Then take the sword," said he "and strike off her head and I will believe that, thou wottest her not and will leave thee free to go, and will not deal hardly with thee." I replied, "That will I do;" and, taking the sword went forward sharply and raised my hand to smite. But she signed to me with her eyebrows, "Have I failed thee in aught of love; and is it thus that thou requitest me?" I understood what her looks implied and answered 122 her with an eye-glance, "I will sacrifice my soul for thee." And the tongue of the case wrote in our hearts these lines:—

How many a lover with his eyebrows speaketh ✿ To his beloved, as his passion pleadeth:

With flashing eyne his passion he inspireth ✿ And well she seeth what his pleading needeth.

How sweet the look when each on other gazeth; ✿ And with what swiftness and how sure it speedeth:
And this with eyebrows all his passion writeth; ✿ And that with eyeballs all his passion readeth.

Then my eyes filled with tears to overflowing and I cast the sword from my hand saying, "O mighty Ifrit and hero, if a woman lacking wits and faith deem it unlawful to strike off my head, how can it be lawful for me, a man, to smite her neck whom I never saw in my whole life. I cannot do such misdeed though thou cause me drink the cup of death and perdition." Then said the Ifrit, "Ye twain show the good understanding between you; but I will let you see how such doings end." He took the sword, and struck off the lady's hands first, with four strokes, and then her feet; whilst I looked on and made sure of death and she farewelled me with her dying eyes. So the Ifrit cried at her, "Thou whorest and makest me a wittol with thine eyes;" and struck her so that her head went flying. Then turned he to me and said, "O mortal, we have it in our law that, when the wife committeth advowtry it is lawful for us to slay her. As for this damsel I snatched her away on her bride-night when she was a girl of twelve and she knew no one but myself. I used to come to her once in every ten days and lie with her the night, under the semblance of a man, a Persian; and when I was well assured that she had cuckolded me, I slew her. But as for thee I am not well satisfied that thou hast wronged me in her; nevertheless I must not let thee go unharmed; so ask a boon of me and I will grant it." Then I rejoiced, O my lady, with exceeding joy and said, "What boon shall I crave of thee?" He replied, "Ask me this boon; into what shape I shall bewitch thee; wilt thou be a dog, or an ass or an ape?" I rejoined (and indeed I had hoped that mercy might be shown me), "By Allah, spare me, that Allah spare thee for sparing a Moslem and a man who never wronged thee." And I humbled myself before him with exceeding humility, and remained standing in his presence, saying, "I am sore oppressed by 123circumstance." He replied "Talk me no long talk, it is in my power to slay thee; but I give thee instead thy choice." Quoth I, "O thou Ifrit, it would besit thee to pardon me even as the Envied pardoned the Envier." Quoth he, "And how was that?" and I began to tell him

THE TALE OF THE ENVIER AND THE ENVIED.

They relate, O Ifrit, that in a certain city were two men who dwelt in adjoining houses, having a common party-wall; and one of them envied the other and looked on him with an evil eye,[217] and did his utmost endeavour to injure him; and, albeit at all times he was jealous of his neighbour, his malice at last grew on him till he could hardly eat or enjoy the sweet pleasures of sleep. But the Envied did nothing save prosper; and the more the other strove to injure him, the more he got and gained and throve. At last the malice of his neighbour and the man's constant endeavour to work him a harm came to his knowledge; so he said, "By Allah! God's earth is wide enough for its people;" and, leaving the neighbourhood, he repaired to another city where he

bought himself a piece of land in which was a dried up draw-well,[218] old and in ruinous condition. Here he built him an oratory and, furnishing it with a few necessaries, took up his abode therein, and devoted himself to prayer and worshipping Allah Almighty; and Fakirs and holy mendicants flocked to him from all quarters; and his fame went abroad through the city and that country side. Presently the news reached his envious neighbour, of what good fortune had befallen him and how the city notables had become his disciples; so he travelled to the place and presented himself at the holy man's hermitage, and was met by the Envied with welcome and greeting and all honour. Then quoth the Envier, "I have a word to say to thee; and this is the cause of my faring hither, and I wish to give thee a piece of good news; so come with me to thy 124 cell." Thereupon the Envied arose and took the Envier by the hand, and they went in to the inmost part of the hermitage; but the Envier said, "Bid thy Fakirs retire to their cells, for I will not tell thee what I have to say, save in secret where none may hear us." Accordingly the Envied said to his Fakirs, "Retire to your private cells;" and, when all had done as he bade them, he set out with his visitor and walked a little way until the twain reached the ruinous old well. And as they stood upon the brink the Envier gave the Envied a push which tumbled him headlong into it, unseen of any; whereupon he fared forth, and went his ways, thinking to have had slain him. Now this well happened to be haunted by the Jann who, seeing the case, bore him up and let him down little by little, till he reached the bottom, when they seated him upon a large stone. Then one of them asked his fellows, "Wot ye who be this man?" and they answered, "Nay." "This man," continued the speaker, "is the Envied hight who, flying from the Envier, came to dwell in our city, and here founded this holy house, and he hath edified us by his litanies[219] and his lections of the Koran; but the Envier set out and journeyed till he rejoined him, and cunningly contrived to deceive him and cast him into the well where we now are. But the fame of this good man hath this very night come to the Sultan of our city who designeth to visit him on the morrow on account of his daughter." "What aileth his daughter?" asked one, and another answered "She is possessed of a spirit; for Maymun, son of Damdam, is madly in love with her; but, if this pious man knew the remedy, her cure would be as easy as could be." Hereupon one of them inquired, "And what is the medicine?" and he replied, "The black tom-cat which is with him in the oratory hath, on the end of his tail, a white spot, the size of a dirham; let him pluck seven white hairs from the spot, then let him fumigate her therewith and the Marid will flee from her and not return; so she shall be sane for the rest of her 125 life. All this took place, O Ifrit, within earshot of the Envied who listened readily. When dawn broke and morn arose in sheen and shone, the Fakirs went to seek the Shaykh and found him climbing up the wall of the well; whereby he was magnified in their eyes.[220] Then, knowing that naught save the black tom-cat could supply him with the remedy required, he plucked the seven tail-hairs from the white spot and laid them by him; and hardly had the sun risen ere the

Sultan entered the hermitage, with the great lords of his estate, bidding the rest of his retinue to remain standing outside. The Envied gave him a hearty welcome, and seating him by his side asked him, "Shall I tell thee the cause of thy coming?" The King answered "Yes." He continued, "Thou hast come upon pretext of a visitation;[221] but it is in thy heart to question me of thy daughter." Replied the King, ""Tis even so, O thou holy Shaykh;" and the Envied continued, "Send and fetch her, and I trust to heal her forthright (an such it be the will of Allah!). The King in great joy sent for his daughter, and they brought her pinioned and fettered. The Envied made her sit down behind a curtain and taking out the hairs fumigated her therewith; whereupon that which was in her head cried out and departed from her. The girl was at once restored to her right mind and veiling her face, said, "What hath happened and who brought me hither?" The Sultan rejoiced with a joy which nothing could exceed, and kissed his daughter's eyes,[222] and the holy man's hand; then, turning to his great lords, he asked, "How say ye! What fee deserveth he who hath made my daughter whole?" and all answered "He deserveth her to wife;" and the King said, "Ye speak sooth!" So he married him to her and the Envied thus became son-in-law to the King. And after a little the Wazir died and the King said, "Whom can I make Minister in his stead?" "Thy son-in-law," replied the courtiers. So the Envied became a Wazir; and after a while the Sultan also died and the lieges said, "Whom shall we make King?" and all cried, "The Wazir." So the Wazir was forthright made Sultan, and he became King regnant, a true ruler of men. One day as he had mounted his horse; and, in the eminence 126 of his kinglihood, was riding amidst his Emirs and Wazirs and the Grandees of his realm his eye fell upon his old neighbour, the Envier, who stood afoot on his path; so he turned to one of his Ministers, and said, "Bring hither that man and cause him no affright." The Wazir brought him and the King said, "Give him a thousand miskáls[223] of gold from the treasury, and load him ten camels with goods for trade, and send him under escort to his own town." Then he bade his enemy farewell and sent him away and forbore to punish him for the many and great evils he had done. See, O Ifrit, the mercy of the Envied to the Envier, who had hated him from the beginning and had borne him such bitter malice and never met him without causing him trouble; and had driven him from house and home, and then had journeyed for the sole purpose of taking his life by throwing him into the well. Yet he did not requite his injurious dealing, but forgave him and was bountiful to him.[224] Then I wept before him, O my lady, with sore weeping, never was there sorer, and I recited:—

Pardon my fault, for 'tis the wise man's wont ✿ All faults to pardon and revenge forgo:
In sooth all manner faults in me contain ✿ Then deign of goodness mercy-grace to show:
Whoso imploreth pardon from on High ✿ Should hold his hand from sinners here below.

Said the Ifrit, "Lengthen not thy words! As to my slaying thee fear it not, and as to my pardoning thee hope it not; but from my bewitching thee there is no escape." Then he tore me from the ground which closed under my feet and flew with me into the

firmament till I saw the earth as a large white cloud or a saucer[225] in the midst of the waters. Presently he set me down on a mountain, and taking a little dust, over which he muttered some magical words, sprinkled me therewith, saying, "Quit that shape and take thou the shape of an ape!" And on the instant I became an ape, a tail-less baboon, the son of a century[226]. Now when he had left me and I saw myself in this ugly and hateful shape, I wept for myself, but resigned my soul to the tyranny of Time and Circumstance, well weeting that Fortune is fair and constant to no man. I 127 descended the mountain and found at the foot a desert plain, long and broad, over which I travelled for the space of a month till my course brought me to the brink of the briny sea.[227] After standing there awhile, I was ware of a ship in the offing which ran before a fair wind making for the shore: I hid myself behind a rock on the beach and waited till the ship drew near, when I leaped on board. I found her full of merchants and passengers and one of them cried, "O Captain, this ill-omened brute will bring us ill-luck!" and another said, "Turn this ill-omened beast out from among us;" the Captain said, "Let us kill it!" another said, "Slay it with the sword;" a third, "Drown it;" and a fourth, "Shoot it with an arrow." But I sprang up and laid hold of the Rais's[228] skirt, and shed tears which poured down my chops. The Captain took pity on me, and said, "O merchants! this ape hath appealed to me for protection and I will protect him; henceforth he is under my charge: so let none do him aught hurt or harm, otherwise there will be bad blood between us." Then he entreated me kindly and whatsoever he said I understood and ministered to his every want and served him as a servant, albeit my tongue would not obey my wishes; so that he came to love me. The vessel sailed on, the wind being fair, for the space of fifty days; at the end of which we cast anchor under the walls of a great city wherein was a world of people, especially learned men, none could tell their number save Allah. No sooner had we arrived than we were visited by certain Mameluke-officials from the King of that city; who, after boarding us, greeted the merchants and giving them joy of safe arrival said, "Our King welcometh you, and sendeth you this roll of paper, whereupon each and every of you must write a line. For ye shall know that the King's Minister, a calligrapher of renown, is dead, and the King hath sworn a solemn oath that he will make none Wazir in his stead who cannot write as well as he could." He then gave us the scroll which measured ten cubits long by a breadth of one, and each of the merchants who knew how to write wrote a line thereon, even to the last of them; after which I stood up (still in the shape of an ape) and snatched the roll out of their hands. They feared lest I should tear it or throw it overboard; so they tried to stay me and scare me, but I signed to them that I could write, whereat all marvelled, saying, "We never yet saw an ape 128 write." And the Captain cried, "Let him write; and if he scribble and scrabble we will kick him out and kill him; but if he write fair and scholarly I will adopt him as my son; for surely I never yet saw a more intelligent and well-mannered monkey than he. Would Heaven my real son were his match in morals

and manners." I took the reed, and stretching out my paw, dipped it in ink and wrote, in the hand used for letters,[229] these two couplets:—

Time hath recorded gifts she gave the great; ✿ But none recorded thine which be far higher;

Allah ne'er orphan men by loss of thee ✿ Who be of Goodness mother, Bounty's sire.

And I wrote in Rayháni or larger letters elegantly curved:—[230]

Thou hast a reed[231] of rede to every land, ✿ Whose driving causeth all the world to thrive;

Nil is the Nile of Misraim by thy boons ✿ Who makest misery smile with fingers five.

Then I wrote in the Suls[232] character:—

There be no writer who from Death shall fleet, ✿ But what his hand hath writ men shall repeat:

Write, therefore, naught save what shall serve thee when ✿ Thou see't on Judgment-Day an so thou see't!

Then I wrote in the character Naskh:—[233]

129 When to sore parting Fate our love shall doom, ✿ To distant life by Destiny decreed,

We cause the inkhorn's lips to 'plain our pains, ✿ And tongue our utterance with the talking reed.

And I wrote in the Túmár character[234]:—

Kingdom with none endures; if thou deny ✿ This truth, where be the Kings of earlier earth?

Set trees of goodliness while rule endures, ✿ And when thou art fallen they shall tell thy worth.

And I wrote in the character Muhakkak[235]:—

When oped the inkhorn of thy wealth and fame ✿ Take ink of generous heart and gracious hand;

Write brave and noble deeds while write thou can ✿ And win thee praise from point of pen and brand.

Then I gave the scroll to the officials and, after we all had written our line, they carried it before the King. When he saw the paper no writing pleased him save my writing; and he said to the assembled courtiers, "Go seek the writer of these lines and dress him in a splendid robe of honour; then mount him on a she-mule,[236] 130 let a band of music precede him and bring him to the presence." At these words they smiled and the King was wroth with them and cried "O accursed! I give you an order and you laugh at me?" "O King," replied they, "if we laugh 'tis not at thee and not without a cause." "And what is it?" asked he; and they answered, "O King, thou orderest us to bring to thy presence the man who wrote these lines; now the truth is that he who wrote them is not of the sons of Adam,[237] but an ape, a tail-less baboon, belonging to the ship-Captain." Quoth he, "Is this true that you say?" Quoth they "Yea! by the rights of thy munificence!" The King marvelled at their words and shook with mirth and said, "I am minded to buy this ape of the Captain." Then he sent messengers to the ship with the mule, the dress, the guard and the state-drums, saying, "Not the less do you clothe him in the robe of honour and mount him on the mule and let him be surrounded by the guards and preceded by the band of music." They came to the ship and took me from the Captain and robed me in the robe of honour and, mounting me on the she-mule, carried me in state-procession through the streets; whilst the people were amazed and amused. And folk said to one another "Halloo! is

our Sultan about to make an ape his Minister?"; and came all agog crowding to gaze at me, and the town was astir and turned topsy-turvy on my account. When they brought me up to the King and set me in his presence, I kissed the ground before him three times, and once before the High Chamberlain and great officers, and he bade me be seated, and I sat respectfully on shins and knees,[238] and all who were present marvelled at my fine manners, and the King most of all. Thereupon he ordered the lieges to retire; and, when none remained save the King's majesty, the Eunuch on duty and a little white slave, he bade them set before me the table of food, containing all manner of birds, whatever hoppeth and flieth and treadeth in nest, such as quail and sand-grouse. Then he signed to me to eat with him; so I rose and kissed ground before him, then sat me down and ate with him. And when the table was removed I washed my hands in seven 131 waters and took the reed-case and reed; and wrote instead of speaking these couplets:—

Wail for the little partridges on porringer and plate; ✿ Cry for the ruin of the fries and stews well marinate:

Keen as I keen for loved, lost daughters of the Katá-grouse,[239] ✿ And omelette round the fair enbrownèd fowls agglomerate:

O fire in heart of me for fish, those *deux poissons* I saw, ✿ Bedded on new made scones[240] and cakes in piles to laniate.

For thee, O vermicelli! aches my very maw! I hold ✿ Without thee every taste and joy are clean annihilate.

Those eggs have rolled their yellow eyes in torturing pains of fire ✿ Ere served with hash and fritters hot, that delicatest cate,

Praisèd be Allah for His baked and roast and ah! how good ✿ This pulse, these pot-herbs steeped in oil with eysill combinate!

When hunger sated was, I elbow-propt fell back upon ✿ Meat-pudding[241] wherein gleamed the bangles that my wits amate.

Then woke I sleeping appetite to eat as though in sport ✿ Sweets from brocaded trays and kickshaws most elaborate.

Be patient, soul of me! Time is a haughty, jealous wight; ✿ To-day he seems dark-lowering and to-morrow fair to sight.[242]

Then I rose and seated myself at a respectful distance while the King read what I had written, and marvelled, exclaiming, "O the miracle, that an ape should be gifted with this graceful style and this power of penmanship! By Allah, 'tis a wonder of wonders!"

132 Presently they set before the King choice wines in flagons of glass and he drank: then he passed on the cup to me; and I kissed the ground and drank and wrote on it:—

With fire they boilèd me to loose my tongue,[243] ✿ And pain and patience gave for fellowship:

Hence comes it hands of men upbear me high ✿ And honey-dew from lips of maid I sip!

And these also:—

Morn saith to Night, "withdraw and let me shine;" ✿ So drain we draughts that dull all pain and pine:[244]

I doubt, so fine the glass, the wine so clear, ✿ If 'tis the wine in glass or glass in wine.

The King read my verse and said with a sigh, "Were these gifts[245] in a man, he would excel all the folk of his time and age!" Then he called for the chess-board, and said, "Say, wilt thou play with me?"; and I signed with my head, "Yes." Then I came forward and ordered the pieces and played with him two games, both of which I won. He was speechless with surprise; so I took the pen-case and, drawing forth a reed, wrote on the board these two couplets:—

Two hosts fare fighting thro' the livelong day ✿ Nor is their battling ever finishèd,

Until, when darkness girdeth them about, ✿ The twain go sleeping in a single bed.[246]

The King read these lines with wonder and delight and said to his Eunuch,[247] "O Mukbil, go to thy mistress, Sitt al-Husn,[248] and say her, Come, speak the King who biddeth thee hither to take thy 133solace in seeing this right wondrous ape!" So the Eunuch went out and presently returned with the lady who, when she saw me veiled her face and said, "O my father! hast thou lost all sense of honour? How cometh it thou art pleased to send for me and show me to strange men?" "O Sitt al-Husn," said he, "no man is here save this little foot-page and the Eunuch who reared thee and I, thy father. From whom, then, dost thou veil thy face?" She answered, "This whom thou deemest an ape is a young man, a clever and polite, a wise and learned and the son of a King; but he is ensorcelled and the Ifrit Jirjaris, who is of the seed of Iblis, cast a spell upon him, after putting to death his own wife the daughter of King Ifitamus lord of the Islands of Abnus." The King marvelled at his daughter's words and, turning to me, said, "Is this true that she saith of thee?"; and I signed by a nod of my head the answer "Yea, verily;" and wept sore. Then he asked his daughter "Whence knewest thou that he is ensorcelled?"; and she answered "O my dear papa, there was with me in my childhood an old woman, a wily one and a wise and a witch to boot, and she taught me the theory of magic and its practice; and I took notes in writing and therein waxed perfect, and have committed to memory an hundred and seventy chapters of egromantic formulas, by the least of which I could transport the stones of thy city behind the Mountain Kaf and the Circumambient Main,[249] or make its site an abyss of the sea and its people fishes swimming in the midst of it." "O my daughter," said her father, "I conjure thee, by my life, disenchant this young man, that I may make him my Wazir and marry thee to him, for indeed he is an ingenious youth and a deeply learned." "With joy and goodly gree," she replied and, hending in hand an iron knife whereon was inscribed the name of Allah in Hebrew characters, she described a wide circle——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fourteenth Night,



She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kalandar continued his tale thus:—O my lady, the King's daughter hent in 134hand a knife whereon were inscribed Hebrew characters and described a wide circle in the midst of the palace-hall, and therein wrote in Cufic letters mysterious names and talismans; and she uttered words and muttered charms, some of which we understood and others we understood not. Presently the world waxed dark before our sight till we thought that the sky was falling upon our heads, and lo! the Ifrit presented himself in his own

shape and aspect. His hands were like many-pronged pitchforks, his legs like the masts of great ships, and his eyes like cressets of gleaming fire. We were in terrible fear of him but the King's daughter cried at him, "No welcome to thee and no greeting, O dog!" whereupon he changed to the form of a lion and said, "O traitress, how is it thou hast broken the oath we sware that neither should contraire other!" "O accursed one," answered she, "how could there be a compact between me and the like of thee?" Then said he, "Take what thou has brought on thyself;" and the lion opened his jaws and rushed upon her; but she was too quick for him; and, plucking a hair from her head, waved it in the air muttering over it the while; and the hair straightway became a trenchant sword-blade, wherewith she smote the lion and cut him in twain. Then the two halves flew away in air and the head changed to a scorpion and the Princess became a huge serpent and set upon the accursed scorpion, and the two fought, coiling and uncoiling, a stiff fight for an hour at least. Then the scorpion changed to a vulture and the serpent became an eagle which set upon the vulture, and hunted him for an hour's time, till he became a black tom-cat, which miauled and grinned and spat. Thereupon the eagle changed into a piebald wolf and these two battled in the palace for a long time, when the cat, seeing himself overcome, changed into a worm and crept into a huge red pomegranate,[250] which lay beside the jetting fountain in the midst of the palace hall. Whereupon the pomegranate swelled to the size of a water-melon in air; and, falling upon the marble pavement of the palace, broke to pieces, and all the grains fell out and were scattered about till they covered the whole floor. Then the wolf shook himself and became a snow-white cock, which fell to picking up the grains purposing not to leave 135 one; but by doom of destiny one seed rolled to the fountain-edge and there lay hid. The cock fell to crowing and clapping his wings and signing to us with his beak as if to ask, "Are any grains left?" But we understood not what he meant, and he cried to us with so loud a cry that we thought the palace would fall upon us. Then he ran over all the floor till he saw the grain which had rolled to the fountain edge, and rushed eagerly to pick it up when behold, it sprang into the midst of the water and became a fish and dived to the bottom of the basin. Thereupon the cock changed to a big fish, and plunged in after the other, and the two disappeared for a while and lo! we heard loud shrieks and cries of pain which made us tremble. After this the Ifrit rose out of the water, and he was as a burning flame; casting fire and smoke from his mouth and eyes and nostrils. And immediately the Princess likewise came forth from the basin and she was one live coal of flaming lowe; and these two, she and he, battled for the space of an hour, until their fires entirely compassed them about and their thick smoke filled the palace. As for us we panted for breath, being well-nigh suffocated, and we longed to plunge into the water fearing lest we be burnt up and utterly destroyed; and the King said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah the Glorious, the Great! Verily we are Allah's and unto Him are we returning! Would Heaven I had not urged my

daughter to attempt the disenchantment of this ape-fellow, whereby I have imposed upon her the terrible task of fighting yon accursed Ifrit against whom all the Ifrits in the world could not prevail. And would Heaven we had never seen this ape, Allah never assain nor bless the day of his coming! We thought to do a good deed by him before the face of Allah,[251] and to release him from enchantment, and now we have brought this trouble and travail upon our heart." But I, O my lady, was tongue-tied and powerless to say a word to him. Suddenly, ere we were ware of aught, the Ifrit yelled out from under the flames and, coming up to us as we stood on the estrade, blew fire in our faces. The damsel overtook him and breathed blasts of fire at his face and the sparks from her and from him rained down upon us, and her sparks did us no harm, but one of his sparks alighted upon my eye and destroyed it making me a monocular ape; and another fell on the King's face scorching the lower half, burning off his beard and mustachios and causing 136 his under teeth to fall out; while a third alighted on the Castrato's breast, killing him on the spot. So we despaired of life and made sure of death when lo! a voice repeated the saying, "Allah is most Highest! Allah is most Highest! Aidance and victory to all who the Truth believe; and disappointment and disgrace to all who the religion of Mohammed, the Moon of Faith, unbelieve," The speaker was the Princess who had burnt the Ifrit, and he was become a heap of ashes. Then she came up to us and said, "Reach me a cup of water." They brought it to her and she spoke over it words we understood not, and sprinkling me with it cried, "By virtue of the Truth, and by the Most Great name of Allah, I charge thee return to thy former shape." And behold, I shook and became a man as before, save that I had utterly lost an eye. Then she cried out, "The fire! The fire! O my dear papa an arrow from the accursed hath wounded me to the death, for I am not used to fight with the Jann; had he been a man I had slain him in the beginning. I had no trouble till the time when the pomegranate burst and the grains scattered, but I overlooked the seed wherein was the very life of the Jinni. Had I picked it up he had died on the spot, but as Fate and Fortune decreed, I saw it not; so he came upon me all unawares and there befel between him and me a sore struggle under the earth and high in air and in the water; and, as often as I opened on him a gate,[252] he opened on me another gate and a stronger, till at last he opened on me the gate of fire, and few are saved upon whom the door of fire openeth. But Destiny willed that my cunning prevail over his cunning; and I burned him to death after I vainly exhorted him to embrace the religion of Al-Islam. As for me I am a dead woman; Allah supply my place to you!" Then she called upon Heaven for help and ceased not to implore relief from the fire; when lo! a black spark shot up from her robed feet to her thighs; then it flew to her bosom and thence to her face. When it reached her face she wept and said, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God and that Mahommed is the Apostle of God!" And we looked at her and saw naught but a heap of ashes by the side of the heap that had been the Ifrit. We mourned for her and I wished I had been in her place, so had I

not seen her lovely face who had [137] worked me such weal become ashes; but there is no gainsaying the will of Allah. When the King saw his daughter's terrible death, he plucked out what was left of his beard and beat his face and rent his raiment; and I did as he did and we both wept over her. Then came in the Chamberlains and Grandees and were amazed to find two heaps of ashes and the Sultan in a fainting fit; so they stood round him till he revived and told them what had befallen his daughter from the Ifrit; whereat their grief was right grievous and the women and the slave-girls shrieked and keened,[253] and they continued their lamentations for the space of seven days. Moreover the King bade build over his daughter's ashes a vast vaulted tomb, and burn therein wax tapers and sepulchral lamps: but as for the Ifrit's ashes they scattered them on the winds, speeding them to the curse of Allah. Then the Sultan fell sick of a sickness that well nigh brought him to his death for a month's space; and, when health returned to him and his beard grew again and he had been converted by the mercy of Allah to Al-Islam, he sent for me and said, "O youth, Fate had decreed for us the happiest of lives, safe from all the chances and changes of Time, till thou camest to us, when troubles fell upon us. Would to Heaven we had never seen thee and the foul face of thee! For we took pity on thee and thereby we have lost our all. I have on thy account first lost my daughter who to me was well worth an hundred men; secondly I have suffered that which befel me by reason of the fire and the loss of my teeth, and my Eunuch also was slain. I blame thee not, for it was out of thy power to prevent this: the doom of Allah was on thee as well as on us and thanks be to the Almighty for that my daughter delivered thee, albeit thereby she lost her own life! Go forth now, O my son, from this my city, and suffice thee what hath befallen us through thee, even although 'twas decreed for us. Go forth in peace; and if I ever see thee again I will surely slay thee." And he cried out at me. So I went forth from his presence, O my lady, weeping bitterly [138] and hardly believing in my escape and knowing not whither I should wend. And I recalled all that had befallen me, my meeting the tailor, my love for the damsel in the palace beneath the earth, and my narrow escape from the Ifrit, even after he had determined to do me die; and how I had entered the city as an ape and was now leaving it a man once more. Then I gave thanks to Allah and said, "My eye and not my life!" and before leaving the place I entered the bath and shaved my poll and beard and mustachios and eyebrows; and cast ashes on my head and donned the coarse black woollen robe of a Kalandar. Then I fared forth, O my lady, and every day I pondered all the calamities which had betided me, and I wept and repeated these couplets:—

"I am distraught, yet verily His ruth abides with me, ✿ Tho' round me gather hosts of ills, whence come I cannot see:

Patient I'll be till Patience self with me impatient wax; ✿ Patient for ever till the Lord fulfil my destiny:

Patient I'll bide without complaint, a wronged and vanquisht man; ✿ Patient as sunparcht wight that spans the desert's sandy sea:

Patient I'll be till Aloe's[254] self unwittingly allow ✿ I'm patient under bitterer things than bitterest aloë:

No bitterer things than aloes or than patience for mankind; ✿ Yet bitterer than the twain to me were Patience' treachery:

My sere and seamed and seared brow would dragoman my sore ✿ If soul could search my sprite and there unsecret secrecy:

Were hills to bear the load I bear they'd crumble 'neath the weight; ✿ 'Twould still the roaring wind, 'twould quench the flame-tongue's flagrancy,

And whoso saith the world is sweet certès a day he'll see ✿ With more than aloes' bitterness and aloes' pungency."

Then I journeyed through many regions and saw many a city intending for Baghdad, that I might seek audience, in the House 139 of Peace,[255] with the Commander of the Faithful and tell him all that had befallen me. I arrived here this very night and found my brother in Allah, this first Kalandar, standing about as one perplexed; so I saluted him with "Peace be upon thee," and entered into discourse with him. Presently up came our brother, this third Kalandar, and said to us, "Peace be with you! I am a stranger;" whereto we replied, "And we too be strangers, who have come hither this blessed night." So we all three walked on together, none of us knowing the other's history, till Destiny drave us to this door and we came in to you. Such then is my story and my reason for shaving my beard and mustachios, and this is what caused the loss of my eye. Said the house-mistress "Thy tale is indeed a rare; so rub thy head and wend thy ways;" but he replied, "I will not budge till I hear my companions' stories." Then came forward the third Kalandar, and said, "O illustrious lady! my history is not like that of these my comrades, but more wondrous and far more marvellous. In their case Fate and Fortune came down on them unawares; but I drew down destiny upon my own head and brought sorrow on mine own soul, and shaved my own beard and lost my own eye. Hear then"

THE THIRD KALANDAR'S TALE.

Know, O my lady, that I also am a King and the Son of a King and my name is Ajíb son of Khazíb. When my father died I succeeded him; and I ruled and did justice and dealt fairly by all my lieges. I delighted in sea trips, for my capital stood on the shore, before which the ocean stretched far and wide; and nearhand were many great islands with sconces and garrisons in the midst of the main. My fleet numbered fifty merchantmen, and as many yachts for pleasance, and an hundred and fifty sail ready fitted for holy war with the Unbelievers. It fortuned that I had a mind to enjoy myself on the islands aforesaid, so I took ship with my people in ten keel; and, carrying with me a month's victual, I set out on a twenty days voyage. But one night a head wind struck us, and the sea rose against us with huge waves; the billows sorely buffetted us and a dense darkness settled round us. We gave ourselves 140 up for lost and I said,

"Whoso endangereth his days, e'en an he 'scape deserveth no praise." Then we prayed to Allah and besought Him; but the storm-blasts ceased not to blow against us nor the surges to strike us till morning broke, when the gale fell, the seas sank to mirrory stillness and the sun shone upon us kindly clear. Presently we made an island where we landed and cooked somewhat of food, and ate heartily and took our rest for a couple of days. Then we set out again and sailed other twenty days, the seas broadening and the land shrinking. Presently the current ran counter to us, and we found ourselves in strange waters, where the Captain had lost his reckoning, and was wholly bewildered in this sea; so said we to the look-out man,[256] "Get thee to the mast-head and keep thine eyes open." He swarmed up the mast and looked out and cried aloud, "O Rais, I espy to starboard something dark, very like a fish floating on the face of the sea, and to larboard there is a loom in the midst of the main, now black and now bright." When the Captain heard the look-out's words he dashed his turband on the deck and plucked out his beard and beat his face saying, "Good news indeed! we be all dead men; not one of us can be saved." And he fell to weeping and all of us wept for his weeping and also for our lives; and I said, "O Captain, tell us what it is the look-out saw." "O my Prince," answered he, "know that we lost our course on the night of the storm, which was followed on the morrow by a two-days' calm during which we made no way; and we have gone astray eleven days reckoning from that night, with ne'er a wind to bring us back to our true course. To-morrow by the end of the day we shall come to a mountain of black stone, hight the Magnet Mountain;[257] for thither the currents carry us willy-nilly. 141 As soon as we are under its lea, the ship's sides will open and every nail in plank will fly out and cleave fast to the mountain; for that Almighty Allah hath gifted the loadstone with a mysterious virtue and a love for iron, by reason whereof all which is iron travelleth towards it; and on this mountain is much iron, how much none knoweth save the Most High, from the many vessels which have been lost there since the days of yore. The bright spot upon its summit is a dome of yellow laton from Andalusia, vaulted upon ten columns; and on its crown is a horseman who rideth a horse of brass and holdeth in hand a lance of laton; and there hangeth on his bosom a tablet of lead graven with names and talismans." And he presently added, "And, O King, none destroyeth folk save the rider on that steed, nor will the egromancy be dispelled till he fall from his horse."[258] Then, O my lady, the Captain wept with exceeding weeping and we all made sure of death-doom and each and every one of us farewelled his friend and charged him with his last will and testament in case he might be saved. We slept not that night and in the morning we found ourselves much nearer the Loadstone Mountain, whither the waters drave us with a violent send. When the ships were close under its lea they opened and the nails flew out and all the iron in them sought the Magnet Mountain and clove to it like a network; so that by the end of the day we were all struggling in the waves round about the mountain. Some of us were saved, but more were drowned and even those who had escaped knew not one another, so stupefied were they by the beating of the

billows and the raving of the winds. As for me, O my lady, Allah (be His name exalted!) preserved my life that I might suffer whatso He willed to me of hardship, misfortune and calamity; for I scrambled upon a plank from one of the ships, and the wind and waters threw it at the feet of the Mountain. There I found a 142 practicable path leading by steps carven out of the rock to the summit, and I called on the name of Allah Almighty[259]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fifteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the third Kalandar said to the lady (the rest of the party sitting fast bound and the slaves standing with swords drawn over their heads):—And after calling on the name of Almighty Allah and passionately beseeching Him, I breasted the ascent, clinging to the steps and notches hewn in the stone, and mounted little by little. And the Lord stilled the wind and aided me in the ascent, so that I succeeded in reaching the summit. There I found no resting-place save the dome, which I entered, joying with exceeding joy at my escape; and made the Wuzu-ablution[260] and prayed a two-bow prayer[261] a thanksgiving to God for my preservation. Then I fell asleep under the dome, and heard in my dream a mysterious Voice[262] saying, "O son of Khazib! when thou wakest from thy sleep dig under thy feet and thou shalt find a bow of brass and three leaden arrows, inscribed with talismans and characts. Take the bow and shoot the arrows at the horseman on the dome-top and free mankind from this sore calamity. When thou hast shot him he shall fall into the sea, and the horse will also drop at thy feet: then bury it in the place of the bow. This done, the main will swell and rise till it is level with the mountain-head, and there will appear on it a skiff carrying a man of laton (other than he thou shalt have shot) holding in his hand a pair of paddles. He will come to thee and do thou embark with him but beware of saying Bismillah or of otherwise naming Allah Almighty. He will row thee for a space of ten days, till he bring thee to certain Islands called the Islands of Safety, and thence thou shalt easily reach a port and find those who will convey thee 143 to thy native land; and all this shall be fulfilled to thee so thou call not on the name of Allah." Then I started up from my sleep in joy and gladness and, hastening to do the bidding of the mysterious Voice, found the bow and arrows and shot at the horseman and tumbled him into the main, whilst the horse dropped at my feet; so I took it and buried it. Presently the sea surged up and rose till it reached the top of the mountain; nor had I long to wait ere I saw a skiff in the offing coming towards me. I gave thanks to Allah; and, when the skiff came up to me, I saw therein a man of brass with a tablet of lead on his breast inscribed with talismans and characts; and I embarked without uttering a word. The boatman rowed on with me through the first day and the second and the third, in all ten whole days, till I caught sight of the Islands of Safety; whereat I joyed with exceeding joy and for stress of gladness exclaimed, "Allah! Allah! In the name of Allah! There is no god but *the* God

and Allah is Almighty."[263] Thereupon the skiff forthwith upset and cast me upon the sea; then it righted and sank deep into the depths. Now I am a fair swimmer, so I swam the whole day till nightfall, when my forearms and shoulders were numbed with fatigue and I felt like to die; so I testified to my Faith, expecting naught but death. The sea was still surging under the violence of the winds, and presently there came a billow like a hillock; and, bearing me up high in air, threw me with a long cast on dry land, that His will might be fulfilled. I crawled up the beach and doffing my raiment wrung it out to dry and spread it in the sunshine: then I lay me down and slept the whole night. As soon as it was day, I donned my clothes and rose to look whither I should walk. Presently I came to a thicket of low trees; and, making a cast round it, found that the spot whereon I stood was an islet, a mere holm, girt on all sides by the ocean; whereupon I said to myself, "Whatso freeth me from one great calamity casteth me into a greater!" But while I was pondering my case and longing for death behold, I saw afar off a ship making for the island; so I clomb a tree and hid myself among the branches. Presently the ship anchored and landed ten slaves, blackamoors, bearing iron hoes and baskets, who walked on till they reached the middle of the island. Here they dug deep into the ground, until they uncovered a plate of metal 144 which they lifted, thereby opening a trap-door. After this they returned to the ship and thence brought bread and flour, honey and fruits, clarified butter,[264] leather bottles containing liquors and many household stuffs; also furniture, table-service and mirrors; rugs, carpets and in fact all needed to furnish a dwelling; and they kept going to and fro, and descending by the trap-door, till they had transported into the dwelling all that was in the ship. After this the slaves again went on board and brought back with them garments as rich as may be, and in the midst of them came an old old man, of whom very little was left, for Time had dealt hardly and harshly with him, and all that remained of him was a bone wrapped in a rag of blue stuff, through which the winds whistled west and east. As saith the poet of him:—

Time gars me tremble Ah, how sore the baulk! ✿ While Time in pride of strength doth ever stalk:

Time was I walked nor ever felt I tired, ✿ Now am I tired albe I never walk!

And the Shaykh held by the hand a youth cast in beauty's mould, all elegance and perfect grace; so fair that his comeliness deserved to be proverbial; for he was as a green bough or the tender young of the roe, ravishing every heart with his loveliness and subduing every soul with his coquetry and amorous ways.[265] It was of him the poet spake when he said:—

Beauty they brought with him to make compare; ✿ But Beauty hung her head in shame and care:

Quoth they, "O Beauty, hast thou seen his like?" ✿ And Beauty cried, "His like? not anywhere!"

They stinted not their going, O my lady, till all went down by the trap-door and did not reappear for an hour, or rather more; at the end of which time the slaves and the old man came up without 145 the youth and, replacing the iron plate and carefully closing the door-slab, as it was before, they returned to the ship and made sail and

were lost to my sight. When they turned away to depart, I came down from the tree and, going to the place I had seen them fill up, scraped off and removed the earth; and in patience possessed my soul till I had cleared the whole of it away. Then appeared the trap-door which was of wood, in shape and size like a millstone; and when I lifted it up it disclosed a winding staircase of stone. At this I marvelled and, descending the steps till I reached the last, found a fair hall, spread with various kinds of carpets and silk stuffs, wherein was a youth sitting upon a raised couch and leaning back on a round cushion with a fan in his hand and nosegays and posies of sweet scented herbs and flowers before him;[266] but he was alone and not a soul near him in the great vault. When he saw me he turned pale; but I saluted him courteously and said, "Set thy mind at ease and calm thy fears; no harm shall come near thee; I am a man like thyself and the son of a King to boot; whom the decrees of Destiny have sent to bear thee company and cheer thee in thy loneliness. But now tell me, what is thy story and what causeth thee to dwell thus in solitude under the ground?" When he was assured that I was of his kind and no Jinni, he rejoiced and his fine colour returned; and, making me draw near to him he said, "O my brother, my story is a strange story and 'tis this. My father is a merchant-jeweller possessed of great wealth, who hath white and black slaves travelling and trading on his account in ships and on camels, and trafficking with the most distant cities; but he was not blessed with a child, not even one. Now on a certain night he dreamed a dream that 146 he should be favoured with a son, who would be short lived; so the morning dawned on my father bringing him woe and weeping. On the following night my mother conceived and my father noted down the date of her becoming pregnant.[267] Her time being fulfilled she bare me; whereat my father rejoiced and made banquets and called together the neighbours and fed the Fakirs and the poor, for that he had been blessed with issue near the end of his days. Then he assembled the astrologers and astronomers who knew the places of the planets, and the wizards and wise ones of the time, and men learned in horoscopes and nativities;[268] and they drew out my birth scheme and said to my father:—Thy son shall live to fifteen years, but in his fifteenth there is a sinister aspect; an he safely tide it over he shall attain a great age. And the cause that threateneth him with death is this. In the Sea of Peril standeth the Mountain Magnet hight; on whose summit is a horseman of yellow laton seated on a horse also of brass and bearing on his breast a tablet of lead. Fifty days after this rider shall fall from his steed thy son will die and his slayer will be he who shoots down the horseman, a Prince named Ajib son of King Khazib. My father grieved with exceeding grief to hear these words; but reared me in tenderest fashion and educated me excellently well till my fifteenth year was told. Ten days ago news came to him that the horseman had fallen into the sea and he who shot him down was named Ajib son of King Khazib. My father thereupon wept bitter tears at the need of parting with me and became like one possessed of a Jinni. However, being in mortal fear for me, he built me this place under the earth; and, stocking it

with all required for the few days still remaining, he brought me hither in a ship and left me here. Ten are already past and, when the forty shall have gone by without danger to me, he will come and take me away; for he hath done all this only in fear of Prince 147Ajib. Such, then, is my story and the cause of my loneliness." When I heard his history I marvelled and said in my mind, "I am the Prince Ajib who hath done all this; but as Allah is with me I will surely not slay him!" So said I to him, O my lord, far from thee be this hurt and harm and then, please Allah, thou shalt not suffer cark nor care nor aught disquietude, for I will tarry with thee and serve thee as a servant, and then wend my ways; and, after having borne thee company during the forty days, I will go with thee to thy home where thou shalt give me an escort of some of thy Mamelukes with whom I may journey back to my own city; and the Almighty shall requite thee for me. He was glad to hear these words, when I rose and lighted a large wax-candle and trimmed the lamps and the three lanterns; and I set on meat and drink and sweetmeats. We ate and drank and sat talking over various matters till the greater part of the night was gone; when he lay down to rest and I covered him up and went to sleep myself. Next morning I arose and warmed a little water, then lifted him gently so as to awake him and brought him the warm water wherewith he washed his face[269] and said to me, "Heaven requite thee for me with every blessing, O youth! By Allah, if I get quit of this danger and am saved from him whose name is Ajib bin Khazib, I will make my father reward thee and send thee home healthy and wealthy; and, if I die, then my blessing be upon thee." I answered, "May the day never dawn on which evil shall betide thee; and may Allah make my last day before thy last day!" Then I set before him somewhat of food and we ate; and I got ready perfumes for fumigating the hall, wherewith he was pleased. Moreover I made him a Mankalah-cloth;[270] and we played and ate sweetmeats and we played again and took our pleasure till nightfall, when I rose and lighted the lamps, and set before him somewhat to eat, and sat telling him stories till the hours of darkness were far spent. Then he lay down to rest and I covered him up and rested also. And thus I continued to do, O my lady for days and nights, and affection for him took root in my heart and my sorrow was 148eased, and I said to myself, The astrologers lied[271] when they predicted that he should be slain by Ajib bin Khazib: by Allah, I will not slay him. I ceased not ministering to him and conversing and carousing with him and telling him all manner tales for thirty-nine days. On the fortieth night[272] the youth rejoiced and said, "O my brother, Alhamdolillah!—praise be to Allah—who hath preserved me from death and this is by thy blessing and the blessing of thy coming to me; and I pray God that He restore thee to thy native land. But now, O my brother, I would thou warm me some water for the Ghusl-ablution and do thou kindly bathe me and change my clothes." I replied, "With love and gladness;" and I heated water in plenty and carrying it in to him washed his body all over, the washing of health,[273] with meal of lupins[274] and rubbed him well and changed his clothes and spread him a high bed whereon he lay

down to rest, being drowsy after bathing. Then said he, "O my brother, cut me up a water-melon, and sweeten it with a little sugar-candy."[275] So I went to the store-room and bringing out a fine water-melon I found there, set it on a platter and laid it before him saying, "O my master hast thou not a knife?" "Here it is," answered he, "over my head upon the high shelf." So I got up in haste and taking the knife drew it from its sheath; but my foot slipped in stepping down and I fell heavily upon the youth holding in my hand the knife which hastened to fulfil what had been written on the Day that decided the destinies of man, and buried itself, as if planted, in the youth's heart. He died on the instant. When I saw that he was slain and knew that I had slain him, maugre myself, I cried out with an exceeding loud and bitter cry and beat my face and rent my raiment and said, "Verily we be Allah's and unto Him we be returning, O Moslems! O folk fain of Allah! there remained for this youth but one day of the forty dangerous days which the astrologers and the learned had foretold for him; and the predestined death of this beautiful one was to be at my hand. Would Heaven I had not tried to cut the water-melon. 149 What dire misfortune is this I must bear lief or loath? What a disaster! What an affliction! O Allah mine, I implore thy pardon and declare to Thee my innocence of his death. But what God willeth let that come to pass."[276]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ajib thus continued his tale to the lady:—When I was certified that I had slain him, I arose and ascending the stairs replaced the trap-door and covered it with earth as before. Then I looked out seawards and saw the ship cleaving the waters and making for the island, wherefore I was afeard and said, "The moment they come and see the youth done to death, they will know 'twas I who slew him and will slay me without respite." So I climbed up into a high tree and concealed myself among its leaves; and hardly had I done so when the ship anchored and the slaves landed with the ancient man, the youth's father, and made direct for the place and when they removed the earth they were surprised to see it soft.[277] Then they raised the trap-door and went down and found the youth lying at full length, clothed in fair new garments with a face beaming after the bath, and the knife deep in his heart. At the sight they shrieked and wept and beat their faces, loudly cursing the murderer; whilst a swoon came over the Shaykh so that the slaves deemed him dead, unable to survive his son. At last they wrapped the slain youth in his clothes and carried him up and laid him on the ground covering him with a shroud of silk. Whilst they were making for the ship the old man revived; and, gazing on his son who was stretched out, fell on the ground and strewed dust over his head and smote his face and plucked out his beard; and his weeping redoubled as he thought of his murdered son and he swooned away once more. After awhile a slave went and fetched a strip of silk whereupon they lay the old man and sat down at his head. All

this took place and I was on the tree above them 150watching everything that came to pass; and my heart became hoary before my head waxed grey, for the hard lot which was mine, and for the distress and anguish I had undergone, and I fell to reciting:—

"How many a joy by Allah's will hath fled ✿ With flight escaping sight of wisest head!
How many a sadness shall begin the day, ✿ Yet grow right gladsome ere the day is sped!
How many a weal trips on the heels of ill, ✿ Causing the mourner's heart with joy to thrill!"[278]

But the old man, O my lady, ceased not from his swoon till near sunset, when he came to himself and, looking upon his dead son, he recalled what had happened, and how what he had dreaded had come to pass; and he beat his face and head and recited these couplets:—

"Racked is my heart by parting fro' my friends ✿ And two rills ever fro' my eyelids flow:
With them[279] went forth my hopes, Ah, well away! ✿ What shift remaineth me to say or do?
Would I had never looked upon their sight, ✿ What shift, fair sirs, when paths e'er straiter grow?
What charm shall calm my pangs when this wise burn ✿ Longings of love which in my vitals glow?
Would I had trod with them the road of Death! ✿ Ne'er had befel us twain this parting-blow:
Allah: I pray the Ruthful show me ruth ✿ And mix our lives nor part them evermo'e!
How blest were we as 'neath one roof we dwelt ✿ Conjoined in joys nor recking aught of woe;
Till Fortune shot us with the severance shaft; ✿ Ah who shall patient bear such parting throe?
And dart of Death struck down amid the tribe ✿ The age's pearl that Morn saw brightest show:
I cried the while his case took speech and said:—✿ Would Heaven, my son, Death mote his doom foreslow!
Which be the readiest road wi' thee to meet ✿ My Son! for whom I would my soul bestow?
If sun I call him no! the sun doth set; ✿ If moon I call him, wane the moons; Ah no!
151 O sad mischance o' thee, O doom of days, ✿ Thy place none other love shall ever know:
Thy sire distracted sees thee, but despairs ✿ By wit or wisdom Fate to overthrow:
Some evil eye this day hath cast its spell ✿ And foul befal him as it foul befel!"

Then he sobbed a single sob and his soul fled his flesh. The slaves shrieked aloud "Alas, our lord!" and showered dust on their heads and redoubled their weeping and wailing. Presently they carried their dead master to the ship side by side with his dead son and, having transported all the stuff from the dwelling to the vessel, set sail and disappeared from mine eyes. I descended from the tree and, raising the trap-door, went down into the underground dwelling where everything reminded me of the youth; and I looked upon the poor remains of him and began repeating these verses:—

Their tracks I see, and pine with pain and pang ✿ And on deserted hearths I weep and yearn:
And Him I pray who doomèd them depart ✿ Some day vouchsafe the boon of safe return.[280]

Then, O my lady, I went up again by the trap-door, and every day I used to wander round about the island and every night I returned to the underground hall. Thus I lived for a month, till at last, looking at the western side of the island, I observed that every day the tide ebbed, leaving shallow water for which the flow did not compensate; and

by the end of the month the sea showed dry land in that direction. At this I rejoiced making certain of my safety; so I arose and fording what little was left of the water got me to the main land, where I fell in with great heaps of loose sand in which even a camel's hoof would sink up to the knee.[281] However I emboldened my soul and wading through the sand behold, a fire shone from afar burning with a blazing light.[282] So I made for it hoping haply to find succour and broke out into these verses:—

152 "Belike my Fortune may her bridle turn ✿ And Time bring weal although he's jealous hight;
Forward my hopes, and further all my needs, ✿ And passèd ills with present weals requite."

And when I drew near the fire aforesaid lo! it was a palace with gates of copper burnished red which, when the rising sun shone thereon, gleamed and glistened from afar showing what had seemed to me a fire. I rejoiced in the sight, and sat down over against the gate, but I was hardly settled in my seat before there met me ten young men clothed in sumptuous gear and all were blind of the left eye which appeared as plucked out. They were accompanied by a Shaykh, an old, old man, and much I marvelled at their appearance, and their all being blind of the same eye. When they saw me, they saluted me with the Salam and asked me of my case and my history; whereupon I related to them all what had befallen me, and what full measure of misfortune was mine. Marvelling at my tale they took me to the mansion, where I saw ranged round the hall ten couches each with its blue bedding and coverlet of blue stuff[283] and amiddlemost stood a smaller couch furnished like them with blue and nothing else. As we entered each of the youths took his seat on his own couch and the old man seated himself upon the smaller one in the middle saying to me, "O youth, sit thee down on the floor and ask not of our case nor of the loss of our eyes." Presently he rose up and set before each young man some meat in a charger and drink in a large mazer, treating me in like manner; and after that they sat questioning me concerning my adventures and what had betided me: and I kept telling them my tale till the night was far spent. Then said the young men, "O our Shaykh, wilt not thou set before us our ordinary? The time is come." He replied, "With love and gladness," and rose and entering a closet disappeared, but presently returned bearing on his head ten trays each covered with a strip of blue stuff. He set a tray before each, youth and, lighting 153 ten wax candles, he stuck one upon each tray, and drew off the covers and lo! under them was naught but ashes and powdered charcoal and kettle soot. Then all the young men tucked up their sleeves to the elbows and fell a-weeping and wailing and they blackened their faces and smeared their clothes and buffetted their brows and beat their breasts, continually exclaiming, "We were sitting at our ease but our frowardness brought us unease!" They ceased not to do thus till dawn drew nigh, when the old man rose and heated water for them; and they washed their faces, and donned other and clean clothes. Now when I saw this, O my lady, for very wonderment my senses left me and my wits went wild and heart and head were full of

thought, till I forgot what had betided me and I could not keep silence feeling I fain must speak out and question them of these strangenesses; so I said to them, "How come ye to do this after we have been so open-hearted and frolicksome? Thanks be to Allah ye be all sound and sane, yet actions such as these befit none but mad men or those possessed of an evil spirit. I conjure you by all that is dearest to you, why stint ye to tell me your history, and the cause of your losing your eyes and your blackening your faces with ashes and soot?" Hereupon they turned to me and said, "O young man, hearken not to thy youthtide's suggestions and question us no questions." Then they slept and I with them and when they awoke the old man brought us somewhat of food; and, after we had eaten and the plates and goblets had been removed, they sat conversing till nightfall when the old man rose and lit the wax candles and lamps and set meat and drink before us. After we had eaten and drunken we sat conversing and carousing in companionage till the noon of night, when they said to the old man, "Bring us our ordinary, for the hour of sleep is at hand!" So he rose and brought them the trays of soot and ashes; and they did as they had done on the preceding night, nor more, nor less. I abode with them after this fashion for the space of a month during which time they used to blacken their faces with ashes every night, and to wash and change their raiment when the morn was young; and I but marvelled the more and my scruples and curiosity increased to such a point that I had to forego even food and drink. At last, I lost command of myself, for my heart was aflame with fire unquenchable and lowe unconcealable and I said, "O young men, will ye not relieve my trouble and acquaint me with the reason of thus blackening your faces and the meaning of your words:—We were sitting at our ease but our 154 frowardness brought us unease?" Quoth they "'Twere better to keep these things secret." Still I was bewildered by their doings to the point of abstaining from eating and drinking and, at last wholly losing patience, quoth I to them, "There is no help for it: ye must acquaint me with what is the reason of these doings." They replied, "We kept our secret only for thy good: to gratify thee will bring down evil upon thee and thou wilt become a monocular even as we are." I repeated, "There is no help for it and, if ye will not, let me leave you and return to mine own people and be at rest from seeing these things, for the proverb saith:—

Better ye 'bide and I take my leave: ✿ For what eye sees not heart shall never grieve."

Thereupon they said to me, "Remember, O youth, that should ill befal thee we will not again harbour thee nor suffer thee to abide amongst us;" and bringing a ram they slaughtered it and skinned it. Lastly they gave me a knife saying, "Take this skin and stretch thyself upon it and we will sew it around thee; presently there shall come to thee a certain bird, hight Rukh,[284] that will catch thee up in his pounces and tower high in air and then set thee down on a mountain. When thou feelest he is no longer flying, rip open the pelt with this blade and come out of it; the bird will be scared and will fly away and leave thee free. After this fare for half a day, and the march will place thee

at a palace wondrous fair to behold, towering high in air and builded of Khalanj,[285] lign-aloes and sandal-wood, plated with red gold, and studded with all manner emeralds and costly gems fit for seal-rings. Enter it and thou shalt win to thy wish for we have all entered that palace; and such is the cause of our losing our eyes and of our blackening our faces. Were we now to tell thee our stories it would take too long a time; for each and every of us lost his left eye by an adventure of his own." I rejoiced at their words and they did with me as they said; and the bird Rukh bore me off and set me down on the 155 mountain. Then I came out of the skin and walked on till I reached the palace. The door stood open as I entered and found myself in a spacious and goodly hall, wide exceedingly, even as a horse-course; and around it were an hundred chambers with doors of sandal and aloes woods plated with red gold and furnished with silver rings by way of knockers.[286] At the head or upper end[287] of the hall I saw forty damsels, sumptuously dressed and ornamented and one and all bright as moons; none could ever tire of gazing upon them and all so lovely that the most ascetic devotee on seeing them would become their slave and obey their will. When they saw me the whole bevy came up to me and said "Welcome and well come and good cheer[288] to thee, O our lord! This whole month have we been expecting thee. Praised be Allah who hath sent us one who is worthy of us, even as we are worthy of him!" Then they made me sit down upon a high divan and said to me, "This day thou art our lord and master, and we are thy servants and thy handmaids, so order us as thou wilt." And I marvelled at their case. Presently one of them arose and set meat before me and I ate and they ate with me; whilst others warmed water and washed my hands and feet and changed my clothes, and others made ready sherbets and gave us to drink; and all gathered around me being full of joy and gladness at my coming. Then they sat down and conversed with me till nightfall, when five of them arose and laid the trays and spread them with flowers and fragrant herbs and fruits, fresh and dried, and confections in profusion. At last they brought out a fine wine-service with rich old wine; and we sat down to drink and some sang songs and others played the lute and psaltery and recorders and other instruments, and the bowl went merrily round. Hereupon such gladness possessed me that I forgot the sorrows of the world one and all and said, "This is indeed life; O sad that 'tis fleeting!" I enjoyed their company till the time came for rest; and our heads were all warm with wine, when they said, "O our lord, choose from amongst us her who shall be thy bed-fellow this night and not lie with thee again till forty days be past." So I chose a girl fair of face and perfect in shape, with eyes Kohl-edged 156 by nature's hand;[289] hair long and jet black with slightly parted teeth[290] and joining brows: 'twas as if she were some limber graceful branchlet or the slender stalk of sweet basil to amaze and to bewilder man's fancy; even as the poet said of such an one:—

To even her with greeny bough were vain ✿ Fool he who finds her beauties in the roe:
When hath the roe those lively lovely limbs ✿ Or honey dews those lips alone bestow?

Those eyne, soul-piercing eyne, which slay with love, ✿ Which bind the victim by their shafts laid low?

My heart to second childhood they beguiled ✿ No wonder: love-sick man again is child!

And I repeated to her the maker's words who said:—

None other charms but thine shall greet mine eyes, ✿ Nor other image can my heart surprize:

Thy love, my lady, captives all my thoughts ✿ And on that love I'll die and I'll arise.

So I lay with her that night; none fairer I ever knew; and, when it was morning, the damsels carried me to the Hammam-bath and bathed me and robed me in fairest apparel. Then they served up food, and we ate and drank and the cup went round till nightfall when I chose from among them one fair of form and face, soft-sided and a model of grace, such an one as the poet described when he said:—

On her fair bosom caskets twain I scanned, ✿ Sealed fast with musk-seals lovers to withstand;

With arrowy glances stand on guard her eyes, ✿ Whose shafts would shoot who dares put forth a hand.

With her I spent a most goodly night; and, to be brief, O my mistress, I remained with them in all solace and delight of life, eating and drinking, conversing and carousing and every night 157lying with one or other of them. But at the head of the new year they came to me in tears and bade me farewell, weeping and crying out and clinging about me; whereat I wondered and said, "What may be the matter? verily you break my heart!" They exclaimed, "Would Heaven we had never known thee; for, though we have companied with many, yet never saw we a pleasanter than thou or a more courteous." And they wept again. "But tell me more clearly," asked I, "what causeth this weeping which maketh my gall-bladder[291] like to burst;" and they answered, "O our lord and master, it is severance which maketh us weep; and thou, and thou only, art the cause of our tears. If thou hearken to us we need never be parted and if thou hearken not we part for ever; but our hearts tell us that thou wilt not listen to our words and this is the cause of our tears and cries." "Tell me how the case standeth?" "Know, O our lord, that we are the daughters of Kings who have met here and have lived together for years; and once in every year we are perforce absent for forty days and afterwards we return and abide here for the rest of the twelvemonth eating and drinking and taking our pleasure and enjoying delights: we are about to depart according to our custom; and we fear lest after we be gone thou contraire our charge and disobey our injunctions. Here now we commit to thee the keys of the palace which containeth forty chambers and thou mayest open of these thirty and nine, but beware (and we conjure thee by Allah and by the lives of us!) lest thou open the fortieth door, for therein is that which shall separate us for ever."[292] Quoth I, "Assuredly I will not open it, if it contain the cause of severance from you." Then one among them came up to me and falling on my neck wept and recited these verses:—

"If Time unite us after absent-while, ✿ The world harsh frowning on our lot shall smile;

And if thy semblance deign adorn mine eyes,[293] ✿ I'll pardon Time past wrongs and by-gone guile."

158And I recited the following:—

"When drew she near to bid adieu with heart unstrung, ✿ While care and longing on that day her bosom wrung;

Wet pearls she wept and mine like red carnelians rolled ✿ And, joined in sad *rivière*, around her neck they hung."

When I saw her weeping I said, "By Allah I will never open that fortieth door, never and no wise!" and I bade her farewell. Thereupon all departed flying away like birds; signalling with their hands farewells as they went and leaving me alone in the palace. When evening drew near I opened the door of the first chamber and entering it found myself in a place like one of the pleasaunces of Paradise. It was a garden with trees of freshest green and ripe fruits of yellow sheen; and its birds were singing clear and keen and rills ran wimpling through the fair terrene. The sight and sounds brought solace to my sprite; and I walked among the trees, and I smelt the breath of the flowers on the breeze; and heard the birdies sing their melodies hymning the One, the Almighty in sweetest litanies; and I looked upon the apple whose hue is parcel red and parcel yellow; as said the poet:—

Apple whose hue combines in union mellow ✿ My fair's red cheek, her hapless lover's yellow.

Then I looked upon the quince, and inhaled its fragrance which putteth to shame musk and ambergris, even as the poet hath said:—

Quince every taste conjoins; in her are found ✿ Gifts which for queen of fruits the Quince have crowned;

Her taste is wine, her scent the waft of musk; ✿ Pure gold her hue, her shape the Moon's fair round.

Then I looked upon the pear whose taste surpasseth sherbet and sugar; and the apricot[294] whose beauty striketh the eye with admiration, as if she were a polished ruby. Then I went out of the place and locked the door as it was before. When it was the morrow I opened the second door; and entering found myself in a spacious 159plain set with tall date-palms and watered by a running stream whose banks were shrubbed with bushes of rose and jasmine, while privet and eglantine, oxe-eye, violet and lily, narcissus, origane and the winter gilliflower carpeted the borders; and the breath of the breeze swept over these sweet-smelling growths diffusing their delicious odours right and left, perfuming the world and filling my soul with delight. After taking my pleasure there awhile I went from it and, having closed the door as it was before, opened the third door wherein I saw a high open hall pargetted with particoloured marbles and *pietra dura* of price and other precious stones, and hung with cages of sandal-wood and eagle-wood; full of birds which made sweet music, such as the "Thousand-voiced,"[295] and the cushat, the merle, the turtle-dove and the Nubian ring-dove. My heart was filled with pleasure thereby; my grief was dispelled and I slept in that aviary till dawn. Then I unlocked the door of the fourth chamber and therein found a grand saloon with forty smaller chambers giving upon it. All their doors stood open: so I entered and found them full of pearls and jacinths and beryls and emeralds and corals and carbuncles, and all manner precious gems and jewels, such as tongue of man may not describe. My thought was stunned at the sight and I said to myself, "These be things methinks united which could not be found save in the treasuries of a King of Kings, nor could the monarchs of the world

have collected the like of these!" And my heart dilated and my sorrows ceased, "For," quoth I, "now verily am I the monarch of the age, since by Allah's grace this enormous wealth is mine; and I have forty damsels under my hand nor is there any to claim them save myself." Then I gave not over opening place after place until nine and thirty days were passed and in that time I had entered every chamber except that one whose door the Princesses had charged me not to open. But my thoughts, O my mistress, ever ran on that forbidden fortieth[296] and Satan urged me to open it for my own undoing; nor had I patience to forbear, albeit there wanted of the trysting time but a single day. So I stood before the chamber aforesaid and, after a moment's hesitation, opened the door which was plated with red gold, and entered. I was met by a perfume whose like I 160 had never before smelt; and so sharp and subtle was the odour that it made my senses drunken as with strong wine, and I fell to the ground in a fainting fit which lasted a full hour. When I came to myself I strengthened my heart and, entering, found myself in a chamber whose floor was bespread with saffron and blazing with light from branched candelabra of gold and lamps fed with costly oils, which diffused the scent of musk and ambergris. I saw there also two great censers each big as a mazer-bowl,[297] flaming with lign-aloes, nadd-perfume,[298] ambergris and honied scents; and the place was full of their fragrance. Presently, O my lady, I espied a noble steed, black as the murks of night when murkiest, standing, ready saddled and bridled (and his saddle was of red gold) before two mangers, one of clear crystal wherein was husked sesame, and the other also of crystal containing water of the rose scented with musk. When I saw this I marvelled and said to myself, "Doubtless in this animal must be some wondrous mystery;" and Satan cozened me, so I led him without the palace and mounted him; but he would not stir from his place. So I hammered his sides with my heels, but he moved not, and then I took the rein-whip[299] and struck him withal. When he felt the blow, he neighed a neigh with a sound like deafening thunder and, opening a pair of wings[300] flew up with me in the firmament of heaven far beyond the eyesight of man. After a full hour of flight he descended and alighted on a terrace roof and shaking me off his back lashed me on the face with his tail and gouged out my left eye causing it roll along my cheek. Then he flew away. I went down from the terrace and found myself again amongst the ten one-eyed youths sitting upon their ten couches with blue covers; and they cried out when they saw me, "No welcome to thee, nor aught of good cheer! We all lived of lives the happiest and we ate and drank of the best; upon brocades and cloths of gold we took our rest, and we slept with our heads on beauty's breast, but we could not await one day to gain the delights of a year!" Quoth I, "Behold I have become one like unto you and now I would have you bring me a tray full of blackness, wherewith to blacken my face, and receive me into 161 your society." "No, by Allah," quoth they, "thou shalt not sojourn with us and now get thee hence!" So they drove me away. Finding them reject me thus I foresaw that matters would go hard with me, and I remembered the many miseries which

Destiny had written upon my forehead; and I fared forth from among them heavy-hearted and tearful-eyed, repeating to myself these words, "I was sitting at mine ease but my frowardness brought me to unease." Then I shaved beard and mustachios and eyebrows, renouncing the world, and wandered in Kalandar-garb about Allah's earth; and the Almighty decreed safety for me till I arrived at Baghdad, which was on the evening of this very night. Here I met these two other Kalandars standing bewildered; so I saluted them saying, "I am a stranger!" and they answered, "And we likewise be strangers!" By the freak of Fortune we were like to like, three Kalandars and three monoculars all blind of the left eye. Such, O my lady, is the cause of the shearing of my beard and the manner of my losing an eye. Said the lady to him, "Rub thy head and wend thy ways;" but he answered, "By Allah, I will not go until I hear the stories of these others." Then the lady, turning towards the Caliph and Ja'afar and Masrur, said to them, "Do ye also give an account of yourselves, you men!" Whereupon Ja'afar stood forth and told her what he had told the portress as they were entering the house; and when she heard his story of their being merchants and Mosul-men who had outrun the watch, she said, "I grant you your lives each for each sake, and now away with you all." So they all went out and when they were in the street, quoth the Caliph to the Kalandars, "O company, whither go ye now, seeing that the morning hath not yet dawned?" Quoth they, "By Allah, O our lord, we know not where to go." "Come and pass the rest of the night with us," said the Caliph and, turning to Ja'afar, "Take them home with thee and to-morrow bring them to my presence that we may chronicle their adventures." Ja'afar did as the Caliph bade him and the Commander of the Faithful returned to his palace; but sleep gave no sign of visiting him that night and he lay awake pondering the mishaps of the three Kalandar-princes and impatient to know the history of the ladies and the two black bitches. No sooner had morning dawned than he went forth and sat upon the throne of his sovereignty; and, turning to Ja'afar, after all his Grandees and Officers of state were gathered together, he said, "Bring me the three ladies and the two bitches and the three Kalandars." So 162 Ja'afar fared forth and brought them all before him (and the ladies were veiled); then the Minister turned to them and said in the Caliph's name, "We pardon you your maltreatment of us and your want of courtesy, in consideration of the kindness which forewent it, and for that ye knew us not: now however I would have you to know that ye stand in presence of the fifth[301] of the sons of Abbas, Harun al-Rashid, brother of Caliph Músá al-Hádi, son of Al-Mansúr; son of Mohammed the brother of Al-Saffáh bin Mohammed who was first of the royal house. Speak ye therefore before him the truth and the whole truth!" When the ladies heard Ja'afar's words touching the Commander of the Faithful, the eldest came forward and said, "O Prince of True Believers, my story is one which, were it graven with needle-gravers upon the eye-corners were a warner for whoso would be warned and an example for whoso can

take profit from example."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventeenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that she stood forth before the Commander of the Faithful and began to tell

THE ELDEST LADY'S TALE.

Verily a strange tale is mine and 'tis this:—Yon two black bitches are my eldest sisters by one mother and father; and these two others, she who beareth upon her the signs of stripes and the third our procuratrix are my sisters by another mother. When my father died, each took her share of the heritage and, after a while my mother also deceased, leaving me and my sisters-german three thousand dinars; so each daughter received her portion of a thousand dinars and I the same, albe the youngest. In due course of time my sisters married with the usual festivities and lived with their husbands, who bought merchandise with their wives' monies and set out on their travels together. Thus they threw me off. My brothers-in-law were absent with their wives five years, during which period they spent all the money they had and, becoming bankrupt, deserted my sisters in foreign parts amid stranger folk. After five years my eldest sister returned to 163 me in beggar's gear with her clothes in rags and tatters[302] and a dirty old mantilla;[303] and truly she was in the foulest and sorriest plight. At first sight I did not know my own sister; but presently I recognised her and said "What state is this?" "O our sister," she replied, "Words cannot undo the done; and the reed of Destiny hath run through what Allah decreed." Then I sent her to the bath and dressed her in a suit of mine own, and boiled for her a bouillon and brought her some good wine and said to her, "O my sister, thou art the eldest, who still standest to us in the stead of father and mother; and, as for the inheritance which came to me as to you twain, Allah hath blessed it and prospered it to me with increase; and my circumstances are easy, for I have made much money by spinning and cleaning silk; and I and you will share my wealth alike." I entreated her with all kindliness and she abode with me a whole year, during which our thoughts and fancies were always full of our other sister. Shortly after she too came home in yet fouler and sorrier plight than that of my eldest sister; and I dealt by her still more honorably than I had done by the first, and each of them had a share of my substance. After a time they said to me, "O our sister, we desire to marry again, for indeed we have not patience to drag on our days without husbands and to lead the lives of widows bewitched;" and I replied, "O eyes of me![304] ye have hitherto seen scanty weal in wedlock, for now-a-days good men and true are become rareties and curiosities; nor do I deem your projects advisable, as ye have already made trial of matrimony and have failed." But they would not accept my advice and married without my consent: nevertheless I gave

them outfit and dowries out of my money; and they fared forth with their mates. In a mighty little time their husbands played them false and, taking whatever they could lay hands upon, levanted and left them in the lurch. Thereupon they came to me ashamed and in abject case and made their 164 excuses to me, saying, "Pardon our fault and be not wroth with us;[305] for although thou art younger in years yet art thou older in wit; henceforth we will never make mention of marriage; so take us back as thy handmaidens that we may eat our mouthful." Quoth I, "Welcome to you, O my sisters, there is naught dearer to me than you." And I took them in and redoubled my kindness to them. We ceased not to live after this loving fashion for a full year, when I resolved to sell my wares abroad and first to fit me a conveyance for Bassorah; so I equipped a large ship, and loaded her with merchandise and valuable goods for traffic, and with provaunt and all needful for a voyage, and said to my sisters, "Will ye abide at home whilst I travel, or would ye prefer to accompany me on the voyage?" "We will travel with thee," answered they, "for we cannot bear to be parted from thee." So I divided my monies into two parts, one to accompany me and the other to be left in charge of a trusty person, for, as I said to myself, "Haply some accident may happen to the ship and yet we remain alive; in which case we shall find on our return what may stand us in good stead." I took my two sisters and we went a-voyaging some days and nights; but the master was careless enough to miss his course, and the ship went astray with us and entered a sea other than the sea we sought. For a time we knew naught of this; and the wind blew fair for us ten days, after which the look-out man went aloft to see about him and cried, "Good news!" Then he came down rejoicing and said, "I have seen what seemeth to be a city as 'twere a pigeon." Hereat we rejoiced and, ere an hour of the day had passed, the buildings showed plain in the offing and we asked the Captain, "What is the name of yonder city?" and he answered, "By Allah I wot not, for I never saw it before and never sailed these seas in my life: but, since our troubles have ended in safety, remains for you only to land there with your merchandise and, if you find selling profitable, sell and make your market of what is there; and if not, we will rest here two days and provision ourselves and fare away." So we entered the port and the Captain went up town and was absent awhile, after which he returned to us and said, "Arise; go up into the city and marvel at the works of Allah with His creatures and pray to be preserved from His righteous wrath!" So we landed and going up into the city, saw at the gate men hending staves in hand; but when we drew near them, 165 behold, they had been translated[306] by the anger of Allah and had become stones. Then we entered the city and found all who therein woned into black stones enstoned: not an inhabited house appeared to the espier, nor was there a blower of fire.[307] We were awe struck at the sight and threaded the market streets where we found the goods and gold and silver left lying in their places; and we were glad and said, "Doubtless there is some mystery in all this." Then we dispersed about the thoroughfares and each busied himself with collecting the

wealth and money and rich stuffs, taking scanty heed of friend or comrade. As for myself I went up to the castle which was strongly fortified; and, entering the King's palace by its gate of red gold, found all the vaiselle of gold and silver, and the King himself seated in the midst of his Chamberlains and Nabobs and Emirs and Wazirs; all clad in raiment which confounded man's art. I drew nearer and saw him sitting on a throne incrusted and inlaid with pearls and gems; and his robes were of gold-cloth adorned with jewels of every kind, each one flashing like a star. Around him stood fifty Mamelukes, white slaves, clothed in silks of divers sorts holding their drawn swords in their hands; but when I drew near to them lo! all were black stones. My understanding was confounded at the sight, but I walked on and entered the great hall of the Harím,[308] whose walls I found hung with tapestries of gold-striped silk and spread with silken carpets embroidered with golden flowers. Here I saw the Queen lying at full length arrayed in robes purfled with fresh young[309] pearls; on her head was a diadem set with many sorts of gems each fit for a ring[310] and around her neck hung collars and necklaces. All her raiment and her ornaments were in natural state but she had been turned into a black stone by Allah's wrath. Presently I espied an open door for which I made straight and found leading to it a flight of seven 166 steps. So I walked up and came upon a place pargetted with marble and spread and hung with gold-worked carpets and tapestry, amiddlemost of which stood a throne of juniper-wood inlaid with pearls and precious stones and set with bosses of emeralds. In the further wall was an alcove whose curtains, bestrung with pearls, were let down and I saw a light issuing therefrom; so I drew near and perceived that the light came from a precious stone as big as an ostrich-egg, set at the upper end of the alcove upon a little chryselephantine couch of ivory and gold; and this jewel, blazing like the sun, cast its rays wide and side. The couch also was spread with all manner of silken stuffs amazing the gazer with their richness and beauty. I marvelled much at all this, especially when seeing in that place candles ready lighted; and I said in my mind, "Needs must some one have lighted these candles." Then I went forth and came to the kitchen and thence to the buttery and the King's treasure-chambers; and continued to explore the palace and to pace from place to place; I forgot myself in my awe and marvel at these matters and I was drowned in thought till the night came on. Then I would have gone forth, but knowing not the gate I lost my way, so I returned to the alcove whither the lighted candles directed me and sat down upon the couch; and wrapping myself in a coverlet, after I had repeated somewhat from the Koran, I would have slept but could not, for restlessness possessed me. When night was at its noon I heard a voice chanting the Koran in sweetest accents; but the tone thereof was weak; so I rose, glad to hear the silence broken, and followed the sound until I reached a closet whose door stood ajar. Then peeping through a chink I considered the place and lo! it was an oratory wherein was a prayer-niche[311] with two wax candles burning 167 and lamps hanging from the ceiling. In it too was spread a prayer-carpet

whereupon sat a youth fair to see; and before him on its stand[312] was a copy of the Koran, from which he was reading. I marvelled to see him alone alive amongst the people of the city and entering saluted him; whereupon he raised his eyes and returned my salam. Quoth I, "Now by the Truth of what thou readest in Allah's Holy Book, I conjure thee to answer my question." He looked upon me with a smile and said, "O handmaid of Allah, first tell me the cause of thy coming hither, and I in turn will tell what hath befallen both me and the people of this city, and what was the reason of my escaping their doom." So I told him my story whereat he wondered; and I questioned him of the people of the city, when he replied, "Have patience with me for awhile, O my sister!" and, reverently closing the Holy Book, he laid it up in a satin bag. Then he seated me by his side; and I looked at him and behold, he was as the moon at its full, fair of face and rare of form, soft-sided and slight, of well-proportioned height, and cheek smoothly bright and diffusing light; in brief a sweet, a sugar-stick,[313] even as saith the poet of the like of him in these couplets:—

That night th' astrologer a scheme of planets drew, ✿ And lo! a graceful shape of youth appeared in view:

Saturn had stained his locks with Saturninest jet, ✿ And spots of nut-brown musk on rosy side-face blew:[314]

Mars tinctured either cheek with tinct of martial red; ✿ Sagittal shots from eyelids Sagittarius threw:

Dowered him Mercury with bright mercurial wit; ✿ Bore off the Bear[315] what all man's evil glances grew:

Amazed stood Astrophil to sight the marvel-birth ✿ When louted low the Moon at full to buss the Earth.

And of a truth Allah the Most High had robed him in the raiment 168 of perfect grace and had purfled and fringed it with a cheek all beauty and loveliness, even as the poet saith of such an one:—

By his eyelids shedding perfume and his fine slim waist I swear, ✿ By the shooting of his shafts barbed with sorcery passing rare;

By the softness of his sides,[316] and glances' lingering light; ✿ And brow of dazzling day-tide ray and night within his hair;

By his eyebrows which deny to who look upon them rest, ✿ Now bidding now forbidding, ever dealing joy and care;

By the rose that decks his cheek, and the myrtle of its moss;[317] ✿ By jacinths bedded in his lips and pearl his smile lays bare;

By his graceful bending neck and the curving of his breast; ✿ Whose polished surface beareth those granados, lovely pair;

By his heavy hips that quiver as he passeth in his pride; ✿ Or he resteth with that waist which is slim beyond compare;

By the satin of his skin, by that fine unsullied sprite; ✿ By the beauty that containeth all things bright and debonnair;

By that ever-open hand; by the candour of his tongue; ✿ By noble blood and high degree whereof he's hope and heir;

Musk from him borrows muskiness she loveth to exhale; ✿ And all the airs of ambergris through him perfume the air;

The sun, methinks, the broad bright sun, before my love would pale; ✿ And sans his splendour would appear a paring of his nail.[318]

I glanced at him with one glance of eyes which caused me a thousand sighs; and my heart was at once taken captive-wise; so I asked him, "O my lord and my love, tell me that whereof I questioned thee;" and he answered, "Hearing is obeying! Know, O handmaid of Allah, that this city was the capital of my father who is the King thou sawest on the throne transfigured by Allah's wrath to a black stone, and the Queen thou foundest in the alcove is my mother. They and all the people of the city were Magians who fire adored in lieu of the Omnipotent Lord[319] and were wont to swear by lowe and heat and shade and light, and the spheres revolving day and night. My father had ne'er a son till he was blest with me near the last of his days; and he reared me till I 169 grew up and prosperity anticipated me in all things. Now it so fortuned there was with us an old woman well stricken in years, a Moslemah who, inwardly believing in Allah and His Apostle, conformed outwardly with the religion of my people; and my father placed thorough confidence in her for that he knew her to be trustworthy and virtuous; and he treated her with ever-increasing kindness believing her to be of his own belief. So when I was well-nigh grown up my father committed me to her charge saying:—Take him and educate him and teach him the rules of our faith; let him have the best instructions and cease not thy fostering care of him. So she took me and taught me the tenets of Al-Islam with the divine ordinances[320] of the Wuzu-ablution and the five daily prayers and she made me learn the Koran by rote, often repeating:—Serve none save Allah Almighty! When I had mastered this much of knowledge she said to me:—O my son, keep this matter concealed from thy sire and reveal naught to him lest he slay thee. So I hid it from him and I abode on this wise for a term of days when the old woman died, and the people of the city redoubled in their impiety[321] and arrogance and the error of their ways. One day, while they were as wont, behold, they heard a loud and terrible sound and a crier crying out with a voice like roaring thunder so every ear could hear, far and near:—O folk of this city leave ye your fire-worshipping and adore Allah the All-compassionate King! At this, fear and terror fell upon the citizens and they crowded to my father (he being King of the city) and asked him:—What is this awesome voice we have heard, for it hath confounded us with the excess of its terror?; and he answered:—Let not a voice fright you nor shake your steadfast sprite nor turn you back from the faith which is right. Their hearts inclined to his words and they ceased not to worship the fire and they persisted in rebellion 170 for a full year from the time they heard the first voice; and on the anniversary came a second cry and a third at the head of the third year, each year once. Still they persisted in their malpractices till one day at break of dawn, judgment and the wrath of Heaven descended upon them with all suddenness, and by the visitation of Allah all were metamorphosed into black stones,[322] they and their beasts and their cattle; and none was saved save myself who at the time was engaged in my

devotions. From that day to this I am in the case thou seest, constant in prayer and fasting and reading and reciting the Koran; but I am indeed grown weary by reason of my loneliness, having none to bear me company." Then said I to him (for in very sooth he had won my heart and was the lord of my life and soul), "O youth, wilt thou fare with me to Baghdad city and visit the Olema and men learned in the law and doctors of divinity and get thee increase of wisdom and understanding and theology? And know that she who standeth in thy presence will be thy handmaid, albeit she be head of her family and mistress over men and eunuchs and servants and slaves. Indeed my life was no life before it fell in with thy youth. I have here a ship laden with merchandise; and in very truth Destiny drove me to this city that I might come to the knowledge of these matters, for it was fated that we should meet. And I ceased not to persuade him and speak him fair and use every art till he consented."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lady ceased not persuading with soft speech the youth to depart with her till he consented and said "Yes." She slept that night lying at his feet and hardly knowing where she was for excess of joy. As soon as the next morning dawned (she pursued, addressing the Caliph), I arose and we entered the treasuries and took thence whatever was light in weight and great in worth; then we went down side by side from the castle to the city, where we were met by the Captain and my sisters and slaves who had been seeking [171] for me. When they saw me they rejoiced and asked what had stayed me, and I told them all I had seen and related to them the story of the young Prince and the transformation wherewith the citizens had been justly visited. Hereat all marvelled, but when my two sisters (these two bitches, O Commander of the Faithful!) saw me by the side of my young lover they jaloused me on his account and were wroth and plotted mischief against me. We awaited a fair wind and went on board rejoicing and ready to fly for joy by reason of the goods we had gotten, but my own greatest joyance was in the youth; and we waited awhile till the wind blew fair for us and then we set sail and fared forth. Now as we sat talking, my sisters asked me, "And what wilt thou do with this handsome young man?"; and I answered, "I purpose to make him my husband!" Then I turned to him and said, "O my lord, I have that to propose to thee wherein thou must not cross me; and this it is that, when we reach Baghdad, my native city, I offer thee my life as thy handmaiden in holy matrimony, and thou shalt be to me baron and I will be femme to thee." He answered, "I hear and I obey!; thou art my lady and my mistress and whatso thou doest I will not gainsay." Then I turned to my sisters and said, "This is my gain; I content me with this youth and those who have gotten aught of my property let them keep it as their gain with my good will." "Thou sayest and doest well," answered the twain, but they imagined mischief against me. We ceased not spooning before a fair wind till we had exchanged the sea

of peril for the seas of safety and, in a few days, we made Bassorah-city, whose buildings loomed clear before us as evening fell. But after we had retired to rest and were sound asleep, my two sisters arose and took me up, bed and all, and threw me into the sea: they did the same with the young Prince who, as he could not swim, sank and was drowned and Allah enrolled him in the noble army of Martyrs.[323] As for me would Heaven I had been drowned with 172 him, but Allah deemed that I should be of the saved; so when I awoke and found myself in the sea and saw the ship making off like a flash of lightning, He threw in my way a piece of timber which I bestrided, and the waves tossed me to and fro till they cast me upon an island coast, a high land and an uninhabited. I landed and walked about the island the rest of the night and, when morning dawned, I saw a rough track barely fit for child of Adam to tread, leading to what proved a shallow ford connecting island and mainland. As soon as the sun had risen I spread my garments to dry in its rays; and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters; then I set out along the foot-track and ceased not walking till I reached the mainland. Now when there remained between me and the city but a two hours' journey behold, a great serpent, the bigness of a date-palm, came fleeing towards me in all haste, gliding along now to the right then to the left till she was close upon me, whilst her tongue lolled ground-wards a span long and swept the dust as she went. She was pursued by a Dragon[324] who was not longer than two lances, and of slender build about the bulk of a spear and, although her terror lent her speed, and she kept wriggling from side to side, he overtook her and seized her by the tail, whereat her tears streamed down and her tongue was thrust out in her agony. I took pity on her and, picking up a stone and calling upon Allah for aid, threw it at the Dragon's head with such force that he died then and there; and the serpent opening a pair of wings flew into the lift and disappeared from before my eyes. I sat down marvelling over that adventure, but I was weary and, drowsiness overcoming me, I slept where I was for a while. When I awoke I found a jet-black damsel sitting at my feet shampooing them; and by her side stood two black bitches (my sisters, O Commander of the Faithful!). I was ashamed before her[325] and, sitting up, asked her, "O my sister, who and what art thou?"; and she answered, "How soon hast thou forgotten me! I am she for whom thou wroughtest a good deed and sowedest the seed of gratitude and slewest her foe; for I am the serpent whom by Allah's aidance 173 thou didst just now deliver from the Dragon. I am a Jinniyah and he was a Jinn who hated me, and none saved my life from him save thou. As soon as thou freedest me from him I flew on the wind to the ship whence thy sisters threw thee, and removed all that was therein to thy house. Then I ordered my attendant Marids to sink the ship and I transformed thy two sisters into these black bitches; for I know all that hath passed between them and thee; but as for the youth, of a truth he is drowned. So saying she flew up with me and the bitches, and presently set us down on the terrace-roof of my house, wherein I found ready stored the whole of what property

was in my ship, nor was aught of it missing. Now (continued the serpent that was), I swear by all engraven on the seal-ring of Solomon[326] (with whom be peace!) unless thou deal to each of these bitches three hundred stripes every day I will come and imprison thee for ever under the earth." I answered, "Hearkening and obedience!"; and away she flew. But before going she again charged me saying, "I again swear by Him who made the two seas flow[327] (and this be my second oath) if thou gainsay me I will come and transform thee like thy sisters." Since then I have never failed, O Commander of the Faithful, to beat them with that number of blows till their blood flows with my tears, I pitying them the while, and well they wot that their being scourged is no fault of mine and they accept my excuses. And this is my tale and my history! The Caliph marvelled at her adventures and then signed to Ja'afar who said to the second lady, the Portress, "And thou, how camest thou by the welts and wheals upon thy body?" So she began the



TALE OF THE PORTRESS.

Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that I had a father who, after fulfilling his time, deceased and left me great store of wealth. I remained single for a short time and presently married one of the richest of his day. I abode with him a year when he also

died, and my share of his property amounted to eighty thousand dinars 174in gold according to the holy law of inheritance.[328] Thus I became passing rich and my reputation spread far and wide, for I had made me ten changes of raiment, each worth a thousand dinars. One day as I was sitting at home, behold, there came in to me an old woman[329] with lantern jaws and cheeks sucked in, and eyes rucked up, and eyebrows scant and scald, and head bare and bald; and teeth broken by time and mauled, and back bending and neck-nape nodding, and face blotched, and rheum running, and hair like a snake black-and-white-speckled, in complexion a very fright, even as saith the poet of the like of her:—

Ill-omened hag! unshriven be her sins ✿ Nor mercy visit her on dying bed:

Thousand head-strongest he-mules would her guiles, ✿ Despite their bolting, lead with spider thread.

And as saith another:—

A hag to whom th' unlawful lawfullest ✿ And witchcraft wisdom in her sight are grown:

A mischief-making brat, a demon-maid, ✿ A whorish woman and a pimping crone.[330]

When the old woman entered she salamed to me and kissing the ground before me, said, "I have at home an orphan daughter and this night are her wedding and her displaying.[331] We be poor folks and strangers in this city knowing none inhabitant and we are broken-hearted. So do thou earn for thyself a recompense and a reward in Heaven by being present at her displaying and, when the ladies of this city shall hear that thou art to make act of presence, they also will present themselves; so shalt thou comfort her affliction, for she is sore bruised in spirit and she hath none to 175look to save Allah the Most High." Then she wept and kissed my feet reciting these couplets:—

Thy presence bringeth us a grace ✿ We own before thy winsome face:

And wert thou absent ne'er an one ✿ Could stand in stead or take thy place.

So pity gat hold on me and compassion and I said, "Hearing is consenting and, please Allah, I will do somewhat more for her; nor shall she be shown to her bridegroom save in my raiment and ornaments and jewelry." At this the old woman rejoiced and bowed her head to my feet and kissed them, saying, "Allah requite thee weal, and comfort thy heart even as thou has comforted mine! But, O my lady, do not trouble thyself to do me this service at this hour; be thou ready by supper-time,[332] when I will come and fetch thee." So saying she kissed my hand and went her ways. I set about stringing my pearls and donning my brocades and making my toilette, little recking what Fortune had in womb for me, when suddenly the old woman stood before me, simpering and smiling till she showed every tooth stump, and quoth she, "O my mistress, the city madams have arrived and when I apprized them that thou promisedst to be present, they were glad and they are now awaiting thee and looking eagerly for thy coming and for the honour of meeting thee." So I threw on my mantilla and, making the old crone walk before me and my handmaidens behind me, I

fared till we came to a street well watered and swept neat, where the winnowing breeze blew cool and sweet. Here we were stopped by a gate arched over with a dome of marble stone firmly seated on solidest foundation, and leading to a Palace whose walls from earth rose tall and proud, and whose pinnacle was crowned by the clouds,[333] and over the doorway were writ these couplets:—

I am the wone where Mirth shall ever smile; ✿ The home of Joyance through my lasting while:

And 'mid my court a fountain jets and flows, ✿ Nor tears nor troubles shall that fount defile:

The marge with royal Nu'uman's[334] bloom is dight, ✿ Myrtle, Narcissus-flower and Chamomile.

176 Arrived at the gate, before which hung a black curtain, the old woman knocked and it was opened to us; when we entered and found a vestibule spread with carpets and hung around with lamps all alight and wax candles in candelabra adorned with pendants of precious gems and noble ores. We passed on through this passage till we entered a saloon, whose like for grandeur and beauty is not to be found in this world. It was hung and carpeted with silken stuffs, and was illuminated with branches, sconces and tapers ranged in double row, an avenue abutting on the upper or noble end of the saloon, where stood a couch of juniper-wood encrusted with pearls and gems and surmounted by a baldaquin with mosquito-curtains of satin looped up with margarites. And hardly had we taken note of this when there came forth from the baldaquin a young lady and I looked, O Commander of the Faithful, upon a face and form more perfect than the moon when fullest, with a favour brighter than the dawn gleaming with saffron-hued light, even as the poet sang when he said:—

Thou pacest the palace a marvel-sight, ✿ A bride for a Kisrá's or Kaisar's night!

Wantons the rose on thy roseate cheek, ✿ O cheek as the blood of the dragon[335] bright!

Slim-waisted, languorous, sleepy-eyed, ✿ With charms which promise all love-delight:

And the tire which attires thy tiara'd brow ✿ Is a night of woe on a morn's glad light.

The fair young girl came down from the estrade and said to me, "Welcome and well come and good cheer to my sister, the dearly-beloved, the illustrious, and a thousand greetings!" Then she recited these couplets:—

An but the house could know who cometh 'twould rejoice, ✿ And kiss the very dust whereon thy foot was placed;

And with the tongue of circumstance the walls would say, ✿ "Welcome and hail to one with generous gifts engraced!"

Then sat she down and said to me, "O my sister, I have a brother who hath had sight of thee at sundry wedding-feasts and festive seasons: he is a youth handsomer than I, and he hath fallen 177 desperately in love with thee, for that bounteous Destiny hath garnered in thee all beauty and perfection; and he hath given silver to this old woman that she might visit thee; and she hath contrived on this wise to foregather us twain. He hath heard that thou art one of the nobles of thy tribe nor is he aught less in his; and, being desirous to ally his lot with thy lot, he hath practised this device to bring me in company with thee; for he is fain to marry thee after the ordinance of Allah and

his Apostle; and in what is lawful and right there is no shame." When I heard these words and saw myself fairly entrapped in the house, I said, "Hearing is consenting." She was delighted at this and clapped her hands;[336] whereupon a door opened and out of it came a young man blooming in the prime of life, exquisitely dressed, a model of beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace, with gentle winning manners and eyebrows like a bended bow and shaft on cord, and eyes which bewitched all hearts with sorcery lawful in the sight of the Lord; even as saith some rhymer describing the like of him:—

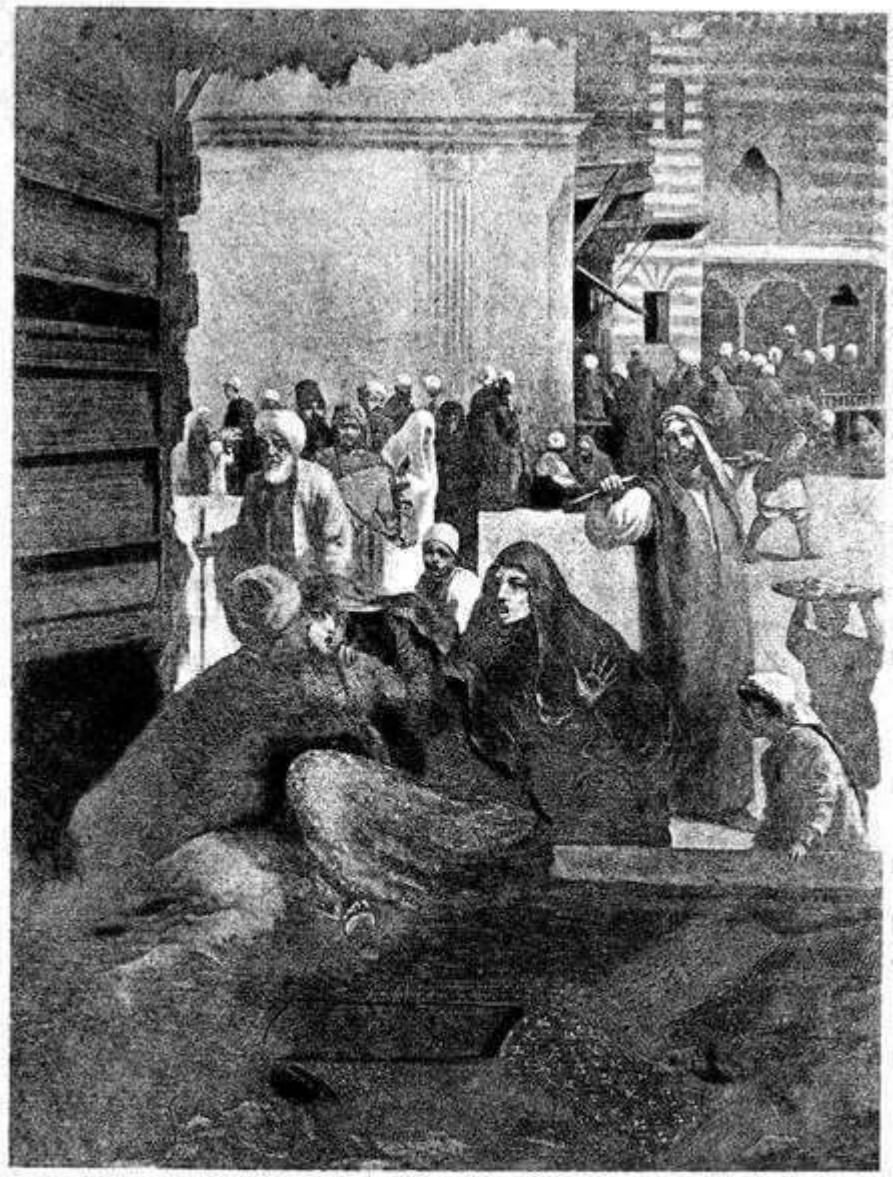
His face as the face of the young moon shines ✿ And Fortune stamps him with pearls for signs.[337]

And Allah favour him who said:—

Blest be his beauty; blest the Lord's decree ✿ Who cast and shaped a thing so bright of blee:

All gifts of beauty he conjoins in one; ✿ Lost in his love is all humanity;

For Beauty's self inscribed on his brow ✿ "I testify there be no Good but he!"[338]



When I looked at him my heart inclined to him and I loved him; and he sat by my side and talked with me a while, when the young lady again clapped her hands and behold, a side-door opened and out of it came the Kazi with his four assessors as witnesses; and they saluted us and, sitting down, drew up and wrote out the marriage-contract between me and the youth and retired. Then he turned to me and said, "Be our night blessed," presently adding, "O my lady, I have a condition to lay on thee." Quoth I, "O 178my lord, what is that?" Whereupon he arose and fetching a copy of the Holy

Book presented it to me saying, "Swear hereon thou wilt never look at any other than myself nor incline thy body or thy heart to him." I swore readily enough to this and he joyed with exceeding joy and embraced me round the neck while love for him possessed my whole heart. Then they set the table[339] before us and we ate and drank till we were satisfied; but I was dying for the coming of the night. And when night did come he led me to the bride-chamber and slept with me on the bed and continued to kiss and embrace me till the morning—such a night I had never seen in my dreams. I lived with him a life of happiness and delight for a full month, at the end of which I asked his leave[340] to go on foot to the bazar and buy me certain especial stuffs and he gave me permission. So I donned my mantilla and, taking with me the old woman and a slave-girl,[341] I went to the khan of the silk-mercers, where I seated myself in the shop-front of a young merchant whom the old woman recommended, saying to me, "This youth's father died when he was a boy and left him great store of wealth: he hath by him a mighty fine[342] stock of goods and thou wilt find what thou seekest with him, for none in the bazar hath better stuffs than he." Then she said to him, "Show this lady the most costly stuffs thou hast by thee;" and he replied, "Hearkening and obedience!" Then she whispered me, "Say a civil word to him!"; but I replied, "I am pledged to address no man save my lord." And as she began to sound his praise I said sharply to her, "We want nought of thy sweet speeches; our wish is to buy of him whatsoever we need, and return home." So 179 he brought me all I sought and I offered him his money, but he refused to take it saying, "Let it be a gift offered to my guest this day!" Then quoth I to the old woman, "If he will not take the money, give him back his stuff." "By Allah," cried he, "not a thing will I take from thee: I sell it not for gold or for silver, but I give it all as a gift for a single kiss; a kiss more precious to me than everything the shop containeth." Asked the old woman, "What will the kiss profit thee?"; and, turning to me, whispered, "O my daughter, thou hearest what this young fellow saith? What harm will it do thee if he get a kiss from thee and thou gettest what thou seekest at that price?" Replied I, "I take refuge with Allah from such action! Knowest thou not that I am bound by an oath?"[343] But she answered, "Now whist! just let him kiss thee and neither speak to him nor lean over him, so shalt thou keep thine oath and thy silver, and no harm whatever shall befal thee." And she ceased not to persuade me and importune me and make light of the matter till evil entered into my mind and I put my head in the poke[344] and, declaring I would ne'er consent, consented. So I veiled my eyes and held up the edge of my mantilla between me and the people passing and he put his mouth to my cheek under the veil. But while kissing me he bit me so hard a bite that it tore the flesh from my cheek,[345] and blood flowed fast and faintness came over me. The old woman caught me in her arms and, when I came to myself, I found the shop shut up and her sorrowing over me and saying "Thank Allah for averting which might have been worse!" Then she said to me, "Come, take heart and let us go home before the matter

become public and thou be dishonoured. And when thou art safe inside the house feign sickness and lie down and cover thyself up; and I will bring thee powders and plasters to cure this bite withal, and thy wound will be healed at the latest in three days." So after a while I arose and I was in extreme distress and terror came full upon me; but I went on little by little till I reached the house when I pleaded illness and lay me down. When it was night my husband came in to me and said, "What hath befallen thee, O my [180]darling, in this excursion of thine?"; and I replied, "I am not well: my head acheth badly." Then he lighted a candle and drew near me and looked hard at me and asked, "What is that wound I see on thy cheek and in the tenderest part too?" And I answered, "When I went out to-day with thy leave to buy stuffs, a camel laden with firewood jostled me and one of the pieces tore my veil and wounded my cheek as thou seest; for indeed the ways of this city are strait." "To-morrow," cried he, "I will go complain to the Governor, so shall he gibbet every fuel-seller in Baghdad." "Allah upon thee," said I, "burden not thy soul with such sin against any man. The fact is I was riding on an ass and it stumbled, throwing me to the ground; and my cheek lighted upon a stick or a bit of glass and got this wound." "Then," said he, "to-morrow I will go up to Ja'afar the Barmaki and tell him the story, so shall he kill every donkey-boy in Baghdad." "Wouldst thou destroy all these men because of my wound," said I, "when this which befel me was by decree of Allah and His destiny?" But he answered, "There is no help for it;" and, springing to his feet, plied me with words and pressed me till I was perplexed and frightened; and I stuttered and stammered and my speech waxed thick and I said, "This is a mere accident by decree of Allah." Then, O Commander of the Faithful, he guessed my case and said, "Thou hast been false to thine oath." He at once cried out with a loud cry, whereupon a door opened and in came seven black slaves whom he commanded to drag me from my bed and throw me down in the middle of the room. Furthermore, he ordered one of them to pinion my elbows and squat upon my head; and a second to sit upon my knees and secure my feet; and drawing his sword he gave it to a third and said, "Strike her, O Sa'ad, and cut her in twain and let each one take half and cast it into the Tigris[346] that the fish may eat her; for such is the retribution due to those who violate their vows and are unfaithful to their love." And he redoubled in wrath and recited these couplets:—

An there be one who shares with me her love, ✿ I'd strangle Love tho' life by Love were slain;

Saying, O Soul, Death were the nobler choice, ✿ For ill is Love when shared 'twixt partners twain.

Then he repeated to the slave, "Smite her, O Sa'ad!" And when the slave who was sitting upon me made sure of the command he [181]bent down to me and said, "O my mistress, repeat the profession of Faith and bethink thee if there be any thing thou wouldst have done; for verily this is the last hour of thy life." "O good slave," said I, "wait but a little while and get off my head that I may charge thee with my last injunctions." Then I raised my head and saw the state I was in, how I had fallen from

high degree into lowest disgrace; and into death after life (and such life!) and how I had brought my punishment on myself by my own sin; whereupon the tears streamed from mine eyes and I wept with exceeding weeping. But he looked on me with eyes of wrath, and began repeating:—

Tell her who turneth from our love to work it injury sore, ✿ And taketh her a fine new love the old love tossing o'er:

We cry enough o' thee ere thou enough of us shalt cry! ✿ What past between us doth suffice and haply something more.[347]

When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I wept and looked at him and began repeating these couplets:—

To severance you doom my love and all unmoved remain; ✿ My tear-sore lids you sleepless make and sleep while I complain:

You make firm friendship reign between mine eyes and insomny; ✿ Yet can my heart forget you not, nor tears can I restrain:

You made me swear with many an oath my troth to hold for aye; ✿ But when you reigned my bosom's lord you wrought me traitor-bane:

I loved you like a silly child who wots not what is Love; ✿ Then spare the learner, let her not be by the master slain!

By Allah's name I pray you write, when I am dead and gone, ✿ Upon my tomb, This died of Love whose senses Love had ta'en:

Then haply one shall pass that way who fire of Love hath felt, ✿ And treading on a lover's heart with ruth and woe shall melt.

When I ended my verses tears came again; but the poetry and the weeping only added fury to his fury, and he recited:—

'Twas not satiety bade me leave the dearling of my soul, ✿ But that she sinned a mortal sin which clipt me in its clip:

She sought to let another share the love between us twain, ✿ But my True Faith of Unity refuseth partnership.[348]

182When he ceased reciting I wept again and prayed his pardon and humbled myself before him and spoke him softly, saying to myself, "I will work on him with words; so haply he will refrain from slaying me, even though he take all I have." So I complained of my sufferings and began to repeat these couplets:—

Now, by thy life and wert thou just my life thou hadst not ta'en, ✿ But who can break the severance-law which parteth lovers twain!

Thou loadest me with heavy weight of longing love, when I ✿ Can hardly bear my chemisette for weakness and for pain:

I marvel not to see my life and soul in ruin Iain ✿ I marvel much to see my frame such severance-pangs sustain.

When I ended my verse I wept again; and he looked at me and reviled me in abusive language,[349] repeating these couplets:—

Thou wast all taken up with love of other man, not me; ✿ 'Twas thine to show me severance-face, 'twas only mine to see:

I'll leave thee for that first thou wast of me to take thy leave ✿ And patient bear that parting blow thou borest so patiently:

E'en as thou soughtest other love, so other love I'll seek, ✿ And make the crime of murdering love thine own atrocity.

When he had ended his verses he again cried out to the slave, "Cut her in half and free us from her, for we have no profit of her." So the slave drew near me, O Commander of the Faithful, and I ceased bandying verses and made sure of death and, despairing of life, committed my affairs to Almighty Allah, when behold, the old woman rushed in and threw herself at my husband's feet and kissed them and wept and said, "O my son, by the rights of my fosterage and by my long service to thee, I conjure thee pardon this young lady, for indeed she hath done nothing deserving such doom. Thou art a very young man and I fear lest her death be laid at thy door; for it is said:—Whoso slayeth shall be slain. As for this wanton (since thou deemest her such) drive her out from thy doors, from thy love and from thy heart." And she ceased not to weep and importune him till he relented and said, "I pardon her, but needs must I set on her my mark which shall show upon her all her life." Then he bade the slaves drag me along the ground and lay me out 183 at full length, after stripping me of all my clothes;[350] and when the slaves had so sat upon me that I could not move, he fetched in a rod of quince-tree and came down with it upon my body, and continued beating me on the back and sides till I lost consciousness from excess of pain, and I despaired of life. Then he commanded the slaves to take me away as soon as it was dark, together with the old woman to show them the way and throw me upon the floor of the house wherein I dwelt before my marriage. They did their lord's bidding and cast me down in my old home and went their ways. I did not revive from my swoon till dawn appeared, when I applied myself to the dressing of my wounds with ointments and other medicaments; and I medicined myself, but my sides and ribs still showed signs of the rod as thou hast seen. I lay in weakly case and confined to my bed for four months before I was able to rise and health returned to me. At the end of that time I went to the house where all this had happened and found it a ruin; the street had been pulled down endlong and rubbish-heaps rose where the building erst was; nor could I learn how this had come about. Then I betook myself to this my sister on my father's side and found with her these two black bitches. I saluted her and told her what had betided me and the whole of my story and she said, "O my sister, who is safe from the despite of Time and secure? Thanks be to Allah who hath brought thee off safely;" and she began to say:—

Such is the World, so bear a patient heart ✿ When riches leave thee and when friends depart!

Then she told me her own story, and what had happened to her with her two sisters and how matters had ended; so we abode together and the subject of marriage was never on our tongues for all these years. After a while we were joined by our other sister, the procuratrix, who goeth out every morning and buyeth all we require for the

day and night; and we continued in such condition till this last night. In the morning our sister went out, as usual, to make her market and then befel us what befel from bringing the Porter into the house and admitting these three Kalandar-men.

184 We entreated them kindly and honourably and a quarter of the night had not passed ere three grave and respectable merchants from Mosul joined us and told us their adventures. We sat talking with them but on one condition which they violated, whereupon we treated them as sorted with their breach of promise, and made them repeat the account they had given of themselves. They did our bidding and we forgave their offence; so they departed from us and this morning we were unexpectedly summoned to thy presence. And such is our story! The Caliph wondered at her words and bade the tale be recorded and chronicled and laid up in his muniment-chambers.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nineteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph commanded this story and those of the sister and the Kalandars to be recorded in the archives and be set in the royal muniment-chambers. Then he asked the eldest lady, the mistress of the house, "Knowest thou the whereabouts of the Ifritah who spelled thy sisters?"; and she answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, she gave me a ringlet of her hair saying:—Whenas thou wouldest see me, burn a couple of these hairs and I will be with thee forthright, even though I were beyond Caucasus-mountain." Quoth the Caliph, "Bring me hither the hair." So she brought it and he threw the whole lock upon the fire. As soon as the odour of the burning hair dispread itself, the palace shook and trembled, and all present heard a rumbling and rolling of thunder and a noise as of wings and lo! the Jinniyah who had been a serpent stood in the Caliph's presence. Now she was a Moslemah, so she saluted him and said, "Peace be with thee O Vicar[351] of Allah;" whereto he replied, "And with thee also be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessing." Then she continued, "Know that this damsel sowed for me the seed of kindness, wherefor I cannot enough requite her, in that she delivered me from death and destroyed mine enemy. Now I had seen how her sisters dealt with her and felt myself 185 bound to avenge her on them. At first I was minded to slay them, but I feared it would be grievous to her, so I transformed them to bitches; but if thou desire their release, O Commander of the Faithful, I will release them to pleasure thee and her for I am of the Moslems." Quoth the Caliph, "Release them and after we will look into the affair of the beaten lady and consider her case carefully; and if the truth of her story be evidenced I will exact retaliation[352] from him who wronged her." Said the Ifritah, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will forthwith release them and will discover to thee the man who did that deed by this lady and wronged her and took her property, and he is the nearest of all men to thee!" So saying she took a cup of water and muttered a spell over it and uttered words there was no understanding; then she

sprinkled some of the water over the faces of the two bitches, saying, "Return to your former human shape!" whereupon they were restored to their natural forms and fell to praising their Creator. Then said the Ifritah, "O Commander of the Faithful, of a truth he who scourged this lady with rods is thy son Al-Amin brother of Al-Maamun;[353] for he had heard of her beauty and loveliness and he played a lover's stratagem with her and married her according to the law and committed the crime (such as it is) of scourging her. Yet indeed he is not to be blamed for beating her, for he laid a condition on her and swore her by a solemn oath not to do a certain thing; however, she was false to her vow and he was minded to put her to death, but he feared Almighty Allah and contented himself with scourging her, as thou hast seen, and with sending her back to her own place. Such is the story of the second lady and the Lord knoweth all." When the Caliph heard these words of the Ifritah, and knew who had beaten the damsel, he marvelled with mighty marvel and said, "Praise be to Allah, the Most High, the Almighty, who hath shown His exceeding mercy towards me, enabling me to deliver these two damsels from sorcery and torture, and vouchsafing to let me know the secret of this lady's history! And now by Allah, we will do a deed which shall be recorded of us after we are no more." Then he summoned his son Al-Amin and questioned him of the story of the second lady, the 186 portress; and he told it in the face of truth; whereupon the Caliph bade call into presence the Kazis and their witnesses and the three Kalandars and the first lady with her sisters german who had been ensorcelled; and he married the three to the three Kalandars whom he knew to be princes and sons of Kings and he appointed them chamberlains about his person, assigning to them stipends and allowances and all that they required, and lodging them in his palace at Baghdad. He returned the beaten lady to his son, Al-Amin, renewing the marriage-contract between them and gave her great wealth and bade rebuild the house fairer than it was before. As for himself he took to wife the procuratrix and lay with her that night: and next day he set apart for her an apartment in his Serraglio, with handmaidens for her service and a fixed daily allowance. And the people marvelled at their Caliph's generosity and natural beneficence and princely wisdom; nor did he forget to send all these histories to be recorded in his annals. When Shahrazad ceased speaking Dunyazad exclaimed, "O my own sister, by Allah in very sooth this is a right pleasant tale and a delectable; never was heard the like of it, but prithee tell me now another story to while away what yet remaineth of the waking hours of this our night." She replied, "With love and gladness if the King give me leave;" and he said, "Tell thy tale and tell it quickly." So she began, in these words,

4- THE TALE OF THE THREE APPLES.

They relate, O King of the age and lord of the time and of these days, that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid summoned his Wazir Ja'afar one night and said to him, "I desire to go down into the city and question the common folk concerning the conduct of those charged with its governance; and those of whom they complain we will depose from office and those whom they commend we will promote." Quoth Ja'afar, "Hearkening and obedience!" So the Caliph went down with Ja'afar and Eunuch Masrur to the town and walked about the streets and markets and, as they were threading a narrow alley, they came upon a very old man with a fishing-net and crate to carry small fish on his head, and in his hand a staff; and, as he walked at a leisurely pace, he repeated these lines:—

187 They say me:—Thou shinest a light to mankind ✿ With thy lore as the night which the Moon doth uplight!
I answer, "A truce to your jests and your gibes; ✿ Without luck what is learning?—a poor-devil wight!
If they take me to pawn with my lore in my pouch, ✿ With my volumes to read and my ink-case to write,
For one day's provision they never could pledge me; ✿ As likely on Doomsday to draw bill at sight:"
How poorly, indeed, doth it fare wi' the poor, ✿ With his pauper existence and beggarly plight:
In summer he faileth provision to find; ✿ In winter the fire-pot's his only delight:
The street-dogs with bite and with bark to him rise, ✿ And each losel receives him with bark and with bite:
If he lift up his voice and complain of his wrong, ✿ None pities or heeds him, however he's right;
And when sorrows and evils like these he must brave ✿ His happiest homestead were down in the grave.

When the Caliph heard his verses he said to Ja'afar, "See this poor man and note his verses, for surely they point to his necessities." Then he accosted him and asked, "O Shaykh, what be thine occupation?" and the poor man answered, "O my lord, I am a fisherman with a family to keep and I have been out between midday and this time; and not a thing hath Allah made my portion wherewithal to feed my family. I cannot even pawn myself to buy them a supper and I hate and disgust my life and I hanker after death." Quoth the Caliph, "Say me, wilt thou return with us to Tigris' bank and cast thy net on my luck, and whatsoever turneth up I will buy of thee for an hundred gold pieces?" The man rejoiced when he heard these words and said, "On my head be it! I will go back with you;" and, returning with them river-wards, made a cast and waited a while; then he hauled in the rope and dragged the net ashore and there appeared in it a chest padlocked and heavy. The Caliph examined it and lifted it finding it weighty; so he gave the fisherman two hundred dinars and sent him about his business; whilst Masrur, aided by the Caliph, carried the chest to the palace and

set it down and lighted the candles. Ja'afar and Masrur then broke it open and found therein a basket of palm-leaves corded with red worsted. This they cut open and saw within it a piece of carpet which they lifted out, and under it was a woman's mantilla folded in four, which they pulled out; and at the bottom of the chest they came upon a young lady, fair as a silver ingot, slain and cut into nineteen pieces. When the Caliph looked 188 upon her he cried, "Alas!" and tears ran down his cheeks and turning to Ja'afar he said, "O dog of Wazirs,[354] shall folk be murdered in our reign and be cast into the river to be a burden and a responsibility for us on the Day of Doom? By Allah, we must avenge this woman on her murderer and he shall be made die the worst of deaths!" And presently he added, "Now, as surely as we are descended from the Sons of Abbas,[355] if thou bring us not him who slew her, that we do her justice on him, I will hang thee at the gate of my palace, thee and forty of thy kith and kin by thy side." And the Caliph was wroth with exceeding rage. Quoth Ja'afar, "Grant me three days delay;" and quoth the Caliph, "We grant thee this." So Ja'afar went out from before him and returned to his own house, full of sorrow and saying to himself, "How shall I find him who murdered this damsel, that I may bring him before the Caliph? If I bring other than the murderer, it will be laid to my charge by the Lord: in very sooth I wot not what to do." He kept his house three days and on the fourth day the Caliph sent one of the Chamberlains for him and, as he came into the presence, asked him, "Where is the murderer of the damsel?" to which answered Ja'afar, "O Commander of the Faithful, am I inspector of murdered folk that I should ken who killed her?" The Caliph was furious at his answer and bade hang him before the palace-gate and commanded that a crier cry through the streets of Baghdad, "Whoso would see the hanging of Ja'afar, the Barmaki, Wazir of the Caliph, with forty of the Barmecides,[356] his cousins and kinsmen, before the palace-gate, let him come and let him look!" The people flocked out from all the quarters of the city to witness the execution of Ja'afar and his kinsmen, not knowing the cause. Then they set up the gallows and made Ja'afar and the others stand underneath 189 in readiness for execution, but whilst every eye was looking for the Caliph's signal, and the crowd wept for Ja'afar and his cousins of the Barmecides, lo and behold! a young man fair of face and neat of dress and of favour like the moon raining light, with eyes black and bright, and brow flower-white, and cheeks red as rose and young down where the beard grows, and a mole like a grain of ambergris, pushed his way through the people till he stood immediately before the Wazir and said to him, "Safety to thee from this strait, O Prince of the Emirs and Asylum of the poor! I am the man who slew the woman ye found in the chest, so hang me for her and do her justice on me!" When Ja'afar heard the youth's confession he rejoiced at his own deliverance, but grieved and sorrowed for the fair youth, and whilst they were yet talking behold, another man well stricken in years pressed forwards through the people and thrust his way amid the populace till he came to Ja'afar and the youth, whom he saluted saying, "Ho thou

the Wazir and Prince sans-peer! believe not the words of this youth. Of a surety none murdered the damsel but I; take her wreak on me this moment; for, an thou do not thus, I will require it of thee before Almighty Allah." Then quoth the young man, "O Wazir, this is an old man in his dotage who wotteth not whatso he saith ever, and I am he who murdered her, so do thou avenge her on me!" Quoth the old man, "O my son, thou art young and desirest the joys of the world and I am old and weary and surfeited with the world: I will offer my life as a ransom for thee and for the Wazir and his cousins. No one murdered the damsel but I, so Allah upon thee, make haste to hang me, for no life is left in me now that hers is gone." The Wazir marvelled much at all this strangeness and, taking the young man and the old man, carried them before the Caliph, where, after kissing the ground seven times between his hands, he said, "O Commander of the Faithful, I bring thee the murderer of the damsel!" "Where is he?"; asked the Caliph and Ja'afar answered, "This young man saith, I am the murderer, and this old man giving him the lie saith, I am the murderer, and behold, here are the twain standing before thee." The Caliph looked at the old man and the young man and asked, "Which of you killed the girl?" The young man replied, "No one slew her save I;" and the old man answered, "Indeed none killed her but myself." Then said the Caliph to Ja'afar, "Take the twain and hang them both;" but Ja'afar rejoined, "Since one of them was the murderer, to hang the other 190 were mere injustice."[357] "By Him who raised the firmament and dispread the earth like a carpet," cried the youth, "I am he who slew the damsel;" and he went on to describe the manner of her murder and the basket, the mantilla and the bit of carpet, in fact all that the Caliph had found upon her. So the Caliph was certified that the young man was the murderer; whereat he wondered and asked him, "What was the cause of thy wrongfully doing this damsel to die and what made thee confess the murder without the bastinado, and what brought thee here to yield up thy life, and what made thee say Do her wreak upon me?" The youth answered, "Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that this woman was my wife and the mother of my children; also my first cousin and the daughter of my paternal uncle, this old man who is my father's own brother. When I married her she was a maid[358] and Allah blessed me with three male children by her; she loved me and served me and I saw no evil in her, for I also loved her with fondest love. Now on the first day of this month she fell ill with grievous sickness and I fetched in physicians to her; but recovery came to her little by little and, when I wished her to go to the Hammam-bath, she said:—There is a something I long for before I go to the bath and I long for it with an exceeding longing. To hear is to comply, said I. And what is it? Quoth she, I have a queasy craving for an apple, to smell it and bite a bit of it. I replied:—Hadst thou a thousand longings I would try to satisfy them! So I went on the instant into the city and sought for apples but could find none; yet, had they cost a gold piece each, would I have bought them. I was vexed at this and went home and said:—O daughter of my uncle, by Allah I can find none! She was distressed, being

yet very weakly, and her weakness increased greatly on her that night and I felt anxious and alarmed on her account. As soon as morning dawned I went out again and made the round of the gardens, one by one, but found no apples anywhere. At last there met me an old gardener, of whom I asked about them and he answered:—O my son, this fruit is a rarity with us and is not 191now to be found save in the garden of the Commander of the Faithful at Bassorah, where the gardener keepeth it for the Caliph's eating. I returned to my house troubled by my ill-success; and my love for my wife and my affection moved me to undertake the journey. So I gat me ready and set out and travelled fifteen days and nights, going and coming, and brought her three apples which I bought from the gardener for three dinars. But when I went in to my wife and set them before her, she took no pleasure in them and let them lie by her side; for her weakness and fever had increased on her and her malady lasted without abating ten days, after which time she began to recover health. So I left my house and betaking me to my shop sat there buying and selling; and about midday behold, a great ugly black slave, long as a lance and broad as a bench, passed by my shop holding in hand one of the three apples wherewith he was playing. Quoth I:—O my good slave, tell me whence thou tookest that apple, that I may get the like of it? He laughed and answered:—I got it from my mistress, for I had been absent and on my return I found her lying ill with three apples by her side, and she said to me:—My horned wittol of a husband made a journey for them to Bassorah and bought them for three dinars. So I ate and drank with her and took this one from her.[359] When I heard such words from the slave, O Commander of the Faithful, the world grew black before my face, and I arose and locked up my shop and went home beside myself for excess of rage. I looked for the apples and finding only two of the three asked my wife:—O my cousin, where is the third apple?; and raising her head languidly she answered:—I wot not, O son of my uncle, where 'tis gone! This convinced me that the slave had spoken the truth, so I took a knife and coming behind her got upon her breast without a word said and cut her throat. Then I hewed off her head and her limbs in pieces and, wrapping her in her mantilla and a rag of carpet, hurriedly sewed up the whole which I set in a chest and, locking it tight, loaded 192it on my he-mule and threw it into the Tigris with my own hands. So Allah upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful, make haste to hang me, as I fear lest she appeal for vengeance on Resurrection Day. For, when I had thrown her into the river and none knew aught of it, as I went back home I found my eldest son crying and yet he knew naught of what I had done with his mother. I asked him:—What hath made thee weep, my boy?; and he answered:—I took one of the three apples which were by my mammy and went down into the lane to play with my brethren when behold, a big long black slave snatched it from my hand and said, Whence hadst thou this? Quoth I, My father travelled far for it, and brought it from Bassorah for my mother who was ill and two other apples for which he paid three ducats. He took no heed of my words and I asked

for the apple a second and a third time, but he cuffed me and kicked me and went off with it. I was afraid lest my mother should swinge me on account of the apple, so for fear of her I went with my brother outside the city and stayed there till evening closed in upon us; and indeed I am in fear of her; and now by Allah, O my father, say nothing to her of this or it may add to her ailment! When I heard what my child said I knew that the slave was he who had foully slandered my wife, the daughter of my uncle, and was certified that I had slain her wrongfully. So I wept with exceeding weeping and presently this old man, my paternal uncle and her father, came in; and I told him what had happened and he sat down by my side and wept and we ceased not weeping till midnight. We have kept up mourning for her these last five days and we lamented her in the deepest sorrow for that she was unjustly done to die. This came from the gratuitous lying of the slave, the blackamoor, and this was the manner of my killing her; so I conjure thee, by the honour of thine ancestors, make haste to kill me and do her justice upon me, as there is no living for me after her!" The Caliph marvelled at his words and said, "By Allah the young man is excusable: I will hang none but the accursed slave and I will do a deed which shall comfort the ill-at-ease and suffering, and which shall please the All-glorious King."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

193 Now when it was the Twentieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph swore he would hang none but the slave, for the youth was excusable. Then he turned to Ja'afar and said to him, "Bring before me this accursed slave who was the sole cause of this calamity; and, if thou bring him not before me within three days, thou shalt be slain in his stead." So Ja'afar fared forth weeping and saying, "Two deaths have already beset me, nor shall the crock come off safe from every shock.[360] In this matter craft and cunning are of no avail; but He who preserved my life the first time can preserve it a second time. By Allah, I will not leave my house during the three days of life which remain to me and let the Truth (whose perfection be praised!) do e'en as He will." So he kept his house three days, and on the fourth day he summoned the Kazis and legal witnesses and made his last will and testament, and took leave of his children weeping. Presently in came a messenger from the Caliph and said to him, "The Commander of the Faithful is in the most violent rage that can be, and he sendeth to seek thee and he sweareth that the day shall certainly not pass without thy being hanged unless the slave be forthcoming." When Ja'afar heard this he wept, and his children and slaves and all who were in the house wept with him. After he had bidden adieu to everybody except his youngest daughter, he proceeded to farewell her; for he loved this wee one, who was a beautiful child, more than all his other children; and he pressed her to his breast and kissed her and wept bitterly at parting from her; when he felt something round inside the bosom of her dress and asked her, "O my little maid, what is in thy bosom pocket?"; "O my father," she replied, "it is an apple with the

name of our Lord the Caliph written upon it. Rayhán our slave brought it to me four days ago and would not let me have it till I gave him two dinars for it." When Ja'afar heard speak of the slave and the apple, he was glad and put his hand into his child's pocket[361] and drew out the apple and knew it and rejoiced saying, "O ready Dispeller of trouble!"[362] Then he bade them bring the 194 slave and said to him, "Fie upon thee, Rayhan! whence haddest thou this apple?" "By Allah, O my master," he replied, "though a lie may get a man once off, yet may truth get him off, and well off, again and again. I did not steal this apple from thy palace nor from the gardens of the Commander of the Faithful. The fact is that five days ago, as I was walking along one of the alleys of this city, I saw some little ones at play and this apple in hand of one of them. So I snatched it from him and beat him and he cried and said, O youth this apple is my mother's and she is ill. She told my father how she longed for an apple, so he travelled to Bassorah and bought her three apples for three gold pieces, and I took one of them to play withal. He wept again, but I paid no heed to what he said and carried it off and brought it here, and my little lady bought it of me for two dinars of gold. And this is the whole story." When Ja'afar heard his words he marvelled that the murder of the damsel and all this misery should have been caused by his slave; he grieved for the relation of the slave to himself, while rejoicing over his own deliverance, and he repeated these lines:—

If ill betide thee through thy slave, ✿ Make him forthright thy sacrifice:

A many serviles thou shalt find, ✿ But life comes once and never twice.

Then he took the slave's hand and, leading him to the Caliph, related the story from first to last and the Caliph marvelled with extreme astonishment, and laughed till he fell on his back and ordered that the story be recorded and be made public amongst the people. But Ja'afar said, "Marvel not, O Commander of the Faithful, at this adventure, for it is not more wondrous than the History of the Wazir Núr al-Dín Ali of Egypt and his brother Shams al-Dín Mohammed." Quoth the Caliph, "Out with it; but what can be stranger than this story?" And Ja'afar answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will not tell it thee, save on condition that thou pardon my slave;" and the Caliph rejoined, "If it be indeed more wondrous than that of the three apples, I grant thee his blood, and if not I will surely slay thy slave." So Ja'afar began in these words the

TALE OF NÚR AL-DÍN ALÍ & HIS SON BADR AL-DÍN HASAN

Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that in times of yore the land of Egypt was ruled by a Sultan endowed with justice and generosity, one who loved the pious poor and companied with the Olema and learned men; and he had a Wazir, a wise and an

experienced, well versed in affairs and in the art of government. This Minister, who was a very old man, had two sons, as they were two moons; never man saw the like of them for beauty and grace, the elder called Shams al-Din Mohammed and the younger Nur al-Din Ali; but the younger excelled the elder in seemliness and pleasing semblance, so that folk heard his fame in far countries and men flocked to Egypt for the purpose of seeing him. In course of time their father, the Wazir, died and was deeply regretted and mourned by the Sultan, who sent for his two sons and, investing them with dresses of honour,[363] said to them, "Let not your hearts be troubled, for ye shall stand in your father's stead and be joint Ministers of Egypt." At this they rejoiced and kissed the ground before him and performed the ceremonial mourning[364] for their father during a full month; after which time they entered upon the Wazirate, and the power passed into their hands as it had been in the hands of their father, each doing duty for a week at a time. They lived under the same roof and their word was one; and whenever the Sultan desired to travel they took it by turns to be in attendance on him. It fortuned one night that the Sultan purposed setting out on a journey next morning, and the elder, whose turn it was to accompany him, was sitting conversing with his brother and said to him, "O my brother, it is my wish that we both marry, I and thou, two sisters; and go in to our wives on one and the same night." "Do, O my brother, as thou desirest," the younger replied, "for right is thy recking and surely I will comply with 196 thee in whatso thou sayest." So they agreed upon this and quoth Shams al-Din, "If Allah decree that we marry two damsels and go in to them on the same night, and they shall conceive on their bride-nights and bear children to us on the same day, and by Allah's will thy wife bear thee a son and my wife bear me a daughter, let us wed them either to other, for they will be cousins." Quoth Nur al-Din, "O my brother, Shams al-Din, what dower[365] wilt thou require from my son for thy daughter?" Quoth Shams al-Din, "I will take three thousand dinars and three pleasure gardens and three farms; and it would not be seemly that the youth make contract for less than this." When Nur al-Din heard such demand he said, "What manner of dower is this thou wouldest impose upon my son? Wottest thou not that we are brothers and both by Allah's grace Wazirs and equal in office? It behoveth thee to offer thy daughter to my son without marriage settlement; or, if one need be, it should represent a mere nominal value by way of show to the world: for thou knowest that the masculine is worthier than the feminine, and my son is a male and our memory will be preserved by him, not by thy daughter." "But what," said Shams al-Din, "is she to have?"; and Nur al-Din continued, "Through her we shall not be remembered among the Emirs of the earth; but I see thou wouldest do with me according to the saying:—An thou wouldst bluff off a buyer, ask him high price and higher; or as did a man who, they say, went to a friend and asked something of him being in necessity and was answered:—Bismillah,[366] in the name of Allah, I will do all what thou requirest but come to-morrow!" Whereupon the other replied in this verse:—

When he who is asked a favour saith "To-morrow," ✿ The wise man wots 'tis vain to beg or borrow.

Quoth Shams al-Din, "Basta![367] I see thee fail in respect to me by making thy son of more account than my daughter; and 'tis plain 197 that thine understanding is of the meanest and that thou lackest manners. Thou remindest me of thy partnership in the Wazirate, when I admitted thee to share with me only in pity for thee, and not wishing to mortify thee; and that thou mightest help me as a manner of assistant. But since thou talkest on this wise, by Allah, I will never marry my daughter to thy son; no, not for her weight in gold!" When Nur al-Din heard his brother's words he waxed wroth and said, "And I too, I will never, never marry my son to thy daughter; no, not to keep from my lips the cup of death." Shams al-Din replied, "I would not accept him as a husband for her, and he is not worth a paring of her nail. Were I not about to travel I would make an example of thee; however when I return thou shalt see, and I will show thee, how I can assert my dignity and vindicate my honour. But Allah doeth whatso He willeth."[368] When Nur al-Din heard this speech from his brother, he was filled with fury and lost his wits for rage; but he hid what he felt and held his peace; and each of the brothers passed the night in a place far apart, wild with wrath against the other. As soon as morning dawned the Sultan fared forth in state and crossed over from Cairo[369] to Jízah[370] and made for the Pyramids, accompanied by the Wazir Shams al-Din, whose turn of duty it was, whilst his brother Nur al-Din, who passed the night in sore rage, rose with the light and prayed the dawn-prayer. Then he betook himself to his treasury and, taking a small pair of saddle-bags, filled them with gold; and he called to mind his brother's threats and the contempt wherewith he had treated him, and he repeated these couplets:—

Travel! and thou shalt find new friends for old ones left behind; ✿ Toil! for the sweets of human life by toil and moil are found:

The stay-at-home no honour wins nor aught attains but want; ✿ So leave thy place of birth[371] and wander all the world around!

198 I've seen, and very oft I've seen, how standing water stinks, ✿ And only flowing sweetens it and trotting makes it sound:

And were the moon for ever full and ne'er to wax or wane, ✿ Man would not strain his watchful eyes to see its gladsome round:

Except the lion leave his lair he ne'er would fell his game; ✿ Except the arrow leave the bow ne'er had it reached its bound:

Gold-dust is dust the while it lies untravelled in the mine, ✿ And aloes-wood mere fuel is upon its native ground:

And gold shall win his highest worth when from his goal ungoal'd; ✿ And aloes sent to foreign parts grows costlier than gold.

When he ended his verse he bade one of his pages saddle him his Nubian mare-mule with her padded selle. Now she was a dapple-grey,[372] with ears like reed-pens and legs like columns and a back high and strong as a dome builded on pillars; her saddle was of gold-cloth and her stirrups of Indian steel, and her housing of Ispahan velvet; she had trappings which would serve the Chosroës, and she was like a bride adorned for

her wedding night. Moreover he bade lay on her back a piece of silk for a seat, and a prayer-carpet under which were his saddle-bags. When this was done he said to his pages and slaves, "I purpose going forth a-pleasuring outside the city on the road to Kalyúb-town,[373] and I shall lie three nights abroad; so let none of you follow me, for there is something straiteneth my breast." Then he mounted the mule in haste; and, taking with him some provaunt for the way, set out from Cairo and faced the open and uncultivated country lying around it.[374] About noontide he entered Bilbays-city,[375] where he dismounted and stayed awhile to rest himself and his mule and ate some of his victual. He bought at Bilbays all he wanted for himself and forage for his mule and then fared on the way of the waste. Towards nightfall he entered a town called Sa'adiyah[376] where he alighted and took out somewhat of his viaticum and ate; then he spread his strip of silk on the sand and set the saddle-bags under his head and slept in the open air; for he was still overcome with anger. When 199 morning dawned he mounted and rode onward till he reached the Holy City,[377] Jerusalem, and thence he made Aleppo, where he dismounted at one of the caravanserais and abode three days to rest himself and the mule and to smell the air.[378] Then, being determined to travel afar and Allah having written safety in his fate, he set out again, wending without wotting whither he was going; and, having fallen in with certain couriers, he stinted not travelling till he had reached Bassorah-city albeit he knew not what the place was. It was dark night when he alighted at the Khan, so he spread out his prayer-carpet and took down the saddle-bags from the back of the mule and gave her with her furniture in charge of the door-keeper that he might walk her about. The man took her and did as he was bid. Now it so happened that the Wazir of Bassorah, a man shot in years, was sitting at the lattice-window of his palace opposite the Khan and he saw the porter walking the mule up and down. He was struck by her trappings of price and thought her a nice beast fit for the riding of Wazirs or even of royalties; and the more he looked the more was he perplexed till at last he said to one of his pages, "Bring hither yon door-keeper." The page went and returned to the Wazir with the porter who kissed the ground between his hands, and the Minister asked him, "Who is the owner of yonder mule and what manner of man is he?"; and he answered, "O my lord, the owner of this mule is a comely young man of pleasant manners, withal grave and dignified, and doubtless one of the sons of the merchants." When the Wazir 200 heard the door-keeper's words he arose forthright; and, mounting his horse, rode to the Khan[379] and went in to Nur al-Din who, seeing the Minister making towards him, rose to his feet and advanced to meet him and saluted him. The Wazir welcomed him to Bassorah and dismounting, embraced him and made him sit down by his side and said, "O my son, whence comest thou and what dost thou seek?" "O my lord," Nur al-Din replied, "I have come from Cairo-city of which my father was whilome Wazir; but he hath been removed to the grace of Allah;" and he informed him of all that had befallen him from beginning to end, adding, "I am resolved never to return home

before I have seen all the cities and countries of the world." When the Wazir heard this, he said to him, "O my son, hearken not to the voice of passion lest it cast thee into the pit; for indeed many regions be waste places and I fear for thee the turns of Time." Then he let load the saddle-bags and the silk and prayer-carpets on the mule and carried Nur al-Din to his own house, where he lodged him in a pleasant place and entreated him honourably and made much of him, for he inclined to love him with exceeding love. After a while he said to him, "O my son, here am I left a man in years and have no male children, but Allah hath blessed me with a daughter who eveneth thee in beauty; and I have rejected all her many suitors, men of rank and substance. But affection for thee hath entered into my heart; say me, then, wilt thou be to her a husband? If thou accept this, I will go up with thee to the Sultan of Bassorah[380] and will tell him that thou art my nephew, the son of my brother, and bring thee to be appointed Wazir in my place that I may keep the house for, by Allah, O my son, I am 201 stricken in years and aweary." When Nur al-Din heard the Wazir's words, he bowed his head in modesty and said, "To hear is to obey!" At this the Wazir rejoiced and bade his servants prepare a feast and decorate the great assembly-hall, wherein they were wont to celebrate the marriages of Emirs and Grandees. Then he assembled his friends and the notables of the reign and the merchants of Bassorah and when all stood before him he said to them, "I had a brother who was Wazir in the land of Egypt, and Allah Almighty blessed him with two sons, whilst to me, as well ye wot, He hath given a daughter. My brother charged me to marry my daughter to one of his sons, whereto I assented; and, when my daughter was of age to marry, he sent me one of his sons, the young man now present, to whom I purpose marrying her, drawing up the contract and celebrating the night of unveiling with due ceremony: for he is nearer and dearer to me than a stranger and, after the wedding, if he please he shall abide with me, or if he desire to travel I will forward him and his wife to his father's home." Hereat one and all replied, "Right is thy recking;" and they looked at the bridegroom and were pleased with him. So the Wazir sent for the Kazi and legal witnesses and they wrote out the marriage contract, after which the slaves perfumed the guests with incense,[381] and served them with sherbet of sugar and sprinkled rose-water on them and all went their ways. Then the Wazir bade his servants take Nur al-Din to the Hammam-baths and sent him a suit of the best of his own especial raiment, and napkins and towelry and bowls and perfume-burners and all else that was required. And after the bath, when he came out and donned the dress, he was even as the full moon on the fourteenth night; and he mounted his mule and stayed not till he reached the Wazir's palace. There he dismounted and went in to the Minister and kissed his hands, and the Wazir bade him welcome.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

202 Now when it was the Twenty-First Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir stood up to him and welcoming him said, "Arise and go in to thy wife this night, and on the morrow I will carry thee to the Sultan, and pray Allah bless thee with all manner of weal." So Nur al-Din left him and went in to his wife the Wazir's daughter. Thus far concerning him, but as regards his elder brother, Shams al-Din, he was absent with the Sultan a long time and when he returned from his journey he found not his brother; and he asked of his servants and slaves who answered, "On the day of thy departure with the Sultan, thy brother mounted his mule fully caparisoned as for state procession saying:—I am going towards Kalyub-town and I shall be absent one day or at most two days; for my breast is straitened, and let none of you follow me." Then he fared forth and from that time to this we have heard no tidings of him. Shams al-Din was greatly troubled at the sudden disappearance of his brother and grieved with exceeding grief at the loss and said to himself, "This is only because I chided and upbraided him the night before my departure with the Sultan; haply his feelings were hurt and he fared forth a-travelling; but I must send after him." Then he went in to the Sultan and acquainted him with what had happened and wrote letters and dispatches, which he sent by running footmen to his deputies in every province. But during the twenty days of his brother's absence Nur al-Din had travelled far and had reached Bassorah; so after diligent search the messengers failed to come at any news of him and returned. Thereupon Shams al-Din despaired of finding his brother and said, "Indeed I went beyond all bounds in what I said to him with reference to the marriage of our children. Would that I had not done so! This all cometh of my lack of wit and want of caution." Soon after this he sought in marriage the daughter of a Cairene merchant[382] and drew up the marriage contract and went in to her. And it so chanced that, on the very 203 same night when Shams al-Din went in to his wife, Nur al-Din also went in to his wife the daughter of the Wazir of Bassorah; this being in accordance with the will of Almighty Allah, that He might deal the decrees of Destiny to His creatures. Furthermore, it was as the two brothers had said; for their two wives became pregnant by them on the same night and both were brought to bed on the same day; the wife of Shams al-Din, Wazir of Egypt, of a daughter, never in Cairo was seen a fairer; and the wife of Nur al-Din of a son, none more beautiful was ever seen in his time, as one of the poets said concerning the like of him:—

That jetty hair, that glossy brow,
My slender waisted youth, of thine,
Can darkness round creation throw,
Or make it brightly shine.
The dusky mole that faintly shows
Upon his cheek, ah! blame it not;
The tulip-flower never blows
Undarkened by its spot.[3831]

And as another also said:—

His scent was musk and his cheek was rose; ✿ His teeth are pearls and his lips drop wine;

His form is a brand and his hips a hill; ✿ His hair is night and his face moonshine.

They named the boy Badr al-Din Hasan and his grandfather, the Wazir of Bassorah, rejoiced in him and, on the seventh day after his birth, made entertainments and spread banquets which would befit the birth of Kings' sons and heirs. Then he took Nur al-Din and went up with him to the Sultan, and his son-in-law, when he came before the presence of the King, kissed the ground between his hands and repeated these verses, for he was ready of speech, firm of sprite and good in heart as he was goodly in form:—

The world's best joys long be thy lot, my lord! ✿ And last while darkness and the dawn o'erlap:

O thou who makest, when we greet thy gifts, ✿ The world to dance and Time his palms to clap.[384]

204 Then the Sultan rose up to honour them and, thanking Nur al-Din for his fine compliment, asked the Wazir, "Who may be this young man?"; and the Minister answered, "This is my brother's son," and related his tale from first to last. Quoth the Sultan, "And how comes he to be thy nephew and we have never heard speak of him?" Quoth the Minister, "O our lord the Sultan, I had a brother who was Wazir in the land of Egypt and he died, leaving two sons, whereof the elder hath taken his father's place and the younger, whom thou seest, came to me. I had sworn I would not marry my daughter to any but to him; so when he came I married him to her.[385] Now he is young and I am old; my hearing is dulled and my judgment is easily fooled; wherefore I would solicit our lord the Sultan[386] to set him in my stead, for he is my brother's son and my daughter's husband; and he is fit for the Wazirate, being a man of good counsel and ready contrivance." The Sultan looked at Nur al-Din and liked him, so he stablished him in office as the Wazir had requested and formally appointed him, presenting him with a splendid dress of honour and a she-mule from his private stud; and assigning to him solde, stipends and supplies. Nur al-Din kissed the Sultan's hand and went home, he and his father-in-law, joying with exceeding joy and saying, "All this followeth on the heels of the boy Hasan's birth!" Next day he presented himself before the King and, kissing the ground, began repeating:—

Grow thy weal and thy welfare day by day: ✿ And thy luck prevail o'er the envier's spite;

And ne'er cease thy days to be white as day, ✿ And thy foeman's day to be black as night!

The Sultan bade him be seated on the Wazir's seat, so he sat down and applied himself to the business of his office and went 205 into the cases of the lieges and their suits, as is the wont of Ministers; while the Sultan watched him and wondered at his wit and good sense, judgment and insight. Wherefor he loved him and took him into intimacy. When the Divan was dismissed Nur al-Din returned to his house and related what had passed to his father-in-law who rejoiced. And thenceforward Nur al-Din ceased not so to administer the Wazirate that the Sultan would not be parted from him night or day; and increased his stipends and supplies till his means were ample and he became the owner of ships that made trading voyages at his command, as well as of Mamelukes

and blackamoor slaves; and he laid out many estates and set up Persian wheels and planted gardens. When his son Hasan was four years of age, the old Wazir deceased, and he made for his father-in-law a sumptuous funeral ceremony ere he was laid in the dust. Then he occupied himself with the education of this son and, when the boy waxed strong and came to the age of seven, he brought him a Fakih, a doctor of law and religion, to teach him in his own house and charged him to give him a good education and instruct him in politeness and good manners. So the tutor made the boy read and retain all varieties of useful knowledge, after he had spent some years in learning the Koran by heart;[387] and he ceased not to grow in beauty and stature and symmetry, even as saith the poet:—

In his face-sky shines the fullest moon; ✿ In his cheeks' anemone glows the sun:
He so conquered Beauty that he hath won ✿ All charms of humanity one by one.

The professor brought him up in his father's palace teaching him reading, writing and cyphering, theology and belles lettres. His grandfather the old Wazir had bequeathed to him the whole of his property when he was but four years of age. Now during all the time of his earliest youth he had never left the house, till on a certain day his father, the Wazir Nur al-Din, clad him in his best clothes and, mounting him on a she-mule of the finest, went up with him to the Sultan. The King gazed at Badr al-Din Hasan and marvelled 206 at his comeliness and loved him. As for the city-folk, when he first passed before them with his father, they marvelled at his exceeding beauty and sat down on the road expecting his return, that they might look their fill on his beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace; even as the poet said in these verses:—

As the sage watched the stars, the semblance clear
Of a fair youth on's scroll he saw appear.
Those jetty looks Canopus o'er him threw,
And tinged his temple curls a musky hue;
Mars dyed his ruddy cheek; and from his eyes
The Archer-star his glittering arrow flies;
His wit from Hermes came; and Soha's care,
(The half-seen star that dimly haunts the Bear)
Kept off all evil eyes that threaten and ensnare,
The sage stood mazed to see such fortunes meet,
And Luna kissed the earth beneath his feet.[388]

And they blessed him aloud as he passed and called upon Almighty Allah to bless him.[389] The Sultan entreated the lad with especial favour and said to his father, "O Wazir, thou must needs bring him daily to my presence;" whereupon he replied, "I hear and I obey." Then the Wazir returned home with his son and ceased not to carry him to court till he reached the age of twenty. At that time the Minister sickened and, sending for Badr al-Din Hasan, said to him, "Know, O my son, that the world of the

Present is but a house of mortality, while that of the Future is a house of eternity. I wish, before I die, to bequeath thee certain charges and do thou take heed of what I say and incline thy heart to my words." Then he gave him his last instructions as to the properest way of dealing with his neighbours and the due management of his affairs; after which he called to mind his brother and his home and his native land and wept over his separation from those he had first loved. Then he wiped away his tears and, turning to his son, said to him, "Before I proceed, O my son, to my last charges and injunctions, know that I have a brother, and thou hast an uncle, Shams al-Din hight, the Wazir of Cairo, with whom I parted, leaving him against his will. Now take thee a sheet of paper and 207write upon it whatso I say to thee. Badr al-Din took a fair leaf and set about doing his father's bidding and he wrote thereon a full account of what had happened to his sire first and last; the dates of his arrival at Bassorah and of his foregathering with the Wazir; of his marriage, of his going in to the Minister's daughter and of the birth of his son; brief, his life of forty years from the day of his dispute with his brother, adding the words, "And this is written at my dictation and may Almighty Allah be with him when I am gone!" Then he folded the paper and sealed it and said, "O Hasan, O my son, keep this paper with all care; for it will enable thee to stablish thine origin and rank and lineage and, if anything contrary befal thee, set out for Cairo and ask for thine uncle and show him this paper and say to him that I died a stranger far from mine own people and full of yearning to see him and them." So Badr al-Din Hasan took the document and folded it; and, wrapping it up in a piece of waxed cloth, sewed it like a talisman between the inner and outer cloth of his skull-cap and wound his light turband[390] round it. And he fell to weeping over his father and at parting with him, and he but a boy. Then Nur al-Din lapsed into a swoon, the forerunner of death; but presently recovering himself he said, "O Hasan, O my son, I will now bequeath to thee five last behests. The FIRST BEHEST is, Be over-intimate with none, nor frequent any, nor be familiar with any; so shalt thou be safe from his mischief;[391] for security lieth in seclusion of thought and a certain retirement from the society of thy fellows; and I have heard it said by a poet:—

In this world there is none thou mayst count upon ✿ To befriend thy case in the nick of need:

So live for thyself nursing hope of none ✿ Such counsel I give thee: enow, take heed!

The SECOND BEHEST is, O my son: Deal harshly with none lest fortune with thee deal hardly; for the fortune of this world is one day with thee and another day against thee and all worldly goods are but a loan to be repaid. And I have heard a poet say:—

Take thought nor haste to win the thing thou wilt; ✿ Have ruth on man for ruth thou may'st require:

No hand is there but Allah's hand is higher; ✿ No tyrant but shall rue worse tyrant's ire!

208The THIRD BEHEST is, Learn to be silent in society and let thine own faults distract thine attention from the faults of other men: for it is said:—In silence dwelleth safety, and thereon I have heard the lines that tell us:—

Reserve's a jewel, Silence safety is; ✿ Whenas thou speakest many a word withhold:

For an of Silence thou repent thee once, ✿ Of speech thou shalt repent times manifold.

The FOURTH BEHEST, O my son, is Beware of wine-bibbing, for wine is the head of all frowardness and a fine solvent of human wits. So shun, and again I say, shun mixing strong liquor; for I have heard a poet say:—[392]

From wine[393] I turn and whoso wine-cups swill; ✿ Becoming one of those who deem it ill:

Wine driveth man to miss salvation-way,[394] ✿ And opes the gateway wide to sins that kill.

The FIFTH BEHEST, O my son, is Keep thy wealth and it will keep thee; guard thy money and it will guard thee; and waste not thy substance lest haply thou come to want and must fare a-begging from the meanest of mankind. Save thy dirhams and deem them the sovereignest salve for the wounds of the world. And here again I have heard that one of the poets said:—

When fails my wealth no friend will deign befriend: ✿ When wealth abounds all friends their friendship tender:

How many friends lent aid my wealth to spend; ✿ But friends to lack of wealth no friendship render.

209 On this wise Nur al-Din ceased not to counsel his son Badr al-Din Hasan till his hour came and, sighing one sobbing sigh, his life went forth. Then the voice of mourning and keening rose high in his house and the Sultan and all the grandees grieved for him and buried him; but his son ceased not lamenting his loss for two months, during which he never mounted horse, nor attended the Divan nor presented himself before the Sultan. At last the King, being wroth with him, stablished in his stead one of his Chamberlains and made him Wazir, giving orders to seize and set seals on all Nur al-Din's houses and goods and domains. So the new Wazir went forth with a mighty posse of Chamberlains and people of the Divan, and watchmen and a host of idlers to do this and to seize Badr al-Din Hasan and carry him before the King, who would deal with him as he deemed fit. Now there was among the crowd of followers a Mameluke of the deceased Wazir who, when he had heard this order, urged his horse and rode at full speed to the house of Badr al-Din Hasan; for he could not endure to see the ruin of his old master's son. He found him sitting at the gate with head hung down and sorrowing, as was his wont, for the loss of his father; so he dismounted and kissing his hand said to him, "O my lord and son of my lord, haste ere ruin come and lay waste!" When Hasan heard this he trembled and asked, "What may be the matter?"; and the man answered, "The Sultan is angered with thee and hath issued a warrant against thee, and evil cometh hard upon my track; so flee with thy life!" At these words Hasan's heart flamed with the fire of bale, and his rose-red cheek turned pale, and he said to the Mameluke, "O my brother, is there time for me to go in and get me some worldly gear which may stand me in stead during my strangerhood?" But the slave replied, "O my lord, up at once and save thyself and leave this house, while it is yet time." And he quoted these lines:—

Escape with thy life, if oppression betide thee, ✿ And let the house tell of its builder's fate!

Country for country thou'lt find, if thou seek it; ✿ Life for life never, early or late.

It is strange men should dwell in the house of abjection, ✿ When the plain of God's earth is so wide and so great![395]

At these words of the Mameluke, Badr al-Din covered his head [210]with the skirt of his garment and went forth on foot till he stood outside of the city, where he heard folk saying, "The Sultan hath sent his new Wazir to the house of the old Wazir, now no more, to seal his property and seize his son Badr al-Din Hasan and take him before the presence, that he may put him to death;" and all cried, "Alas for his beauty and his loveliness!" When he heard this he fled forth at hazard, knowing not whither he was going, and gave not over hurrying onwards till Destiny drove him to his father's tomb. So he entered the cemetery and, threading his way through the graves, at last he reached the sepulchre where he sat down and let fall from his head the skirt of his long robe[396] which was made of brocade with a gold-embroidered hem whereon were worked these couplets:—

O thou whose forehead, like the radiant East, ✿ Tells of the stars of Heaven and bounteous dews:

Endure thine honour to the latest day, ✿ And Time thy growth of glory ne'er refuse!

While he was sitting by his father's tomb behold, there came to him a Jew as he were a Shroff,[397] a money-changer, with a pair of saddle-bags containing much gold, who accosted him and kissed his hand, saying, "Whither bound, O my lord: 'tis late in the day and thou art clad but lightly and I read signs of trouble in thy face?" "I was sleeping within this very hour," answered Hasan, "when my father appeared to me and chid me for not having visited his tomb; so I awoke trembling and came hither forthright lest the day should go by without my visiting him, which would have been grievous to me." "O my lord," rejoined the Jew[398] "thy father had many merchantmen at sea and, as some of them are now due, it is my wish to buy of thee the cargo of the first ship that cometh into port with this thousand dinars of gold." "I consent," quoth Hasan, whereupon the Jew took out a bag full of gold and counted out a thousand sequins which he gave to [211]Hasan, the son of the Wazir, saying, "Write me a letter of sale and seal it." So Hasan took a pen and paper and wrote these words in duplicate, "The writer, Hasan Badr al-Din, son of Wazir Nur al-Din, hath sold to Isaac the Jew all the cargo of the first of his father's ships which cometh into port, for a thousand dinars, and he hath received the price in advance." And after he had taken one copy the Jew put it into his pouch and went away; but Hasan fell a-weeping as he thought of the dignity and prosperity which had erst been his and he began reciting:—

This house, my lady, since you left is now a home no more ✿ For me, nor neighbours, since you left, prove kind and neighbourly:

The friend, whilere I took to heart, alas! no more to me ✿ Is friend; and even Luna's self displayeth lunacy:

You left and by your going left the world a waste, a wold, ✿ And lies a gloomy murk upon the face of hill and lea:

O may the raven-bird whose cry our hapless parting croaked ✿ Find ne'er a nesty home and eke shed all his plumery!

At length my patience fails me; and this absence wastes my flesh; ✿ How many a veil by severance rent our eyes are doomèd see:

Ah! shall I ever sight again our fair past nights of yore; ✿ And shall a single house become a home for me once more?

Then he wept with exceeding weeping and night came upon him; so he leant his head against his father's grave and sleep overcame him: Glory to Him who sleepeth not! He ceased not slumbering till the moon rose, when his head slipped from off the tomb and he lay on his back, with limbs outstretched, his face shining bright in the moonlight. Now the cemetery was haunted day and night by Jinns who were of the True Believers, and presently came out a Jinniyah who, seeing Hasan asleep, marvelled at his beauty and loveliness and cried, "Glory to God! this youth can be none other than one of the Wuldán of Paradise."[399] Then she flew firmament-wards to circle it, as was her custom, and met an Ifrit on the wing 212 who saluted her and she said to him, "Whence comest thou?" "From Cairo," he replied. "Wilt thou come with me and look upon the beauty of a youth who sleepeth in yonder burial place?" she asked, and he answered, "I will." So they flew till they lighted at the tomb and she showed him the youth and said, "Now diddest thou ever in thy born days see aught like this?" The Ifrit looked upon him and exclaimed, "Praise be to Him that hath no equal! But, O my sister, shall I tell thee what I have seen this day?" Asked she, "What is that?" and he answered, "I have seen the counterpart of this youth in the land of Egypt. She is the daughter of the Wazir Shams al-Din and she is a model of beauty and loveliness, of fairest favour and formous form, and dight with symmetry and perfect grace. When she had reached the age of nineteen,[400] the Sultan of Egypt heard of her and, sending for the Wazir her father, said to him:—Hear me, O Wazir: it hath reached mine ear that thou hast a daughter and I wish to demand her of thee in marriage. The Wazir replied:—O our lord the Sultan, deign accept my excuses and take compassion on my sorrows, for thou knowest that my brother, who was partner with me in the Wazirate, disappeared from amongst us many years ago and we wot not where he is. Now the cause of his departure was that one night, as we were sitting together and talking of wives and children to come, we had words on the matter and he went off in high dudgeon. But I swore that I would marry my daughter to none save to the son of my brother on the day her mother gave her birth, which was nigh upon nineteen years ago. I have lately heard that my brother died at Bassorah, where he had married the daughter of the Wazir and that she bare him a son; and I will not marry my daughter but to him in honour of my brother's memory I recorded the date of my marriage and the conception of my wife and the birth of my daughter; and from her horoscope I find that 213 her name is conjoined with that of her cousin;[401] and there are damsels in foison for our lord the Sultan. The King, hearing his Minister's answer and refusal, waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and cried:—When the like of me asketh a girl in marriage of the like of thee, he conferreth an honour, and thou rejectest me and puttest me off with cold[402] excuses! Now, by the life of my head I

will marry her to the meanest of my men in spite of the nose of thee![403] There was in the palace a horse-groom which was a Gobbo with a bunch to his breast and a hunch to his back; and the Sultan sent for him and married him to the daughter of the Wazir, lief or loath, and hath ordered a pompous marriage procession for him and that he go in to his bride this very night. I have now just flown hither from Cairo, where I left the Hunchback at the door of the Hammam-bath amidst the Sultan's white slaves who were waving lighted flambeaux about him. As for the Minister's daughter she sitteth among her nurses and tirewomen, weeping and wailing; for they have forbidden her father to come near her. Never have I seen, O my sister, more hideous being than this Hunchback[404] whilst the young lady is the likest of all folk to this young man, albeit even fairer than he."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twenty-Second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Jinni narrated to the Jinniyah how the King had caused the wedding contract to be drawn up between the hunchbacked groom and the lovely young lady who was heart-broken for sorrow; and how she 214was the fairest of created things and even more beautiful than this youth, the Jinniyah cried at him "Thou liest! this youth is handsomer than any one of his day." The Ifrit gave her the lie again, adding, "By Allah, O my sister, the damsel I speak of is fairer than this; yet none but he deserveth her, for they resemble each other like brother and sister or at least cousins. And, well-away! how she is wasted upon that Hunchback!" Then said she, "O my brother, let us get under him and lift him up and carry him to Cairo, that we may compare him with the damsel of whom thou speakest and so determine whether of the twain is the fairer." "To hear is to obey!" replied he, "thou speakest to the point; nor is there a righter recking than this of thine, and I myself will carry him." So he raised him from the ground and flew with him like a bird soaring in upper air, the Ifritah keeping close by his side at equal speed, till he alighted with him in the city of Cairo and set him down on a stone bench and woke him up. He roused himself and finding that he was no longer at his father's tomb in Bassorah-city he looked right and left and saw that he was in a strange place; and he would have cried out; but the Ifrit gave him a cuff which persuaded him to keep silence. Then he brought him rich raiment and clothed him therein and, giving him a lighted flambeau, said, "Know that I have brought thee hither, meaning to do thee a good turn for the love of Allah: so take this torch and mingle with the people at the Hammam-door and walk on with them without stopping till thou reach the house of the wedding-festival; then go boldly forward and enter the great saloon; and fear none, but take thy stand at the right hand of the Hunchback bridegroom; and, as often as any of the nurses and tirewomen and singing-girls come up to thee,[405] put thy hand into thy pocket which thou wilt find filled 215with gold. Take it out and throw to them and spare not; for as often as thou thrustest fingers in pouch thou shalt find it full of

coin. Give largesse by handsful and fear nothing, but set thy trust upon Him who created thee, for this is not by thine own strength but by that of Allah Almighty, that His decrees may take effect upon his creatures." When Badr al-Din Hasan heard these words from the Ifrit he said to himself, "Would Heaven I knew what all this means and what is the cause of such kindness!" However, he mingled with the people and, lighting his flambeau, moved on with the bridal procession till he came to the bath where he found the Hunchback already on horseback. Then he pushed his way in among the crowd, a veritable beauty of a man in the finest apparel, wearing tarbush[406] and turband and a long-sleeved robe purfled with gold; and, as often as the singing women stopped for the people to give them largesse, he thrust his hand into his pocket and, finding it full of gold, took out a handful and threw it on the tambourine[407] till he had filled it with gold pieces for the music-girls and the tirewomen. The singers were amazed by his bounty and the people marvelled at his beauty and loveliness and the splendour of his dress. He ceased not to do thus till he reached the mansion of the Wazir (who was his uncle), where the Chamberlains drove back the people and forbade them to go forward; but the singing-girls and the tirewomen said, "By Allah we will not enter unless this young man enter with us, for he hath given us length o' life with his largesse and we will not display the bride unless he be present." Therewith they carried him into the bridal hall and made him sit down defying the evil glances of the hunchbacked bridegroom. The wives of the Emirs and Wazirs and Chamberlains and Courtiers all stood in double line, each holding a massy cierge ready lighted; all wore thin face-veils and the two rows right and left extended from the bride's throne[408] to the head of the hall adjoining the chamber whence she was to come forth. When the ladies saw Badr al-Din Hasan and 216 noted his beauty and loveliness and his face that shone like the new moon, their hearts inclined to him and the singing-girls said to all that were present, "Know that this beauty crossed our hands with naught but red gold; so be not chary to do him womanly service and comply with all he says, no matter what he ask."[409] So all the women crowded round Hasan with their torches and gazed on his loveliness and envied him his beauty; and one and all would gladly have lain on his bosom an hour or rather a year. Their hearts were so troubled that they let fall their veils from before their faces and said, "Happy she who belongeth to this youth or to whom he belongeth!"; and they called down curses on the crooked groom and on him who was the cause of his marriage to the girl-beauty; and as often as they blessed Badr al-Din Hasan they damned the Hunchback, saying, "Verily this youth and none else deserveth our Bride: ah, well-away for such a lovely one with this hideous Quasimodo; Allah's curse light on his head and on the Sultan who commanded the marriage!" Then the singing-girls beat their tabrets and lulliloo'd with joy, announcing the appearing of the bride; and the Wazir's daughter came in surrounded by her tirewomen who had made her goodly to look upon; for they had perfumed her and

incensed her and adorned her hair; and they had robed her in raiment and ornaments befitting the mighty Chosroes Kings. The most notable part of her dress was a loose robe worn over her other garments: it was diapered in red gold with figures of wild beasts, and birds whose eyes and beaks were of gems, and claws of red rubies and green beryl; and her neck was graced with a necklace of Yamani work, worth thousands of gold pieces, whose bezels were great round jewels of sorts, the like of which was never owned by Kaysar or by Tobba King.[410] And the bride was as the full moon when at fullest on fourteenth night; and as she paced into the hall 217 she was like one of the Houris of Heaven—praise be to Him who created her in such splendour of beauty! The ladies encompassed her as the white contains the black of the eye, they clustering like stars whilst she shone amongst them like the moon when it eats up the clouds. Now Badr al-Din Hasan of Bassorah was sitting in full gaze of the folk, when the bride came forward with her graceful swaying and swimming gait, and her hunchbacked bridegroom stood up to meet[411] and receive her: she, however, turned away from the wight and walked forward till she stood before her cousin Hasan, the son of her uncle. Whereat the people laughed. But when the wedding-guests saw her thus attracted towards Badr Al-Din they made a mighty clamour and the singing-women shouted their loudest; whereupon he put his hand into his pocket and, pulling out a handful of gold, cast it into their tambourines and the girls rejoiced and said, "Could we win our wish this bride were thine!" At this he smiled and the folk came round him, flambeaux in hand like the eyeball round the pupil, while the Gobbo bridegroom was left sitting alone much like a tail-less baboon; for every time they lighted a candle for him it went out willy-nilly, so he was left in darkness and silence and looking at naught but himself.[412] When Badr al-Din Hasan saw the bridegroom sitting lonesome in the dark, and all the wedding-guests with their flambeaux and wax candles crowding about himself, he was bewildered and marvelled much; but when he looked at his cousin, the daughter of his uncle, he rejoiced and felt an inward delight: he longed to greet her and gazed intently on her face which was radiant with light and brilliancy. Then the tirewomen took off her veil and displayed her in the first bridal dress which was of scarlet satin; and Hasan had a view of her which dazzled his sight and dazed his wits, as she moved to and fro, swaying with graceful gait;[413] and she turned the heads of all the guests, women as well as men, for she was even as saith the surpassing poet:—

A sun on wand in knoll of sand she showed, ✿ Clad in her cramoisy-hued chemisette:

Of her lips honey-dew she gave me drink, ✿ And with her rosy cheeks quencht fire she set.

218 Then they changed that dress and displayed her in a robe of azure; and she reappeared like the full moon when it riseth over the horizon, with her coal-black hair and cheeks delicately fair; and teeth shown in sweet smiling and breasts firm rising and crowning sides of the softest and waist of the roundest. And in this second suit she was as a certain master of high conceits saith of the like of her:—

She came apparelled in an azure vest, ✿ Ultramarine, as skies are deckt and dight:

I view'd th' unparallel'd sight, which show'd my eyes ✿ A moon of Summer on a Winter-night.

Then they changed that suit for another and, veiling her face in the luxuriance of her hair, loosed her lovelocks, so dark, so long that their darkness and length outvied the darkest nights, and she shot through all hearts with the magical shaft of her eye-babes. They displayed her in the third dress and she was as said of her the sayer:—

Veiling her cheeks with hair a-morn she comes, ✿ And I her mischiefs with the cloud compare:

Saying, "Thou veilest morn with night!" "Ah no!" ✿ Quoth she, "I shroud full moon with darkling air!"

Then they displayed her in the fourth bridal dress and she came forward shining like the rising sun and swaying to and fro with lovesome grace and supple ease like a gazelle-fawn. And she clave all hearts with the arrows of her eyelashes, even as saith one who described a charmer like her:—·

The sun of beauty she to sight appears ✿ And, lovely-coy, she mocks all loveliness;

And when he fronts her favour and her smile ✿ A-morn, the Sun of day in clouds must dress.

Then she came forth in the fifth dress, a very light of loveliness like a wand of waving willow or a gazelle of the thirsty wold. Those locks which stung like scorpions along her cheeks were bent, and her neck was bowed in blandishment, and her hips quivered as she went. As saith one of the poets describing her in verse:—

She comes like fullest moon on happy night; ✿ Taper of waist, with shape of magic might:

She hath an eye whose glances quell mankind, ✿ And Ruby on her cheeks reflects his light:

219 Enveils her hips the blackness of her hair; ✿ Beware of curls that bite with viper-bite!

Her sides are silken-soft, the while the heart ✿ Mere rock behind that surface lurks from sight:

From the fringed curtains of her eyne she shoots ✿ Shafts which at farthest range on mark alight:

When round her neck or waist I throw my arms ✿ Her breasts repel me with their hardened height.

Ah, how her beauty all excels! ah how ✿ That shape transcends the graceful waving bough!

Then they adorned her with the sixth toilette, a dress which was green. And now she shamed in her slender straightness the nut-brown spear; her radiant face dimmed the brightest beams of full moon and she outdid the bending branches in gentle movement and flexile grace. Her loveliness exalted the beauties of earth's four quarters and she broke men's hearts by the significance of her semblance; for she was even as saith one of the poets in these lines:—

A damsel 'twas the tirer's art had decked with snares and sleight:[414] ✿ And robed in rays as though the sun from her had borrowed light:

She came before us wondrous clad in chemisette of green, ✿ As veilèd by its leafy screen pomegranate hides from sight:

And when he said "How callest thou the manner of thy dress?" ✿ She answered us in pleasant way with double meaning dight;

"We call this garment *crève-cœur*; and rightly is it hight, ✿ For many a heart wi' this we broke[415] and conquered many a sprite!"

Then they displayed her in the seventh dress, coloured between safflower[416] and saffron, even as one of the poets saith:—

In vest of saffron pale and safflower red ✿ Musk'd, sandal'd, ambergris'd, she came to front:

"Rise!" cried her youth, "go forth and show thyself!" ✿ "Sit!" said her hips, "we cannot bear the brunt!"

And when I craved a bout, her Beauty said ✿ "Do, do!" and said her pretty shame, "Don't, don't!"

220 Thus they displayed the bride in all her seven toilettes before Hasan al-Basri, wholly neglecting the Gobbo who sat moping alone; and, when she opened her eyes[417] she said, "O Allah make this man my goodman and deliver me from the evil of this hunchbacked groom." As soon as they had made an end of this part of the ceremony they dismissed the wedding guests who went forth, women children and all, and none remained save Hasan and the Hunchback, whilst the tirewomen led the bride into an inner room to change her garb and gear and get her ready for the bridegroom. Thereupon Quasimodo came up to Badr al-Din Hasan and said, "O my lord, thou hast cheered us this night with thy good company and overwhelmed us with thy kindness and courtesy; but now why not get thee up and go?" "Bismillah;" he answered, "In Allah's name so be it!"; and rising, he went forth by the door, where the Ifrit met him and said, "Stay in thy stead, O Badr al-Din, and when the Hunchback goes out to the closet of ease go in without losing time and seat thyself in the alcove; and when the bride comes say to her:—'Tis I am thy husband, for the King devised this trick only fearing for thee the evil eye, and he whom thou sawest is but a Syce, a groom, one of our stablemen. Then walk boldly up to her and unveil her face; for jealousy hath taken us of this matter." While Hasan was still talking with the Ifrit behold, the groom fared forth from the hall and entering the closet of ease sat down on the stool. Hardly had he done this when the Ifrit came out of the tank,[418] wherein the water was, in semblance of a mouse and squeaked out "Zeek!" Quoth the Hunchback, "What ails thee?"; and the mouse grew and grew till it became a coal-black cat and caterwauled "Meeao! Meeao[419]"! Then it grew still more and more till it became a dog and barked out "Owh! Owh!" When the bridegroom saw this he was frightened and 221 exclaimed "Out with thee, O unlucky one!"[420] But the dog grew and swelled till it became an ass-colt that brayed and snorted in his face "Hauk![421] Hauk!" Whereupon the Hunchback quaked and cried, "Come to my aid, O people of the house!" But behold, the ass-colt grew and became big as a buffalo and walled the way before him and spake with the voice of the sons of Adam, saying, "Woe to thee, O thou Bunch-back, thou stinkard, O thou filthiest of grooms!" Hearing this the groom was seized with a colic and he sat down on the jakes in his clothes with teeth chattering and knocking together. Quoth the Ifrit, "Is the world so strait to thee thou findest none to marry save my lady-love?" But as he was silent the Ifrit continued, "Answer me or I will do thee dwell in the dust!" "By Allah," replied the Gobbo, "O King of the Buffaloes, this is no fault of mine, for they forced me to wed her; and verily I wot not that she had a lover amongst the buffaloes; but now I repent, first before Allah and then before thee." Said the Ifrit

to him, "I swear to thee that if thou fare forth from this place, or thou utter a word before sunrise, I assuredly will wring thy neck. When the sun rises wend thy went and never more return to this house." So saying, the Ifrit took up the Gobbo bridegroom and set him head downwards and feet upwards in the slit of the privy,[422] and said to him, "I will leave thee here but I shall be on the look-out for thee till sunrise; and, if thou stir before then, I will seize thee by the feet and dash out thy brains against the wall: so look out for thy life!" Thus far concerning the Hunchback, but as regards Badr al-Din Hasan of Bassorah he left the Gobbo and the Ifrit jangling and wrangling and, going into the house, sat him down in the very middle of the alcove; and behold, in came the bride attended by an old woman who stood at the door and said, "O Father of Uprightness,[423] 222 arise and take what God giveth thee." Then the old woman went away and the bride, Sitt al-Husn or the Lady of Beauty hight, entered the inner part of the alcove broken-hearted and saying in herself, "By Allah I will never yield my person to him; no, not even were he to take my life!" But as she came to the further end she saw Badr al-Din Hasan and she said, "Dearling! art thou still sitting here? By Allah I was wishing that thou wert my bridegroom or, at least, that thou and the hunchbacked horse-groom were partners in me." He replied, "O beautiful lady, how should the Syce have access to thee, and how should he share in thee with me?" "Then," quoth she, "who *is* my husband, thou or he?" "Sitt al-Husn," rejoined Hasan, "we have not done this for mere fun,[424] but only as a device to ward off the evil eye from thee; for when the tirewomen and singers and wedding guests saw thy beauty being displayed to me, they feared fascination and thy father hired the horse-groom for ten dinars and a porringer of meat to take the evil eye off us; and now he hath received his hire and gone his gait." When the Lady of Beauty heard these words she smiled and rejoiced and laughed a pleasant laugh. Then she whispered him, "By the Lord thou hast quenched a fire which tortured me and now, by Allah, O my little dark-haired darling, take me to thee and press me to thy bosom!" Then she began singing:—

By Allah, set thy foot upon my soul; ✿ Since long, long years for this alone I long:
And whisper tale of love in ear of me; ✿ To me 'tis sweeter than the sweetest song!
No other youth upon my heart shall lie; ✿ So do it often, dear, and do it long.

Then she stripped off her outer gear and she threw open her chemise from the neck downwards and showed her parts genital and all the rondure of her hips. When Badr al-Din saw the glorious sight his desires were roused, and he arose and doffed his clothes, and wrapping up in his bag-trousers[425] the purse of gold 223 which he had taken from the Jew and which contained the thousand dinars, he laid it under the edge of the bedding. Then he took off his turband and set it upon the settle[426] atop of his other clothes, remaining in his skull-cap and fine shirt of blue silk laced with gold. Whereupon the Lady of Beauty drew him to her and he did likewise. Then he took her to his embrace and set her legs round his waist and point-blanked that

cannon[427] placed where it battereth down the bulwark of maidenhead and layeth it waste. And he found her a pearl unpierced and unthridden and a filly by all men save himself unridden; and he abated her virginity and had joyance of her youth in his virility and presently he withdrew sword from sheath; and then returned to the fray right eath; and when the battle and the siege had finished, some fifteen assaults he had furnished and she conceived by him that very night. Then he laid his hand under her head and she did the same and they embraced and fell asleep in each other's arms, as a certain poet said of such lovers in these couplets:—

Visit thy lover, spurn what envy told; ✿ No envious churl shall smile on love ensoul'd
Merciful Allah made no fairer sight ✿ Than coupled lovers single couch doth hold;
Breast pressing breast and robed in joys their own, ✿ With pillowed forearms cast in finest mould:
And when heart speaks to heart with tongue of love, ✿ Folk who would part them hammer steel ice-cold:
If a fair friend[428] thou find who cleaves to thee, ✿ Live for that friend, that friend in heart enfold.
O ye who blame for love us lover kind ✿ Say, can ye minister to diseasèd mind?

This much concerning Badr al-Din Hasan and Sitt al-Husn his 224cousin; but as regards the Ifrit, as soon as he saw the twain asleep, he said to the Ifritah, "Arise; slip thee under the youth and let us carry him back to his place ere dawn overtake us; for the day is nearhand." Thereupon she came forward and, getting under him as he lay asleep, took him up clad only in his fine blue shirt, leaving the rest of his garments; and ceased not flying (and the Ifrit vying with her in flight) till the dawn advised them that it had come upon them mid-way, and the Muezzin began his call from the Minaret, "Haste ye to salvation![429] Haste ye to salvation!" Then Allah suffered His angelic host to shoot down the Ifrit with a shooting star,[430] so he was consumed, but the Ifritah escaped and she descended with Badr al-Din at the place where the Ifrit was burnt, and did not carry him back to Bassorah, fearing lest he come to harm. Now by the order of Him who predestineth all things, they alighted at Damascus of Syria, and the Ifritah set down her burden at one of the city-gates and flew away. When day arose and the doors were opened, the folk who came forth saw a handsome youth, with no other raiment but his blue shirt of gold-embroidered silk and skull-cap,[431] lying upon the ground drowned in sleep after the hard labour of the night which had not suffered him to take his rest. So the folk looking at him said, "O her luck with whom this one spent the night! but would he had waited to don his garments." Quoth another, "A sorry lot are the sons of great families! Haply he but now came forth of the tavern on some occasion of his own and his wine flew to his head,[432] whereby he hath missed the place he was making for and strayed till he came to the gate of the city; and finding it shut lay him down and went to by-by!" As the people were bandying guesses about him suddenly the morning breeze blew upon Badr al-Din and raising his shirt to his middle showed a stomach and navel with something below it,[433] and legs and thighs clear as crystal and smooth as cream. Cried the people, "By Allah he is a pretty fellow!"; and at the 225cry Badr al-Din awoke and found himself

lying at a city-gate with a crowd gathered around him. At this he greatly marvelled and asked, "Where am I, O good folk; and what causeth you thus to gather round me, and what have I had to do with you?"; and they answered, "We found thee lying here asleep during the call to dawn-prayer and this is all we know of the matter, but where diddest thou lie last night?"[434] "By Allah, O good people," replied he, "I lay last night in Cairo." Said somebody, "Thou hast surely been eating Hashísh;"[435] and another, "He is a fool;" and a third, "He is a *citrouille*;" and a fourth asked him, "Art thou out of thy mind? thou sleepest in Cairo and thou wakest in the morning at the gate of Damascus-city!"[436] Cried he, "By Allah, my good people, one and all, I lie not to you: indeed I lay yesternight in the land of Egypt and yesternoon I was at Bassorah." Quoth one, "Well! well!"; and quoth another, "Ho! ho!"; and a third, "So! so!"; and a fourth cried, "This youth is mad, is possessed of the Jinni!" So they clapped hands at him and said to one another, "Alas, the pity of it for his youth: by Allah a madman! and madness is no respecter of persons." Then said they to him, "Collect thy wits and return to thy reason! How couldest thou be in Bassorah yesterday and in Cairo yesternight and withal awake in Damascus this morning?" But he persisted, "Indeed I was a bridegroom in Cairo last night." "Belike thou hast been dreaming," rejoined they, "and sawest all this in thy sleep." So Hasan took thought for a while and said to them, "By Allah, this is no dream; nor vision-like doth it seem! I certainly was in Cairo where they displayed the bride before me, in presence of a third person, the Hunchback groom who was sitting hard by. By Allah, O my brother, this be no dream, and if it were a dream, where is the bag of gold I bore with me and where are my turband and my robe, and my trousers?" Then he rose and entered the city, threading its highways and by-ways and bazar-streets; and the people pressed upon him and jeered at him, crying out "Madman! madman!" till he, beside himself with rage, took refuge in 226a cook's shop. Now that Cook had been a trifle too clever, that is, a rogue and thief; but Allah had made him repent and turn from his evil ways and open a cook-shop; and all the people of Damascus stood in fear of his boldness and his mischief. So when the crowd saw the youth enter his shop, they dispersed being afraid of him, and went their ways. The Cook looked at Badr al-Din and, noting his beauty and loveliness, fell in love with him forthright and said, "Whence comest thou, O youth? Tell me at once thy tale, for thou art become dearer to me than my soul." So Hasan recounted to him all that had befallen him from beginning to end (but in repetition there is no fruition) and the Cook said, "O my lord Badr al-Din, doubtless thou knowest that this case is wondrous and this story marvellous; therefore, O my son, hide what hath betided thee, till Allah dispel what ills be thine; and tarry with me here the meanwhile, for I have no child and I will adopt thee." Badr al-Din replied, "Be it as thou wilt, O my uncle!" Whereupon the Cook went to the bazar and bought him a fine suit of clothes and made him don it; then fared with him to the Kazi, and formally declared that he was his son. So Badr al-Din Hasan became known in

Damascus-city as the Cook's son and he sat with him in the shop to take the silver, and on this wise he sojourned there for a time. Thus far concerning him; but as regards his cousin, the Lady of Beauty, when morning dawned she awoke and missed Badr al-Din Hasan from her side; but she thought that he had gone to the privy and she sat expecting him for an hour or so; when behold, entered her father Shams al-Din Mohammed, Wazir of Egypt. Now he was disconsolate by reason of what had befallen him through the Sultan, who had entreated him harshly and had married his daughter by force to the lowest of his menials and he too a lump of a groom hunchbacked withal, and he said to himself, "I will slay this daughter of mine if of her own free will she have yielded her person to this accursed carle." So he came to the door of the bride's private chamber, and said, "Ho! Sitt al-Husn." She answered him, "Here am I! here am I![437] O my lord," and came 227 out unsteady of gait after the pains and pleasures of the night; and she kissed his hand, her face showing redoubled brightness and beauty for having lain in the arms of that gazelle, her cousin. When her father, the Wazir, saw her in such case, he asked her, "O thou accursed, art thou rejoicing because of this horse-groom?", and Sitt al-Husn smiled sweetly and answered, "By Allah, don't ridicule me: enough of what passed yesterday when folk laughed at me, and evened me with that groom-fellow who is not worthy to bring my husband's shoes or slippers; nay who is not worth the paring of my husband's nails! By the Lord, never in my life have I nighted a night so sweet as yesternight!, so don't mock by reminding me of the Gobbo." When her parent heard her words he was filled with fury, and his eyes glared and stared, so that little of them showed save the whites and he cried, "Fie upon thee! What words are these? 'Twas the hunchbacked horse-groom who passed the night with thee!" "Allah upon thee," replied the Lady of Beauty, "do not worry me about the Gobbo, Allah damn his father;[438] and leave jesting with me; for this groom was only hired for ten dinars and a porringer of meat and he took his wage and went his way. As for me I entered the bridal-chamber, where I found my true bridegroom sitting, after the singer-women had displayed me to him; the same who had crossed their hands with red gold, till every pauper that was present waxed wealthy; and I passed the night on the breast of my bonny man, a most lively darling, with his black eyes and joined eyebrows."[439] When her parent heard these words the light before his face became night, and he cried out at her saying, "O thou whore! What is this thou tellest me? Where be thy wits?" "O my father," she rejoined, "thou breakest my heart; enough for thee that thou hast been so hard upon me! Indeed my husband who took my virginity is but just now gone to the draught house and I feel that I have conceived by him."[440] The Wazir rose in much marvel and 228 entered the privy where he found the hunchbacked horse-groom with his head in the hole and his heels in the air. At this sight he was confounded and said, "This is none other than he, the rascal Hunchback!" So he called to him, "Ho, Hunchback!" The Gobbo grunted out, "*Taghúm! Taghúm!*"[441] thinking it was the Ifrit spoke to him; so the

Wazir shouted at him and said, "Speak out, or I'll strike off thy pate with this sword." Then quoth the Hunchback, "By Allah, O Shaykh of the Ifrits, ever since thou settest me in this place, I have not lifted my head; so Allah upon thee, take pity and entreat me kindly!" When the Wazir heard this he asked, "What is this thou sayest? I'm the bride's father and no Ifrit." "Enough for thee that thou hast well nigh done me die," answered Quasimodo; "now go thy ways before he come upon thee who hath served me thus. Could ye not marry me to any save the lady-love of buffaloes and the beloved of Ifrits? Allah curse her and curse him who married me to her and was the cause of this my case."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twenty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the hunchbacked groom spake to the bride's father saying, "Allah curse him who was the cause of this my case!" Then said the Wazir to him, "Up and out of this place!" "Am I mad," cried the groom, "that I should go with thee without leave of the Ifrit whose last words to me were:—When the sun rises, arise and go thy gait. So hath the sun risen or no?; for I dare not budge from this place till then." Asked the Wazir, "Who brought thee hither?"; and he answered "I came here yesternight for a call of nature and to do what none can do for me, when lo! a mouse came out of the 229 water, and squeaked at me and swelled and waxed gross till it was big as a buffalo, and spoke to me words that entered my ears. Then he left me here and went away, Allah curse the bride and him who married me to her!" The Wazir walked up to him and lifted his head out of the cess-pool hole; and he fared forth running for dear life and hardly crediting that the sun had risen; and repaired to the Sultan to whom he told all that had befallen him with the Ifrit. But the Wazir returned to the bride's private chamber, sore troubled in spirit about her, and said to her, "O my daughter, explain this strange matter to me!" Quoth she, "'Tis simply this. The bridegroom to whom they displayed me yester-eve lay with me all night, and took my virginity and I am with child by him. He is my husband and if thou believe me not, there are his turband, twisted as it was, lying on the settle and his dagger and his trousers beneath the bed with a something, I wot not what, wrapped up in them." When her father heard this he entered the private chamber and found the turband which had been left there by Badr al-Din Hasan, his brother's son, and he took it in hand and turned it over, saying, "This is the turband worn by Wazirs, save that it is of Mosul stuff."[442] So he opened it and, finding what seemed to be an amulet sewn up in the Fez, he unsewed the lining and took it out; then he lifted up the trousers wherein was the purse of the thousand gold pieces and, opening that also, found in it a written paper. This he read and it was the sale-receipt of the Jew in the name of Badr al-Din Hasan, son of Nur al-Din Ali, the Egyptian; and the thousand dinars were also there. No sooner had Shams al-Din read this than he cried out with a loud cry and fell to the ground fainting; and as soon as he revived and understood the gist of the matter

he marvelled and said, "There is no god, but *the* God, whose All-might is over all things! Knowest thou, O my daughter, who it was that became the husband of thy virginity?" "No," answered she, and he said, "Verily he is the son of my brother, thy cousin, and this thousand dinars is thy dowry. Praise be to Allah! and would I wot how this matter came about!" Then opened he the amulet which was sewn up and found therein a paper in the handwriting of his deceased brother, Nur al-Din the Egyptian, father of Badr al-Din Hasan; and, when he saw the handwriting, he kissed it again and 230 again; and he wept and wailed over his dead brother and improvised these lines:—

I see their traces and with pain I melt, ✿ And on their whilome homes I weep and yearn:

And Him I pray who dealt this parting-blow ✿ Some day he deign vouchsafe a safe return.[443]

When he ceased versifying, he read the scroll and found in it recorded the dates of his brother's marriage with the daughter of the Wazir of Bassorah, and of his going in to her, and her conception, and the birth of Badr al-Din Hasan and all his brother's history and doings up to his dying day. So he marvelled much and shook with joy and, comparing the dates with his own marriage and going in unto his wife and the birth of his daughter, Sitt al-Husn, he found that they perfectly agreed. So he took the document and, repairing with it to the Sultan, acquainted him with what had passed, from first to last; whereat the King marvelled and commanded the case to be at once recorded.[444] The Wazir abode that day expecting to see his brother's son but he came not; and he waited a second day, a third day and so on to the seventh day, without any tidings of him. So he said, "By Allah, I will do a deed such as none hath ever done before me!"; and he took reed-pen and ink and drew upon a sheet of paper the plan of the whole house, showing whereabouts was the private chamber with the curtain in such a place and the furniture in such another and so on with all that was in the room. Then he folded up the sketch and, causing all the furniture to be collected, he took Badr al-Din's garments and the turband and Fez and robe and purse, and carried the whole to his house and locked them up, against the coming of his nephew, Badr al-Din Hasan, the son of his lost brother, with an iron padlock on which he set his seal. As for the Wazir's daughter, when her tale of months was fulfilled, she bare a son like the full moon, the image of his father in beauty and loveliness 231 and fair proportions and perfect grace. They cut his navel-string[445] and Kohl'd his eyelids to strengthen his eyes, and gave him over to the nurses and nursery governesses,[446] naming him Ajíb, the Wonderful. His day was as a month and his month was as a year;[447] and, when seven years had passed over him, his grandfather sent him to school, enjoining the master to teach him Koran-reading, and to educate him well. He remained at the school four years, till he began to bully his schoolfellows and abuse them and bash them and thrash them and say, "Who among you is like me? I am the son of the Wazir of Egypt!" At last the boys came in a body to complain to the Monitor[448] of what hard usage they were wont to have from Ajib, and he said to them, "I will tell you

somewhat you may do to him so that he shall leave off coming to the school, and it is this. When he enters to-morrow, sit ye down about him and say some one of you to some other:—By Allah none shall play with us at this game except he tell us the names of his mamma and his papa; for he who knows not the names of his mother and his father is a bastard, a son of adultery,[449] and he shall not play with us." When morning dawned the boys came to school, Ajib being one of them, and all flocked round him saying, "We will play a game wherein none shall join save he can tell the name of his mamma and his papa." And they all cried, "By Allah, good!" Then quoth one of them, "My name is Májid and my mammy's name is Alawiyah and my daddy's Izz al-Din." Another spoke in like guise and yet a third, till Ajib's turn came, and he said, "My name is Ajib, and my mother's is Sitt al-Husn, and my father's Shams al-Din, the Wazir of Cairo." "By Allah," cried they, "the Wazir is not thy true father." Ajib answered, "The Wazir is my father in very deed." Then the boys all laughed and clapped their hands at him, saying "He does not know who is his papa: get out from among us, for none shall play with us except he know his father's name." Thereupon they dispersed from around him and laughed him to scorn; so his breast was straitened and he 232well nigh choked with tears and hurt feelings. Then said the Monitor to him, "We know that the Wazir is thy grandfather, the father of thy mother, Sitt al-Husn, and not thy father. As for thy father, neither dost thou know him nor yet do we; for the Sultan married thy mother to the hunchbacked horse-groom; but the Jinni came and slept with her and thou hast no known father. Leave, then, comparing thyself too advantageously with the little ones of the school, till thou know that thou hast a lawful father; for until then thou wilt pass for a child of adultery amongst them. Seest thou not that even a huckster's son knoweth his own sire? Thy grandfather is the Wazir of Egypt; but as for thy father we wot him not and we say indeed that thou hast none. So return to thy sound senses!" When Ajib heard these insulting words from the Monitor and the school boys and understood the reproach they put upon him, he went out at once and ran to his mother, Sitt al-Husn, to complain; but he was crying so bitterly that his tears prevented his speech for a while. When she heard his sobs and saw his tears her heart burned as though with fire for him, and she said, "O my son, why dost thou weep? Allah keep the tears from thine eyes! Tell me what hath betided thee?" So he told her all that he heard from the boys and from the Monitor and ended with asking, "And who, O my mother, is my father?" She answered, "Thy father is the Wazir of Egypt;" but he said, "Do not lie to me. The Wazir is thy father, not mine! who then is my father? Except thou tell me the very truth I will kill myself with this hanger."[450] When his mother heard him speak of his father she wept, remembering her cousin and her bridal night with him and all that occurred there and then, and she repeated these couplets:—

Love in my heart they lit and went their ways, ✿ And all I love to furthest lands withdrew;

And when they left me sufferance also left, ✿ And when we parted Patience bade adieu:

They fled and flying with my joys they fled, ✿ In very constancy my spirit flew:

They made my eyelids flow with severance tears ✿ And to the parting-pang these drops are due:

And when I long to see reunion-day, ✿ My groans prolonging sore for ruth I sue:

233 Then in my heart of hearts their shapes I trace, ✿ And love and longing care and cark renew:

O ye, whose names cling round me like a cloak, ✿ Whose love yet closer than a shirt I drew,

Belovèd ones! how long this hard despite? ✿ How long this severance and this coy shy flight?

Then she wailed and shrieked aloud and her son did the like; and behold, in came the Wazir whose heart burnt within him at the sight of their lamentations and he said, "What makes you weep?" So the Lady of Beauty acquainted him with what happened between her son and the school boys; and he also wept, calling to mind his brother and what had past between them and what had betided his daughter and how he had failed to find out what mystery there was in the matter. Then he rose at once and, repairing to the audience-hall, went straight to the King and told his tale and craved his permission[451] to travel eastward to the city of Bassorah and ask after his brother's son. Furthermore he besought the Sultan to write for him letters patent, authorising him to seize upon Badr al-Din, his nephew and son-in-law, wheresoever he might find him. And he wept before the King, who had pity on him and wrote royal autographs to his deputies in all climes[452] and countries and cities; whereat the Wazir rejoiced and prayed for blessings on him. Then, taking leave of his Sovereign, he returned to his house, where he equipped himself and his daughter and his adopted child Ajib, with all things meet for a long march; and set out and travelled the first day and the second and the third and so forth till he arrived at Damascus-city. He found it a fair place abounding in trees and streams, even as the poet said of it:—

When I nighted and dayed in Damascus-town, ✿ Time sware such another he ne'er should view:

And careless we slept under wing of night, ✿ Till dappled Morn 'gan her smiles renew:

And dew-drops on branch in their beauty hung, ✿ Like pearls to be dropt when the Zephyr blew:

And the Lake[453] was the page where birds read and note, ✿ And the clouds set points to what breezes wrote.

234 The Wazir encamped on the open space called Al-Hasá;[454] and, after pitching tents, said to his servants, "A halt here for two days!" So they went into the city upon their several occasions, this to sell and that to buy; this to go to the Hammam and that to visit the Cathedral-mosque of the Banu Umayyah, the Ommiades, whose like is not in this world.[455] Ajib also went, with his attendant eunuch, for solace and diversion to the city and the servant followed with a quarter-staff[456] of almond-wood so heavy that if he struck a camel therewith the beast would never rise again.[457] When the people of Damascus saw Ajib's beauty and brilliancy and perfect grace and symmetry (for he was a marvel of comeliness and winning loveliness, softer than the cool breeze of the North, sweeter than limpid waters to man in drowth, and pleasanter than the health for which sick man sueth), a mighty many followed him, whilst others ran on before and sat down on the road until he should come up, that they might gaze on him, till, as

Destiny had decreed, the Eunuch stopped opposite the shop of Ajib's father, Badr al-Din Hasan. Now his beard had grown long and thick and his wits had ripened during the twelve years which had passed over him, and the Cook and ex-rogue having died, the so-called Hasan of Bassorah had succeeded to his goods and shop, for that he had been formally adopted before the Kazi and witnesses. When his son and the Eunuch stepped before him he gazed on Ajib and, seeing how very beautiful he was, his heart fluttered and throbbed, and blood drew to blood and natural affection spake out and his bowels yearned over him. He had just dressed a conserve of pomegranate grains with sugar, and Heaven-implanted love wrought within him; so he called to his son Ajib and said, "O my lord, O thou who hast gotten the mastery of my heart and my very vitals and to whom my bowels yearn; say me, wilt thou enter my house and solace my soul by eating of my meat?" Then his eyes streamed with tears which he could not stay, for he bethought him of what he had been and what he had become. When Ajib heard his father's words his 235heart also yearned himwards and he looked at the Eunuch and said to him, "Of a truth, O my good guard, my heart yearns to this cook; he is as one that hath a son far away from him: so let us enter and gladden his heart by tasting of his hospitality. Perchance for our so doing Allah may reunite me with my father." When the Eunuch heard these words he cried, "A fine thing this, by Allah! Shall the sons of Wazirs be seen eating in a common cook-shop? Indeed I keep off the folk from thee with this quarter-staff lest they even look upon thee; and I dare not suffer thee to enter this shop at all." When Hasan of Bassorah heard his speech he marvelled and turned to the Eunuch with the tears pouring down his cheeks; and Ajib said, "Verily my heart loves him!" But he answered, "Leave this talk, thou shalt not go in." Thereupon the father turned to the Eunuch and said, "O worthy sir, why wilt thou not gladden my soul by entering my shop? O thou who art like a chesnut, dark without but white of heart within! O thou of the like of whom a certain poet said * * *" The Eunuch burst out a-laughing and asked—"Said what? Speak out by Allah and be quick about it." So Hasan the Bassorite began reciting these couplets:—

If not master of manners or aught but discreet ✿ In the household of Kings no trust could he take:

And then for the Harem! What Eunuch[458] is he ✿ Whom angels would serve for his service sake.

The Eunuch marvelled and was pleased at these words, so he took Ajib by the hand and went into the cook's shop: whereupon Hasan the Bassorite ladled into a saucer some conserve of pomegranate-grains wonderfully good, dressed with almonds and sugar, saying, "You have honoured me with your company: eat then and health and happiness to you!" Thereupon Ajib said to his father, "Sit thee down and eat with us; so perchance Allah may unite us with him we long for." Quoth Hasan, "O my son, hast thou then been afflicted in thy tender years with parting from those thou lovest?" Quoth Ajib, "Even so, O nuncle mine; my heart burns for the loss of a beloved one who is none other than 236my father; and indeed I come forth, I and my grandfather,[459] to circle and search the world for him. Oh, the pity of it, and how I long

to meet him!" Then he wept with exceeding weeping, and his father also wept seeing him weep and for his own bereavement, which recalled to him his long separation from dear friends and from his mother; and the Eunuch was moved to pity for him. Then they ate together till they were satisfied; and Ajib and the slave rose and left the shop. Hereat Hasan the Bassorite felt as though his soul had departed his body and had gone with them; for he could not lose sight of the boy during the twinkling of an eye, albeit he knew not that Ajib was his son. So he locked up his shop and hastened after them; and he walked so fast that he came up with them before they had gone out of the western gate. The Eunuch turned and asked him, "What ails thee?"; and Badr al-Din answered, "When ye went from me, meseemed my soul had gone with you; and, as I had business without the city-gate, I purposed to bear you company till my matter was ordered and so return." The Eunuch was angered and said to Ajib, "This is just what I feared! we ate that unlucky mouthful (which we are bound to respect), and here is the fellow following us from place to place; for the vulgar are ever the vulgar." Ajib, turning and seeing the Cook just behind him, was wroth and his face reddened with rage and he said to the servant, "Let him walk the highway of the Moslems; but, when we turn off it to our tents, and find that he still follows us, we will send him about his business with a flea in his ear." Then he bowed his head and walked on, the Eunuch walking behind him. But Hasan of Bassorah followed them to the plain Al-Hasa; and, as they drew near to the tents, they turned round and saw him close on their heels; so Ajib was very angry, fearing that the Eunuch might tell his grandfather what had happened. His indignation was the hotter for apprehension lest any say that after he had entered a cook-shop the cook had followed him. So he turned and looked at Hasan of Bassorah and found his eyes fixed on his own, for the father had become a body without a soul; and it seemed to Ajib that his eye was a treacherous eye or that he was some lewd fellow. So his rage redoubled and, stooping down, he took up a stone weighing half a pound and threw it at his father. It struck him 237 on the forehead, cutting it open from eye-brow to eye-brow and causing the blood to stream down: and Hasan fell to the ground in a swoon whilst Ajib and the Eunuch made for the tents. When the father came to himself he wiped away the blood and tore off a strip from his turband and bound up his head, blaming himself the while, and saying, "I wronged the lad by shutting up my shop and following, so that he thought I was some evil-minded fellow." Then he returned to his place where he busied himself with the sale of his sweetmeats; and he yearned after his mother at Bassorah, and wept over her and broke out repeating:—

Unjust it were to bid the World[460] be just ✿ And blame her not: She ne'er was made for justice:

Take what she gives thee, leave all grief aside, ✿ For now to fair and then to foul her lust is.

So Hasan of Bassorah set himself steadily to sell his sweetmeats; but the Wazir, his uncle, halted in Damascus three days and then marched upon Emesa, and passing through that town he made enquiry there and at every place where he rested. Thence

he fared on by way of Hamah and Aleppo and thence through Diyár Bakr and Máridin and Mosul, still enquiring, till he arrived at Bassorah-city. Here, as soon as he had secured a lodging, he presented himself before the Sultan, who entreated him with high honour and the respect due to his rank, and asked the cause of his coming. The Wazir acquainted him with his history and told him that the Minister Nur al-Din was his brother; whereupon the Sultan exclaimed, "Allah have mercy upon him!" and added, "My good Sáhib![461]; he was my Wazir for fifteen years and I loved him exceedingly. Then he died leaving a son who abode only a single month after his father's death; since which time he has disappeared and we could gain no tidings of him. But his mother, who is the daughter of my former Minister, is still among us." When the Wazir Shams al-Din heard that his nephew's mother was alive and well, he rejoiced and said, "O King I much desire to meet her." The King on 238 the instant gave him leave to visit her; so he betook himself to the mansion of his brother, Nur al-Din, and cast sorrowful glances on all things in and around it and kissed the threshold. Then he bethought him of his brother, Nur al-Din Ali, and how he had died in a strange land far from kith and kin and friends; and he wept and repeated these lines:—

I wander 'mid these walls, my Lavla's walls, ✿ And kissing this and other wall I roam:

'Tis not the walls or roof my heart so loves, ✿ But those who in this house had made their home.

Then he passed through the gate into a courtyard and found a vaulted doorway builded of hardest syenite[462] inlaid with sundry kinds of multi-coloured marble. Into this he walked and wandered about the house and, throwing many a glance around, saw the name of his brother, Nur al-Din, written in gold wash upon the walls. So he went up to the inscription and kissed it and wept and thought of how he had been separated from his brother and had now lost him for ever, and he recited these couplets:—

I ask of you from every rising sun, ✿ And eke I ask when flasheth leven-light:

Restless I pass my nights in passion-pain, ✿ Yet ne'er I 'plain me of my painful plight:

My love! if longer last this parting throe ✿ Little by little shall it waste my sprite.

An thou wouldst bless these eyne with sight of thee ✿ One day on earth, I crave none other sight:

Think not another could possess my mind ✿ Nor length nor breadth for other love I find.

Then he walked on till he came to the apartment of his brother's widow, the mother of Badr al-Din Hasan, the Egyptian. Now from the time of her son's disappearance she had never ceased weeping and wailing through the light hours and the dark; and, when the years grew longsome with her, she built for him a tomb of marble in the midst of the saloon and there used to weep for him day and night, never sleeping save thereby. When the Wazir drew near her apartment, he heard her voice and stood behind the door while she addressed the sepulchre in verse and said:—

239 Answer, by Allah! Sepulchre, are all his beauties gone? ✿ Hath change the power to blight his charms, that Beauty's paragon?

Thou art not earth, O Sepulchre! nor art thou sky to me; ✿ How comes it, then, in thee I see conjoint the branch and moon?

While she was bemoaning herself after this fashion, behold, the Wazir went in to her and saluted her and informed her that he was her husband's brother; and, telling her all that had passed between them, laid open before her the whole story, how her son Badr al-Din Hasan had spent a whole night with his daughter full ten years ago but had disappeared in the morning. And he ended with saying, "My daughter conceived by thy son and bare a male child who is now with me, and he is thy son and thy son's son by my daughter." When she heard the tidings that her boy, Badr al-Din, was still alive and saw her brother-in-law, she rose up to him and threw herself at his feet and kissed them, reciting these lines:—

Allah be good to him that gives glad tidings of thy steps; ✿ In very sooth for better news mine ears would never sue:

Were he content with worn-out robe, upon his back I'd throw ✿ A heart to pieces rent and torn when heard the word Adieu.

Then the Wazir sent for Ajib and his grandmother stood up and fell on his neck and wept; but Shams al-Din said to her, "This is no time for weeping; this is the time to get thee ready for travelling with us to the land of Egypt; haply Allah will reunite me and thee with thy son and my nephew." Replied she, "Hearkening and obedience;" and, rising at once, collected her baggage and treasures and her jewels, and equipped herself and her slave-girls for the march, whilst the Wazir went to take his leave of the Sultan of Bassorah, who sent by him presents and rarities for the Soldan of Egypt. Then he set out at once upon his homeward march and journeyed till he came to Damascus-city where he alighted in the usual place and pitched tents, and said to his suite, "We will halt a se'nnight here to buy presents and rare things for the Soldan." Now Ajib bethought him of the past so he said to the Eunuch, "O Láik, I want a little diversion; come, let us go down to the great bazar of Damascus,[463] and see what hath become of the cook whose sweetmeats we ate and whose head we broke, for indeed he was kind 240 to us and we entreated him scurvily." The Eunuch answered, "Hearing is obeying!" So they went forth from the tents; and the tie of blood drew Ajib towards his father, and forthwith they passed through the gateway, Báb al-Farádís[464] hight, and entered the city and ceased not walking through the streets till they reached the cook-shop, where they found Hasan of Bassorah standing at the door. It was near the time of mid-afternoon prayer[465] and it so fortuned that he had just dressed a confection of pomegranate-grains. When the twain drew near to him and Ajib saw him, his heart yearned towards him, and noticing the scar of the blow, which time had darkened on his brow, he said to him, "Peace be on thee, O man![466]; know that my heart is with thee." But when Badr al-Din looked upon his son his vitals yearned and his heart fluttered, and he hung his head earthwards and sought to make his tongue give utterance to his words, but he could not. Then he raised his head humbly and suppliant-wise towards his boy and repeated these couplets:—

I longed for my beloved but when I saw his face, ✿ Abashed I held my tongue and stood with downcast eye;
And hung my head in dread and would have hid my love, ✿ But do whatso I would hidden it would not lie:
Volumes of plaints I had prepared, reproach and blame, ✿ But when we met, no single word remembered I.

And then said he to them, "Heal my broken heart and eat of my sweetmeats; for, by Allah, I cannot look at thee but my heart flutters. Indeed I should not have followed thee the other day, but that I was beside myself." "By Allah," answered Ajib, "thou dost indeed love us! We ate in thy house a mouthful when we were here before and thou madest us repent of it, for that thou followedst us and wouldst have disgraced us; so now we will not eat aught with thee save on condition that thou make oath not to go out after us nor dog us. Otherwise we will not visit thee again during our present stay; for we shall halt a week here, whilst my 241grandfather buys certain presents for the King." Quoth Hasan of Bassorah, "I promise you this." So Ajib and the Eunuch entered the shop, and his father set before them a saucer-full of conserve of pomegranate-grains. Said Ajib, "Sit thee down and eat with us, so haply shall Allah dispel our sorrows." Hasan the Bassorite was joyful and sat down and ate with them; but his eyes kept gazing fixedly on Ajib's face, for his very heart and vitals clove to him; and at last the boy said to him, "Did I not tell thee thou art a most noyous dotard?; so do stint thy staring in my face!" But when Hasan of Bassorah heard his son's words he repeated these lines:—

Thou hast some art the hearts of men to clip; ✿ Close-veiled, far-hidden mystery dark and deep:
O thou whose beauties shame the lustrous moon, ✿ Wherewith the saffron Morn fears rivalship!
Thy beauty is a shrine shall ne'er decay; ✿ Whose signs shall grow until they all outstrip;[467]
Must I be thirst-burnt by that Eden-brow ✿ And die of pine to taste that Kausar[468]-lip?

Hasan kept putting morsels into Ajib's mouth at one time and at another time did the same by the Eunuch and they ate till they were satisfied and could no more. Then all rose up and the cook poured water on their hands;[469] and, loosing a silken waist-shawl, dried them and sprinkled them with rose-water from a casting-bottle he had by him. Then he went out and presently returned with a gugglet of sherbet flavoured with rose-water, scented with musk and cooled with snow; and he set this before them saying, 242"Complete your kindness to me!" So Ajib took the gugglet and drank and passed it to the Eunuch; and it went round till their stomachs were full and they were surfeited with a meal larger than their wont. Then they went away and made haste in walking till they reached the tents, and Ajib went in to his grandmother, who kissed him and, thinking of her son, Badr al-Din Hasan, groaned aloud and wept and recited these lines:—

I still had hoped to see thee and enjoy thy sight, ✿ For in thine absence life had lost its kindly light:
I swear my vitals wot none other love but thine ✿ By Allah, who can read the secrets of the sprite!

Then she asked Ajib, "O my son! where hast thou been?"; and he answered, "In Damascus-city;" Whereupon she rose and set before him a bit of scone and a saucer of

conserve of pomegranate-grains (which was too little sweetened), and she said to the Eunuch, "Sit down with thy master!" Said the servant to himself, "By Allah, we have no mind to eat: I cannot bear the smell of bread;" but he sat down and so did Ajib, though his stomach was full of what he had eaten already and drunken. Nevertheless he took a bit of the bread and dipped it in the pomegranate-conserve and made shift to eat it, but he found it too little sweetened, for he was cloyed and surfeited, so he said, "Faugh; what be this wild-beast[470] stuff?" "O my son," cried his grandmother, "dost thou find fault with my cookery? I cooked this myself and none can cook it as nicely as I can save thy father, Badr al-Din Hasan." "By Allah, O my lady," Ajib answered, "this dish is nasty stuff; for we saw but now in the city of Bassorah a cook who so dresseth pomegranate-grains that the very smell openeth a way to the heart and the taste would make a full man long to eat; and, as for this mess compared with his, 'tis not worth either much or little." When his grandmother heard his words she waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and looked at the servant——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

243 Now when it was the Twenty-Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ajib's grandmother heard his words, she waxed wroth and looked at the servant and said, "Woe to thee! dost thou spoil my son,[471] and dost take him into common cookshops?" The Eunuch was frightened and denied, saying, "We did not go into the shop; we only passed by it." "By Allah," cried Ajib, "but we *did* go in and we ate till it came out of our nostrils, and the dish was better than thy dish!" Then his grandmother rose and went and told her brother-in-law, who was incensed against the Eunuch, and sending for him asked him, "Why didst thou take my son into a cook-shop?"; and the Eunuch being frightened answered, "We did not go in." But Ajib said, "We *did* go inside and ate conserve of pomegranate-grains till we were full; and the cook gave us to drink of iced and sugared sherbet." At this the Wazir's indignation redoubled and he questioned the Castrato but, as he still denied, the Wazir said to him, "If thou speak sooth, sit down and eat before us." So he came forward and tried to eat, but could not and threw away the mouthful crying "O my lord! I am surfeited since yesterday." By this the Wazir was certified that he had eaten at the cook's and bade the slaves throw him[472] which they did. Then they came down on him with a rib-basting which burned him till he cried for mercy and help from Allah, saying, "O my master, beat me no more and I will tell thee the truth;" whereupon the Wazir stopped the bastinado and said, "Now speak thou sooth." Quoth the Eunuch, "Know then that we did enter the shop of a cook while he was dressing conserve of pomegranate-grains and he set some of it before us: by Allah! I never ate in my life its like, nor tasted aught nastier than this stuff which is now before us."[473] Badr al-Din Hasan's mother was angry at this and said, "Needs must thou go back to the cook and bring me a saucer of conserved pomegranate-grains from that which is in his shop and show it to thy

master, that he may say which be the better and the nicer, 244mine or his." Said the unsexed "I will." So on the instant she gave him a saucer and a half dinar and he returned to the shop and said to the cook, "O Shaykh of all Cooks,[474] we have laid a wager concerning thy cookery in my lord's house, for they have conserve of pomegranate-grains there also; so give me this half-dinar's worth and look to it; for I have eaten a full meal of stick on account of thy cookery, and so do not let me eat aught more thereof." Hasan of Bassorah laughed and answered, "By Allah, none can dress this dish as it should be dressed save myself and my mother, and she at this time is in a far country." Then he ladled out a saucer-full; and, finishing it off with musk and rose-water, put it in a cloth which he sealed[475] and gave it to the Eunuch, who hastened back with it. No sooner had Badr al-Din Hasan's mother tasted it and perceived its fine flavour and the excellence of the cookery, than she knew who had dressed it, and she screamed and fell down fainting. The Wazir, sorely startled, sprinkled rose-water upon her and after a time she recovered and said, "If my son be yet of this world, none dressed this conserve of pomegranate-grains but he; and this Cook is my very son Badr al-Din Hasan; there is no doubt of it nor can there be any mistake, for only I and he knew how to prepare it and I taught him." When the Wazir heard her words he joyed with exceeding joy and said, "Oh the longing of me for a sight of my brother's son! I wonder if the days will ever unite us with him! Yet it is to Almighty Allah alone that we look for bringing about this meeting." Then he rose without stay or delay and, going to his suite said to them, "Be off, some fifty of you with sticks and staves to the Cook's shop and demolish it; then pinion his arms behind him with his own turband, saying:—It was thou madest that foul mess of pomegranate-grains! and drag him here perforce but without doing him a harm." And they replied, "It is well." Then the Wazir rode off without losing an instant to the Palace and, foregathering with the Viceroy of Damascus, showed him the Sultan's orders. After careful perusal he kissed the letter, and placing it upon his head said to his visitor, "Who is this offender of thine?" Quoth the Wazir, "A man which is a cook." So the Viceroy at once sent his apparitors to the shop; which they found demolished and 245everything in it broken to pieces; for whilst the Wazir was riding to the palace his men had done his bidding. Then they awaited his return from the audience, and Hasan of Bassorah who was their prisoner kept saying, "I wonder what they have found in the conserve of pomegranate-grains to bring things to this pass!"[476] When the Wazir returned to them, after his visit to the Viceroy who had given him formal permission to take up his debtor and depart with him, on entering the tents he called for the Cook. They brought him forward pinioned with his turband; and, when Badr al-Din Hasan saw his uncle, he wept with exceeding weeping and said, "O my lord, what is my offence against thee?" "Art thou the man who dressed that conserve of pomegranate-grains?"; asked the Wazir, and he answered "Yes! didst thou find in it aught to call for the cutting off of my head?" Quoth the Wazir, "That

were the least of thy deserts!" Quoth the cook, "O my lord, wilt thou not tell me my crime and what aileth the conserve of pomegranate-grains?" "Presently," replied the Wazir and called aloud to his men, saying "Bring hither the camels." So they struck the tents and by the Wazir's orders the servants took Badr al-Din Hasan, and set him in a chest which they padlocked and put on a camel. Then they departed and stinted not journeying till nightfall, when they halted and ate some victual, and took Badr al-Din Hasan out of his chest and gave him a meal and locked him up again. They set out once more and travelled till they reached Kimrah, where they took him out of the box and brought him before the Wazir who asked him, "Art thou he who dressed that conserve of pomegranate-grains?" He answered "Yes, O my lord!"; and the Wazir said "Fetter him!" So they fettered him and returned him to the chest and fared on again till they reached Cairo and lighted at the quarter called Al-Raydaniyah.[477] Then the Wazir gave order to take Badr al-Din Hasan out of the chest and sent for a carpenter and said to him, "Make me a cross of wood[478] for this fellow!" Cried Badr al-Din 246 Hasan, "And what wilt thou do with it?"; and the Wazir replied, "I mean to crucify thee thereon, and nail thee thereto and parade thee all about the city." "And why wilt thou use me after this fashion?" "Because of thy villanous cookery of conserved pomegranate-grains; how durst thou dress it and sell it lacking pepper?" "And for that it lacked pepper wilt thou do all this to me? Is it not enough that thou hast broken my shop and smashed my gear and boxed me up in a chest and fed me only once a day?" "Too little pepper! too little pepper! this is a crime which can be expiated only upon the cross!" Then Badr al-Din Hasan marvelled and fell a-mourning for his life; whereupon the Wazir asked him, "Of what thinkest thou?"; and he answered him, "Of maggoty heads like thine;[479] for an thou had one ounce of sense thou hadst not treated me thus." Quoth the Wazir, "It is our duty to punish thee lest thou do the like again." Quoth Badr al-Din Hasan, "Of a truth my offence were over-punished by the least of what thou hast already done to me; and Allah damn all conserve of pomegranate-grains and curse the hour when I cooked it and would I had died ere this!" But the Wazir rejoined, "There is no help for it: I must crucify a man who sells conserve of pomegranate-grains lacking pepper." All this time the carpenter was shaping the wood and Badr al-Din looked on; and thus they did till night, when his uncle took him and clapped him into the chest, saying, "The thing shall be done to-morrow!" Then he waited till he knew Badr al-Din Hasan to be asleep, when he mounted; and, taking the chest up before him, entered the city and rode on to his own house, where he alighted and said to his daughter, Sitt al-Husn, "Praised be Allah who hath reunited thee with thy husband, the son of thine uncle! Up now, and order the house as it was on thy bridal night." So the servants arose and lit the candles; and the Wazir took out his plan of the nuptial chamber, and directed them what to do till they had set everything in its stead, so that whoever saw it would have no doubt but it was the very night of the marriage. Then he bade them put down Badr al-Din Hasan's

turband on the [247]settle, as he had deposited it with his own hand, and in like manner his bag-trousers and the purse which were under the mattress; and told his daughter to undress herself and go to bed in the private chamber as on her wedding-night, adding, "When the son of thine uncle comes in to thee, say to him:—Thou hast loitered while going to the privy; and call him to lie by thy side and keep him in converse till day-break, when we will explain the whole matter to him." Then he bade take Badr al-Din Hasan out of the chest, after loosing the fetters from his feet and stripping off all that was on him save the fine shirt of blue silk in which he had slept on his wedding-night; so that he was well nigh naked and trouserless. All this was done whilst he was sleeping on utterly unconscious. Then, by doom of Destiny, Badr al-Din Hasan turned over and awoke; and, finding himself in a lighted vestibule, said to himself, "Surely I am in the mazes of some dream." So he rose and went on a little to an inner door and looked in and lo! he was in the very chamber wherein the bride had been displayed to him; and there he saw the bridal alcove and the settle and his turband and all his clothes. When he saw this he was confounded and kept advancing with one foot, and retiring with the other, saying, "Am I sleeping or waking?" And he began rubbing his forehead and saying (for indeed he was thoroughly astounded), "By Allah, verily this is the chamber of the bride who was displayed before me! Where am I then? I was surely but now in a box!" Whilst he was talking with himself, Sitt al-Husn suddenly lifted the corner of the chamber-curtain and said, "O my lord, wilt thou not come in? Indeed thou hast loitered long in the water-closet." When he heard her words and saw her face he burst out laughing and said, "Of a truth this is a very nightmare among dreams!" Then he went in sighing, and pondered what had come to pass with him and was perplexed about his case, and his affair became yet more obscure to him when he saw his turband and bag-trousers and when, feeling the pocket, he found the purse containing the thousand gold pieces. So he stood still and muttered, "Allah is all knowing! Assuredly I am dreaming a wild waking dream!" Then said the Lady of Beauty to him, "What ails thee to look puzzled and perplexed?"; adding, "Thou wast a very different man during the first of the night!" He laughed and asked her, "How long have I been away from thee?"; and she answered him, "Allah preserve thee and His Holy Name be about thee! Thou didst but go out an hour ago for an occasion and return. Are thy [248]wits clean gone?" When Badr al-Din Hasan heard this, he laughed,[480] and said, "Thou hast spoken truth; but, when I went out from thee, I forgot myself awhile in the draught-house and dreamed that I was a cook at Damascus and abode there ten years; and there came to me a boy who was of the sons of the great, and with him an Eunuch." Here he passed his hand over his forehead and, feeling the scar, cried, "By Allah, O my lady, it must have been true, for he struck my forehead with a stone and cut it open from eye-brow to eye-brow; and here is the mark: so it must have been on wake." Then he added, "But perhaps I dreamt it when we fell asleep, I and thou, in each other's arms, for meseems it was as though I travelled to

Damascus without tarbush and trousers and set up as a cook there." Then he was perplexed and considered for awhile, and said, "By Allah, I also fancied that I dressed a conserve of pomegranate-grains and put too little pepper in it. By Allah, I must have slept in the numero-cent and have seen the whole of this in a dream; but how long was that dream!" "Allah upon thee," said Sitt al-Husn, "and what more sawest thou?" So he related all to her; and presently said, "By Allah, had I not woke up they would have nailed me to a cross of wood!" "Wherefore?" asked she; and he answered, "For putting too little pepper in the conserve of pomegranate-grains, and meseemed they demolished my shop and dashed to pieces my pots and pans, destroyed all my stuff and put me in a box; then they sent for the carpenter to fashion a cross for me and would have crucified me thereon. Now Alhamdolillah! thanks be to Allah, for that all this happened to me in sleep, and not on wake." Sitt al-Husn laughed and clasped him to her bosom and he her to his: then he thought again and said, "By Allah, it could not be save while I was awake: truly I know not what to think of it." Then he lay him down and all the night he was bewildered about his case, now saying, "I was dreaming!" and then saying, "I was awake!", till morning, when his uncle Shams al-Din, the Wazir, came to him and saluted him. When Badr al-Din Hasan saw him he said, "By Allah, art thou not he who bade bind my hands behind me and smash my shop and nail me to a cross on a matter of conserved pomegranate-grains because the dish lacked a sufficiency [249] of pepper?" Whereupon the Wazir said to him, "Know, O my son, that truth hath shown it soothfast and the concealed hath been revealed![481] Thou art the son of my brother, and I did all this with thee to certify myself that thou wast indeed he who went in unto my daughter that night. I could not be sure of this, till I saw that thou knewest the chamber and thy turband and thy trousers and thy gold and the papers in thy writing and in that of thy father, my brother; for I had never seen thee afore that and knew thee not; and as to thy mother I have prevailed upon her to come with me from Bassorah." So saying, he threw himself on his nephew's breast and wept for joy; and Badr al-Din Hasan, hearing these words from his uncle, marvelled with exceeding marvel and fell on his neck and also shed tears for excess of delight. Then said the Wazir to him, "O my son, the sole cause of all this is what passed between me and thy sire;" and he told him the manner of his father wayfaring to Bassorah and all that had occurred to part them. Lastly the Wazir sent for Ajib; and when his father saw him he cried, "And this is he who struck me with the stone!" Quoth the Wazir "This is thy son!" And Badr al-Din Hasan threw himself upon his boy and began repeating:—

Long have I wept o'er severance' ban and bane, ✿ Long from mine eyelids tear-rills rail and rain:

And vowèd I if Time re-union bring ✿ My tongue from name of "Severance" I'll restrain:

Joy hath o'ercome me to this stress that I ✿ From joy's revulsion to shed tears am fain:

Ye are so trained to tears, O eyne of me! ✿ You weep with pleasure as you weep with pain.[482]

When he had ended his verse his mother came in and threw herself upon him and began reciting:—

When we met we complained, ✿ Our hearts were sore wrung:

But plaint is not pleasant ✿ Fro' messenger's tongue.

Then she wept and related to him what had befallen her since his departure, and he told her what he had suffered, and they thanked 250 Allah Almighty for their reunion. Two days after his arrival the Wazir Shams al-Din went in to the Sultan and, kissing the ground between his hands, greeted him with the greeting due to Kings. The Sultan rejoiced at his return and his face brightened and, placing him hard by his side,[483] asked him to relate all he had seen in his wayfaring and whatso had betided him in his going and coming. So the Wazir told him all that had passed from first to last and the Sultan said, "Thanks be to Allah for thy victory[484] and the winning of thy wish and thy safe return to thy children and thy people! And now I needs must see the son of thy brother, Hasan of Bassorah, so bring him to the audience-hall to-morrow." Shams al-Din replied, "Thy slave shall stand in thy presence to-morrow, Inshallah, if it be God's will." Then he saluted him and, returning to his own house, informed his nephew of the Sultan's desire to see him, whereto replied Hasan, whilome the Bassorite, "The slave is obedient to the orders of his lord." And the result was that next day he accompanied his uncle, Shams al-Din, to the Divan; and, after saluting the Sultan and doing him reverence in most ceremonious obeisance and with most courtly obsequiousness, he began improvising these verses:—

The first in rank to kiss the ground shall deign ✿ Before you, and all ends and aims attain:

You are Honour's fount; and all that hope of you, ✿ Shall gain more honour than Hope hoped to gain.

The Sultan smiled and signed to him to sit down. So he took a seat close to his uncle, Shams al-Din, and the King asked him his name. Quoth Badr al-Din Hasan, "The meanest of thy slaves is known as Hasan the Bassorite, who is instant in prayer for thee day and night." The Sultan was pleased at his words and, being minded to test his learning and prove his good breeding, asked him, "Dost thou remember any verses in praise of the mole on the cheek?" He answered, "I do," and began reciting:—

When I think of my love and our parting-smart, ✿ My groans go forth and my tears upstart:

He's a mole that reminds me in colour and charms ✿ O' the black o' the eye and the grain[485] of the heart.

251 The King admired and praised the two couplets and said to him, "Quote something else; Allah bless thy sire and may thy tongue never tire!" So he began:—

That cheek-mole's spot they evened with a grain ✿ Of musk, nor did they here the simile strain:

Nay, marvel at the face comprising all ✿ Beauty, nor falling short by single grain.

The King shook with pleasure[486] and said to him, "Say more: Allah bless thy days!" So he began:—

O you whose mole on cheek enthroned recalls ✿ A dot of musk upon a stone of ruby,

Grant me your favours! Be not stone at heart! ✿ Core of my heart whose only sustenance *you* be!

Quoth the King, "Fair comparison, O Hasan![487] thou hast spoken excellently well and hast proved thyself accomplished in every accomplishment! Now explain to me how many meanings be there in the Arabic language[488] for the word *Khál* or *mole*." He replied, "Allah keep the King! Seven and fifty and some by tradition say fifty." Said the Sultan, "Thou sayest sooth," presently adding, "Hast thou knowledge as to the points of excellence in beauty?" "Yes," answered Badr al-Din Hasan, "Beauty consisteth in brightness of face, clearness of complexion, shapeliness of nose, gentleness of eyes, sweetness of mouth, cleverness of speech, slenderness of shape and seemliness of all attributes." But the acme of beauty is in the hair and, indeed, al-Shiháb the Hijazi hath brought together all these items in his doggrel verse of the metre Rajaz[489] and it is this:—

252 Say thou to skin "Be soft," to face "Be fair;" ✿ And gaze, nor shall they blame howso thou stare:

Fine nose in Beauty's list is high esteemed; ✿ Nor less an eye full, bright and debonnair

Eke did they well to laud the lovely lips ✿ (Which e'en the sleep of me will never spare);

A winning tongue, a stature tall and straight;[490] ✿ A seemly union of gifts rarest rare:

But Beauty's acme in the hair one views it; ✿ So hear my strain and with some few excuse it!

The Sultan was captivated by his converse and, regarding him as a friend, asked, "What meaning is there in the saw "Shurayh is foxier than the fox"?" And he answered, "Know, O King (whom Almighty Allah keep!) that the legist Shurayh[491] was wont, during the days of the plague, to make a visitation to Al-Najaf; and, whenever he stood up to pray, there came a fox which would plant himself facing him and which, by mimicking his movements, distracted him from his devotions. Now when this became longsome to him, one day he doffed his shirt and set it upon a cane and shook out the sleeves; then placing his turband on the top and girding its middle with a shawl, he stuck it up in the place where he used to pray. Presently up trotted the fox according to his custom and stood over against the figure, whereupon Shurayh came behind him, and took him." Hence the sayer saith, "Shurayh is foxier than the fox." When the Sultan heard Badr al-Din Hasan's explanation he said to his uncle, Shams al-Din, "Truly this the son of thy brother is perfect in courtly breeding and I do not think that his like can be found in Cairo." At this Hasan arose and kissed the ground before him and sat down again as a Mameluke should sit before his master. When the Sultan had thus assured himself of his courtly breeding and bearing and his knowledge of the liberal arts and belles-lettres, he joyed with exceeding joy and invested him with a splendid robe of honour and promoted him to an 253 office whereby he might better his condition.[492] Then Badr al-Din Hasan arose and, kissing the ground before the King, wished him continuance of glory and asked leave to retire with his uncle, the Wazir Shams al-Din. The Sultan gave him leave and he issued forth and the two returned home, where food was set before them and they ate what Allah had given them. After finishing his meal Hasan repaired to the sitting-chamber of his wife, the Lady of Beauty, and told her what had past between him and the

Sultan; whereupon quoth she, "He cannot fail to make thee a cup-companion and give thee largesse in excess and load thee with favours and bounties; so shalt thou, by Allah's blessing, dispread, like the greater light, the rays of thy perfection wherever thou be, on shore or on sea." Said he to her, "I purpose to recite a Kasídah, an ode, in his praise, that he may redouble in affection for me." "Thou art right in thine intent," she answered, "so gather thy wits together and weigh thy words, and I shall surely see my husband favoured with his highest favour." Thereupon Hasan shut himself up and composed these couplets on a solid base and abounding in inner grace and copied them out in a handwriting of the nicest taste. They are as follows:—

Mine is a Chief who reached most haught estate, ✿ Treading the pathways of the good and great:

His justice makes all regions safe and sure, ✿ And against froward foes bars every gate:

Bold lion, hero, saint, e'en if you call ✿ Seraph or Sovran[493] he with all may rate!

The poorest suppliant rich from him returns, ✿ All words to praise him were inadequate.

254 He to the day of peace is saffron Morn, ✿ And murky Night in furious warfare's bate.

Bow 'neath his gifts our necks, and by his deeds ✿ As King of freeborn[494] souls he 'joys his state:

Allah increase for us his term of years, ✿ And from his lot avert all risks and fears!

When he had finished transcribing the lines, he despatched them, in charge of one of his uncle's slaves, to the Sultan, who perused them and his fancy was pleased; so he read them to those present and all praised them with the highest praise. Thereupon he sent for the writer to his sitting chamber and said to him, "Thou art from this day forth my boon-companion and I appoint to thee a monthly solde of a thousand dirhams, over and above that I bestowed on thee aforetime." So Hasan rose and, kissing the ground before the King several times, prayed for the continuance of his greatness and glory and length of life and strength. Thus Badr al-Din Hasan the Bassorite waxed high in honour and his fame flew forth to many regions and he abode in all comfort and solace and delight of life with his uncle and his own folk till Death overtook him. When the Caliph Harun al-Rashid heard this story from the mouth of his Wazir, Ja'afar the Barmecide, he marvelled much and said, "It behoves that these stories be written in letters of liquid gold." Then he set the slave at liberty and assigned to the youth who had slain his wife such a monthly stipend as sufficed to make his life easy; he also gave him a concubine from amongst his own slave-girls and the young man became one of his cup-companions. "Yet this story" (continued Shahrazad) "is in no wise stranger than the tale of the Tailor and the Hunchback and the Jew and the Reeve and the Nazarene, and what betided them." Quoth the King, "And what may that be?" So Shahrazad began, in these words,[495]

5- THE HUNCHBACK'S TALE.

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there dwelt during times of yore, and years and ages long gone before, in a certain city of China,[496] a Tailor who was an open-handed man that loved pleasuring and merry making; and who was wont, he and his wife, to solace themselves from time to time with public diversions and amusements. One day they went out with the first of the light and were returning in the evening when they fell in with a Hunchback, whose semblance would draw a laugh from care and dispel the horrors of despair. So they went up to enjoy looking at him and invited him to go home with them and converse and carouse with them that night. He consented and accompanied them afoot to their home; whereupon the Tailor fared forth to the bazar (night having just set in) and bought a fried fish and bread and lemons and dry sweetmeats for dessert; and set the victuals before the Hunchback and they ate. Presently the Tailor's wife took a great fid of fish and gave it in a gobbet to the Gobbo, stopping his mouth with her hand and saying, "By Allah, thou must down with it at a single gulp; and I will not give thee time to chew it." So he bolted it; but therein was a stiff bone which stuck in his gullet and, his hour being come, he died.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twenty-Fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Tailor's wife gave the Hunchback that mouthful of fish which ended his term of days he died on the instant. Seeing this the Tailor cried aloud, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! Alas, that this poor wretch should have died in so foolish fashion at our hands!" and the woman rejoined, "Why this idle talk? Hast thou not heard his saying who said?—

256 Why then waste I my time in grief, until ✿ I find no friend to bear my weight of woe?

How sleep upon a fire that flames unquenched? ✿ Upon the flames to rest were hard enow!"

Asked her husband, "And what shall I do with him?"; and she answered, "Rise and take him in thine arms and spread a silken kerchief over him; then I will fare forth, with thee following me, this very night and if thou meet any one say:—This is my son, and his mother and I are carrying him to the doctor that he may look at him." So he rose and taking the Hunchback in his arms bore him along the streets, preceded by his wife who kept crying, "O my son, Allah keep thee! what part paineth thee and where hath this small-pox[497] attacked thee?" So all who saw them said "'Tis a child sick of small-pox."[498] They went along asking for the physician's house till folk

directed them to that of a leach which was a Jew. They knocked at the door, and there came down to them a black slave-girl who opened and, seeing a man bearing a babe, and a woman with him, said to them, "What is the matter?" "We have a little one with us," answered the Tailor's wife "and we wish to show him to the physician: so take this quarter dinar and give it to thy master and let him come down and see my son who is sore sick." The girl went up to tell her master, whereupon the Tailor's wife walked into the vestibule and said to her husband, "Leave the Hunchback here and let us fly for our lives." So the Tailor carried the dead man to the top of the stairs and propped him upright against the wall and ran away, he and his wife. Meanwhile the girl went in to the Jew 257 and said to him, "At the door are a man and a woman with a sick child and they have given me a quarter-dinar for thee, that thou mayest go down and look at the little one and prescribe for it." As soon as the Jew saw the quarter-dinar he rejoiced and rose quickly in his greed of gain and went forth hurriedly in the dark; but hardly had he made a step when he stumbled on the corpse and threw it over, when it rolled to the bottom of the staircase. So he cried out to the girl to hurry up with the light, and she brought it, whereupon he went down and examining the Hunchback found that he was stone dead. So he cried out, "O for Esdras![499] O for Moses! O for Aaron! O for Joshua, son of Nun! O the Ten Commandments! I have stumbled against the sick one and he hath fallen downstairs and he is dead! How shall I get this man I have killed out of my house? O by the hoofs of the ass of Esdras!" Then he took up the body and, carrying it into the house, told his wife what had happened and she said to him, "Why dost thou sit still? If thou keep him here till day-break we shall both lose our lives. Let us two carry him to the terrace-roof and throw him over into the house of our neighbour, the Moslem, for if he abide there a night the dogs will come down on him from the adjoining terraces and eat him up." Now his neighbour was a Reeve, the controller of the Sultan's kitchen, and was wont to bring back great store of oil and fat and broken meats; but the cats and rats used to eat it, or, if the dogs scented a fat sheep's tail they would come down from the nearest roofs and tear at it; and on this wise the beasts had already damaged much of what he brought home. So the Jew and his wife carried the Hunchback up to the roof; and, letting him down by his hands and feet through the wind-shaft[500] into the Reeve's house, propped 258 him up against the wall and went their ways. Hardly had they done this when the Reeve, who had been passing an evening with his friends hearing a recitation of the Koran, came home and opened the door and, going up with a lighted candle, found a son of Adam standing in the corner under the ventilator. When he saw this, he said, "Wah! by Allah, very good forsooth! He who robbeth my stuff is none other than a man." Then he turned to the Hunchback and said, "So 'tis thou that stealest the meat and the fat! I thought it was the cats and dogs, and I kill the dogs and cats of the quarter and sin against them by killing them. And all the while 'tis thou comest down from the house terrace through the wind-shaft. But I will avenge myself

upon thee with my own hand!" So he snatched up a heavy hammer and set upon him and smote him full on the breast and he fell down. Then he examined him and, finding that he was dead, cried out in horror, thinking that he had killed him, and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" And he feared for his life, and added, "Allah curse the oil and the meat and the grease and the sheep's tails to boot! How hath fate given this man his quietus at my hand!" Then he looked at the body and seeing it was that of a Gobbo, said, "Was it not enough for thee to be a hunchback,[501] but thou must likewise be a thief and prig flesh and fat! O thou Veiler,[502] deign to veil me with Thy curtain of concealment!" So he took him up on his shoulders and, going forth with him from his house about the latter end of the night, carried him to the nearest end of the bazar, where he set him up on his feet against the wall of a shop at the head of a dark lane, and left him and went away. After a while up came a Nazarene,[503] the Sultan's broker who, much bemused with liquor, was purposing for the Hammam-bath as his drunkenness whispered in his ear, "Verily the call to matins[504] is nigh." He came plodding along and staggering about till he drew near the Hunchback and 259 squatted down to make water[505] over against him; when he happened to glance around and saw a man standing against the wall. Now some person had snatched off the Christian's turband[506] in the first of the night; so when he saw the Hunchback hard by he fancied that he also meant to steal his head-dress. Thereupon he clenched his fist and struck him on the neck, felling him to the ground, and called aloud to the watchman of the bazar, and came down on the body in his drunken fury and kept on belabouring and throttling the corpse. Presently the Charley came up and, finding a Nazarene kneeling on a Moslem and frapping him, asked, "What harm hath this one done?"; and the Broker answered, "The fellow meant to snatch off my turband." "Get up from him," quoth the watchman. So he arose and the Charley went up to the Hunchback and finding him dead, exclaimed, "By Allah, good indeed! A Christian killing a Mahometan!" Then he seized the Broker and, tying his hands behind his back, carried him to the Governor's house,[507] and all the while the Nazarene kept saying to himself, "O Messiah! O Virgin! how came I to kill this fellow? And in what a hurry he must have been to depart this life when he died of a single blow!" Presently, as his drunkenness fled, came dolour in its stead. So the broker and the body were kept in the Governor's place till morning morrowed, when the Wali came out and gave order to hang the supposed murderer and commanded the executioner[508] make proclamation 260 of the sentence. Forthwith they set up a gallows under which they made the Nazarene stand and the torch-bearer, who was hangman, threw the rope round his neck and passed one end through the pulley, and was about to hoist him up[509] when lo! the Reeve, who was passing by, saw the Broker about to be hanged; and, making his way through the people, cried out to the executioner, "Hold! Hold! I am he who killed the Hunchback!" Asked the Governor, "What made thee kill him?"; and he answered, "I went home last night and there found this man

who had come down the ventilator to steal my property; so I smote him with a hammer on the breast and he died forthright. Then I took him up and carried him to the bazar and set him up against the wall in such a place near such a lane;" adding, "Is it not enough for me to have killed a Moslem without also killing a Christian? So hang none other but me." When the Governor heard these words he released the Broker and said to the torch-bearer, "Hang up this man on his own confession." So he loosed the cord from the Nazarene's neck and threw it round that of the Reeve and, making him stand under the gallows-tree, was about to string him up when behold, the Jewish physician pushed through the people and shouted to the executioner, "Hold! Hold! It was I and none else killed the Hunchback! Last night I was sitting at home when a man and a woman knocked at the door carrying this Gobbo who was sick, and gave my handmaid a quarter-dinar, bidding her hand me the fee and tell me to come down and see him. Whilst she was gone the man and the woman brought him into the house and, setting him on the stairs, went away; and presently I came down and not seeing him, for I was in the dark, stumbled over him and he fell to the foot of the staircase and died on the moment. Then we took him up, I and my wife, and carried him on to the top terrace; and, the house of this Reeve being next door to mine, we let the body down through the ventilator. When he came home and found the Hunchback in his house, he fancied he was a thief and struck him with a hammer, so that he fell to the ground, and our neighbour made certain that he had slain him. Now is it not enough for me to have killed one Moslem unwittingly, without burdening myself with taking the life of another Moslem wittingly?" When the Governor heard this he said to the hangman, "Set free the Reeve, and hang the Jew."

261 Thereupon the torch-bearer took him and slung the cord round his neck when behold, the Tailor pushed through the people, and shouted to the executioner, "Hold! Hold! It was I and none else killed the Hunchback; and this was the fashion thereof. I had been out a-pleasuring yesterday and, coming back to supper, fell in with this Gobbo, who was drunk and drumming away and singing lustily to his tambourine. So I accosted him and carried him to my house and bought a fish, and we sat down to eat. Presently my wife took a fid of fish and, making a gobbet of it,[510] crammed it into his mouth; but some of it went down the wrong way or stuck in his gullet and he died on the instant. So we lifted him up, I and my wife, and carried him to the Jew's house where the slave-girl came down and opened the door to us and I said to her:—Tell thy master that there are a man and a woman and a sick person for thee to see! I gave her a quarter-dinar and she went up to tell her master; and, whilst she was gone, I carried the Hunchback to the head of the staircase and propped him up against the wall, and went off with my wife. When the Jew came down he stumbled over him and thought that he had killed him." Then he asked the Jew, "Is this the truth?"; and the Jew answered, "Yes." Thereupon the Tailor turned to the Governor, and said, "Leave go the Jew and hang me." When the Governor heard the Tailor's tale he marvelled at the

matter of this Hunchback and exclaimed, "Verily this is an adventure which should be recorded in books!" Then he said to the hangman, "Let the Jew go and hang the Tailor on his own confession." The executioner took the Tailor and put the rope around his neck and said, "I am tired of such slow work: we bring out this one and change him for that other, and no one is hanged after all!" Now the Hunchback in question was, they relate, jester to the Sultan of China who could not bear him out of his sight; so when the fellow got drunk and did not make his appearance that night or the next day till noon, the Sultan asked some of his courtiers about him and they answered, "O our lord, the Governor hath come upon him dead and hath ordered his murderer to be hanged; but, as the hangman was about to hoist him up there came a second and a third and a fourth and each one said:—It is I, and none else killed the 262 Hunchback!; and each gave a full and circumstantial account of the manner of the jester being killed." When the King heard this he cried aloud to the Chamberlain-in-waiting, "Go down to the Governor and bring me all four of them." So the Chamberlain went down at once to the place of execution, where he found the torch-bearer on the point of hanging the Tailor and shouted to him, "Hold! Hold!" Then he gave the King's command to the Governor who took the Tailor, the Jew, the Nazarene and the Reeve (the Hunchback's body being borne on men's shoulders) and went up with one and all of them to the King. When he came into the presence, he kissed the ground and acquainted the ruler with the whole story which it is needless to relate for, as they say:—There is no avail in a thrice-told tale. The Sultan hearing it marvelled and was moved to mirth and commanded the story to be written in letters of liquid gold, saying to those present, "Did ye ever hear a more wondrous tale than that of my Hunchback?" Thereupon the Nazarene broker came forward and said, "O King of the age, with thy leave I will tell thee a thing which happened to myself and which is still more wondrous and marvellous and pleasurable and delectable than the tale of the Hunchback." Quoth the King, "Tell us what thou hast to say!" So he began in these words

THE NAZARENE BROKER'S STORY.

O King of the age, I came to this thy country with merchandise and Destiny stayed me here with you: but my place of birth was Cairo, in Egypt, where I also was brought up, for I am one of the Copts and my father was a broker before me. When I came to man's estate he departed this life and I succeeded to his business. One day, as I was sitting in my shop, behold, there came up to me a youth as handsome as could be, wearing sumptuous raiment and riding a fine ass.[511] When he saw me he saluted me, and I stood up 263 to do him honour: then he took out a kerchief containing a sample of sesame and asked, "How much is this worth per Ardabb[512]?"; whereto I answered, "An hundred dirhams." Quoth he, "Take porters and gaugers and metesmen and come to-morrow to the Khan al-Jawáli,[513] by the Gate of Victory quarter where thou wilt

find me." Then he fared forth leaving with me the sample of sesame in his kerchief; and I went the round of my customers and ascertained that every Ardabb would fetch an hundred and twenty dirhams. Next day I took four metesmen and walked with them to the Khan, where I found him awaiting me. As soon as he saw me he rose and opened his magazine, when we measured the grain till the store was empty; and we found the contents fifty Ardabbs, making five thousand pieces of silver. Then said he, "Let ten dirhams on every Ardabb be thy brokerage; so take the price and keep in deposit four thousand, and five hundred dirhams for me; and, when I have made an end of selling the other wares in my warehouses, I will come to thee and receive the amount." "I will well," replied I and kissing his hand went away, having made that day a profit of a thousand dirhams. He was absent a month, at the end of which he came to me and asked, "Where be the dirhams?" I rose and saluted him and answered to him, "Wilt thou not eat somewhat in my house?" But he refused with the remark, "Get the monies ready and I will presently return and take them." Then he rode away. So I brought out the dirhams and sat down to await him, but he stayed away for another month, when he came back and said to me, "Where be the dirhams?" I rose and saluting him asked, "Wilt thou not eat something in my house?" But he again refused adding, "Get me the monies ready and I will presently return and take them." Then he rode off. So I brought out the dirhams and sat down to await his return; but he stayed away from me a third month, and I said, "Verily this young man is liberality in incarnate form." At the end of the month he came up, riding a mare-mule and wearing a suit of sumptuous raiment; he was as the moon on the night of fullness, and he seemed as if fresh from the baths, with his cheeks rosy bright, and his brow flower-white, and a mole-spot like a grain of 264ambergris delighting the sight; even as was said of such an one by the poet:—

Full moon with sun in single mansion ✿ In brightest sheen and fortune rose and shone,
With happy splendour changing every sprite: ✿ Hail to what guerdons prayer with blissfull boon!
Their charms and grace have gained perfection's height, ✿ All hearts have conquered and all wits have won.
Laud to the Lord for works so wonder-strange, ✿ And what th' Almighty wills His hand hath done!

When I saw him I rose to him and invoking blessings on him asked, "O my lord, wilt thou not take thy monies?" "Whence the hurry?"[514] quoth he, "Wait till I have made an end of my business and then I will come and take them." Again he rode away and I said to myself, "By Allah, when he comes next time needs must I make him my guest; for I have traded with his dirhams and have gotten large gains thereby." At the end of the year he came again, habited in a suit of clothes more sumptuous than the former; and, when I conjured him by the Evangel to alight at my house and eat of my guest-food, he said, "I consent, on condition that what thou expendest on me shall be of my monies still in thy hands." I answered, "So be it," and made him sit down whilst I got ready what was needful of meat and drink and else besides; and set the tray before him, with the invitation "Bismillah"![515] Then he drew near the tray and put out his left

hand[516] and ate with me; and I marvelled at his not using the right hand. When we had done eating, I poured water on his hand and gave him wherewith to wipe it. Upon this we sat down to converse after I had set before him some sweetmeats; and I said to him, "O my master, prithee relieve me by telling me why thou eatest with thy 265left hand? Perchance something aileth thy other hand?" When he heard my words, he repeated these verses:—

Dear friend, ask not what burneth in my breast, ✿ Lest thou see fiery pangs eye never saw:

Wills not my heart to harbour Salmá in stead ✿ Of Laylá's[517] love, but need hath ne'er a law!

And he put out his right arm from his sleeve and behold, the hand was cut off, a wrist without a fist. I was astounded at this but he said, "Marvel not, and think not that I ate with my left hand for conceit and insolence, but from necessity; and the cutting off my right hand was caused by an adventure of the strangest." Asked I, "And what caused it?"; and he answered:—Know that I am of the sons of Baghdad and my father was of notables of that city. When I came to man's estate I heard the pilgrims and wayfarers, travellers and merchants talk of the land of Egypt and their words sank deep into my mind till my parent died, when I took a large sum of money and furnished myself for trade with stuffs of Baghdad and Mosul and, packing them up in bales, set out on my wanderings; and Allah decreed me safety till I entered this your city. Then he wept and began repeating:—

The blear-eyed scapes the pits ✿ Wherein the lynx-eyed fall:

A word the wise man slays ✿ And saves the natural:

The Moslem fails of food ✿ The Káfir feasts in hall:

What art or act is man's? ✿ God's will obligeth all!

Now when he had ended his verse he said, So I entered Cairo and took off my loads and stored my stuffs in the Khan "Al-Masrúr."[518] Then I gave the servant a few silvers wherewith to buy me some food and lay down to sleep awhile. When I awoke I went to the street called "Bayn al-Kasrayn"—Between the two Palaces—and presently returned and rested my night in the Khan. When it was morning I opened a bale and took out some stuff saying to myself, "I will be off and go through some of the bazars and see the state of the market." So I loaded the stuff on some of my slaves and fared forth till I reached the Kaysariyah or Exchange 266of Jahárkas;[519] where the brokers who knew of my coming came to meet me. They took the stuffs and cried them for sale, but could not get the prime cost of them. I was vexed at this, however the Shaykh of the brokers said to me, "O my lord, I will tell thee how thou mayest make a profit of thy goods. Thou shouldest do as the merchants do and sell thy merchandise at credit for a fixed period, on a contract drawn up by a notary and duly witnessed; and employ a Shroff to take thy dues every Monday and Thursday. So shalt thou gain two dirhams and more, for every one; and thou shalt solace and divert thyself by seeing Cairo and the Nile." Quoth I, "This is sound advice," and carried the brokers to the Khan. They took my stuffs and went with them on 'Change where I sold them well

taking bonds for the value. These bonds I deposited with a Shroff, a banker, who gave me a receipt with which I returned to the Khan. Here I stayed a whole month, every morning breaking my fast with a cup of wine and making my meals on pigeon's meat, mutton and sweetmeats, till the time came when my receipts began to fall due. So, every Monday and Thursday I used to go on 'Change and sit in the shop of one or other of the merchants, whilst the notary and money-changer went round to recover the monies from the traders, till after the time of mid-afternoon prayer, when they brought me the amount, and I counted it and, sealing the bags, returned with them to the Khan. On a certain day which happened to be a Monday,[520] I went to the Hammam and thence back to my Khan, and sitting in my own room[521] broke my fast with a cup of wine, after which I slept a little. When I awoke I ate a chicken and, perfuming my person, repaired to the shop of a merchant hight Badr al-Din al-Bostáni, or the Gardener,[522] who welcomed me; and we sat talking awhile till the bazar should open. Presently, behold, up came a lady of stately figure wearing 267 a head-dress of the most magnificent, perfumed with the sweetest of scents and walking with graceful swaying gait; and seeing me she raised her mantilla allowing me a glimpse of her beautiful black eyes. She saluted Badr al-Din who returned her salutation and stood up, and talked with her; and the moment I heard her speak, the love of her gat hold of my heart. Presently she said to Badr al-Din "Hast thou by thee a cut piece of stuff woven with thread of pure gold?" So he brought out to her a piece from those he had bought of me and sold it to her for one thousand two hundred dirhams; when she said, "I will take the piece home with me and send thee its price." "That is impossible, O my lady," the merchant replied, "for here is the owner of the stuff and I owe him a share of profit." "Fie upon thee!" she cried, "Do I not use to take from thee entire rolls of costly stuff, and give thee a greater profit than thou expectest, and send thee the money?" "Yes," rejoined he; "but I stand in pressing need of the price this very day." Hereupon she took up the piece and threw it back upon his lap, saying "Out on thee! Allah confound the tribe of you which estimates none at the right value;" and she turned to go. I felt my very soul going with her; so I stood up and stayed her, saying, "I conjure thee by the Lord, O my lady, favour me by retracing thy gracious steps." She turned back with a smile and said, "For thy sake I return," and took a seat opposite me in the shop. Then quoth I to Badr al-Din "What is the price they asked thee for this piece?"; and quoth he, "Eleven hundred dirhams." I rejoined, "The odd hundred shall be thy profit: bring me a sheet of paper and I will write thee a discharge for it." Then I wrote him a receipt in my own handwriting and gave the piece to the lady, saying, "Take it away with thee and, if thou wilt, bring me its price next bazar-day; or better still, accept it as my guest-gift to thee." "Allah requite thee with good," answered she, "and make thee my husband and lord and master of all I have!"[523] And Allah favoured her prayer. I saw the Gates of Paradise swing open before me and said, "O my lady, let this piece of stuff be now thine and another like it is ready for

thee; only let me have one look at thy face." So she raised her veil and I saw a face the sight of which bequeathed to me a thousand sighs, and my heart was so captivated by her love that I was 268 no longer ruler of my reason. Then she let fall her face-veil and taking up the piece of stuff said, "O my lord make me not desolate by thine absence!" and turned away and disappeared from my sight. I remained sitting on 'Change till past the hour of afternoon prayer, lost to the world by the love which had mastered me; and the violence of my passion compelled me to make enquiries concerning her of the merchant, who answered me, "This is a lady and a rich: she is the daughter of a certain Emir who lately died and left her a large fortune." Then I took leave of him and returned home to the Khan where they set supper before me; but I could not eat for thinking of her and when I lay down to sleep, sleep came not near me. So I watched till morning, when I arose and donned a change of raiment and drank a cup of wine; and, after breaking my fast on some slight matter, I went to the merchant's shop where I saluted him and sat down by him. Presently up came the lady as usual, followed by a slave-girl and wearing a dress more sumptuous than before; and she saluted me without noticing Badr al-Din and said in fluent graceful speech (never heard I voice softer or sweeter), "Send one with me to take the thousand and two hundred dirhams, the price of the piece." "Why this hurry?" asked I and she answered, "May we never lose thee!"[524] and handed me the money. Then I sat talking with her and presently I signed to her in dumb show, whereby she understood that I longed to enjoy her person,[525] and she rose up in haste with a show of displeasure. My heart clung to her and I went forth from the bazar and followed on her track. As I was walking suddenly a black slave-girl stopped me and said, "O my master, come speak with my mistress."[526] At this I was surprised and replied, "There is none who knows me here;" but she rejoined, "O my lord, how soon hast thou forgotten her! My lady is the same who was this day at the shop of such a merchant." Then I went with her to the Shroff's, where I found the lady who drew me to her side and said, "O my beloved, thine image is firmly stamped upon my fancy, and love of thee hath gotten hold of my heart: from the hour I first saw thee nor sleep nor food nor drink hath given me aught of pleasure." I replied, "The double of that 269 suffering is mine and my state dispenseth me from complaint." Then said she, "O my beloved, at thy house, or at mine?" "I am a stranger here and have no place of reception save the Khan, so by thy favour it shall be at thy house." "So be it; but this is Friday[527] night and nothing can be done till to-morrow after public prayers; go to the Mosque and pray; then mount thine ass, and ask for the Habbániyah[528] quarter; and, when there, look out for the mansion of Al-Nakib[529] Barakát, popularly known as Abu Shámah the Syndic; for I live there: so do not delay as I shall be expecting thee." I rejoiced with still greater joy at this; and took leave of her and returned to my Khan, where I passed a sleepless night. Hardly was I assured that morning had dawned when I rose, changed my dress, perfumed myself with essences and sweet scents and, taking fifty dinars in a kerchief,

went from the Khan Masrúr to the Zuwaylah[530] gate, where I mounted an ass and said to its owner, "Take me to the Habbaniyah." So he set off with me and brought up in the twinkling of an eye at a street known as Darb al-Munkari, where I said to him, "Go in and ask for the Syndic's mansion." He was absent a while and then returned and said, "Alight." "Go thou before me to the house," quoth I, adding, "Come back with the earliest light and bring me home;" and he answered, "In Allah's name;" whereupon I gave him a quarter-dinar of gold, and he took it and went his ways. Then I knocked at the door and out came two white slave-girls, both young; high-bosomed virgins, as they were moons, and said to me, "Enter, for our mistress is expecting thee and she hath not 270slept the night long for her delight in thee." I passed through the vestibule into a saloon with seven doors, floored with particoloured marbles and furnished with curtains and hangings of coloured silks: the ceiling was *cloisonné* with gold and corniced with inscriptions[531] emblazoned in lapis lazuli; and the walls were stuccoed with Sultání gypsum[532] which mirrored the beholder's face. Around the saloon were latticed windows overlooking a garden full of all manner of fruits; whose streams were railing and rilling and whose birds were trilling and shrilling; and in the heart of the hall was a jetting fountain at whose corners stood birds fashioned in red gold crusted with pearls and gems and spouting water crystal-clear. When I entered and took a seat,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twenty-Sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued, When I entered and took a seat, the lady at once came in crowned with a diadem[533] of pearls and jewels; her face dotted with artificial moles in indigo,[534] her eyebrows pencilled with Kohl and her hands and feet reddened with Henna. When she saw me she smiled in my face and took me to her embrace and clasped me to her breast; then she put her mouth to my mouth and sucked my tongue[535] (and I did likewise) and said, 271"Can it be true, O my little darkling, thou art come to me?" adding, "Welcome and good cheer to thee! By Allah, from the day I saw thee sleep hath not been sweet to me nor hath food been pleasant." Quoth I, "Such hath also been my case: and I am thy slave, thy negro slave." Then we sat down to converse and I hung my head earthwards in bashfulness, but she delayed not long ere she set before me a tray of the most exquisite viands, marinated meats, fritters soaked in bee's honey[536] and chickens stuffed with sugar and pistachio-nuts, whereof we ate till we were satisfied. Then they brought basin and ewer and I washed my hands and we scented ourselves with rose-water musk'd and sat down again to converse. So she began repeating these couplets:[537]—

Had we wist of thy coming, thy way had been strown
With the blood of our heart and the balls of our sight:
Our cheek as a foot-cloth to greet thee been thrown,

That thy step on our eyelids should softly alight.

And she kept plaining of what had befallen her and I of what had betided me; and love of her gat so firm hold of my heart that all my wealth seemed a thing of naught in comparison with her. Then we fell to toying and groping and kissing till nightfall, when the handmaidens set before us meats and a complete wine service, and we sat carousing till the noon of night; when we lay down and I lay with her, never in my life saw I a night like that night. When morning morrowed I arose and took leave of her, throwing under the carpet-bed the kerchief wherein were the dinars[538] and as I went out she wept and said, "O my lord, when shall I look upon that lovely face again?" "I will be with thee at sunset," answered I, and going out found the donkey-boy, who had brought me the day before, awaiting at the door. So I mounted ass and rode to the Khan of Masrur where I alighted and gave the man a half-dinar, saying, "Return at sunset;" and he said "I will." Then I breakfasted and went out to seek the price of my stuffs; after which I returned, and taking a roast lamb and some sweetmeats, called a porter and put the provision in his 272crate, and sent it to the lady paying the man his hire.[539] I went back to my business till sunset, when the ass-driver came to me; and I took fifty dinars in a kerchief and rode to her house where I found the marble floor swept, the brasses burnisht, the branch-lights burning, the wax-candles ready lighted, the meat served up and the wine strained.[540] When my lady saw me she threw her arms about my neck, and cried, "Thou hast desolated me by thine absence." Then she set the tables before me and we ate till we were satisfied, when the slave girls carried off the trays and served up wine. We gave not over drinking till half the night was past; and, being well warmed with drink, we went to the sleeping-chamber and lay there till morning. I then arose and fared forth from her leaving the fifty dinars with her as before; and, finding the donkey-boy at the door, rode to the Khan and slept awhile. After that I went out to make ready the evening meal and took a brace of geese with gravy on two platters of dressed and peppered rice, and got ready colocasia[541]-roots fried and soaked in honey, and wax-candles and fruits and conserves and nuts and almonds and sweet-scented flowers; and I sent them all to her. As soon as it was night I again tied up fifty dinars in a kerchief and, mounting the ass as usual, rode to the mansion where we ate and drank and lay together till morning when I threw the kerchief and dinars[542] to her and rode back to the Khan. I ceased not doing after that fashion till, after a sweet night, I woke one fine morning and found myself beggared, dinar-less and dirham-less. So said I to myself "All this be Satan's work;" and began to recite these couplets:—

Poverty dims the sheen of man whate'er his wealth has been, ✿ E'en as the sun about to set shines with a yellowing light:

Absent he falls from memory, forgotten by his friends; ✿ Present he shareth not their joys for none in him delight:

He walks the market shunned of all, too glad to hide his head; ✿ In desert places tears he sheds and moans his bitter plight:

By Allah, 'mid his kith and kin a man, however good, ✿ Waylaid by want and penury is but a stranger-wight!

273 I fared forth from the Khan and walked down "Between the Palaces" street till I came to the Zuwaylah Porte, where I found the people crowding and the gateway blocked for the much folk. And by the decree of Destiny I saw there a trooper against whom I pressed unintentionally, so that my hand came upon his bosom pocket and I felt a purse inside it. I looked and seeing a string of green silk hanging from the pocket knew it for a purse; and the crush grew greater every minute and just then, a camel laden with a load of fuel happened to jostle the trooper on the opposite side, and he turned round to fend it off from him, lest it tear his clothes; and Satan tempted me, so I pulled the string and drew out a little bag of blue silk, containing something which chinked like coin. But the soldier, feeling his pocket suddenly lightened, put his hand to it and found it empty; whereupon he turned to me and, snatching up his mace from his saddle-bow, struck me with it on the head. I fell to the ground, whilst the people came round us and seizing the trooper's mare by the bridle said to him, "Strikest thou this youth such a blow as this for a mere push!" But the trooper cried out at them, "This fellow is an accursed thief!" Whereupon I came to myself and stood up, and the people looked at me and said, "Nay, he is a comely youth: he would not steal anything;" and some of them took my part and others were against me and question and answer waxed loud and warm. The people pulled at me and would have rescued me from his clutches; but as fate decreed behold, the Governor, the Chief of Police, and the watch[543] entered the Zuwaylah Gate at this moment and, seeing the people gathered together around me and the soldier, the Governor asked, "What is the matter?" "By Allah! O Emir," answered the trooper, "this is a thief! I had in my pocket a purse of blue silk lined with twenty good gold pieces and he took it, whilst I was in the crush." Quoth the Governor, "Was any one by thee at the time?"; and quoth the soldier, "No." Thereupon the Governor cried out to the Chief of Police who seized me, and on this wise the curtain of the Lord's protection was withdrawn from me. Then he said "Strip him;" and, when they stripped me, they found the purse in my clothes. The Wali took it, opened it and counted it; and, finding in it twenty dinars as the soldier had said, waxed exceeding wroth and 274 bade his guard bring me before him. Then said he to me, "Now, O youth, speak truly: didst thou steal this purse?"[544] At this I hung my head to the ground and said to myself, "If I deny having stolen it, I shall get myself into terrible trouble." So I raised my head and said, "Yes, I took it." When the Governor heard these words he wondered and summoned witnesses who came forward and attested my confession. All this happened at the Zuwaylah Gate. Then the Governor ordered the link-bearer to cut off my right hand, and he did so; after which he would have struck off my left foot also; but the heart of the soldier softened and he took pity on me and interceded for me with the Governor that I should not be slain.[545] Thereupon the Wali left me, and went away and the folk remained round me and gave me a cup of wine to drink. As for the trooper he pressed

the purse upon me, and said, "Thou art a comely youth and it befitteth not thou be a thief." So I repeated these verses:—

I swear by Allah's name, fair sir! no thief was I, ✿ Nor, O thou best of men! was I a bandit bred:
But Fortune's change and chance o'erthrew me suddenly, ✿ And cark and care and penury my course misled:
I shot it not, indeed, 'twas Allah shot the shaft ✿ That rolled in dust the Kingly diadem from my head.[546]

The soldier turned away after giving me the purse; and I also went my ways having wrapped my hand in a piece of rag and thrust it into my bosom. My whole semblance had changed, and my colour had waxed yellow from the shame and pain which had befallen me. Yet I went on to my mistress's house where, in extreme perturbation of spirit I threw myself down on the carpet-bed.

275 She saw me in this state and asked me, "What aileth thee and why do I see thee so changed in looks?"; and I answered, "My head paineth me and I am far from well." Whereupon she was vexed and was concerned on my account and said, "Burn not my heart, O my lord, but sit up and raise thy head and recount to me what hath happened to thee to-day, for thy face tells me a tale." "Leave this talk," replied I. But she wept and said, "Meseems thou art tired of me, for I see thee contrary to thy wont." But I was silent; and she kept on talking to me albeit I gave her no answer, till night came on. Then she set food before me, but I refused it fearing lest she see me eating with my left hand and said to her, "I have no stomach to eat at present." Quoth she, "Tell me what hath befallen thee to-day, and why art thou so sorrowful and broken in spirit and heart?" Quoth I, "Wait awhile; I will tell thee all at my leisure." Then she brought me wine, saying, "Down with it, this will dispel thy grief: thou must indeed drink and tell me of thy tidings." I asked her, "Perforce must I tell thee?"; and she answered, "Yes." Then said I, "If it needs must be so, then give me to drink with thine own hand." She filled and drank,[547] and filled again and gave me the cup which I took from her with my left hand and wiped the tears from my eyelids and began repeating:—

When Allah willeth aught befal a man ✿ Who hath of ears and eyes and wits full share;
His ears He deafens and his eyes He blinds ✿ And draws his wits e'en as we draw a hair[548]
Till, having wrought His purpose, He restores ✿ Man's wits, that warned more circumspect he fare.

When I ended my verses I wept, and she cried out with an exceeding loud cry, "What is the cause of thy tears? Thou burnest my heart! What makes thee take the cup with thy left hand?" Quoth I, "Truly I have on my right hand a boil;" and quoth she, "Put it out and I will open it for thee."[549] "It is not yet time to open it," I replied, "So worry me not with thy words, for I will not take it out of the bandage at this hour." Then I drank off the cup, and 276 she gave not over plying me with drink until drunkenness overcame me and I fell asleep in the place where I was sitting; whereupon she looked at my right hand and saw a wrist without a fist. So she searched me closely and found with me the purse of gold and my severed hand wrapped up in the bit of rag.[550] With this such sorrow came upon her as never overcame any and she ceased not lamenting

on my account till the morning. When I awoke I found that she had dressed me a dish of broth of four boiled chickens, which she brought to me together with a cup of wine. I ate and drank and laying down the purse, would have gone out; but she said to me, "Whither away?"; and I answered, "Where my business calleth me;" and said she, "Thou shalt not go: sit thee down." So I sat down and she resumed, "Hath thy love for me so overpowered thee that thou hast wasted all thy wealth and hast lost thine hand on my account? I take thee to witness against me and also Allah be my witness that I will never part with thee, but will die under thy feet; and soon thou shalt see that my words are true." Then she sent for the Kazi and witnesses and said to them, "Write my contract of marriage with this young man, and bear ye witness that I have received the marriage-settlement."[551] When they had drawn up the document she said, "Be witness that all my monies which are in this chest and all I have in slaves and handmaidens and other property is given in free gift to this young man." So they took act of this statement enabling me to assume possession in right of marriage; and then withdrew, after receiving their fees. Thereupon she took me by the hand and, leading me to a closet, opened a large chest and said to me, "See what is herein;" and I looked and behold, it was full of kerchiefs. Quoth she, "This is the money I had from thee and every kerchief thou gavest me, containing fifty dinars, I wrapped up and cast into this chest; so now take thine own, for it returns to thee, and this day thou art become of high estate. Fortune and Fate afflicted thee so that thou didst lose thy right hand for my sake; and I can never requite thee; nay, although I gave my life 'twere but little and I should still 277remain thy debtor." Then she added, "Take charge of thy property;" so I transferred the contents of her chest to my chest, and added my wealth to her wealth which I had given her, and my heart was eased and my sorrow ceased. I stood up and kissed her and thanked her; and she said, "Thou hast given thy hand for love of me and how am I able to give thee an equivalent? By Allah, if I offered my life for thy love, it were indeed but little and would not do justice to thy claim upon me." Then she made over to me by deed all that she possessed in clothes and ornaments of gold and pearls, and goods and farms and chattels, and lay not down to sleep that night, being sorely grieved for my grief, till I told her the whole of what had befallen me. I passed the night with her. But before we had lived together a month's time she fell sorely sick and illness increased upon her, by reason of her grief for the loss of my hand, and she endured but fifty days before she was numbered among the folk of futurity and heirs of immortality. So I laid her out and buried her body in mother earth and let make a pious perlection of the Koran[552] for the health of her soul, and gave much money in alms for her; after which I turned me from the grave and returned to the house. There I found that she had left much substance in ready money and slaves, mansions, lands and domains, and among her storehouses was a granary of sesame-seed, whereof I sold part to thee; and I had neither time nor inclination to take count with thee till I had sold the rest of the stock in store; nor, indeed, even now

have I made an end of receiving the price. So I desire thou baulk me not in what I am about to say to thee: twice have I eaten of thy food and I wish to give thee as a present the monies for the sesame which are by thee. Such is the cause of the cutting of my right hand and my eating with my left. "Indeed," said I, "thou hast shown me the utmost kindness and liberality." Then he asked me, "Why shouldst thou not travel with me to my native country whither I am about to return with Cairene and Alexandrian stuffs? Say me, wilt thou accompany me?;" and I answered "I will." So I agreed to go with him at the head of the month, and I sold all I had and bought other merchandise; then we set out and travelled, I and the young man, to this country [278] of yours, where he sold his venture and bought other investment of country stuffs and continued his journey to Egypt. But it was my lot to abide here, so that these things befel me in my strangerhood which befel last night, and is not this tale, O King of the age, more wondrous and marvellous than the story of the Hunchback? "Not so," quoth the King, "I cannot accept it: there is no help for it but that you be hanged, every one of you."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King of China declared "There is no help for it but that you be hanged," the Reeve of the Sultan's Kitchen came forward and said, "If thou permit me I will tell thee a tale of what befel me just before I found this Gobbo; and, if it be more wondrous than his story, do thou grant us our lives." And when the King answered "Yes" he began to recount

THE REEVE'S TALE.

Know, O King, that last night I was at a party where they made a perlection of the Koran and got together doctors of law and religion skilled in recitation and intoning; and, when the readers ended, the table was spread and amongst other things they set before us was a marinated ragout[553] flavoured with cumin-seed. So we sat down, but one of our number held back and refused to touch it. We conjured him to eat of it but he swore he would not; and, when we again pressed him, he said, "Be not instant with me; sufficeth me that which hath already befallen me through eating it"; and he began reciting:—

Shoulder thy tray and go straight to thy goal; ✿ And, if suit thee this Kohl, why,—use this Kohl![554]

When he ended his verse we said to him, "Allah upon thee, tell us thy reason for refusing to eat of the cumin-ragout?" "If so it [279] be," he replied, "and needs must I eat of it, I will not do so except I wash my hand forty times with soap, forty times with potash and forty times with galangale,[555] the total being one hundred and twenty washings." Thereupon the hospitable host bade his slaves bring water and whatso he

required; and the young man washed his hand as afore mentioned. Then he sat down, as if disgusted and frightened withal, and dipping his hand in the ragout, began eating and at the same time showing signs of anger. And we wondered at him with extreme wonderment, for his hand trembled and the morsel in it shook and we saw that his thumb had been cut off and he ate with his four fingers only. So we said to him, "Allah upon thee, what happened to thy thumb? Is thy hand thus by the creation of God or hath some accident befallen it?" "O my brothers," he answered, "it is not only thus with this thumb, but also with my other thumb and with both my great toes, as you shall see." So saying he uncovered his left hand and his feet, and we saw that the left hand was even as the right and in like manner that each of his feet lacked its great toe. When we saw him after this fashion, our amazement waxed still greater and we said to him, "We have hardly patience enough to await thy history and to hear the manner of the cutting off of thy thumbs, and the reason of thy washing both hands one hundred and twenty times." Know then, said he, that my father was chief of the merchants and the wealthiest of them all in Baghdad-city during the reign of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid; and he was much given to wine-drinking and listening to the lute and the other instruments of pleasaunce; so that when he died he left nothing. I buried him and had perlections of the Koran made for him, and mourned for him days and nights: then I opened his shop and found that he had left in it few goods, while his debts were many. However I compounded with his creditors for time to settle their demands and betook myself to buying and selling, paying them something from week to week on account; and I gave not over doing this till I had cleared off his obligations in full and began adding to my principal. One day, as I sat in my shop, suddenly and unexpectedly there appeared before me a young lady, than whom I never saw a fairer, wearing the richest raiment and ornaments and riding a she mule, with one negro-slave walking before 280 her and another behind her. She drew rein at the head of the exchange-bazar and entered followed by an eunuch who said to her, "O my lady come out and away without telling any one, lest thou light a fire which will burn us all up." Moreover he stood before her guarding her from view whilst she looked at the merchants' shops. She found none open but mine; so she came up with the eunuch behind her and sitting down in my shop saluted me; never heard I aught fairer than her speech or sweeter than her voice. Then she unveiled her face, and I saw that she was like the moon and I stole a glance at her whose sight caused me a thousand sighs, and my heart was captivated with love of her, and I kept looking again and again upon her face repeating these verses:—

Say to the charmer in the dove-hued veil, ✿ Death would be welcome to abate thy bale!

Favour me with thy favours that I live: ✿ See, I stretch forth my palm to take thy vail!

When she heard my verse she answered me saying:—

I've lost all patience by despite of you; ✿ My heart knows nothing save love-plight to you!

If aught I sight save charms so bright of you; ✿ My parting end not in the sight of you!

I swear I'll ne'er forget the right of you; ✿ And fain this breast would soar to height of you:
You made me drain the love-cup, and I lief ✿ A love-cup tender for delight of you:
Take this my form where'er you go, and when ✿ You die, entomb me in the site of you:
Call on me in my grave, and hear my bones ✿ Sigh their responses to the shright of you:
And were I asked "Of God what wouldst thou see?" ✿ I answer, "first His will then Thy decree!"

When she ended her verse she asked me, "O youth, hast thou any fair stuffs by thee?"; and I answered, "O my lady, thy slave is poor; but have patience till the merchants open their shops, and I will suit thee with what thou wilt." Then we sat talking, I and she (and I was drowned in the sea of her love, dazed in the desert[556] of my passion for her), till the merchants opened their shops; when I rose and fetched her all she sought to the tune of five thousand dirhams. She gave the stuff to the eunuch and, going forth by 281 the door of the Exchange, she mounted mule and went away, without telling me whence she came, and I was ashamed to speak of such trifle. When the merchants dunned me for the price, I made myself answerable for five thousand dirhams and went home, drunken with the love of her. They set supper before me and I ate a mouthful, thinking only of her beauty and loveliness, and sought to sleep, but sleep came not to me. And such was my condition for a whole week, when the merchants required their monies of me, but I persuaded them to have patience for another week, at the end of which time she again appeared mounted on a she-mule and attended by her eunuch and two slaves. She saluted me and said, "O my master, we have been long in bringing thee the price of the stuffs; but now fetch the Shroff and take thy monies." So I sent for the money-changer and the eunuch counted out the coin before him and made it over to me. Then we sat talking, I and she, till the market opened, when she said to me, "Get me this and that." So I got her from the merchants whatso she wanted, and she took it and went away without saying a word to me about the price. As soon as she was out of sight, I repented me of what I had done; for the worth of the stuffs bought for her amounted to a thousand dinars, and I said in my soul, "What manner of love is this? She hath brought me five thousand dirhams, and hath taken goods for a thousand dinars."[557] I feared lest I should be beggared through having to pay the merchants their money, and I said, "They know none other but me; this lovely lady is naught but a cheat and a swindler, who hath diddled me with her beauty and grace; for she saw that I was a mere youth and laughed at me for not asking her address. I ceased not to be troubled by these doubts and fears, as she was absent more than a month, till the merchants pestered me for their money and were so hard upon me that I put up my property for sale and stood on the very brink of ruin." However, as I was sitting in my shop one day, drowned in melancholy musings, she suddenly rode up and, dismounting at the bazar-gate, came straight towards me. When I saw her all my cares fell from me and I forgot every trouble. She came close up to me and greeted me with her sweet voice and pleasant speech and presently said, "Fetch me the Shroff and weigh thy money.[558]" So she gave me the price of what

goods 282I had gotten for her and more, and fell to talking freely with me, till I was like to die of joy and delight. Presently she asked me, "Hast thou a wife?"; and I answered "No, indeed: I have never known woman"; and began to shed tears. Quoth she "Why weepest thou?" Quoth I "It is nothing!" Then giving the eunuch some of the gold pieces, I begged him to be go-between[559] in the matter; but he laughed and said, "She is more in love with thee than thou with her: she hath no occasion for the stuffs she hath bought of thee and did all this only for the love of thee; so ask of her what thou wilt and she will deny thee nothing." When she saw me giving the dinars to the eunuch, she returned and sat down again; and I said to her, "Be charitable to thy slave and pardon him what he is about to say." Then I told her what was in my mind and she assented and said to the eunuch, "Thou shalt carry my message to him," adding to me, "And do thou whatso the eunuch biddeth thee." Then she got up and went away, and I paid the merchants their monies and they all profited; but as for me, regret at the breaking off of our intercourse was all my gain; and I slept not the whole of that night. However, before many days passed her eunuch came to me, and I entreated him honourably and asked him after his mistress. "Truly she is sick with love of thee," he replied and I rejoined, "Tell me who and what she is." Quoth he, "The Lady Zubaydah, queen-consort of Harun al-Rashid, bought her up as a rearling[560] and hath advanced her to be stewardess of the Harim, and gave her the right of going in and out of her own sweet will. She spoke to her lady of thee and begged her to marry her to thee; but she said:—I will not do this, till I see the young man; and, if he be worthy of thee, I will marry thee to him. So now we look for the moment to smuggle thee into the Palace and if thou succeed in entering privily thou wilt win thy wish to wed her; but if the affair get wind, the Lady Zubaydah will strike off thy head.[561] What sayest thou to this?" I answered, "I will go 283with thee and abide the risk whereof thou speakest." Then said he, "As soon as it is night, go to the Mosque built by the Lady Zubaydah on the Tigris and pray the night-prayers and sleep there." "With love and gladness," cried I. So at nightfall I repaired to the Mosque, where I prayed and passed the night. With earliest dawn, behold, came sundry eunuchs in a skiff with a number of empty chests which they deposited in the Mosque, then all of them went their ways but one, and looking curiously at him, I saw he was our go-between. Presently in came the handmaiden, my mistress, walking straight up to us; and I rose to her and embraced her while she kissed me and shed tears.[562] We talked awhile; after which she made me get into one of the chests which she locked upon me. Presently the other eunuchs came back with a quantity of packages and she fell to stowing them in the chests, which she locked down, one by one, till all were shut. When all was done the eunuchs embarked the chests in the boat and made for the Lady Zubaydah's palace. With this, thought began to beset me and I said to myself, "Verily thy lust and wantonness will be the death of thee; and the question is after all shalt thou win to thy wish or not?" And I began to weep, boxed up as I was in the box and suffering from

cramp; and I prayed Allah that He deliver me from the dangerous strait I was in, whilst the boat gave not over going on till it reached the Palace-gate where they lifted out the chests and amongst them that in which I was. Then they carried them in, passing through a troop of eunuchs, guardians of the Harim and of the ladies behind the curtain, till they came to the post of the Eunuch-in-Chief[563] who started up from his slumbers and shouted to the damsel "What is in those chests?" "They are full of wares for the Lady Zubaydah!" "Open them, one by 284one, that I may see what is in them." "And wherefore wouldst thou open them?" "Give me no words and exceed not in talk! these chests must and shall be opened." So saying, he sprang to his feet, and the first which they brought to him to open was that wherein I was; and, when I felt his hands upon it, my senses failed me and I bepissed myself in my funk, the water running out of the box. Then said she to the Eunuch-in-Chief, "O steward! thou wilt cause me to be killed and thyself too, for thou hast damaged goods worth ten thousand dinars. This chest contains coloured dresses, and four gallon flasks of Zemzem water;[564] and now one of them hath got unstoppered and the water is running out over the clothes and it will spoil their colours." The eunuch answered, "Take up thy boxes and get thee gone to the curse of God!" So the slaves carried off all the chests, including mine; and hastened on with them till suddenly I heard the voice of one saying, "Alack, and alack! the Caliph! the Caliph!" When that cry struck mine ears I died in my skin and said a saying which never yet shamed the sayer, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I and only I have brought this calamity upon myself." Presently I heard the Caliph say to my mistress, "A plague on thee, what is in those boxes?"; and she answered, "Dresses for the Lady Zubaydah";[565] whereupon he, "Open them before me!" When I heard this I died my death outright and said to myself, "By Allah, to-day is the very last of my days in this world: if I come safe out of this I am to marry her and no more words, but detection stares me in the face and my head is as good as stricken off." Then I repeated the profession of Faith, saying, "There is no god but *the* God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twenty-Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued as follows: Now when I testified, "I bear witness that there is no god save *the* God, I heard my mistress the 285handmaid declare to the Caliph, "These chests, O Commander of the Faithful, have been committed to my charge by the Lady Zubaydah, and she doth not wish their contents to be seen by any one." "No matter!" quoth the Caliph, "needs must they be opened, I *will* see what is in them"; and he cried aloud to the eunuchs, "Bring the chests here before me." At this I made sure of death (without benefit of a doubt) and swooned away. Then the eunuchs brought the chests up to him one after another and he fell to inspecting the contents, but he saw in

them only ottars and stuffs and fine dresses; and they ceased not opening the chests and he ceased not looking to see what was in them, finding only clothes and such matters, till none remained unopened but the box in which I was boxed. They put forth their hands to open it, but my mistress the handmaid made haste and said to the Caliph, "This one thou shalt see only in the presence of the Lady Zubaydah, for that which is in it is her secret." When he heard this he gave orders to carry in the chests; so they took up that wherein I was and bore it with the rest into the Harim and set it down in the midst of the saloon; and indeed my spittle was dried up for very fear.[566] Then my mistress opened the box and took me out, saying, "Fear not: no harm shall betide thee now nor dread; but broaden thy breast and strengthen thy heart and sit thee down till the Lady Zubaydah come, and surely thou shalt win thy wish of me." So I sat down and, after a while, in came ten handmaidens, virgins like moons, and ranged themselves in two rows, five facing five; and after them twenty other damsels, high-bosomed virginity, surrounding the Lady Zubaydah who could hardly walk for the weight of her raiment and ornaments. As she drew near, the slave-girls dispersed from around her, and I advanced and kissed the ground between her hands. She signed to me to sit and, when I sat down before her chair, she began questioning me of my forbears and family and condition, to which I made such answers that pleased her, and she said to my mistress, "Our nurturing of thee, O damsel, hath not disappointed us." Then she said to me, "Know that this handmaiden is to us even as our own child and she is a trust committed to thee by Allah." I again kissed the ground before her, well pleased that I should marry my mistress, and she bade me abide ten days in the palace. So I abode there ten days, during which time I saw not my mistress nor any body save one of the concubines, who brought me the morning and 286 evening meals. After this the Lady Zubaydah took counsel with the Caliph on the marriage of her favourite handmaid, and he gave leave and assigned to her a wedding portion of ten thousand gold pieces. So the Lady Zubaydah sent for the Kazi and witnesses who wrote our marriage-contract, after which the women made ready sweetmeats and rich viands and distributed them among all the Odahs[567] of the Harim. Thus they did other ten days, at the end of which time my mistress went to the baths.[568] Meanwhile, they set before me a tray of food whereon were various meats and among those dishes, which were enough to daze the wits, was a bowl of cumin-ragout containing chickens' breasts, fricandoed[569] and flavoured with sugar, pistachios, musk and rose-water. Then, by Allah, fair sirs, I did not long hesitate; but took my seat before the ragout and fell to and ate of it till I could no more. After this I wiped my hands, but forgot to wash them; and sat till it grew dark, when the wax-candles were lighted and the singing women came in with their tambourines and proceeded to display the bride in various dresses and to carry her in procession from room to room all round the palace, getting their palms crossed with gold. Then they brought her to me and disrobed her. When I found myself alone with her on the bed I embraced her,

hardly believing in our union; but she smelt the strong odours of the ragout upon my hands and forthwith cried out with an exceeding loud cry, at which the slave-girls came running to her from all sides. I trembled with alarm, unknowing what was the matter, and the girls asked her, "What aileth thee, O our sister?" She answered them, "Take this madman away from me: I had thought he was a man of sense!" Quoth I to her, "What makes thee think me mad?" Quoth she, "Thou madman! what made thee eat of cumin-ragout and forget to wash thy hand? By Allah, I will requite thee for thy misconduct. Shall the like of thee come to bed with the like of me with unclean hands?[570]" Then she took from her side a plaited scourge and came down with it on my back and the place where I sit till her forearms were benumbed and I fainted away from the much beating; when she said to the handmaids, "Take him and 287 carry him to the Chief of Police, that he may strike off the hand wherewith he ate of the cumin-ragout, and which he did not wash." When I heard this I said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! Wilt thou cut off my hand, because I ate of a cumin-ragout and did not wash?" The handmaidens also interceded with her and kissed her hand saying, "O our sister, this man is a simpleton, punish him not for what he hath done this nonce;" but she answered, "By Allah, there is no help but that I dock him of somewhat, especially the offending member." Then she went away and I saw no more of her for ten days, during which time she sent me meat and drink by a slave-girl who told me that she had fallen sick from the smell of the cumin-ragout. After that time she came to me and said, "O black of face[571]! I will teach thee how to eat cumin-ragout without washing thy hands!" Then she cried out to the handmaids, who pinioned me; and she took a sharp razor and cut off my thumbs and great toes; even as you see, O fair assembly! Thereupon I swooned away, and she sprinkled some powder of healing herbs upon the stumps and when the blood was staunched, I said, "Never again will I eat of cumin-ragout without washing my hands forty times with potash and forty times with galangale and forty times with soap!" And she took of me an oath and bound me by a covenant to that effect. When, therefore, you brought me the cumin-ragout my colour changed and I said to myself, "It was this very dish that caused the cutting off of my thumbs and great toes;" and, when you forced me, I said, "Needs must I fulfil the oath I have sworn." "And what befel thee after this?" asked those present; and he answered, When I swore to her, her anger was appeased and I slept with her that night. We abode thus awhile till she said to me one day, "Verily the Palace of the Caliph is not a pleasant place for us to live in, and none ever entered it save thyself; and thou only by grace of the Lady Zubaydah. Now she hath given me fifty thousand dinars," adding, "Take this money and go out and buy us a fair dwelling-house." So I fared forth and bought a fine and spacious mansion, whither she removed all the wealth she owned and what riches I had gained in stuffs and costly rarities. Such is the cause of the cutting off of my thumbs and great toes." We ate,

(continued the Reeve) and were returning to our homes when there befel me with the Hunchback that thou wottest of.

288 This then is my story, and peace be with thee! Quoth the King, "This story is on no wise more delectable than the story of the Hunchback; nay, it is even less so, and there is no help for the hanging of the whole of you." Then came forward the Jewish physician and kissing the ground said, "O King of the age, I will tell thee an history more wonderful than that of the Hunchback." "Tell on," said the King of China; so he began the

TALE OF THE JEWISH DOCTOR.

Right marvellous was a matter which came to pass to me in my youth. I lived in Damascus of Syria studying my art and, one day, as I was sitting at home behold, there came to me a Mameluke from the household of the Sáhib and said to me, "Speak with my lord!" So I followed him to the Viceroy's house and, entering the great hall, saw at its head a couch of cedar plated with gold whereon lay a sickly youth beautiful withal; fairer than he one could not see. I sat down by his head and prayed to Heaven for a cure; and he made me a sign with his eyes, so I said to him, "O my lord! favour me with thy hand, and safety be with thee!"[572] Then he put forth his left hand and I marvelled thereat and said, "By Allah, strange that this handsome youth, the son of a great house, should so lack good manners. This can be nothing but pride and conceit!" However I felt his pulse and wrote him a prescription and continued to visit him for ten days, at the end of which time he recovered and went to the Hammam,[573] whereupon the Viceroy gave me a handsome dress of honour and appointed me superintendent of the hospital which is in Damascus.[574] I accompanied 289 him to the baths, the whole of which they had kept private for his accommodation; and the servants came in with him and took off his clothes within the bath, and when he was stripped I saw that his right hand had been newly cut off, and this was the cause of his weakliness. At this I was amazed and grieved for him: then, looking at his body, I saw on it the scars of scourge-stripes whereto he had applied unguents. I was troubled at the sight and my concern appeared in my face. The young man looked at me and, comprehending the matter, said, "O Physician of the age, marvel not at my case; I will tell thee my story as soon as we quit the baths." Then we washed and, returning to his house, ate somewhat of food and took rest awhile; after which he asked me, "What sayest thou to solacing thee by inspecting the supper-hall"; and I answered "So let it be." Thereupon he ordered the slaves to carry out the carpets and cushions required and roast a lamb and bring us some fruit. They did his bidding and we ate together, he using the left hand for the purpose. After a while I said to him, "Now tell me thy tale." "O Physician of the age," replied he, "Hear what befel me. Know that I am of the sons of Mosul, where my grandfather died leaving nine

children of whom my father was the eldest. All grew up and took to them wives, but none of them was blessed with offspring except my father, to whom Providence vouchsafed me. So I grew up amongst my uncles who rejoiced in me with exceeding joy, till I came to man's estate. One day which happened to be a Friday, I went to the Cathedral-mosque of Mosul with my father and my uncles, and we prayed the congregational prayers, after which the folk went forth, except my father and uncles, who sat talking of wondrous things in foreign parts and the marvellous sights of strange cities. At last they mentioned Egypt, and one of my uncles said, "Travellers tell us that there is not on earth's face aught fairer than Cairo and her 290 Nile;" and these words made me long to see Cairo. Quoth my father, "Whoso hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world. Her dust is golden and her Nile a miracle holden; and her women are as Houris fair; puppets, beautiful pictures; her houses are palaces rare; her water is sweet and light[575] and her mud a commodity and a medicine beyond compare, even as said the poet in this his poetry:—

The Nile[576]-flood this day is the gain you own; ✿ You alone in such gain and bounties wone:
The Nile is my tear-flood of severance, ✿ And here none is forlorn but I alone.

Moreover temperate is her air, and with fragrance blent, which surpasseth aloes-wood in scent; and how should it be otherwise, she being the Mother of the World? And Allah favour him who wrote these lines:—

An I quit Cairo and her pleasaunces, ✿ Where can I wend to find so gladsome ways?
Shall I desert that site, whose grateful scents ✿ Joy every soul and call for loudest praise?
Where every palace, as another Eden, ✿ Carpets and cushions richly wrought displays;
A city wooing sight and sprite to glee, ✿ Where Saint meets Sinner and each 'joys his craze;
Where friend meets friend, by Providence united ✿ In greeny garden and in palmy maze:
People of Cairo, an by Allah's doom ✿ I fare, with you in thoughts I wone always!
Whisper not Cairo in the ear of Zephyr, ✿ Lest for her like of garden scents he reave her.[577]

And if your eyes saw her earth, and the adornment thereof with bloom, and the purfling of it with all manner blossoms, and the islands of the Nile and how much is therein of wide-spread and 291 goodly prospect, and if you bent your sight upon the Abyssinian Pond[578], your glance would not revert from the scene quit of wonder; for nowhere would you behold the fellow of that lovely view; and, indeed, the two arms of the Nile embrace most luxuriant verdure[579], as the white of the eye encompasseth its black or like filagree'd silver surrounding chrysolites. And divinely gifted was the poet who thereanent said these couplets:—

By th' Abyssinian Pond, O day divine! ✿ In morning twilight and in sunny shine:
The water prisoned in its verdurous walls, ✿ Like sabre flashes before shrinking eyne:
And in The Garden sat we while it drains ✿ Slow draught, with purfled sides dyed finest fine:
The stream is rippled by the hands of clouds; ✿ We too, a-rippling, on our rugs recline,
Passing pure wine, and whoso leaves us there ✿ Shall ne'er arise from fall his woes design:

Draining long draughts from large and brimming bowls, ✿ Administ'ring thirst's only medicine—wine.

And what is there to compare with the Rasad, the Observatory, and its charms whereof every viewer as he approacheth saith:—"Verily this spot is specialised with all manner of excellence! And if thou speak of the Night of Nile-full,[580] give the rainbow and distribute it![581] And if thou behold The Garden at eventide, with the cool shades sloping far and wide, a marvel thou wouldst see and wouldst incline to Egypt in ecstacy. And wert thou by Cairo's river side,[582] when the sun is sinking and the stream dons mail-coat and habergeon[583] over its other vestments, thou wouldst be quickened to new life by its gentle zephyrs and by its all-sufficient shade." So 292spake he and the rest fell to describing Egypt and her Nile. As I heard their accounts, my thoughts dwelt upon the subject and when, after talking their fill, all arose and went their ways, I lay down to sleep that night, but sleep came not because of my violent longing for Egypt; and neither meat pleased me nor drink. After a few days my uncles equipped themselves for a trade-journey to Egypt; and I wept before my father till he made ready for me fitting merchandise, and he consented to my going with them, saying however, "Let him not enter Cairo, but leave him to sell his wares at Damascus." So I took leave of my father and we fared forth from Mosul and gave not over travelling till we reached Aleppo[584] where we halted certain days. Then we marched onwards till we made Damascus and we found her a city as though she were a Paradise, abounding in trees and streams and birds and fruits of all kinds. We alighted at one of the Khans, where my uncles tarried awhile selling and buying; and they bought and sold also on my account, each dirham turning a profit of five on prime cost, which pleased me mightily. After this they left me alone and set their faces Egyptwards; whilst I abode at Damascus, where I had hired from a jeweller, for two dinars a month, a mansion[585] whose beauties would beggar the tongue. Here I remained, eating and drinking and spending what monies I had in hand till, one day, as I was sitting at the door of my house behold, there came up a young lady clad in costliest raiment—never saw my eyes richer. I winked[586] at her and she stepped inside without hesitation and stood within. I entered with her and shut the door upon myself and her; whereupon she raised her face-veil and threw off her mantilla, when I found her like a pictured moon of rare and marvellous loveliness; and love of her gat hold of my heart. So I rose and brought a tray of the most delicate eatables and fruits and whatso befitted the occasion, and we ate and played and after that we drank till the wine turned our heads. Then I lay with her the sweetest of nights and in the morning I offered her ten gold pieces; when her face lowered and her eyebrows wrinkled and 293shaking with wrath she cried, "Fie upon thee, O my sweet companion! dost thou deem that I covet thy money?" Then she took out from the bosom of her shift[587] fifteen dinars and, laying them before me, said, "By Allah! unless thou take them I will never come back to thee." So I accepted them and she said to me, "O my beloved! expect me again in three days' time, when I will be with thee between sunset

and supper-tide; and do thou prepare for us with these dinars the same entertainment as yesternight." So saying, she took leave of me and went away and all my senses went with her. On the third day she came again, clad in stuff weft with gold wire, and wearing raiment and ornaments finer than before. I had prepared the place for her ere she arrived and the repast was ready; so we ate and drank and lay together, as we had done, till the morning, when she gave me other fifteen gold pieces and promised to come again after three days. Accordingly, I made ready for her and, at the appointed time, she presented herself more richly dressed than on the first and second occasion, and said to me, "O my lord, am I not beautiful?" "Yea, by Allah thou art!" answered I, and she went on, "Wilt thou allow me to bring with me a young lady fairer than I, and younger in years, that she may play with us and thou and she may laugh and make merry and rejoice her heart, for she hath been very sad this long time past, and hath asked me to take her out and let her spend the night abroad with me?" "Yea, by Allah!" I replied; and we drank till the wine turned our heads and slept till the morning, when she gave me other fifteen dinars, saying, "Add something to thy usual provision on account of the young lady who will come with me." Then she went away, and on the fourth day I made ready the house as usual, and soon after sunset behold, she came, accompanied by another damsel carefully wrapped in her mantilla. They entered and sat down; and when I saw them I repeated these verses:—

How dear is our day and how lucky our lot, ✿ When the cynic's away with his tongue malign!

When love and delight and the swimming of head ✿ send cleverness trotting,—the best boon of wine.

294 When the full moon shines from the cloudy veil, ✿ And the branchlet sways in her greens that shine:

When the red rose mantles in freshest cheek, ✿ And Narcissus[588] opeth his love-sick eyne:

When pleasure with those I love is so sweet, ✿ When friendship with those I love is complete!

I rejoiced to see them, and lighted the candles after receiving them with gladness and delight. They doffed their heavy outer dresses and the new damsel uncovered her face when I saw that she was like the moon at its full—never beheld I aught more beautiful. Then I rose and set meat and drink before them, and we ate and drank; and I kept giving mouthfuls to the new comer, crowning her cup and drinking with her till the first damsel, waxing inwardly jealous, asked me, "By Allah, is she not more delicious than I?"; whereto I answered, "Ay, by the Lord!" "It is my wish that thou lie with her this night; for I am thy mistress but she is our visitor." "Upon my head be it, and my eyes." Then she rose and spread the carpets for our bed[589] and I took the young lady and lay with her that night till morning, when I awoke and found myself wet, as I thought, with sweat. I sat up and tried to arouse the damsel; but when I shook her by the shoulders my hand became crimson with blood and her head rolled off the pillow. Thereupon my senses fled and I cried aloud, saying, "O All-powerful Protector, grant me Thy protection!" Then finding her neck had been severed, I sprung up and the world waxed black before my eyes, and I looked for the lady, my former love, but could not find her. So I knew that it was she who had murdered the damsel in

her 295jealousy[590], and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! What is to be done now?" I considered awhile then, doffing my clothes, dug a hole in the middle of the courtyard, wherein I laid the murdered girl with her jewellery and golden ornaments; and, throwing back the earth on her, replaced the slabs of the marble[591] pavement. After this I made the Ghusl or total ablution,[592] and put on pure clothes; then, taking what money I had left, locked up the house and summoned courage and went to its owner to whom I paid a year's rent, saying, "I am about to join my uncles in Cairo." Presently I set out and, journeying to Egypt, foregathered with my uncles who rejoiced in me, and I found that they had made an end of selling their merchandise. They asked me, "What is the cause of thy coming?;" and I answered "I longed for a sight of you;" but did not let them know that I had any money with me. I abode with them a year, enjoying the pleasures of Cairo and her Nile,[593] and squandering the rest of my money in feasting and carousing till the time drew near for the departure of my uncles, when I fled from them and hid myself. They made enquiries and sought for me, but hearing no tidings they said, "He will have gone back to Damascus." When they departed I came forth from my hiding-place and abode in Cairo three years, until naught remained of my money. Now every year I used to send the rent of the Damascus house to its owner, until at last I had nothing left but enough to pay him for one year's rent and my breast was straitened. So I travelled to Damascus and alighted at the house whose owner, the jeweller, was glad to see me and I found everything locked up as I had left it. I opened the closets and took out my clothes and necessaries and came upon, beneath the carpet-bed whereon I had lain that night with the girl who had been beheaded, a golden necklace set 296with ten gems of passing beauty. I took it up and, cleansing it of the blood, sat gazing upon it and wept awhile. Then I abode in the house two days and on the third I entered the Hammam and changed my clothes. I had no money by me now; so Satan whispered temptation to me that the Decree of Destiny be carried out. Next day I took the jewelled necklace to the bazar and handed it to a broker who made me sit down in the shop of the jeweller, my landlord, and bade me have patience till the market was full[594], when he carried off the ornament and proclaimed it for sale, privily and without my knowledge. The necklet was priced as worth two thousand dinars but the broker returned to me and said, "This collar is of copper, a mere counterfeit after the fashion of the Franks[595] and a thousand dirhams have been bidden for it." "Yes," I answered, "I knew it to be copper, as we had it made for a certain person that we might mock her: now my wife hath inherited it and we wish to sell it; so go and take over the thousand dirhams."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Twenty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the beautiful youth said to the broker, "Take over the thousand dirhams"; and when the broker heard this, he knew

that the case was suspicious. So he carried the collar to the Syndic of the bazar, and the Syndic took it to the Governor who was also prefect of police, and said to him falsely enough, "This necklet was stolen from my house, and we have found the thief in traders' dress." So before I was aware of it the watch got round me and, making me their prisoner, carried me before the Governor who questioned me of the collar. I told him the tale I had told to the broker; but he laughed and said, "These words are not true." Then, before I knew what was doing, the guard stripped off my clothes and came down with palm-rods upon my ribs, till for the smart of the stick I confessed, "It was I who stole it;" saying to myself, "'Tis better for thee to say, I stole 297it, than to let them know that its owner was murdered in thy house, for then would they slay thee to avenge her." So they wrote down that I had stolen it and they cut off my hand and scalded the stump in oil,[596] when I swooned away for pain; but they gave me wine to drink and I recovered and, taking up my hand, was going to my fine house, when my landlord said to me, "Inasmuch, O my son, as this hath befallen thee, thou must leave my house and look out for another lodging for thee, since thou art convicted of theft. Thou art a handsome youth, but who will pity thee after this?" "O my master" said I, "bear with me but two days or three, till I find me another place." He answered, "So be it," and went away and left me. I returned to the house where I sat weeping and saying, "How shall I go back to my own people with my hand lopped off and they know not that I am innocent? Perchance even after this Allah may order some matter for me." And I wept with exceeding weeping; grief beset me and I remained in sore trouble for two days; but on the third day my landlord came suddenly in to me, and with him some of the guard and the Syndic of the bazar, who had falsely charged me with stealing the necklet. I went up to them and asked, "What is the matter?" however, they pinioned me without further parley and threw a chain about my neck, saying, "The necklet which was with thee hath proved to be the property of the Wazir of Damascus who is also her Viceroy;" and they added, "It was missing from his house three years ago at the same time as his younger daughter." When I heard these words, my heart sank within me and I said to myself, "Thy life is gone beyond a doubt! By Allah, needs must I tell the Chief my story; and, if he will, let him kill me, and if he please, let him pardon me." So they carried me to the Wazir's house and made me stand between his hands. When he saw me, he glanced at me out of the corner of his eye and said to those present, "Why did ye lop off his hand? This man is unfortunate, and there is no fault in him; indeed ye have wronged him in cutting off his hand." When I heard this, I took heart and, my soul presaging good, I said to him, "By Allah, O my lord, I am no thief; but they calumniated me with a vile calumny, and they scourged me midmost the market, bidding me confess till, for the pain of the rods, I lied against myself and confessed the theft, albeit I am altogether 298innocent of it." "Fear not," quoth the Viceroy, "no harm shall come to thee." Then he ordered the Syndic of the bazar to be imprisoned and said to him, "Give this man the blood-

money for his hand; and, if thou delay I will hang thee and seize all thy property." Moreover he called to his guards who took him and dragged him away, leaving me with the Chief. Then they loosed by his command the chain from my neck and unbound my arms; and he looked at me, and said, "O my son, be true with me, and tell me how this necklace came to thee." And he repeated these verses:—

Truth best befits thee, albeit truth ✿ Shall bring thee to burn on the threatened fire.

"By Allah, O my lord," answered I, "I will tell thee nothing but the truth." Then I related to him all that had passed between me and the first lady, and how she had brought me the second and had slain her out of jealousy, and I detailed for him the tale to its full. When he heard my story, he shook his head and struck his right hand upon the left,[597] and putting his kerchief over his face wept awhile and then repeated:—

I see the woes of the world abound, ✿ And worldings sick with spleen and teen;

There's One who the meeting of two shall part, ✿ And who part not are few and far between!

Then he turned to me and said, "Know, O my son, that the elder damsel who first came to thee was my daughter whom I used to keep closely guarded. When she grew up, I sent her to Cairo and married her to her cousin, my brother's son. After a while he died and she came back: but she had learnt wantonness and ungraciousness from the people of Cairo[598]; so she visited thee four 299 times and at last brought her younger sister. Now they were sisters german and much attached to each other; and, when that adventure happened to the elder, she disclosed her secret to her sister who desired to go out with her. So she asked thy leave and carried her to thee; after which she returned alone and, finding her weeping, I questioned her of her sister, but she said:—I know nothing of her. However, she presently told her mother privily of what had happened and how she had cut off her sister's head and her mother told me. Then she ceased not to weep and say:—By Allah! I shall cry for her till I die. Nor did she give over mourning till her heart broke and she died; and things fell out after that fashion. See then, O my son, what hath come to pass; and now I desire thee not to thwart me in what I am about to offer thee, and it is that I purpose to marry thee to my youngest daughter; for she is a virgin and born of another mother[599]; and I will take no dower of thee but, on the contrary, will appoint thee an allowance, and thou shalt abide with me in my house in the stead of my son." "So be it," I answered, "and how could I hope for such good fortune?" Then he sent at once for the Kazi and witnesses, and let write my marriage-contract with his daughter and I went in to her. Moreover, he got me from the Syndic of the bazar a large sum of money and I became in high favour with him. During this year news came to me that my father was dead and the Wazir despatched a courier, with letters bearing the royal sign-manual, to fetch me the money which my father had left behind him, and now I am living in all the solace of life. Such 300 was the manner of the cutting off my right hand. "I marvelled at his story (continued the Jew), and I abode with him three days after which he gave me

much wealth, and I set out and travelled Eastward till I reached this your city and the sojourn suited me right well; so I took up my abode here and there befel me what thou knowest with the Hunchback." Thereupon the King of China shook his head[600] and said, "This story of thine is not stranger and more wondrous and marvellous and delectable than the tale of the Hunchback; and so needs must I hang the whole number of you. However there yet remains the Tailor who is the head of all the offence;" and he added, "O Tailor, if thou canst tell me any thing more wonderful than the story of the Hunchback, I will pardon you all your offences." Thereupon the man came forward and began to tell the

TALE OF THE TAILOR.

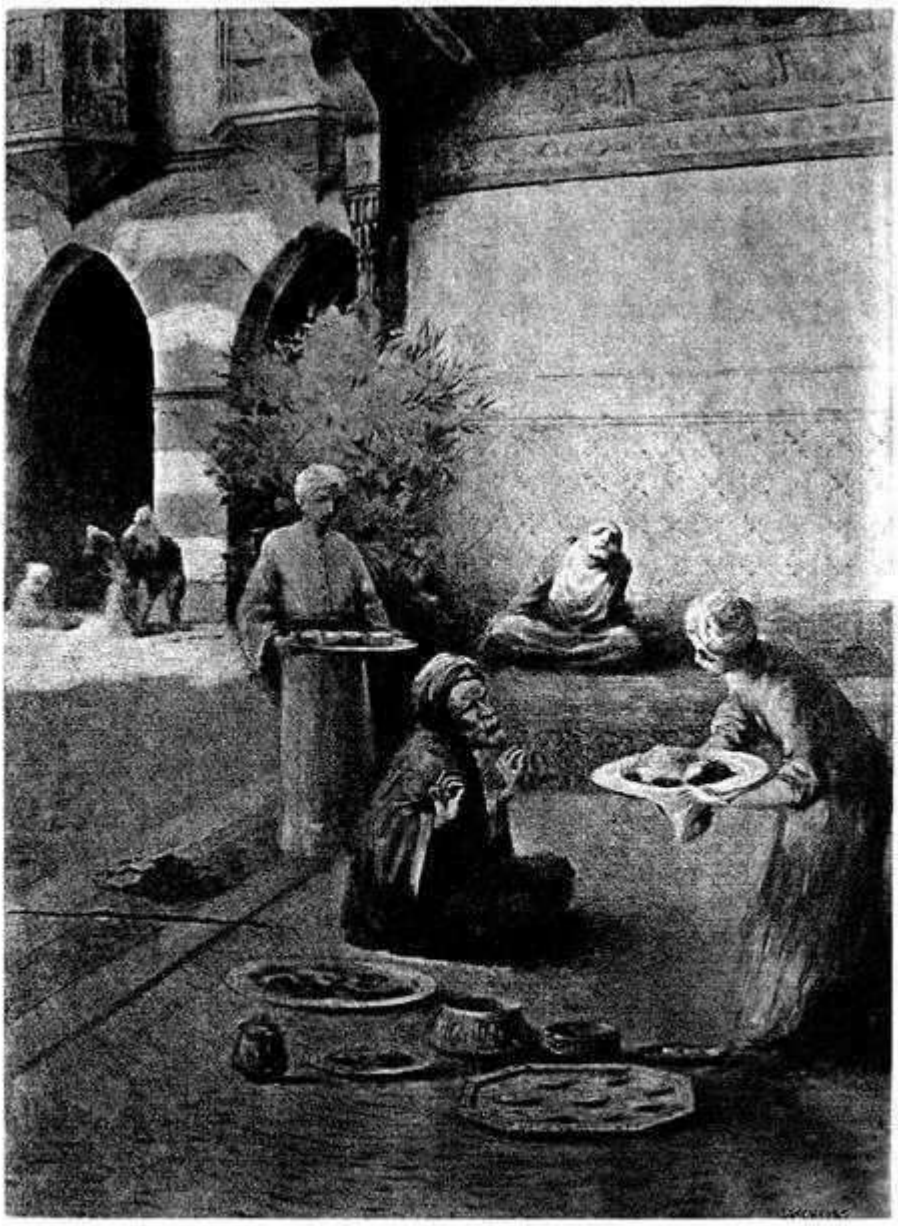
Know, O King of the age, that most marvellous was that which befel me but yesterday, before I foregathered with the Hunchback. It so chanced that in the early day I was at the marriage-feast of one of my companions, who had gotten together in his house some twenty of the handicraftsmen of this city, amongst them tailors and silk-spinners and carpenters and others of the same kidney. As soon as the sun had risen, they set food[601] before us that we might eat when behold, the master of the house entered, and with him a foreign youth and a well-favoured of the people of Baghdad, wearing clothes as handsome as handsome could be; and he was of right comely presence save that he was lame of one leg. He came and saluted us and we stood up to receive him; but when he was about to sit down he espied amongst us a certain man which was a Barber; whereupon he refused to be seated and would have 301 gone away. But we stopped him and our host also stayed him, making oath that he should not leave us and asked him, "What is the reason of thy coming in and going out again at once?"; whereto he answered, "By Allah, O my lord, do not hinder me; for the cause of my turning back is yon Barber of bad omen,[602] yon black o' face, yon ne'er-do-well!" When the house-master heard these words he marvelled with extreme marvel and said, "How cometh this young man, who haileth from Baghdad, to be so troubled and perplexed about this Barber?" Then we looked at the stranger and said, "Explain the cause of thine anger against the Barber." "O fair company," quoth the youth, "there befel me a strange adventure with this Barber in Baghdad (which is my native city); he was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my lameness, and I have sworn never to sit in the same place with him, nor even tarry in any town where he happens to abide; and I have bidden adieu to Baghdad and travelled far from it and came to stay in this your city; yet I have hardly passed one night before I meet him again. But not another day shall go by ere I fare forth from here." Said we to him, "Allah upon thee, tell us the tale;" and the youth replied (the Barber changing colour from brown to yellow as he spoke):—Know, O fair company, that my father was one of the chief merchants of Baghdad, and Almighty Allah had

blessed him with no son but myself. When I grew up and reached man's estate, my father was received into the mercy of Allah (whose Name be exalted!) and left me money and eunuchs, servants and slaves; and I used to dress well and diet well. Now Allah had made me a hater of women-kind and one day, as I was walking along a street in Baghdad a party of females met me face to face in the footway; so I fled from them and, entering an alley which was no thoroughfare, sat down upon a stone-bench at its other end. I had not sat there long before the latticed window of one of the houses opposite was thrown open, and there appeared at it a young lady, as she were the full moon at its fullest; never in my life saw I her like; and she began to water some flowers on the window-sill.[603] She turned right and left and, seeing me watching her, shut the window and went away.

302 Thereupon fire was suddenly enkindled in my heart; my mind was possessed with her and my woman-hate turned to woman-love. I continued sitting there, lost to the world, till sunset when lo! the Kazi of the city came riding by with his slaves before him and his eunuchs behind him, and dismounting entered the house in which the damsel had appeared. By this I knew that he was her father; so I went home sorrowful and cast myself upon my carpet-bed in grief. Then my handmaids flocked in and sat about me, unknowing what ailed me; but I addressed no speech to them, and they wept and wailed over me. Presently in came an old woman who looked at me and saw with a glance what was the matter with me: so she sat down by my head and spoke me fair, saying, "O my son, tell me all about it and I will be the means of thy union with her."[604] So I related to her what had happened and she answered, "O my son, this one is the daughter of the Kazi of Baghdad who keepeth her in the closest seclusion; and the window where thou sawest her is her floor, whilst her father occupies the large saloon in the lower story. She is often there alone and I am wont to visit at the house; so thou shalt not win to her save through me. Now set thy wits to work and be of good cheer." With these words she went away and I took heart at what she said and my people rejoiced that day, seeing me rise in the morning safe and sound. By and by the old woman returned looking chopfallen[605], and said, "O my son, do not ask me how I fared with her! When I told her that, she cried at me:—If thou hold not thy peace, O hag of ill-omen, and leave not such talk, I will entreat thee as thou deservest and do thee die by the foulest of deaths. But needs must I have at her a second time.[606]" When I heard this it added ailment to my ailment and the neighbours visited me and judged that I was not long for this world; but after some days, the old woman came to me and, putting her mouth close to my ear, whispered, "O my son; I claim from thee the gift of good news." With this my soul returned to me and I said, "Whatever thou wilt shall be thine." Thereupon she began, "Yesterday I went to the young lady who, seeing me broken in spirit and shedding tears from reddened eyes, 303 asked me:—O naunty[607] mine, what ails thee, that I see thy breast so straitened?"; and I answered her, weeping bitterly, "O my lady, I am just come from

the house of a youth who loves thee and who is about to die for sake of thee!" Quoth she (and her heart was softened), "And who is this youth of whom thou speakest?"; and quoth I, "He is to me as a son and the fruit of my vitals. He saw thee, some days ago, at the window watering thy flowers and espying thy face and wrists he fell in love at first sight. I let him know what happened to me the last time I was with thee, whereupon his ailment increased, he took to the pillow and he is naught now but a dead man, and no doubt whatever of it." At this she turned pale and asked, "All this for my sake?"; and I answered, "Ay, by Allah![608] what wouldst thou have me do?" Said she, "Go back to him and greet him for me and tell him that I am twice more heartsick than he is. And on Friday, before the hour of public prayer, bid him here to the house, and I will come down and open the door for him. Then I will carry him up to my chamber and foregather with him for awhile, and let him depart before my father return from the Mosque." When I heard the old woman's words, all my sickness suddenly fell from me, my anguish ceased and my heart was comforted, I took off what clothes were on me and gave them to her and, as she turned to go, she said; "Keep a good heart!" "I have not a jot of sorrow left," I replied. My household and intimates rejoiced in my recovery and I abode thus till Friday, when behold, the old woman came in and asked me how I did, to which I answered that I was well and in good case. Then I donned my clothes and perfumed myself and sat down to await the congregation going in to prayers, that I might betake myself to her. But the old woman said to me, "Thou hast time and to spare: so thou wouldst do well to go to the Hammam and have thy hair shaven off (especially after thy ailment), so as not to show traces of sickness." "This were the best way," answered I, "I 304 have just now bathed in hot water; but I will have my head shaved." Then I said to my page, "Go to the bazar and bring me a barber, a discreet fellow and one not inclined to meddling or impertinent curiosity or likely to split my head with his excessive talk."[609] The boy went out at once and brought back with him this wretched old man, this Shaykh of ill-omen. When he came in he saluted me and I returned his salutation; then quoth he, "Of a truth I see thee thin of body;" and quoth I, "I have been ailing." He continued, "Allah drive far away from thee thy woe and thy sorrow and thy trouble and thy distress." "Allah grant thy prayer!" said I. He pursued, "All gladness to thee, O my master, for indeed recovery is come to thee. Dost thou wish to be polled or to be blooded? Indeed it was a tradition of Ibn Abbas[610] (Allah accept of him!) that the Apostle said:—Whoso cutteth his hair on a Friday, the Lord shall avert from him threescore and ten calamities; and again is related of him also that he said:—Cupping on a Friday keepeth from loss of sight and a host of diseases." "Leave this talk," I cried; "come, shave me my head at once for I can't stand it." So he rose and put forth his hand in most leisurely way and took out a kerchief and unfolded it, and lo! it contained an astrolabe[611] with seven parallel plates mounted in silver. Then he went to the middle of the court and raised head and instrument towards the sun's rays and

looked for a long while. When this was over, he came back and said to me, "Know that there have elapsed of this our day, which be Friday, and this Friday be the tenth of the month Safar in the six hundred and fifty-third year since the Hegira or Flight of the Apostle (on whom be the bestest of blessings and peace!) and the seventh thousand three hundred and twentieth year of the era of Alexander, eight degrees and six minutes. Furthermore the ascendant of this our 305 day is, according to the exactest science of computation, the planet Mars; and it so happeneth that Mercury is in conjunction with him, denoting an auspicious moment for hair-cutting; and this also maketh manifest to me that thou desirest union with a certain person and that your intercourse will not be propitious. But after this there occurreth a sign respecting a matter which will befal thee and whereof I will not speak." "O thou," cried I, "by Allah, thou weariest me and scatterest my wits and thy forecast is other than good; I sent for thee to poll my head and naught else: so up and shave me and prolong not thy speech." "By Allah," replied he, "if thou but knew what is about to befal thee, thou wouldst do nothing this day, and I counsel thee to act as I tell thee by computation of the constellations." "By Allah," said I, "never did I see a barber who excelled in judicial astrology save thyself: but I think and I know that thou art most prodigal of frivolous talk. I sent for thee only to shave my head, but thou comest and pesterest me with this sorry prattle." "What more wouldst thou have?" replied he. "Allah hath bounteously bestowed on thee a Barber, who is an astrologer, one learned in alchemy and white magic[612]; syntax, grammar, and lexicology; the arts of logic, rhetoric and elocution; mathematics, arithmetic and algebra; astronomy, astromancy and geometry; theology, the Traditions of the Apostle and the Commentaries on the Koran. Furthermore, I have read books galore and digested them and have had experience of affairs and comprehended them. In short I have learned the theorick and the practick of all the arts and sciences; I know everything of them by rote and I am a past master *in totâ re scibili*. Thy father loved me for my lack of officiousness, argal, to serve thee is a religious duty incumbent on me. I am no busy-body as thou seemest to suppose, and on this account I am known as The Silent Man, also, The Modest Man. Wherefore it behoveth thee to render thanks to Allah Almighty and not cross me, for I am a true counsellor to thee and benevolently minded towards thee. Would that I were 306 in thy service a whole year that thou mightest do me justice; and I would ask thee no wage for all this." When I heard his flow of words, I said to him, "Doubtless thou wilt be my death this day!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Thirtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man said to the Barber, "Thou certainly wilt be the death of me this very day!" "O master mine," replied he, "I am he, The Silent Man hight, by reason of the fewness of my words, to distinguish me from my six brothers. For the eldest is called Al-Bakbúk, the prattler; the second Al-Haddár, the babbler; the third Al-Fakík, the gabbler; the fourth, his

name is Al-Kuz al-aswáni, the long-necked Gugglet, from his eternal chattering; the fifth is Al-Nashshár, the tattler and tale-teller; the sixth Shakáshik, or many-clamours; and the seventh is famous as Al-Sámit, the Silent Man, and this is my noble self!" Whilst he redoubled his talk, I thought my gall-bladder would have burst; so I said to the servant, "Give him a quarter-dinar and dismiss him and let him go from me in the name of God who made him. I won't have my head shaved to-day." "What words be these, O my lord?" cried he. "By Allah! I will accept no hire of thee till I have served thee and have ministered to thy wants; and I care not if I never take money of thee. If thou know not my quality, I know thine; and I owe thy father, honest man, on whom Allah Almighty have mercy! many a kindness, for he was a liberal soul and a generous. By Allah, he sent for me one day, as it were this blessed day, and I went in to him and found a party of his intimates about him." Quoth he to me, "Let me blood;" so I pulled out my astrolabe and, taking the sun's altitude for him, I ascertained that the ascendant was inauspicious and the hour unfavourable for blooding. I told him of this, and he did according to my bidding and awaited a better opportunity. So I made these lines in honour of him:—

I went to my patron some blood to let him, ✿ But found that the moment was far from good:

So I sat and I talked of all strangenesses, ✿ And with jests and jokes his good will I wooed:

They pleased him and cried he, 'O man of wit, ✿ Thou hast proved thee perfect in merry mood!'

307 Quoth I, 'O thou Lord of men, save thou ✿ Lend me art and wisdom I'm fou and wood:

In thee gather grace, boon, bounty, suavity; ✿ And I guerdon the world with lore, science and gravity.

Thy father was delighted and cried out to the servant, "Give him an hundred and three gold pieces with a robe of honour!" The man obeyed his orders, and I awaited an auspicious moment, when I blooded him; and he did not baulk me; nay he thanked me and I was also thanked and praised by all present. When the bloodletting was over I had no power to keep silence and asked him, "By Allah, O my lord, what made thee say to the servant:—Give him an hundred and *three* dinars?"; and he answered, "One dinar was for the astrological observation, another for thy pleasant conversation, the third for the phlebotomisation, and the remaining hundred and the dress were for thy verses in my commendation." "May Allah show small mercy to my father," exclaimed I, "for knowing the like of thee." He laughed and ejaculated, "There is no god but *the* God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God! Glory to Him that changeth and is changed not! I took thee for a man of sense, but I see thou babblest and dotest for illness. Allah hath said in the Blessed Book[613]:—Paradise is prepared for the goodly who bridle their anger and forgive men, and so forth; and in any case thou art excused. Yet I cannot conceive the cause of thy hurry and flurry; and thou must know that thy father and thy grandfather did nothing without consulting me, and indeed it hath been said truly enough:—Let the adviser be prized; and:—There is no vice in advice; and it is also said in certain saws, Whoso hath no counsellor elder than he, will never himself an elder be[614]; and the poet says:—

Whatever needful thing thou undertake, ✿ Consult th' experienced and contraire him not!"

And indeed thou shalt never find a man better versed in affairs than I, and I am here standing on my feet to serve thee. I am not vexed with thee: why shouldest thou be vexed with me? But whatever happen I will bear patiently with thee in memory of the much kindness thy father shewed me." "By Allah," cried I, "O 308 thou with tongue long as the tail of a jackass, thou persistest in pestering me with thy prate and thou becomest more longsome in thy long speeches, when all I want of thee is to shave my head and wend thy way!" Then he lathered my head saying, "I perceive thou art vexed with me, but I will not take it ill of thee, for thy wit is weak and thou art but a laddy: it was only yesterday I used to take thee on my shoulder[615] and carry thee to school." "O my brother," said I, "for Allah's sake do what I want and go thy gait!" And I rent my garments.[616] When he saw me do this he took the razor and fell to sharpening it and gave not over stropping it until my senses were well nigh leaving me. Then he came up to me and shaved part of my head; then he held his hand and then he said, "O my lord, haste is Satan's gait whilst patience is of Allah the Compassionate. But thou, O my master, I ken thou knowest not my rank; for verily this hand alighteth upon the heads of Kings and Emirs and Wazirs, and sages and doctors learned in the law, and the poet said of one like me:—

All crafts are like necklaces strung on a string, ✿ But this Barber's the union pearl of the band:

High over all craftsmen he ranketh, and why? ✿ The heads of the Kings are under his hand!"[617]

309 Then said I, "*Do* leave off talking about what concerneth thee not: indeed thou hast straitened my breast and distracted my mind." Quoth he, "Meseems thou art a hasty man;" and quoth I, "Yes! yes! yes!" and he, "I rede thee practise restraint of self, for haste is Satan's pelf which bequeatheth only repentance and ban and bane, and He (upon whom be blessings and peace!) hath said, The best of works is that wherein deliberation lurks: but I, by Allah! have some doubt about thine affair; and so I should like thee to let me know what it is thou art in such haste to do; for I fear me it is other than good." Then he continued, "It wanteth three hours yet to prayer-time; but I do not wish to be in doubt upon this matter; nay, I must know the moment exactly, for truly:—A guess shot in times of doubt, oft brings harm about; especially in the like of me, a superior person whose merits are famous amongst mankind at large; and it doth not befit me to talk at random, as do the common sort of astrologers." So saying, he threw down the razor and taking up the astrolabe, went forth under the sun and stood there a long time; after which he returned and counting on his fingers said to me, "There remain still to prayer-time three full hours and complete, neither more nor yet less, according to the most learned astronomicals and the wisest makers of almanacks." "Allah upon thee," cried I, "hold thy tongue with me, for thou breakest my liver in pieces." So he took the razor and, after sharpening it as before and shaving other two hairs of my head, he again held his hand and said, "I am concerned about thy hastiness and indeed thou wouldst do well to let me into the cause of it; 'twere the

better for thee, as thou knowest that neither thy father nor thy grandfather ever did a single thing save by my advice." When I saw that there was no escape from him I said to myself, "The time for prayer draws near and I wish to go to her before the folk come out of the mosque. If I am delayed much longer, I know not how to come at her." Then said I aloud, "Be quick and stint this talk and impertinence, for I have to go to a party at the house of some of my intimates." When he heard me speak of the party, he said, "This thy day is a blessed day for me! In very sooth it was but yesterday I invited a company of my friends and I have forgotten to provide anything for them to eat. This very moment I was thinking of it: Alas, how I shall be disgraced in their eyes!" "Be not distressed about this matter," answered I; "have I not told thee that I am bidden to an entertainment this day? So everything in my house, eatable 310 and drinkable, shall be thine, if thou wilt only get through thy work and make haste to shave my head." He replied, "Allah requite thee with good! Specify to me what is in thy house for my guests that I may be ware of it." Quoth I, "Five dishes of meat and ten chickens with reddened breasts[618] and a roasted lamb." "Set them before me," quoth he, "that I may see them." So I told my people to buy, borrow or steal them and bring them in anywise, and had all this set before him. When he saw it he cried, "The wine is wanting," and I replied, "I have a flagon or two of good old grape-juice in the house," and he said, "Have it brought out!" So I sent for it and he exclaimed, "Allah bless thee for a generous disposition! But there are still the essences and perfumes." So I bade them set before him a box containing Nadd,[619] the best of compound perfumes, together with fine lign-aloes, ambergris and musk unmixed, the whole worth fifty dinars. Now the time waxed strait and my heart straitened with it; so I said to him, "Take it all and finish shaving my head by the life of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!)." "By Allah," said he, "I will not take it till I see all that is in it." So I bade the page open the box and the Barber laid down the astrolabe, leaving the greater part of my head unpolled; and, sitting on the ground, turned over the scents and incense and aloes-wood and essences till I was well nigh distraught. Then he took the razor and coming up to me shaved off some few hairs and repeated these lines:—

The boy like his father shall surely show, ✿ As the tree from its parent root shall grow.[620]

Then said he, "By Allah, O my son, I know not whether to thank thee or thy father; for my entertainment this day is all due to thy bounty and beneficence; and, although none of my company be worthy of it, yet I have a set of honourable men, to wit Zantút the bath-keeper and Salí'a the corn-chandler; and Sílat the bean-seller; 311 and Akrashah the greengrocer; and Humayd the scavenger; and Sa'íd the camel-man; and Suwayd the porter; and Abu Makárish the bathman[621]; and Kasím the watchman; and Karím the groom. There is not among the whole of them a bore or a bully in his cups; nor a meddler nor a miser of his money, and each and every hath some dance which he danceth and some of his own couplets which he caroleth; and the best of them is

that, like thy servant, thy slave here, they know not what much talking is nor what forwardness means." The bath-keeper sings to the tom-tom[622] a song which enchants; and he stands up and dances and chants,

I am going, O mammy, to fill up my pot.

As for the corn-chandler he brings more skill to it than any; he dances and sings,

O Keener,[623] O sweetheart, thou fallest not short

and he leaves no one's vitals sound for laughing at him. But the scavenger sings so that the birds stop to listen to him and dances and sings,

News my wife wots is not locked in a box![624]

And he hath privilege, for 'tis a shrewd rogue and a witty;[625] and speaking of his excellence I am wont to say:—

312 "My life for the scavenger! right well I love him, ✿ Like a waving bough he is sweet to my sight:

Fate joined us one night, when to him quoth I ✿ (The while I grew weak and love gained more might)

'Thy love burns my heart!' 'And no wonder,' quoth he ✿ 'When the drawer of dung turns a stoker wight.'[626]

And indeed each is perfect in whatso can charm the wit with joy and jollity;" adding presently, "But hearing is not seeing; and indeed if thou make up thy mind to join us and put off going to thy friends, 'twill be better for us and for thee. The traces of illness are yet upon thee and haply thou art going among folk who be mighty talkers, men who commune together of what concerneth them not; or there may be amongst them some forward fellow who will split thy head, and thou half thy size from sickness." "This shall be for some other day," answered I, and laughed with heart angered: "finish thy work and go, in Allah Almighty's guard, to thy friends, for they will be expecting thy coming." "O my lord," replied he, "I seek only to introduce thee to these fellows of infinite mirth, the sons of men of worth, amongst whom there is neither procacity nor dicacity nor loquacity; for never, since I grew to years of discretion, could I endure to consort with one who asketh questions concerning what concerneth him not, nor have I ever frequented any save those who are, like myself, men of few words. In sooth if thou were to company with them or even to see them once, thou wouldst forsake all thy intimates." "Allah fulfil thy joyance with them," said I, "needs must I come amongst them some day or other." But he said, "Would it were this very day, for I had set my heart upon thy making one of us; yet if thou must go to thy friends to-day, I will take these good things, wherewith thou hast honoured and favoured me, to my guests and leave them to eat and drink and not wait for me; whilst I will return to thee in haste and accompany thee to thy little party; for there is no ceremony between me and my intimates to prevent my leaving them. Fear not, I will soon be back with thee and wend with thee whithersoever thou wendest. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" I shouted; "Go thou to thy friends and make merry with them; and *do* let me go 313 to mine and be with them this day, for they expect me." But the Barber cried, "I will not let thee go alone;" and I replied, "The truth is none can enter where I am going save myself."

He rejoined, "I suspect that to-day thou art for an assignation with some woman, else thou hadst taken me with thee; yet am I the right man to take, one who could aid thee to the end thou wishest. But I fear me thou art running after strange women and thou wilt lose thy life; for in this our city of Baghdad one cannot do any thing in this line, especially on a day like Friday: our Governor is an angry man and a mighty sharp blade." "Shame on thee, thou wicked, bad, old man!" cried I, "Be off! what words are these thou givest me?" "O cold of wit,"[627] cried he, "thou sayest to me what is not true and thou hidest thy mind from me, but I know the whole business for certain and I seek only to help thee this day with my best endeavour." I was fearful lest my people or my neighbours should hear the Barber's talk, so I kept silence for a long time whilst he finished shaving my head; by which time the hour of prayer was come and the Khutbah, or sermon, was about to follow. When he had done, I said to him, "Go to thy friends with their meat and drink, and I will await thy return. Then we will fare together." In this way I hoped to pour oil on troubled waters and to trick the accursed loon, so haply I might get quit of him; but he said, "Thou art cozening me and thou wouldst go alone to thy appointment and cast thyself into jeopardy, whence there will be no escape for thee. Now by Allah! and again by Allah! do not go till I return, that I may accompany thee and watch the issue of thine affair." "So be it," I replied, "do not be long absent." Then he took all the meat and drink I had given him and the rest of it and went out of my house; but the accursed carle gave it in charge of a porter to carry to his home but hid himself in one of the alleys. As for me I rose on the instant, for the Muezzins had already called the Salám of Friday, the salutation to the Apostle;[628] and I dressed in haste and went out alone and, 314 hurrying to the street, took my stand by the house wherein I had seen the young lady. I found the old woman on guard at the door awaiting me, and went up with her to the upper story, the damsel's apartment. Hardly had I reached it when behold, the master of the house returned from prayers and entering the great saloon, closed the door. I looked down from the window and saw this Barber (Allah's curse upon him!) sitting over against the door and said, "How did this devil find me out?" At this very moment, as Allah had decreed it for rending my veil of secrecy, it so happened that a handmaid of the house-master committed some offence for which he beat her. She shrieked out and his slave ran in to intercede for her, whereupon the Kazi beat him to boot, and he also roared out. The damned Barber fancied that it was I who was being beaten; so he also fell to shouting and tore his garments and scattered dust on his head and kept on shrieking and crying Help! Help! So the people came round about him and he went on yelling, "My master is being murdered in the Kazi's house!" Then he ran clamouring to my place with the folk after him, and told my people and servants and slaves; and, before I knew what was doing, up they came tearing their clothes and letting loose their hair[629] and shouting, "Alas, our master!"; and this Barber leading the rout with his clothes rent and in sorriest plight; and he also shouting like a madman and saying,

"Alas for our murdered master!" And they all made an assault upon the house in which I was. The Kazi, hearing the yells and the uproar at his door said to one of his servants, "See what is the matter"; and the man went forth and returned and said, "O my master, at the gate there are more than ten thousand souls what with men and women, and all crying out, Alas for our murdered master!; and they keep pointing to our house." When the Kazi heard this, the matter seemed serious and he waxed wroth; so he rose and opening the door saw a great crowd of people; whereat he was astounded and [315]said, "O folk! what is there to do?" "O accursed! O dog! O hog!" my servants replied; "'Tis thou who hast killed our master!" Quoth he, "O good folk, and what hath your master done to me that I should kill him?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kazi said to the servants, "What hath your master done to me that I should kill him? This is my house and it is open to you all." Then quoth the Barber, "Thou didst beat him and I heard him cry out;" and quoth the Kazi, "But what was he doing that I should beat him, and what brought him in to my house; and whence came he and whither went he?" "Be not a wicked, perverse old man!" cried the Barber, "for I know the whole story; and the long and short of it is that thy daughter is in love with him and he loves her; and when thou knewest that he had entered the house, thou badest thy servants beat him and they did so: by Allah, none shall judge between us and thee but the Caliph; or else do thou bring out our master that his folk may take him, before they go in and save him perforce from thy house, and thou be put to shame." Then said the Kazi (and his tongue was bridled and his mouth was stopped by confusion before the people), "An thou say sooth, do thou come in and fetch him out." Whereupon the Barber pushed forward and entered the house. When I saw this I looked about for a means of escape and flight, but saw no hiding-place except a great chest in the upper chamber where I was. So I got into it and pulled the lid down upon myself and held my breath. The Barber was hardly in the room before he began to look about for me, then turned him right and left and came straight to the place where I was, and stepped up to the chest and, lifting it on his head, made off as fast as he could. At this, my reason forsook me, for I knew that he would not let me be; so I took courage and opening the chest threw myself to the ground. My leg was broken in the fall, and the door being open I saw a great concourse of people looking in. Now I carried in my sleeve much gold and some silver, which I had provided for an ill day like this and the like of such occasion; so I kept scattering it amongst the folk to divert their attention from me and, whilst [316]they were busy scrambling for it, I set off, hopping as fast as I could, through the by-streets of Baghdad, shifting and turning right and left. But whithersoever I went this damned Barber would go in after me, crying aloud, "They would have bereft me of my maa-a-ster! They would have slain him who was a

benefactor to me and my family and my friends! Praised be Allah who made me prevail against them and delivered my lord from their hands!" Then to me, "Where wilt thou go now? Thou wouldst persist in following thine own evil devices, till thou broughtest thyself to this ill pass; and, had not Allah vouchsafed me to thee, ne'er hadst thou escaped this strait into which thou hast fallen, for they would have cast thee into a calamity whence thou never couldest have won free. But I will not call thee to account for thine ignorance, as thou art so little of wit and inconsequential and addicted to hastiness!" Said I to him, "Doth not what thou hast brought upon me suffice thee, but thou must run after me and talk me such talk in the bazar-streets?" And I well-nigh gave up the ghost for excess of rage against him. Then I took refuge in the shop of a weaver amiddlemost of the market and sought protection of the owner who drove the Barber away; and, sitting in the back-room,[630] I said to myself, "If I return home I shall never be able to get rid of this curse of a Barber, who will be with me night and day; and I cannot endure the sight of him even for a breathing-space." So I sent out at once for witnesses and made a will, dividing the greater part of my property among my people, and appointed a guardian over them, to whom I committed the charge of great and small, directing him to sell my houses and domains. Then I set out on my travels that I might be free of this pimp[631]; and I came to settle in your town where I have lived some time. When you invited me and I came hither, the first thing I saw was this accursed pander seated in the place of honour. How then can my heart be glad and my stay be pleasant in company with this fellow who brought all this upon me, and who was the cause of the breaking of my leg and of my exile from home and native land? And the youth refused to sit down and went away. When we heard his story (continued the Tailor) we were amazed beyond measure and amused and said to the Barber, "By Allah, is it true what this 317 young man saith of thee?" "By Allah," replied he, "I dealt thus by him of my courtesy and sound sense and generosity. Had it not been for me he had perished and none but I was the cause of his escape. Well it was for him that he suffered in his leg and not in his life! Had I been a man of many words, a meddler, a busy body, I had not acted thus kindly by him; but now I will tell you a tale which befel me, that you may be well assured I am a man sparing of speech in whom is no forwardness and a very different person from those six Brothers of mine; and this it is."

THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIMSELF.

I was living in Baghdad during the times of Al-Mustansir bi'llah,[632] son of Al-Mustazi bi'llah the then Caliph, a prince who loved the poor and needy and companied with the learned and pious. One day it happened to him that he was wroth with ten persons, highwaymen who robbed on the Caliph's highway, and he ordered the Prefect of Baghdad to bring them into the presence on the anniversary of the Great

Festival.[633] So the Prefect sallied out and, making them his prisoners, embarked with them in a boat. I caught sight of them as they were embarking and said to myself, "These are surely assembled for a marriage-feast; methinks they are spending their day in that boat eating and drinking, and none shall be companion of their cups but I myself." So I rose, O fair assembly; and, of the excess of my courtesy and the gravity of my understanding, I embarked with them and entered into conversation with them. They rowed across to the opposite bank, where they landed and there came up the watch and guardians of the peace with chains, which they put round the robbers' necks. They chained me among the rest of them; and, O people, is it not a proof of my courtesy 318 and spareness of speech, that I held my peace and did not please to speak? Then they took us away in bilbos and next morning carried us all before Al-Mustansir bi'llah, Commander of the Faithful, who bade smite the necks of the ten robbers. So the Sworder came forward after they were seated on the leather of blood:[634] then drawing his blade, struck off one head after another until he had smitten the neck of the tenth; and I alone remained. The Caliph looked at me and asked the Headsman, saying, "What ails thee that thou hast struck off only nine heads?"; and he answered, "Allah forbid that I should behead only nine, when thou biddest me behead ten!" Quoth the Caliph, "Meseems thou hast smitten the necks of only nine, and this man before thee is the tenth." "By thy beneficence!" replied the Headsman, "I have beheaded ten." "Count them!" cried the Caliph and whenas they counted heads, lo! there were ten. The Caliph looked at me and said, "What made thee keep silence at a time like this and how camest thou to company with these men of blood. Tell me the cause of all this, for albeit thou art a very old man, assuredly thy wits are weak." Now when I heard these words from the Caliph I sprang to my feet and replied, "Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that I am the Silent Shaykh and am thus called to distinguish me from my six brothers. I am a man of immense learning whilst, as for the gravity of my understanding, the wiliness of my wits and the spareness of my speech, there is no end to them; and my calling is that of a barber. I went out early on yesterday morning and saw these men making for a skiff; and, fancying they were bound for a marriage-feast, I joined them and mixed with them. After a while up came the watch and guardians of the peace, who put chains round their necks and round mine with the rest; but, in the excess of my courtesy, I held my peace and spake not a word; nor was this other but generosity on my part. They brought us into thy presence, and thou gavest an order to smite the necks of the ten; yet did I not make myself known to thee and remained silent before the Sworder, purely of my great generosity and courtesy which led 319 me to share with them in their death. But all my life long have I dealt thus nobly with mankind, and they requite me the foulest and evillest requital!" When the Caliph heard my words and knew that I was a man of exceeding generosity and of very few words, one in whom is no forwardness (as this youth would have it whom I rescued from mortal risk and who hath so scurvily repaid me), he laughed with

excessive laughter till he fell upon his back. Then said he to me, "O Silent Man, do thy six brothers favour thee in wisdom and knowledge and spareness of speech?" I replied, "Never were they like me! Thou puttest reproach upon me, O Commander of the Faithful, and it becomes thee not to even my brothers with me; for, of the abundance of their speech and their deficiency of courtesy and gravity, each one of them hath gotten some maim or other. One is a monocular, another palsied, a third stone-blind, a fourth cropped of ears and nose and a fifth shorn of both lips, while the sixth is a hunchback and a cripple. And conceive not, O Commander of the Faithful, that I am prodigal of speech; but I must perforce explain to thee that I am a man of greater worth and fewer words than any of them. From each one of my brothers hangs a tale of how he came by his bodily defect and these I will relate to thee." So the Caliph gave ear to

THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS FIRST BROTHER.





Know then, O Commander of the Faithful, that my first brother, Al-Bakbuk, the prattler, is a Hunchback who took to tailoring in Baghdad, and he used to sew in a shop hired from a man of much wealth, who dwelt over the shop,[635] and there was also a flour-mill in the basement. One day as my brother, the Hunchback, was sitting in his

shop a-tailoring, he chanced to raise his head and saw a lady like the rising full moon at a balconied window of his landlord's house, engaged in looking out at the passers-by.[636] When my brother beheld her, his heart was taken with love of her and he passed his whole day gazing at her and neglected his tailoring till 320 eventide. Next morning he opened his shop and sat him down to sew; but, as often as he stitched a stitch, he looked to the window and saw her as before; and his passion and infatuation for her increased. On the third day as he was sitting in his usual place, gazing on her, she caught sight of him and, perceiving that he had been captivated with love of her, laughed in his face,[637] and he smiled back at her. Then she disappeared and presently sent her slave-girl to him with a bundle containing a piece of red flowered silk. The handmaid accosted him and said, "My lady salameth to thee and desireth thee, of thy skill and good will, to fashion for her a shift of this piece and to sew it handsomely with thy best sewing." He replied, "Hearkening and obedience"; and shaped for her a chemise and finished sewing it the same day. When the morning morrowed the girl came back and said to him, "My lady salameth to thee and asks how thou hast passed yesternight; for she hath not tasted sleep by reason of her heart being taken up with thee." Then she laid before him a piece of yellow satin and said, "My lady biddeth thee cut her two pair of petticoat-trousers out of this piece and sew them this very day." Hearkening and obedience!" replied he, "greet her for me with many greetings and say to her, Thy slave is obedient to thine order; so command him as thou wilt." Then he applied himself to cutting out and worked hard at sewing the trousers; and after an hour the lady appeared at the lattice and saluted him by signs, now casting down her eyes, then smiling in his face, and he began to assure himself that he would soon make a conquest. She did not let him stir till he had finished the two pair of trousers, when she withdrew and sent the handmaid to whom he delivered them; and she took them and went her ways. When it was night, he threw himself on his carpet-bed, and lay tossing about from side to side till morning, when he rose and sat down in his place. Presently the damsel came to him and said, "My master calleth for thee." Hearing these words he feared with exceeding fear; but the slave-girl, seeing his affright, said to him, "No evil is meant to thee: naught but good awaiteth thee. My lady would have thee make acquaintance with my lord." So my brother the tailor, rejoicing with great joy, went with her; and when he came into the presence of his landlord, the lady's husband, he kissed the ground before him, and the master of the house returned his greeting and gave 321 him a great piece of linen saying, "Shape me shirts out of this stuff and sew them well;" and my brother answered, "To hear is to obey." Thereupon he fell to work at once, snipping, shaping and sewing till he had finished twenty shirts by supper time, without stopping to taste food. The house-master asked him, "How much the wage for this?"; and he answered, "Twenty dirhams." So the gentleman cried out to the slave-girl, "Bring me twenty dirhams," and my brother spake not a word; but the lady signed, "Take nothing from him;"

whereupon my brother said, "By Allah I will take naught from thy hand." And he carried off his tailor's gear and returned to his shop, although he was destitute even to a red cent.[638] Then he applied himself to do their work; eating, in his zeal and diligence, but a bit of bread and drinking only a little water for three days. At the end of this time came the handmaid and said to him, "What hast thou done?" Quoth he, "They are finished," and carried the shirts to the lady's husband, who would have paid him his hire: but he said, "I will take nothing," for fear of her and, returning to his shop, passed the night without sleep because of his hunger. Now the dame had informed her husband how the case stood (my brother knowing naught of this); and the two had agreed to make him tailor for nothing, the better to mock and laugh at him. Next morning he went to his shop, and, as he sat there, the handmaid came to him and said, "Speak with my master." So he accompanied her to the husband who said to him, "I wish thee to cut out for me five long-sleeved robes.[639]" So he cut them out[640] and took the stuff and went away. Then he sewed them and carried them to the gentleman, who praised his sewing and offered him a purse of silver. He put out his hand to take it, but the lady signed to him from behind her husband not to do so, and he replied, "O my lord, there is no hurry, we have time enough for this." Then he went forth from the house meaner and meeker 322 than a donkey, for verily five things were gathered together in him viz:—love, beggary, hunger, nakedness and hard labour. Nevertheless he heartened himself with the hope of gaining the lady's favours. When he had made an end of all their jobs, they played him another trick and married him to their slave-girl; but, on the night when he thought to go in to her, they said to him, "Lie this night in the mill; and to-morrow all will go well." My brother concluded that there was some good cause for this and nighted alone in the mill. Now the husband had set on the miller to make the tailor turn the mill: so when night was half spent the man came into him and began to say, "This bull of ours hath become useless and standeth still instead of going round: he will not turn the mill this night, and yet we have great store of corn to be ground. However, I'll yoke him perforce and make him finish grinding it before morning, as the folk are impatient for their flour." So he filled the hoppers with grain and, going up to my brother with a rope in his hand, tied it round his neck and said to him, "Gee up! Round with the mill! thou, O bull, wouldst do nothing but grub and stale and dung!" Then he took a whip and laid it on the shoulders and calves of my brother, who began to howl and bellow; but none came to help him; and he was forced to grind the wheat till hard upon dawn, when the house-master came in and, seeing my brother still tethered to the yoke and the man flogging him, went away. At day-break the miller returned home and left him still yoked and half dead; and soon after in came the slave-girl who unbound him, and said to him, "I and my lady are right sorry for what hath happened and we have borne thy grief with thee." But he had no tongue wherewith to answer her from excess of beating and mill-turning. Then he retired to his lodging and behold, the clerk who had drawn up the marriage-deed came to him[641] and saluted him, saying, "Allah give thee long life! May

thy espousal be blessed! This face telleth of pleasant doings and dalliance and kissing and clipping from dusk to dawn." "Allah grant the liar no peace, O thou thousandfold cuckold!", my brother replied, "by Allah, I did nothing but turn the mill in the place of the bull all night till morning!" "Tell me thy tale," quoth he; and my brother recounted what had befallen him and he said, "Thy star agrees not with her star; but an thou wilt I can alter the contract for thee," adding, "'Ware lest another cheat be 323 not in store for thee." And my brother answered him, "See if thou have not another contrivance." Then the clerk left him and he sat in his shop, looking for some one to bring him a job whereby he might earn his day's bread. Presently the handmaid came to him and said, "Speak with my lady." "Begone, O my good girl," replied he, "there shall be no more dealings between me and thy lady." The handmaid returned to her mistress and told her what my brother had said and presently she put her head out of the window, weeping and saying, "Why, O my beloved, are there to be no more dealings 'twixt me and thee?" But he made her no answer. Then she wept and conjured him, swearing that all which had befallen him in the mill was not sanctioned by her and that she was innocent of the whole matter. When he looked upon her beauty and loveliness and heard the sweetness of her speech, the sorrow which had possessed him passed from his heart; he accepted her excuse and he rejoiced in her sight. So he saluted her and talked with her and sat tailoring awhile, after which the handmaid came to him and said, "My mistress greeteth thee and informeth thee that her husband purposeth to lie abroad this night in the house of some intimate friends of his; so, when he is gone, do thou come to us and spend the night with my lady in delightsomest joyance till the morning." Now her husband had asked her, "How shall we manage to turn him away from thee?;" and she answered, "Leave me to play him another trick and make him a laughing-stock for all the town." But my brother knew naught of the malice of women. As soon as it was dusk, the slave-girl came to him and carried him to the house, and when the lady saw him she said to him, "By Allah, O my lord, I have been longing exceedingly for thee." "By Allah," cried he, "kiss me quick before thou give me aught else.[642]" Hardly had he spoken, when the lady's husband came in from the next room[643] and seized him, saying, "By Allah, I will not let thee go, till I deliver thee to the chief of the town watch." My brother humbled himself to him; but he would not listen to him and carried him before the Prefect who gave him an hundred lashes with a whip and, mounting him on a camel, promenaded him round about the city, whilst the guards proclaimed aloud, "This is his reward who violateth the Harims of 324 honourable men!" Moreover, he fell off the camel and broke his leg and so became lame. Then the Prefect banished him from the city; and he went forth unknowing whither he should wend; but I heard of him and fearing for him went out after him, and brought him back secretly to the city and restored him to health and took him into my house where he still liveth." The Caliph laughed at my story and said, "Thou hast done well, O Samit, O Silent Man, O spare of speech!"; and he bade

me take a present and go away. But I said, "I will accept naught of thee except I tell thee what befel all my other brothers; and do not think me a man of many words." So the Caliph gave ear to,

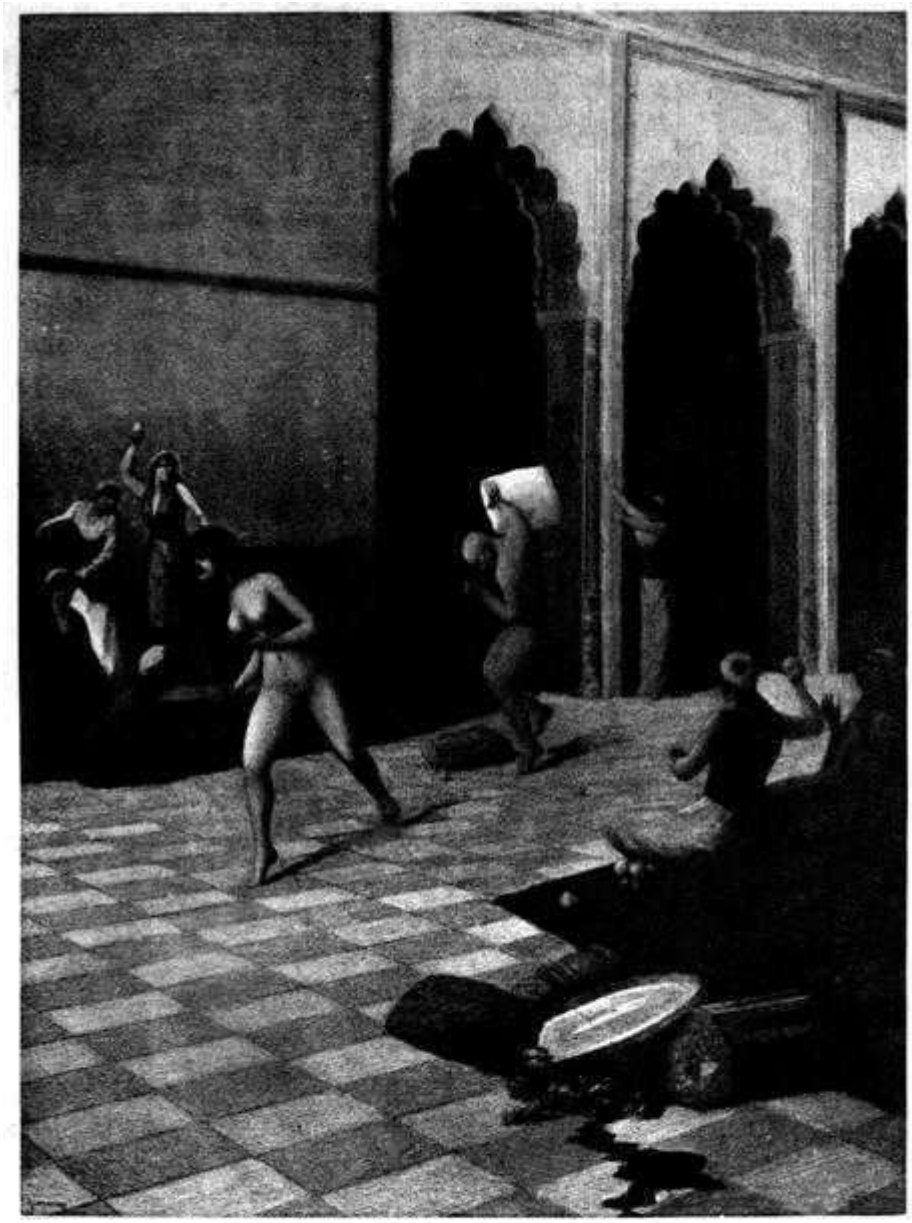
THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS SECOND BROTHER.



Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that my second brother's name was Al-Haddár, that is the babbler, and he was the paralytic. Now it happened to him one day, as he was going about his business, that an old woman accosted him and said, "Stop a little, my good man, that I may tell thee of somewhat which, if it be to thy liking, thou shalt do for me and I will pray Allah to give thee good of it!" My brother stopped and she went on, "I will put thee in the way of a certain thing, so thou not be prodigal of speech." "On with thy talk," quoth he; and she, "What sayest thou to handsome quarters and a fair garden with flowing waters, flowers blooming, and fruit growing, and old wine going and a pretty young face whose owner thou mayest embrace from dark till dawn? If thou do whatso I bid thee thou shalt see something greatly to thy advantage." "And is all this in the world?" asked my brother; and she answered, "Yes, and it shall be thine, so thou be reasonable and leave idle curiosity and many words, and do my bidding," "I will indeed, O my lady," said he, "how is it thou hast preferred me in this matter before all men and what is it that so much pleaseth thee in me?" Quoth she, "Did I not bid thee be spare of speech? Hold thy peace and follow me. Know, that the young lady, to whom I shall carry thee, loveth to have her own way and hateth being thwarted and all who gainsay; so, if thou humour her, thou shalt come to thy desire of her." And my brother said, "I will not cross her in anything." Then she went on and my brother followed her, an-hungering after what she described 325 to him till they entered a fine large house, handsome and choicely furnished, full of eunuchs and servants and showing signs of prosperity from top to bottom. And she was carrying him to the upper story when the people of the house said to him, "What dost thou here?" But the old woman answered them, "Hold your peace and trouble him not: he is a workman and we have occasion for him." Then she brought him into a fine great pavilion, with a garden in its midst, never eyes saw a fairer; and made him sit upon a handsome couch. He had not sat long, before he heard a loud noise and in came a troop of slave-girls surrounding a lady like the moon on the night of its fullest. When he saw her, he rose up and made an obeisance to her, whereupon she welcomed him and bade him be seated. So he sat down and she said to him, "Allah advance thee to honour! Is all well with thee?" "O my lady," he answered, "all with me is right well." Then she bade bring in food, and they set before her delicate viands; so she sat down to eat, making a show of affection to my brother and jesting with him, though all the while she could not refrain from laughing; but as often as he looked at her, she signed towards her handmaidens as though she were laughing at them. My brother (the ass!) understood nothing; but, in the excess of his ridiculous passion, he fancied that the lady was in love with him and that she would soon grant him his desire. When they had done eating, they set on the wine and there came in ten maidens like moons, with lutes ready strung in their hands, and fell to singing with full voices, sweet and sad, whereupon delight gat hold upon him and he took the cup from the lady's hands and drank it standing. Then she drank a cup of wine and my brother (still standing) said to her "Health," and bowed to her. She

handed him another cup and he drank it off, when she slapped him hard on the nape of his neck.[644] Upon this my brother would have gone out of the house in anger; but the old woman followed him and winked to him to return. So he came back and the lady bade him sit and he sat down without a word. Then she again slapped him on the nape of his neck; and the second slapping did not suffice her, she must needs make all her handmaidens also slap and cuff him, while he kept saying to the old woman, "I never saw aught nicer than this." She on her side ceased not exclaiming, "Enough, enough, I conjure thee, O 326 my mistress!"; but the women slapped him till he well nigh swooned away. Presently my brother rose and went out to obey a call of nature, but the old woman overtook him, and said, "Be patient a little and thou shalt win to thy wish." "How much longer have I to wait," my brother replied, "this slapping hath made me feel faint." "As soon as she is warm with wine," answered she, "thou shalt have thy desire." So he returned to his place and sat down, whereupon all the handmaidens stood up and the lady bade them perfume him with pastiles and besprinkle his face with rose-water. Then said she to him, "Allah advance thee to honour! Thou hast entered my house and hast borne with my conditions, for whoso thwarteth me I turn him away, and whoso is patient hath his desire." "O mistress mine," said he, "I am thy slave and in the hollow of thine hand!" "Know, then," continued she, "that Allah hath made me passionately fond of frolic; and whoso falleth in with my humour cometh by whatso he wisheth." Then she ordered her maidens to sing with loud voices till the whole company was delighted; after which she said to one of them, "Take thy lord, and do what is needful for him and bring him back to me forthright." So the damsel took my brother (and he not knowing what she would do with him); but the old woman overtook him and said, "Be patient; there remaineth but little to do." At this his face brightened and he stood up before the lady while the old woman kept saying, "Be patient; thou wilt now at once win to thy wish!"; till he said, "Tell me what she would have the maiden do with me?" "Nothing but good," replied she, "as I am thy sacrifice! She wisheth only to dye thy eyebrows and pluck out thy mustachios." Quoth he, "As for the dyeing of my eyebrows, that will come off with washing,[645] but for the plucking out of my mustachios that indeed is a somewhat painful process." "Be cautious how thou cross her," cried the old woman; "for she hath set her heart on thee." So my brother patiently suffered her to dye his eyebrows and pluck out his mustachios; after which the maiden returned to her mistress and told her. Quoth she, "Remaineth now only one other thing to be done; thou must shave his beard and 327 make him a smooth o' face.[646]" So the maiden went back and told him what her mistress had bidden her do; and my brother (the blockhead!) said to her, "How shall I do what will disgrace me before the folk?" But the old woman said, "She would do on this wise only that thou mayst be as a beardless youth and that no hair be left on thy face to scratch and prick her delicate cheeks; for indeed she is passionately in love with thee. So be patient and thou shalt

attain thine object." My brother *was* patient and did her bidding and let shave off his beard and, when he was brought back to the lady, lo! he appeared dyed red as to his eyebrows, plucked of both mustachios, shorn of his beard, rouged on both cheeks. At first she was affrighted at him; then she made mockery of him and, laughing till she fell upon her back, said, "O my lord, thou hast indeed won my heart by thy good nature!" Then she conjured him, by her life, to stand up and dance, and he arose, and capered about, and there was not a cushion in the house but she threw it at his head, and in like manner did all her women who also kept pelting him with oranges and lemons and citrons till he fell down senseless from the cuffing on the nape of the neck, the pillowing and the fruit-pelting. "Now thou hast attained thy wish," said the old woman when he came round; "there are no more blows in store for thee and there remaineth but one little thing to do. It is her wont, when she is in her cups, to let no one have her until she put off her dress and trousers and remain stark naked.[647] Then she will bid thee doff thy clothes and run; and she will run before thee as if she were flying from thee; and do thou follow her from place to place till thy prickle stands at fullest point, when she will yield to thee[648];" adding, "Strip off thy clothes at once." So he rose, well nigh lost in ecstacy and, doffing his raiment, showed himself mother-naked.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



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Now when it was the Thirty-Second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman said to the Barber's second brother, "Doff thy clothes," he rose, well nigh lost in ecstacy; and, stripping off his raiment, showed himself mother-naked. Whereupon the lady stripped also and said to my brother, "If thou want anything run after me till thou catch me." Then she set out at a run and he ran after her while she rushed into room after room

and rushed out of room after room, my brother scampering after her in a rage of desire like a veritable madman, with yard standing terribly tall. After much of this kind she dashed into a darkened place, and he dashed after her; but suddenly he trod upon a yielding spot, which gave way under his weight; and, before he was aware where he was, he found himself in the midst of a crowded market, part of the bazar of the leather-sellers who were crying the prices of skins and hides and buying and selling. When they saw him in his plight, naked, with standing yard, shorn of beard and moustachios, with eyebrows dyed red, and cheeks ruddled with rouge, they shouted and clapped their hands at him, and set to flogging him with skins upon his bare body till a swoon came over him. Then they threw him on the back of an ass and carried him to the Chief of Police. Quoth the Chief "What is this?" Quoth they, "This fellow fell suddenly upon us out of the Wazir's house[649] in this state." So the Prefect gave him an hundred lashes and then banished him from Baghdad. However I went out after him and brought him back secretly into the city and made him a daily allowance for his living: although, were it not for my generous humour, I could not have put up with the like of him. Then the Caliph gave ear to

THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS THIRD BROTHER.

My third brother's name was Al-Fakík, the Gabbler, who was blind. One day Fate and Fortune drove him to a fine large house, and he knocked at the door, desiring speech of its owner that he 329 might beg somewhat of him. Quoth the master of the house, "Who is at the door?" But my brother spake not a word and presently he heard him repeat with a loud voice, "Who is this?" Still he made no answer and immediately heard the master walk to the door and open it and say, "What dost thou want?" My brother answered "Something for Allah Almighty's sake.[650]" "Art thou blind?" asked the man, and my brother answered "Yes." Quoth the other, "Stretch me out thy hand." So my brother put out his hand thinking that he would give him something; but he took it and, drawing him into the house, carried him up from stair to stair till they reached the terrace on the house-top, my brother thinking the while that he would surely give him something of food or money. Then he asked my brother, "What dost thou want, O blind man?" and he answered, "Something for the Almighty's sake." "Allah open for thee some other door!" "O thou! why not say so when I was below stairs?" "O cadger, why not answer me when I first called to thee?" "And what meanest thou to do for me now?" "There is nothing in the house to give thee." "Then take me down the stair." "The path is before thee." So my brother rose and made his way downstairs, till he came within twenty steps of the door, when his foot slipped and he rolled to the bottom and broke his head. Then he went out, unknowing whither to turn, and presently fell in with two other blind men, companions of his, who said to him, "What didst thou gain to-day?" He told them what had befallen him and added,

"O my brothers, I wish to take some of the money in my hands and provide myself with it." Now the master of the house had followed him and was listening to what they said; but neither my brother nor his comrades knew of this. So my brother went to his lodging and sat down to await his companions, and the house-owner entered after him without being perceived. When the other blind men arrived, my brother said to them, "Bolt the door and search the house lest any stranger have followed us." The man, hearing this, caught hold of a cord that hung from the ceiling and clung to it, whilst they went round about the house and searched but found no one. So they came back, and, sitting beside my brother, brought out their money which they counted and lo! it was twelve thousand dirhams. Each took what he wanted and they buried the rest in 330 a corner of the room. Then they set on food and sat down, to eat. Presently my brother, hearing a strange pair of jaws munching by his side,[651] said to his friends, "There is a stranger amongst us;" and, putting forth his hand, caught hold of that of the house-master. Thereupon all fell on him and beat him;[652] and when tired of belabouring him they shouted, "O ye Moslems! a thief is come in to us, seeking to take our money!" A crowd gathered around them, whereupon the intruder hung on to them; and complained with them as they complained; and, shutting his eyes like them, so that none might doubt his blindness, cried out, "O Moslems, I take refuge with Allah and the Governor, for I have a matter to make known to him!" Suddenly up came the watch and, laying hands on the whole lot (my brother being amongst them), drove them[653] to the Governor's who set them before him and asked, "What news with you?" Quoth the intruder, "Look and find out for thyself, not a word shall be wrung from us save by torture, so begin by beating me and after me beat this man our leader."[654] And he pointed to my brother. So they threw the man at full length and gave him four hundred sticks on his backside. The beating pained him, whereupon he opened one eye and, as they redoubled their blows, he opened the other eye. When the Governor saw this he said to him, "What have we here, O accursed?"; whereto he replied, "Give me the seal-ring of pardon! We four have shammed blind, and we impose upon people that we may enter houses and look upon the unveiled faces of the women and contrive for their corruption. In this way we have gotten great gain 331 and our store amounts to twelve thousand dirhams. Said I to my company:—Give me my share, three thousand; but they rose and beat me and took away my money, and I seek refuge with Allah and with thee; better thou have my share than they. So, if thou wouldst know the truth of my words, beat one and every of the others more than thou hast beaten me, and he will surely open his eyes." The Governor gave orders for the question to begin with my brother, and they bound him to the whipping-post,[655] and the Governor said, "O scum of the earth, do ye abuse the gracious gifts of Allah and make as if ye were blind!" "Allah! Allah!" cried my brother, "by Allah, there is none among us who can see." Then they beat him till he swooned away and the Governor cried, "Leave him till he come to and then beat him again." After this he

caused each of the companions to receive more than three hundred sticks, whilst the sham-abraham kept saying to them "Open your eyes or you will be beaten afresh." At last the man said to the Governor, "Dispatch some one with me to bring thee the money; for these fellows will not open their eyes, lest they incur disgrace before the folk." So the Governor sent to fetch the money and gave the man his pretended share, three thousand dirhams; and, keeping the rest for himself, banished the three blind men from the city. But I, O Commander of the Faithful, went out and overtaking my brother questioned him of his case; whereupon he told me of what I have told thee; so I brought him secretly into the city, and appointed him (in the strictest privacy) an allowance for meat and drink! The Caliph laughed at my story and said, "Give him a gift and let him go;" but I said, "By Allah! I will take naught till I have made known to the Commander of the Faithful what came to pass with the rest of my brothers; for truly I am a man of few words and spare of speech." Then the Caliph gave ear to

THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS FOURTH BROTHER.

Now as for my fourth brother, O Commander of the Faithful, Al-Kuz al-aswáni, or the long-necked Gugglet hight, from his brimming over with words, the same who was blind of one eye, he 332 became a butcher in Baghdad and he sold flesh and fattened rams; and great men and rich bought their meat of him, so that he amassed much wealth and got him cattle and houses. He fared thus a long while, till one day, as he was sitting in his shop, there came up an old man and long o' the beard, who laid down some silver and said, "Give me meat for this." He gave him his money's worth of flesh and the oldster went his ways. My brother examined the Shaykh's silver, and, seeing that the dirhams were white and bright, he set them in a place apart. The grey-beard continued to return to the shop regularly for five months, and my brother ceased not to lay up all the coin he received from him in its own box. At last he thought to take out the money to buy sheep; so he opened the box and found in it nothing, save bits of white paper cut round to look like coin[656]; so he buffetted his face and cried aloud till the folk gathered about him, whereupon he told them his tale which made them marvel exceedingly. Then he rose as was his wont, and slaughtering a ram hung it up inside his shop; after which he cut off some of the flesh, and hanging it outside kept saying to himself, "O Allah, would the ill-omened old fellow but come!" And an hour had not passed before the Shaykh came with his silver in hand; whereupon my brother rose and caught hold of him calling out, "Come aid me, O Moslems, and learn my story with this villain!" When the old man heard this, he quietly said to him, "Which will be the better for thee, to let go of me or to be disgraced by me amidst the folk?" "In what wilt thou disgrace me?" "In that thou sellest man's flesh for mutton!" "Thou liest, thou accursed!" "Nay, he is the accursed who hath a man hanging up by way of meat in his shop." "If the matter be as thou sayest, I give thee lawful leave to

take my money and my life." Then the old man cried out aloud, "Ho, ye people! if you would prove the truth of my words, enter this man's shop." The folk rushed in and found that the ram was become a dead man[657] hung up for sale. So they set upon my brother crying out, "O Infidel! O villain!"; and his best friends fell to cuffing and kicking him and kept saying, "Dost thou make us eat flesh of the sons of Adam?" Furthermore, the old man struck 333 him on the eye and put it out. Then they carried the carcass, with the throat cut, before the Chief of the city-watch, to whom the old man said, "O Emir, this fellow butchers men and sells their flesh for mutton and we have brought him to thee; so arise and execute the judgments of Allah (to whom be honour and glory!)" My brother would have defended himself, but the Chief refused to hear him and sentenced him to receive five hundred sticks and to forfeit the whole of his property. And, indeed, had it not been for that same property which he expended in bribes, they would have surely slain him. Then the Chief banished him from Baghdad; and my brother fared forth at a venture, till he came to a great town, where he thought it best to set up as a cobbler; so he opened a shop and sat there doing what he could for his livelihood. One day, as he went forth on his business, he heard the distant tramp of horses and, asking the cause, was told that the King was going out to hunt and course; so my brother stopped to look at the fine suite. It so fortuned that the King's eye met my brother's; whereupon the King hung down his head and said, "I seek refuge with Allah from the evil of this day!"[658]; and turned the reins of his steed and returned home with all his retinue. Then he gave orders to his guards, who seized my brother and beat him with a beating so painful that he was well-nigh dead; and my brother knew not what could be the cause of his maltreatment, after which he returned to his place in sorriest plight. Soon afterwards he went to one of the King's household and related what had happened to him; and the man laughed till he fell upon his back and cried, "O brother mine, know that the King cannot bear to look at a monocular, especially if he be blind of the right eye, in which case he doth not let him go without killing him." When my brother heard this, he resolved to fly from that city; so he went forth from it to another wherein none knew him and there he abode a long while. One day, being full of sorrowful thought for what had befallen him, he sallied out to solace himself; and, as he was walking along, he heard the distant tramp of horses behind him and said, "The judgment of Allah is upon me!" and looked about for a hiding-place 334 but found none. At last he saw a closed door which he pushed hard: it yielded and he entered a long gallery in which he took refuge, but hardly had he done so, when two men set upon him crying out, "Allah be thanked for having delivered thee into our hands, O enemy of God! These three nights thou hast robbed us of our rest and sleep, and verily thou hast made us taste of the death-cup." My brother asked, "O folk, what ails you?"; and they answered, "Thou givest us the change and goest about to disgrace us and plannest some plot to cut the throat of the house-master! Is it not enough that thou hast brought

him to beggary, thou and thy fellows? But now give us up the knife wherewith thou threatenest us every night." Then they searched him and found in his waist-belt the knife used for his shoe-leather; and he said, "O people, have the fear of Allah before your eyes and maltreat me not, for know that my story is a right strange!" "And what is thy story?" said they; so he told them what had befallen him, hoping they would let him go; however they paid no heed to what he said and, instead of showing some regard, beat him grievously and tore off his clothes: then, finding on his sides the scars of beating with rods, they said, "O accursed! these marks are the manifest signs of thy guilt!" They carried him before the Governor, whilst he said to himself, "I am now punished for my sins and none can deliver me save Allah Almighty!" The Governor addressing my brother asked him, "O villain, what led thee to enter their house with intention to murther?"; and my brother answered, "I conjure thee by Allah, O Emir, hear my words and be not hasty in condemning me!". But the Governor cried, "Shall we listen to the words of a robber who hath beggared these people, and who beareth on his back the scar of his stripes?" adding, "They surely had not done this to thee, save for some great crime." So he sentenced him to receive an hundred cuts with the scourge, after which they set him on a camel and paraded him about the city, proclaiming, "This is the requital and only too little to requite him who breaketh into people's houses." Then they thrust him out of the city, and my brother wandered at random, till I heard what had befallen him; and, going in search of him, questioned him of his case; so he acquainted me with his story and all his mischances, and I carried him secretly to the city where I made him an allowance for his meat and drink. Then the Caliph gave ear to

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THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS FIFTH BROTHER.

My fifth brother Al-Nashshár,[659] the Babbler, the same who was cropped of both ears, O Commander of the Faithful, was an asker wont to beg of folk by night and live on their alms by day. Now when our father, who was an old man well stricken in years, sickened and died, he left us seven hundred dirhams whereof each son took his hundred; but, as my fifth brother received his portion, he was perplexed and knew not what to do with it. While in this uncertainty he bethought him to lay it out on glass-ware of all sorts and turn an honest penny on its price. So he bought an hundred dirhams worth of verroterie and, putting it into a big tray, sat down to sell it on a bench at the foot of a wall against which he leant back. As he sat with the tray before him he fell to musing and said to himself, "Know, O my good Self, that the head of my wealth, my principal invested in this glass-ware, is an hundred dirhams. I will assuredly sell it for two hundred, with which I will forthright buy other glass and make by it four hundred; nor will I cease to sell and buy on this wise, till I have gotten

four thousand and soon find myself the master of much money. With these coins I will buy merchandize and jewels and ottars[660] and gain great profit on them; till, Allah willing, I will make my capital an hundred thousand dirhams. Then I will purchase a fine house with white slaves and eunuchs and horses; and I will eat and drink and disport myself; nor will I leave a singing man or a singing woman in the city, but I will summon 336 them to my palace and make them perform before me." All this he counted over in his mind, while the tray of glass-ware, worth an hundred dirhams, stood on the bench before him, and, after looking at it, he continued, "And when, Inshallah! my capital shall have become one hundred thousand[661] dinars, I will send out marriage-brokeresses to require for me in wedlock the daughters of Kings and Wazirs; and I will demand to wife the eldest daughter of the Prime Minister; for it hath reached me that she is perfect in beauty and prime in loveliness and rare in accomplishments. I will give a marriage-settlement of one thousand dinars; and, if her father consent, well: but if not I will take her by force from under his very nose. When she is safely homed in my house, I will buy ten little eunuchs[662] and for myself a robe of the robes of Kings and Sultans; and get me a saddle of gold and a bridle set thick with gems of price. Then I will mount with the Mamelukes preceding me and surrounding me, and I will make the round of the city whilst the folk salute me and bless me; after which I will repair to the Wazir (he that is father of the girl), with armed white slaves before and behind me and on my right and on my left. When he sees me, the Wazir stands up, and seating me in his own place sits down much below me; for that I am to be his son-in-law. Now I have with me two eunuchs carrying purses, each containing a thousand dinars; and of these I deliver to him the thousand, his daughter's marriage-settlement, and make him a free gift of the other thousand, that he may have reason to know my generosity and liberality and my greatness of spirit and the littleness of the world in my eyes. And for ten words he addresses to me I answer him two. Then back I go to my house, and if one come to me on the bride's part, I make him a present of money and throw on him a dress of honour; but if he bring me a gift, I give it back to him and refuse to accept it,[663] that they may learn what a proud spirit is mine which never condescends to derogate. Thus I establish my rank and status. When this is done I appoint her wedding night and adorn my house showily! gloriously! And as the time for 337 parading the bride is come, I don my finest attire and sit down on a mattress of gold brocade, propping up my elbow with a pillow, and turning neither to the right nor to the left; but looking only straight in front for the haughtiness of my mind and the gravity of my understanding. And there before me stands my wife in her raiment and ornaments, lovely as the full moon; and I, in my loftiness and dread lordliness,[664] will not glance at her till those present say to me, "O our lord and our master, thy wife, thy handmaid, standeth before thee; vouchsafe her one look for standing wearieth her." Then they kiss the ground before me many times; whereupon I raise my eyes and cast at her one single glance and turn my face

earthwards again. Then they bear her off to the bride-chamber,[665] and I arise and change my clothes for a far finer suit; and, when they bring in the bride a second time, I deign not to throw her a look till they have begged me many times; after which I glance at her out of the corner of one eye, and then bend down my head. I continue acting after this fashion till the parading and displaying are completed"[666]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirty-Third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Barber's fifth brother proceeded:—Then I bend down my head and continue acting after this fashion till her parading and displaying are completed. Thereupon I order one of my eunuchs to bring me a bag of five hundred dinars which I give as largesse to the tirewomen present and bid them one and all lead me to the bride-chamber. When they leave me alone with her I neither look at her nor speak to her, but lie[667] by her side with my face to the wall showing my contempt, that each and every may again remark how high and haughty I am. Presently her mother comes in to me; and kissing[668] my head and hand, says to me, "O my lord, look upon thine handmaid who longs for thy favour; so heal her broken spirit!" I give her no answer; and when she sees this she rises and busses 338 my feet many times and says, "O my lord, in very sooth my daughter is a beautiful maid, who hath never known man; and if thou show her this backwardness and aversion, her heart will break; so do thou incline to her and speak to her and soothe her mind and spirit." Then she rises and fetches a cup of wine; and says to her daughter, "Take it and hand it to thy lord." But as she approaches me I leave her standing between my hands and sit, propping my elbow on a round cushion purfled with gold thread, leaning lazily back, and without looking at her in the majesty of my spirit, so that she may deem me indeed a Sultan and a mighty man. Then she says to me, "O my lord, Allah upon thee, do not refuse to take the cup from the hand of thine handmaid, for verily I am thy bondswoman." But I do not speak to her and she presses me, saying, "There is no help but that thou drink it;" and she puts it to my lips. Then I shake my fist in her face and kick her with my foot thus. So he let out with his toe and knocked over the tray of glass-ware which fell to the ground and, falling from the bench, all that was on it was broken to bits. "O foulest of pimps,[669] this comes from the pride of my spirit!" cried my brother; and then, O Commander of the Faithful, he buffeted his face and rent his garments, and kept on weeping and beating himself. The folk who were flocking to their Friday prayers saw him; and some of them looked at him and pitied him, whilst others paid no heed to him, and in this way my brother lost both capital and profit. He remained weeping a long while, and at last up came a beautiful lady, the scent of musk exhaling from her, who was going to Friday prayers riding a mule with a gold saddle and followed by several eunuchs. When she saw the broken glass and my brother weeping, her kind heart was moved to pity for him, and she asked what ailed him and was told that he had a tray full of glass-ware by the sale

of which he hoped to gain his living, but it was broken, and (said they), "there befel him what thou seest." Thereupon she called up one of her eunuchs and said to him, "Give what thou hast with thee to this poor fellow!" And he gave my brother a purse in which he found five hundred dinars; and when it touched his hand he was well-nigh 339dying for excess of joy and he offered up blessings for her. Then he returned to his abode a substantial man; and, as he sat considering, some one rapped at the door. So he rose and opened and saw an old woman whom he had never seen. "O my son," said she, "know that prayertide is near and I have not yet made my Wuzu-ablution[670]; so kindly allow me the use of thy lodging for the purpose." My brother answered, "To hear is to comply;" and going in bade her follow him. So she entered and he brought her an ewer wherewith to wash, and sat down like to fly with joy because of the dinars which he had tied up in his belt for a purse. When the old woman had made an end of her ablution, she came up to where he sat, and prayed a two-bow prayer; after which she blessed my brother with a godly benediction, and he while thanking her put his hand to the dinars and gave her two, saying to himself "These are my voluntaries."[671] When she saw the gold she cried, "Praise be to Allah! why dost thou look on one who loveth thee as if she were a beggar? Take back thy money: I have no need of it; or, if thou want it not, return it to her who gave it thee when thy glass-ware was broken. Moreover, if thou wish to be united with her, I can manage the matter, for she is my mistress." "O my mother," asked my brother, "by what manner of means can I get at her?"; and she answered, "O my son! she hath an inclination for thee, but she is the wife of a wealthy man; so take the whole of thy money with thee and follow me, that I may guide thee to thy desire: and when thou art in her company spare neither persuasion nor fair words, but bring them all to bear upon her; so shalt thou enjoy her beauty and wealth to thy heart's content." My brother took all his gold and rose and followed the old woman, hardly believing in his luck. She ceased not faring on, and my brother following her, till they came to a tall gate at which she knocked and a Roumi slave-girl[672] came out and opened to them. Then the old woman led my brother into a great sitting-room 340spread with wondrous fine carpets and hung with curtains, where he sat down with his gold before him, and his turband on his knee.[673] He had scarcely taken seat before there came to him a young lady (never eye saw fairer) clad in garments of the most sumptuous; whereupon my brother rose to his feet, and she smiled in his face and welcomed him, signing to him to be seated. Then she bade shut the door and, when it was shut, she turned to my brother, and taking his hand conducted him to a private chamber furnished with various kinds of brocades and gold-cloths. Here he sat down and she sat by his side and toyed with him awhile; after which she rose and saying, "Stir not from thy seat till I come back to thee;" disappeared. Meanwhile as he was on this wise, lo! there came in to him a black slave big of body and bulk and holding a drawn sword in hand, who said to him, "Woe to thee! Who brought thee hither and what dost

thou want here?" My brother could not return him a reply, being tongue-tied for terror; so the blackamoor seized him and stripped him of his clothes and bashed him with the flat of his sword-blade till he fell to the ground, swooning from excess of belabouring. The ill-omened nigger fancied that there was an end of him and my brother heard him cry, "Where is the salt-wench?"[674] Whereupon in came a handmaid holding in hand a large tray of salt, and the slave kept rubbing it into my brother's wounds;[675] but he did not stir fearing lest the slave might find out that he was not dead and kill him outright. Then the salt-girl went away, and the slave cried "Where is the souterrain[676]-guardianess?" Hereupon in came the old woman and dragged my brother by his feet to a souterrain and threw him down upon a heap of dead bodies. In this place he lay two full days, but Allah made the salt the means of preserving his life by staunching the blood and staying its flow. Presently, feeling himself able 341 to move, Al-Nashshár rose and opened the trap-door in fear and trembling and crept out into the open; and Allah protected him, so that he went on in the darkness and hid himself in the vestibule till dawn, when he saw the accursed beldam sally forth in quest of other quarry. He followed in her wake without her knowing it, and made for his own lodging where he dressed his wounds and medicined himself till he was whole. Meanwhile he used to watch the old woman, tracking her at all times and seasons, and saw her accost one man after another and carry them to the house. However he uttered not a word; but, as soon as he waxed hale and hearty, he took a piece of stuff and made it into a bag which he filled with broken glass and bound about his middle. He also disguised himself as a Persian that none might know him, and hid a sword under his clothes of foreign cut. Then he went out and presently, falling in with the old woman, said to her, speaking Arabic with a Persian accent, "Venerable lady,[677] I am a stranger arrived but this day here where I know no one. Hast thou a pair of scales wherein I may weigh eleven hundred dinars? I will give thee somewhat of them for thy pains." "I have a son, a money-changer, who keepeth all kinds of scales," she answered, "so come with me to him before he goeth out and he will weigh thy gold." My brother answered "Lead the way!" She led him to the house and the young lady herself came out and opened it, whereupon the old woman smiled in her face and said, "I bring thee fat meat to-day."[678] Then the damsel took my brother by the hand, and led him to the same chamber as before; where she sat with him awhile then rose and went forth saying, "Stir not from thy seat till I come back to thee." Presently in came the accursed slave with the drawn sword and cried to my brother, "Up and be damned to thee!" So he rose, and as the slave walked on before him he drew the sword from under his clothes and smote him with it, making head fly from body. Then he dragged the corpse by the feet to the souterrain and called out, "Where is the salt-wench?" Up came the girl carrying the tray of salt and, seeing my brother sword in hand, turned to fly; but he followed her and struck off her head. Then he called out "Where is the souterrain-guardianess?"; and in came the old woman to whom he said, "Dost know

me again, O ill-omened hag?" "No my lord," she replied, and he said, "I am the 342owner of the five hundred gold pieces, whose house thou enteredst to make the ablution and to pray, and whom thou didst snare hither and betray." "Fear Allah and spare me," cried she; but he regarded her not and struck her with the sword till he had cut her in four. Then he went to look for the young lady; and when she saw him her reason fled and she cried out piteously "Amán![679] Mercy!" So he spared her and asked, "What made thee consort with this blackamoor?;" and she answered, "I was slave to a certain merchant, and the old woman used to visit me till I took a liking to her. One day she said to me:—We have a marriage festival at our house the like of which was never seen and I wish thee to enjoy the sight. To hear is to obey, answered I and rising arrayed myself in my finest raiment and ornaments, and took with me a purse containing an hundred gold pieces. Then she brought me hither and hardly had I entered the house when the black seized on me, and I have remained in this case three whole years through the perfidy of the accursed beldam." Then my brother asked her, "Is there anything of his in the house?"; whereto she answered, "Great store of wealth, and if thou art able to carry it away, do so and Allah give thee good of it!" My brother went with her and she opened to him sundry chests wherein were money bags, at which he was astounded; then she said to him, "Go now and leave me here, and fetch men to remove the money." He went out and hired ten men, but when he returned he found the door wide open, the damsel gone and nothing left but some small matter of coin and the household stuffs.[680] By this he knew that the girl had overreached him; so he opened the store rooms and seized what was in them, together with the rest of the money, leaving nothing in the house. He passed the night rejoicing, but when morning dawned he found at the door some twenty troopers who laid hands on him saying, "The Governor wants thee!" My brother implored them hard to let him return to his house; and even, offered them a large sum of money; but they refused and, binding him fast with cords, carried him off. On the way they met a friend of my brother who clung to his skirt and implored his protection, begging him to stand by him and help to deliver him out of their hands. The man stopped, and asked them what was the matter, 343and they answered, "The Governor hath ordered us to bring this fellow before him and, look ye, we are doing so." My brother's friend urged them to release him, and offered them five hundred dinars to let him go, saying, "When ye return to the Governor tell him that you were unable to find him." But they would not listen to his words and took my brother, dragging him along on his face, and set him before the Governor who asked him, "Whence gottest thou these stuffs and monies?"; and he answered, "I pray for mercy!" So the Governor gave him the kerchief of mercy;[681] and he told him all that had befallen him from first to last with the old woman and the flight of the damsel; ending with, "Whatso I have taken, take of it what thou wilt, so thou leave me sufficient to support life."[682] But the Governor took the whole of the stuffs and all the money for himself; and, fearing lest the affair come to the Sultan's

ears, he summoned my brother and said, "Depart from this city, else I will hang thee." "Hearing and obedience" quoth my brother and set out for another town. On the way thieves fell foul of him and stripped and beat him and docked his ears; but I heard tidings of his misfortunes and went out after him taking him clothes; and brought him secretly into the city where I assigned to him an allowance for meat and drink. And presently the Caliph gave ear to,

THE BARBER'S TALE OF HIS SIXTH BROTHER.

My sixth brother, O Commander of the Faithful, Shakashik,[683] or Many-clamours, the shorn of both lips, was once rich and became poor; so one day he went out to beg somewhat to keep life in him. As he was on the road he suddenly caught sight of a large and handsome mansion, with a detached building wide and lofty at the entrance, where sat sundry eunuchs bidding and forbidding.[684] My brother enquired of one of those idling there and he replied. "The 344 palace belongs to a scion of the Barmaki house;" so he stepped up to the door-keepers and asked an alms of them. "Enter," said they, "by the great gate and thou shalt get what thou seekest from the Wazir our master." Accordingly he went in and, passing through the outer entrance, walked on a while and presently came to a mansion of the utmost beauty and elegance, paved with marble, hung with curtains and having in the midst of it a flower garden whose like he had never seen.[685] My brother stood awhile as one bewildered not knowing whither to turn his steps; then, seeing the farther end of the sitting-chamber tenanted, he walked up to it and there found a man of handsome presence and comely beard. When this personage saw my brother he stood up to him and welcomed him and asked him of his case; whereto he replied that he was in want and needed charity. Hearing these words the grandee showed great concern and, putting his hand to his fine robe, rent it exclaiming, "What! am I in a city, and thou here an-hungered? I have not patience to bear such disgrace!" Then he promised him all manner of good cheer and said, "There is no help but that thou stay with me and eat of my salt.[686]" "O my lord," answered my brother, "I can wait no longer; for I am indeed dying of hunger." So he cried, "Ho boy! bring basin and ewer;" and, turning to my brother, said, "O my guest come forward and wash thy hands." My brother rose to do so but he saw neither ewer nor basin; yet his host kept washing his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water and cried, "Bring the table!" But my brother again saw nothing. Then said the host, "Honour me by eating of this meat and be not ashamed." And he kept moving his hand to and fro as if he ate and saying to my brother, "I wonder to see thee eating thus sparely: do not stint thyself for I am sure thou art famished." So my brother began to make as 345 though he were eating whilst his host kept saying to him, "Fall to, and note especially the excellence of this bread and its whiteness!" But still my brother saw nothing. Then said he to himself, "This man is fond of poking fun at people;" and

replied, "O my lord, in all my days I never knew aught more winsome than its whiteness or sweeter than its savour." The Barmecide said, "This bread was baked by a handmaid of mine whom I bought for five hundred dinars." Then he called out, "Ho boy, bring in the meat pudding[687] for our first dish, and let there be plenty of fat in it;" and, turning to my brother said, "O my guest, Allah upon thee, hast ever seen anything better than this meat-pudding? Now by my life, eat and be not abashed." Presently he cried out again, "Ho boy, serve up the marinated stew[688] with the fatted sand-grouse in it;" and he said to my brother, "Up and eat, O my guest, for truly thou art hungry and needest food." So my brother began wagging his jaws and made as if champing and chewing,[689] whilst the host continued calling for one dish after another and yet produced nothing save orders to eat. Presently he cried out, "Ho boy, bring us the chickens stuffed with pistachio nuts;" and said to my brother, "By thy life, O my guest, I have fattened these chickens upon pistachios; eat, for thou hast never eaten their like." "O my lord," replied my brother, "they are indeed first-rate." Then the host began motioning with his hand as though he were giving my brother a mouthful; and ceased not to enumerate and expatiate upon the various dishes to the hungry man whose hunger waxt still more violent, so that his soul lusted after a bit of bread, even a barley-scone.[690] Quoth the Barmecide, "Didst thou ever taste anything more delicious than the seasoning of these dishes?"; and quoth my brother, "Never O my lord!" "Eat heartily and be not ashamed," said the host, and the guest, 346 "I have eaten my fill of meat." So the entertainer cried, "Take away and bring in the sweets;" and turning to my brother said, "Eat of this almond conserve for it is prime and of these honey fritters; take this one, by my life, the syrup runs out of it." "May I never be bereaved of thee, O my lord," replied the hungry one and began to ask him about the abundance of musk in the fritters. "Such is my custom," he answered: "they put me a dinar-weight of musk in every honey-fritter and half that quantity of ambergris." All this time my brother kept wagging head and jaws till the master cried, "Enough of this. Bring us the dessert!" Then said he to him, "Eat of these almonds and walnuts and raisins; and of this and that (naming divers kinds of dried fruits), and be not abashed." But my brother replied, "O my lord, indeed I am full: I can eat no more." "O my guest," repeated the host, "if thou have a mind to these good things eat: Allah! Allah![691] do not remain hungry;" but my brother rejoined, "O my lord, he who hath eaten of all these dishes how can he be hungry?" Then he considered and said to himself, "I will do that shall make him repent of these pranks." Presently the entertainer called out "Bring me the wine;" and, moving his hands in the air, as though they had set it before them, he gave my brother a cup and said, "Take this cup and, if it please thee, let me know." "O my lord," he replied, "it is notable good as to nose but I am wont to drink wine some twenty years old." "Knock then at this door,[692]" quoth the host, "for thou canst not drink of aught better." "By thy kindness," said my brother, motioning with his hand as though he were drinking. "Health and joy to thee," exclaimed the house-master and feigned to fill a cup and drink it off; then he

handed another to my brother who quaffed it and made as if he were drunken. Presently he took the host unawares; and, raising his arm till the white of his armpit appeared, dealt him such a cuff on the nape of his neck that the palace echoed to it. Then he came down upon him with a second cuff and the entertainer cried aloud, "What is this, O thou scum of the earth?" "O my lord," replied my brother, "thou hast shown much kindness to thy slave, and admitted him into thine abode and given him to eat of thy victual; then thou madest him drink of thine old wine till he 347 became drunken and boisterous; but thou art too noble not to bear with his ignorance and pardon his offence." When the Barmaki heard my brother's words he laughed his loudest and said, "Long have I been wont to make mock of men and play the madcap among my intimates, but never yet have I come across a single one who had the patience and the wit to enter into all my humours save thyself: so I forgive thee, and thou shalt be my boon-companion in very sooth and never leave me." Then he ordered the servants to lay the table in earnest and they set on all the dishes of which he had spoken in sport; and he and my brother ate till they were satisfied; after which they removed to the drinking-chamber, where they found damsels like moons who sang all manner songs and played on all manner instruments. There they remained drinking till their wine got the better of them and the host treated my brother like a familiar friend, so that he became as it were his brother, and bestowed on him a robe of honour and loved him with exceeding love. Next morning the two fell again to feasting and carousing, and ceased not to lead this life for a term of twenty years; at the end of which the Barmecide died and the Sultan took possession of all his wealth and squeezed my brother of his savings, till he was left a pauper without a penny to handle. So he quitted the city and fled forth following his face;[693] but, when he was half way between two towns, the wild Arabs fell on him and bound him and carried him to their camp, where his captor proceeded to torture him, saying, "Buy thy life of me with thy money, else I will slay thee!" My brother began to weep and replied, "By Allah, I have nothing, neither gold nor silver; but I am thy prisoner; so do with me what thou wilt." Then the Badawi drew a knife, broad-bladed and so sharp-grinded that if plunged into a camel's throat[694] it would sever it clean across from one jugular to the other, and cut off my brother's lips and waxed more instant in requiring money. Now this Badawi had a fair wife who in her husband's absence used to make advances to my brother and offer him her favours, but he held off from her. One day she began to tempt him as usual and he 348 played with her and made her sit on his lap, when behold, in came the Badawi who, seeing this, cried out, "Woe to thee, O accursed villain, wouldest thou debauch my wife for me?" Then he took out a knife and cut off my brother's yard, after which he bound him on the back of a camel and, carrying him to a mountain, left him there. He was at last found by some who recognised him and gave him meat and drink and acquainted me with his condition; whereupon I went forth to him and brought him back to Baghdad where I made him an allowance

sufficient to live on. This, then, O Commander of the Faithful, is the history of my six brothers and I feared to go away without relating it all to thee and leave thee in the error of judging me to be like them. And now thou knowest that I have six brothers upon my hands and, being more upright than they, I support the whole family. When the Caliph heard my story and all I told him concerning my brothers, he laughed and said, "Thou sayest sooth, O Silent Man! thou art indeed spare of speech nor is there aught of forwardness in thee; but now go forth out of this city and settle in some other." And he banished me under edict. I left Baghdad and travelled in foreign parts till I heard of his death and the accession of another to the Caliphate. Then I returned to Baghdad where I found all my brothers dead and chanced upon this young man, to whom I rendered the kindliest service, for without me he had surely been killed. Indeed he slanders me and accuses me of a fault which is not in my nature; and what he reports concerning impudence and meddling and forwardness is idle and false; for verily on his account I left Baghdad and travelled about full many a country till I came to this city and met him here in your company. And was not this, O worthy assemblage, of the generosity of my nature?

THE END OF THE TAILOR'S TALE.

Then quoth the Tailor to the King of China:—When we heard the Barber's tale and saw the excess of his loquacity and the way in which he had wronged this young man, we laid hands on him and shut him up, after which we sat down in peace, and ate and drank and enjoyed the good things of the marriage-feast till the 349 time of the call to mid-afternoon prayer, when I left the party and returned home. My wife received me with sour looks and said, "Thou goest a-pleasuring among thy friends and thou leavest me to sit sorrowing here alone. So now, unless thou take me abroad and let me have some amusement for the rest of the day, I will cut the rope[695] and it will be the cause of my separation from thee." So I took her out and we amused ourselves till supper time, when we returned home and fell in with this Hunchback who was brimful of drink and trolling out these rhymes:—

Clear's the wine, the cup's fine; ✿ Like to like they combine:

It is wine and not cup! ✿ 'Tis a cup and not wine!

So I invited him to sup with us and went out to buy fried fish; after which we sat down to eat; and presently my wife took a piece of bread and a fid of fish and stuffed them into his mouth and he choked; and, though I slapped him long and hard between the shoulders, he died. Then I carried him off and contrived to throw him into the house of this leach, the Jew; and the leach contrived to throw him into the house of the Reeve; and the Reeve contrived to throw him on the way of the Nazarene broker. This, then, is my adventure which befel me but yesterday. Is not it more wondrous than the story of the Hunchback? When the King of China heard the Tailor's tale he

shook his head for pleasure; and, showing great surprise, said, "This that passed between the young man and the busy-body of a Barber is indeed more pleasant and wonderful than the story of my lying knave of a Hunchback." Then he bade one of his Chamberlains go with the Tailor and bring the Barber out of jail, saying, "I wish to hear the talk of this Silent Man and it shall be the cause of your deliverance one and all: then we will bury the Hunchback, for that he is dead since yesterday, and set up a tomb over him."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King of China bade, "Bring me the Barber who shall be the cause of your 350deliverance; then we will bury this Hunchback, for that he is dead since yesterday and set up a tomb over him." So the Chamberlain and the Tailor went to the jail and, releasing the Barber, presently returned with him to the King. The Sultan of China looked at him and considered him carefully and lo and behold! he was an ancient man, past his ninetieth year; swart of face, white of beard, and hoar of eyebrows; lop-eared and proboscis-nosed,[696] with a vacant, silly and conceited expression of countenance. The King laughed at this figure o' fun and said to him, "O Silent Man, I desire thee to tell me somewhat of thy history." Quoth the Barber, "O King of the age, allow me first to ask thee what is the tale of this Nazarene and this Jew and this Moslem and this Hunchback (the corpse) I see among you? And prithee what may be the object of this assemblage?" Quoth the King of China, "And why dost thou ask?" "I ask," he replied, "in order that the King's majesty may know that I am no forward fellow or busy-body or impertinent meddler; and that I am innocent of their calumnious charges of overmuch talk; for I am he whose name is the Silent Man, and indeed peculiarly happy is my sobriquet, as saith the poet:—

When a nickname or little name men design, ✿ Know that nature with name shall full oft combine."

Then said the King, "Explain to the Barber the case of this Hunchback and what befel him at supper-time; also repeat to him the stories told by the Nazarene, the Jew, the Reeve, and the Tailor; and of no avail to me is a twice told tale." They did his bidding, and the Barber shook his head and said, "By Allah, this is a marvel of marvels! Now uncover me the corpse of yonder Hunchback." They undid the winding-sheet and he sat down and, taking the Hunchback's head in his lap, looked at his face, and laughed and guffaw'd[697] till he fell upon his back and said, "There 351is wonder in every death,[698] but the death of this Hunchback is worthy to be written and recorded in letters of liquid gold!" The by-standers were astounded at his words and the King marvelled and said to him, "What ails thee O Silent Man? Explain to us thy words!" "O King of the age," said the Barber, "I swear by thy beneficence that there is still life in this Gobbo Golightly!" Thereupon he pulled out of his waist-belt a barber's budget, whence he took a pot of ointment and anointed therewith the neck of the Hunchback

and its arteries. Then he took a pair of iron tweezers and, inserting them into the Hunchback's throat, drew out the fid of fish with its bone; and, when it came to sight, behold, it was soaked in blood. Thereupon the Hunchback sneezed a hearty sneeze and jumped up as if nothing had happened and passing his hand over his face said, "I testify that there is no god, but *the* God, and I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God." At this sight all present wondered; the King of China laughed till he fainted and in like manner did the others. Then said the Sultan, "By Allah, of a truth this is the most marvellous thing I ever saw! O Moslems, O soldiers all, did you ever in the lives of you see a man die and be quickened again? Verily had not Allah vouchsafed to him this Barber, he had been a dead man!" Quoth they, "By Allah, 'tis a marvel of marvels." Then the King of China bade record this tale, so they recorded it and placed it in the royal muniment-rooms; after which he bestowed costly robes of honour upon the Jew, the Nazarene and the Reeve, and bade them depart in all esteem. Then he gave the Tailor a sumptuous dress and appointed him his own tailor, with suitable pay and allowances; and made peace between him and the Hunchback, to whom also he presented a splendid and expensive suit with a suitable stipend. He did as generously with the Barber giving him a gift and a dress of honour; moreover he settled on him a handsome solde and created him Barber-surgeon[699] of state and made him one of his cup-companions. So they ceased not to live the most pleasurable life and the most delectable, till there came to them the Destroyer of 352 all delights and the Sunderer of all societies, the Depopulator of palaces and the Garnerer for graves. Yet, O most auspicious King! (continued Shahrazad) this tale is by no means more wonderful than that of the two Wazirs and Anís al-Jalís. Quoth her sister Dunyazad, "And what may that be?"; whereupon she began to relate the following tale of

6- NUR AL-DIN ALI AND THE DAMSEL ANIS AL-JALIS

Quoth Shahrazad[1]:—It hath reached me, O auspicious King of intelligence penetrating, that there was, amongst the Kings of Bassorah,[2] a King who loved the poor and needy and cherished his lieges, and gave of his wealth to all who believed in Mohammed (whom Allah bless and assain!), and he was even as one of the poets described him:—

A King who when hosts of the foe invade, ✿ Receives them with lance-lunge and sabre-sway;

Writes his name on bosoms in thin red lines, ✿ And scatters the horsemen in wild dismay.[3]

2 His name was King Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, and he had two Wazirs, one called Al-Mu'in, son of Sawi and the other Al-Fazl son of Khákán. Now Al-Fazl was the most generous of the people of his age, upright of life, so that all hearts united in loving him and the wise flocked to him for counsel; whilst the subjects used to pray for his long life, because he was a compendium of the best qualities, encouraging the good and lief, and preventing evil and mischief. But the Wazir Mu'in bin Sawi on the contrary hated folk[4] and loved not the good and was a mere compound of ill; even as was said of him:—

Hold to nobles, sons of nobles! 'tis ever Nature's test ✿ That nobles born of nobles shall excel in noble deed:

And shun the mean of soul, meanly bred, for 'tis the law, ✿ Mean deeds come of men who are mean of blood and breed.

And as much as the people loved and fondly loved Al-Fazl bin Khakan, so they hated and thoroughly hated the mean and miserly Mu'in bin Sawi. It befel one day by the decree of the Decreer, that King Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, being seated on his throne with his officers of state about him, summoned his Wazir Al-Fazl and said to him, "I wish to have a slave-girl of passing beauty, perfect in loveliness, exquisite in symmetry and endowed with all praiseworthy gifts." Said the courtiers, "Such a girl is not to be bought for less than ten thousand gold pieces:" whereupon the Sultan called out to his treasurer and said, "Carry ten thousand dinars to the house of Al-Fazl bin Khakan." The treasurer did the King's bidding; and the Minister went away, after receiving the royal charge to repair to the slave-bazar every day, and entrust to brokers the matter aforesaid. Moreover the King issued orders that girls worth above a thousand gold pieces should not be bought or sold without being first displayed to the

Wazir. Accordingly no broker purchased a slave-girl ere she had been paraded before the minister; but none pleased him, till one day a 3dealer came to the house and found him taking horse and intending for the palace. So he caught hold of his stirrup saying:—

O thou, who givest to royal state sweet savour, ✿ Thou'rt a Wazir shalt never fail of favour!

Dead Bounty thou hast raised to life for men; ✿ Ne'er fail of Allah's grace such high endeavour!

Then quoth he, "O my lord, that surpassing object for whom the gracious mandate was issued is at last found;[5]" and quoth the Wazir, "Here with her to me!" So he went away and returned after a little, bringing a damsel in richest raiment robed, a maid spear-straight of stature and five feet tall; budding of bosom with eyes large and black as by Kohl traced, and dewy lips sweeter than syrup or the sherbet one sips, a virginette smooth cheeked and shapely faced, whose slender waist with massive hips was engraced; a form more pleasing than branchlet waving upon the topmost trees, and a voice softer and gentler than the morning breeze, even as saith one of those who have described her:—

Strange is the charm which dights her brows like Luna's disk that shine; ✿ O sweeter taste than sweetest Robb[6] or raisins of the vine.

A throne th' Empyrean keeps for her in high and glorious state, ✿ For wit and wisdom, wandlike form and graceful bending line:

She in the Heaven of her face[7] the seven-fold stars displays, ✿ That guard her cheeks as satellites against the spy's design:

If man should cast a furtive glance or steal far look at her, ✿ His heart is burnt by devil-bolts shot by those piercing eyne.

When the Wazir saw her she made him marvel with excess of admiration, so he turned, perfectly pleased, to the broker and asked, "What is the price of this girl?"; whereto he answered, "Her market-value stands at ten thousand dinars, but her owner swears that this sum will not cover the cost of the chickens she hath eaten, the wine she hath drunken and the dresses of honour bestowed upon her instructor: for she hath learned calligraphy and syntax and etymology; the commentaries of the Koran; the principles of law and religion; the canons of medicine, and the calendar and the art of playing on musical instruments."[8] Said the Wazir, "Bring me her master." So the broker brought him at once and, 4behold, he was a Persian of whom there was left only what the days had left; for he was as a vulture bald and scald and a wall trembling to its fall. Time had buffetted him with sore smart, yet was he not willing this world to depart; even as said the poet:—

Time hath shattered all my frame, ✿ Oh! how time hath shattered me.

Time with lordly might can tame ✿ Manly strength and vigour free.

Time was in my youth, that none ✿ Sped their way more fleet and fast:

Time is and my strength is gone, ✿ Youth is sped, and speed is past.[9]

The Wazir asked him, "Art thou content to sell this slave-girl to the Sultan for ten thousand dinars?"; and the Persian answered, "By Allah, if I offered her to the King for naught, it were but my devoir,"[10] So the Minister bade bring the monies and saw them weighed out to the Persian, who stood up before him and said, "By the leave of our lord the Wazir, I have somewhat to say;" and the Wazir replied, "Out with all thou hast!" "It is my opinion," continued the slave-dealer, "that thou shouldst not carry the maid to the King this day; for she is newly off a journey; the change of air[11] hath affected her and the toils of trouble have fretted her. But keep her quiet in thy palace some ten days, that she may recover her looks and become again as she was. Then send her to the Hammam and clothe her in the richest of clothes and go up with her to the Sultan: this will be more to thy profit." The Wazir pondered the Persian's words and approved of their wisdom; so he carried her to his palace, where he appointed her private rooms, and allowed her every day whatever she wanted of meat and drink and so forth. And on this wise she abode a while. Now the Wazir Al-Fazl had a son like the full moon when sheeniest dight, with face radiant in light, cheeks ruddy bright, and a mole like a dot of ambergris on a downy site; as said of him the poet and said full right:—

A moon which blights you[12] if you dare behold; ✿ A branch which folds you in its waving fold:

Locks of the Zanj[13] and golden glint of hair; ✿ Sweet gait and form a spear to have and hold:

Ah! hard of heart with softest slenderest waist, ✿ That evil to this weal why not remould?[14]

Were thy form's softness placed in thy heart, ✿ Ne'er would thy lover find thee harsh and cold:

Oh thou accuser! be my love's excuser, ✿ Nor chide if love-pangs deal me woes untold!

I bear no blame; 'tis all my heart and eyne; ✿ So leave thy blaming, let me yearn and pine.

Now the handsome youth knew not the affair of the damsel; and his father had enjoined her closely, saying, "Know, O my daughter, that I have bought thee as a bedfellow for our King, Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni; and I have a son who is a Satan for girls and leaves no maid in the neighbourhood without taking her maidenhead; so be on thy guard against him and beware of letting him see thy face or hear thy voice." "Hearkening and obedience," said the girl; and he left her and fared forth. Some days after this it happened by decree of Destiny, that the damsel repaired to the baths in the house, where some of the slave women bathed her; after which she arrayed herself in sumptuous raiment; and her beauty and loveliness were thereby redoubled. Then she went in to the Wazir's wife and kissed her hand; and the dame said to her, "Naiman! May it benefit thee,[15] O Anis al-Jalis![16] Are not our baths handsome?" "O my mistress," she replied, "I lacked naught there save thy gracious presence." Thereupon the lady said to her slave-women, "Come with us to the Hammam, for it is some days since we went there:" they answered, "To hear is to obey!" and rose and all accompanied her. Now she had set two little slave-girls to keep the door of the private chamber wherein was Anis al-Jalis and had said to them, "Suffer none go in to the damsel." Presently, as the beautiful maiden sat resting in her

rooms, suddenly came in the Wazir's son whose name was Nur al-Din Ali,[17] and asked after his mother and her women, to which the two little slave-girls replied, "They are in the Hammam." But the damsel, Anis al-Jalis, had heard from within Nur al-Din Ali's voice and had said to herself, "O would Heaven I saw what like is this youth against whom the Wazir warned me, saying that he hath not left a virgin in the neighbourhood without taking her virginity: by Allah, I do long to have sight of him!" So she sprang to her feet with the freshness of the bath on her and, stepping to the door, looked at Nur al-Din Ali and saw a youth like the moon in its full and the sight bequeathed her a thousand sighs. The young man also glanced at her and the look made him heir to a thousand thoughts of care; and each fell into Love's ready snare. Then he stepped up to the two little slave-girls and cried aloud at them; whereupon both fled before him and stood afar off to see what he would do. And behold, he walked to the door of the damsel's chamber and, opening it, went in and asked her "Art thou she my father bought for me?" and she answered "Yes." Thereupon the youth, who was warm with wine, came up to her and embraced her; then he took her legs and passed them round his waist and she wound her arms about his neck, and met him with kisses and murmurs of pleasure and amorous toyings. Next he sucked her tongue and she sucked his and, lastly, he loosed the strings of her petticoat-trousers and abated her maidenhead. When the two little slave-girls saw their young master get in unto the damsel, Anis al-Jalis, they cried out and shrieked; so as soon as the youth had had his wicked will of her, he rose and fled forth fearing the consequences of his ill-doing. When the Wazir's wife heard the slave-girls' cries, she sprang up and came out of the baths with the perspiration pouring from her face, saying, "What is this unseemly clamour in the house[18]?" Then she came up to the two little slave-girls and asked them saying, "Fie upon you! what is the matter?"; and both answered, "Verily our lord Nur al-Din came in and beat us, so we fled; then he went up to Anis al-Jalis and threw his arms round her and we know not what he did after that; but when we cried out to thee he ran away." Upon this the lady went to Anis al-Jalis and said to her, "What tidings?" "O my lady," she answered, "as I was sitting here lo! a handsome young man came in and said to me:—Art thou she my father bought for me?; and I answered Yes; for, by Allah, O mistress mine, I believed that his words were true; and he instantly came in and embraced me." "Did he nought else with thee but this?" quoth the lady, and quoth she, "Indeed he did! But he did it only three times." "He did not leave thee without dishonouring thee!" cried the Wazir's wife and fell to weeping and buffetting her face, she and the girl and all the handmaidens, fearing lest Nur al-Din's father should kill him.[19] Whilst they were thus, in came the Wazir and asked what was the matter, and his wife said to him, "Swear that whatso I tell thee thou wilt attend to it." "I will," answered he. So she related to him what his son had done, whereat he was much concerned and rent his raiment and smote his face till his nose bled, and plucked out his beard by the handful. "Do not kill thyself," said his wife, "I will give thee ten thousand dinars, her price, of my own money." But he raised his

head and cried; "Out upon thee! I have no need of her purchase-money: my fear is lest life as well as money go." "O my lord, and how is that?" "Wottest thou not that yonder standeth our enemy Al-Mu'in bin Sawi who, as soon as he shall hear of this matter, will go up to the Sultan?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.





Now when it was the Thirty-fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir said to his wife, "Wottest thou not that yonder standeth our enemy Al-Mu'in bin Sawi who, as soon as he hears of this matter will go up to the Sultan and say to him:—Thy Wazir 8 who, thou wilt have it loveth thee, took from thee ten thousand ducats and bought therewith a slave-girl whose like none ever beheld; but when he saw her, she pleased him and he said to his son:—Take her: thou art worthier of her than the Sultan. So he took her and did away with her virginity and she is now in his house. The King will say:—Thou liest! to which he will reply:—With thy leave I will fall upon him unawares and bring her to thee. The King will give him warranty for this and he will come down upon the house and will take the girl and present her to the Sultan, who will question her and she will not be able to deny the past. Then mine enemy will say:—O my lord, thou wottest that I give thee the best of counsel; but I have not found favour in thine eyes. Thereupon the Sultan will make an example of me, and I shall be a gazing-stock to all the people and my life will be lost." Quoth his wife, "Let none know of this thing which hath happened privily, and commit thy case to Allah and trust in Him to save thee from such strait; for He who knoweth the future shall provide for the future." With this she brought the Wazir a cup of wine and his heart was quieted, and he ceased to feel wrath and fear. Thus far concerning him; but as regards his son Nur al-Din Ali, fearing the consequence of his misdeed he abode his day long in the flower-garden and came back only at night to his mother's apartment where he slept; and, rising before dawn, returned to the gardens. He ceased not to do thus for two whole months without showing his face to his parent, till at last his mother said to his father, "O my lord, shall we lose our boy as well as the girl? If matters continue long in this way he will flee from us." "And what to do?" asked he; and she answered, "Do thou watch this night; and, when he cometh, seize on him and frighten him: I will rescue him from thee and do thou make peace with him and give him the damsel to wife, for she loveth him as he loveth her. And I will pay thee her price." So the Minister sat up that night and, when his son came, he seized him and throwing him down knelt on his breast and showed as though he would cut his throat; but his mother ran to the youth's succour and asked her husband, "What wouldest thou do with him?" He answered her, "I will split his weasand." Said the son to the father, "Is my death, then, so light a matter to thee?"; and his father's eyes welled with tears, for natural affection moved him, and he rejoined, "O my son, how light was to thee the loss of my good and my life!" Quoth Nur al-Din, "Hear, O my father, what the poet hath said:—

9 Forgive me! thee-ward sinned I, but the wise ✿ Ne'er to the sinner shall deny his grace:

Thyfoe may pardon sue when lieth he ✿ In lowest, and thou holdest highest place!"

Thereupon the Wazir rose from off his son's breast saying, "I forgive thee!"; for his heart yearned to him; and the youth kissed the hand of his sire who said, "O my son,

were I sure that thou wouldest deal justly by Anis al-Jalis, I would give her to thee." "O my father, what justice am I to do to her?" "I enjoin thee, O my son, not to take another wife or concubine to share with her, nor sell her." "O my father! I swear to thee that verily I will not do her injustice in either way." Having sworn to that effect Nur al-Din went in to the damsel and abode with her a whole year, whilst Allah Almighty caused the King to forget the matter of the maiden; and Al-Mu'in, though the affair came to his ears, dared not divulge it by reason of the high favour in which his rival stood with the Sultan. At the end of the year Al-Fazl went one day to the public baths; and, as he came out whilst he was still sweating, the air struck him[20] and he caught a cold which turned to a fever; then he took to his bed. His malady gained ground and restlessness was longsome upon him and weakness bound him like a chain; so he called out, "Hither with my son;" and when Nur al-Din Ali came he said to him, "O my son, know that man's lot and means are distributed and decreed; and the end of days by all must be dree'd; and that every soul drain the cup of death is nature's need." Then he repeated these lines:—

I die my death, but He alone is great who dieth not! ✿ And well I wot, soon shall I die, for death was made my lot:

A King there's not that dies and holds his kingdom in his hand, ✿ For Sovranty the Kingdom is of Him who dieth not.

Then he continued, "O my son, I have no charge to leave thee save that thou fear Allah and look to the issues of thine acts and bear in mind my injunctions anent Anis al-Jalis." "O my father!" said Nur al-Din, "who is like unto thee? Indeed thou art famed for well doing and preachers offer prayers for thee in their pulpits!" Quoth Al-Fazl, "O my son, I hope that Allah Almighty may grant 10 me acceptance!" Then he pronounced the Two Testimonies,[21] or Professions of the Faith, and was recorded among the blessed. The palace was filled with crying and lamentation and the news of his death reached the King, and the city-people wept, even those at their prayers and women at household cares and the schoolchildren shed tears for Bin-Khakan. Then his son Nur al-Din Ali arose and made ready his funeral, and the Emirs and Wazirs and high Officers of State and city-notables were present, amongst them the Wazir al-Mu'in bin Sawi. And as the bier went forth from the house some one in the crowd of mourners began to chant these lines:—

On the fifth day I quitted all my friends for evermore, ✿ And they laid me out and washed me on a slab without my door:[22]

They stripped me of the clothes I was ever wont to wear, ✿ And they clothed me in the clothes which till then I never wore.

On four men's necks they bore me and carried me from home ✿ To chapel; and some prayed for him on neck they bore:

They prayed for me a prayer that no prostration knows;[23] ✿ They prayed for me who praised me and were my friends of yore;

And they laid me in a house with a ceiling vaulted o'er, ✿ And Time shall be no more ere it ope to me its door.

When they had shovelled in the dust over him and the crowd had dispersed, Nur al-Din returned home and he lamented with sobs and tears; and the tongue of the case repeated these couplets:—

On the fifth day at even-tide they went away from me: ✿ I farewelled them as faring they made farewell my lot:

But my spirit as they went, with them went and so I cried, ✿ "Ah return ye!" but replied she, "Alas! return is not

To a framework lere and lorn that lacketh blood and life, ✿ A frame whereof remaineth naught but bones that rattle and rot:

Mine eyes are blind and cannot see quencht by the flowing tear! ✿ Mine ears are dull and lost to sense: they have no power to hear!"

He abode a long time sorrowing for his father till, one day, as he was sitting at home, there came a knocking at the door; so he rose in haste and opening let in a man, one of his father's intimates and who had been the Wazir's boon-companion. The visitor kissed 11 Nur al-Din's hand and said to him, "O my lord, he who hath left the like of thee is not dead; and this way went also the Chief of the Ancients and the Moderns.[24] O my lord Ali, be comforted and leave sorrowing." Thereupon Nur al-Din rose and going to the guest-saloon transported thither all he needed. Then he assembled his companions and took his handmaid again; and, collecting round him ten of the sons of the merchants, began to eat meat and drink wine, giving entertainment after entertainment and lavishing his presents and his favours. One day his Steward came to him and said, "O my lord Nur al-Din, hast thou not heard the saying, Whoso spendeth and reckoneth not, to poverty wendeth and recketh not?" And he repeated what the poet wrote:—

I look to my money and keep it with care, ✿ For right well I wot 'tis my buckler and brand:

Did I lavish my dirhams on hostilest foes,[25] ✿ I should truck my good luck by mine ill luck trepanned:

So I'll eat it and drink it and joy in my wealth; ✿ And no spending my pennies on others I'll stand:

I will keep my purse close 'gainst whoever he be; ✿ And a niggard in grain a true friend ne'er I fand:

Far better deny him than come to say:—Lend, ✿ And five-fold the loan shall return to thy hand!

And he turns face aside and he sidles away, ✿ While I stand like a dog disappointed, unmanned.

Oh, the sorry lot his who hath yellow-boys none, ✿ Though his genius and virtues shine bright as the sun!

"O my master," continued the Steward, "this lavish outlay and these magnificent gifts waste away wealth." When Nur al-Din Ali heard these words he looked at his servant and cried, "Of all thou hast spoken I will not heed one single word, for I have heard the saying of the poet who saith;—

An my palm be full of wealth and my wealth I ne'er bestow, ✿ A palsy take my hand and my foot ne'er rise again!

Show me niggard who by niggardise e'er rose to high degree, ✿ Or the generous in gifts generosity hath slain."

12 And he pursued, "Know, O Steward, it is my desire that so long as thou hast money enough for my breakfast, thou trouble me not with taking thought about my supper." Thereupon the Steward asked, "Must it be so?"; and he answered, "It must." So the

honest man went his way and Nur al-Din Ali devoted himself to extravagance; and, if any of his cup-companions chanced to say, "This is a pretty thing;" he would reply, "'Tis a gift to thee!"; or if another said, "O my lord, such a house is handsome;" he would answer, "Take it: it is thine!" After this reckless fashion he continued to live for a whole year, giving his friends a banquet in the morning and a banquet in the evening and a banquet at midnight, till one day, as the company was sitting together, the damsel Anis al-Jalis repeated these lines:

Thou deemedst well of Time when days went well, ✿ And fearedst not what ills might deal thee Fate:

Thy nights so fair and restful cozened thee, ✿ For peaceful nights bring woes of heavy weight.

When she had ended her verse behold, somebody knocked at the door. So Nur al-Din rose to open it and one of his boon-companions followed him without being perceived. At the door he found his Steward and asked him, "What is the matter?"; and he answered, "O my lord, what I dreaded for thee hath come to pass!" "How so?" "Know that there remains not a dirham's worth, less or more in my hands. Here are my Daftars and account books showing both income and outlay and the registers of thine original property." When Nur al-Din heard these words he bowed his head and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" When the man who had followed him privily to spy on him heard the Steward's words, he returned to his friends and warned them saying, "Look ye well to what ye do: Nur al-Din is penniless;" and, as the young host came back to his guests, vexation showed itself in his face. Thereupon one of the intimates rose; and, looking at the entertainer, said to him, "O my lord, may be thou wilt give me leave to retire?" "And why so early retirement this day?"; asked he and the other answered him, "My wife is in child-birth and I may not be absent from her: indeed I must return and see how she does." So he gave him leave, whereupon another rose and said, "O my lord Nur al-Din, I wish now to 13 go to my brother's for he circumciseth his son to day."[26] In short each and every asked permission to retire on some pretence or other, till all the ten were gone leaving Nur al-Din alone. Then he called his slave-girl and said to her, "O Anis al-Jalis, hast thou seen what case is mine?" And he related to her what the Steward had told him. Then quoth she, "O my lord, for many nights I had it in my mind to speak with thee of this matter, but I heard thee repeating:—

When the World heaps favours on thee, pass on ✿ Thy favours to friends ere her hand she stay:

Largesse never let her when fain she comes, ✿ Nor niggardise kept her from turning away!"

"When I heard these verses I held my peace and cared not to exchange a word with thee." "O Anis al-Jalis," said Nur al-Din, "thou knowest that I have not wasted my wealth save on my friends, especially these ten who have now left me a pauper, and I think they will not abandon and desert me without relief." "By Allah," replied she, "they will not profit thee with aught of aid." Said he, "I will rise at once and go to them and knock at their doors; it may be I shall get from them somewhat wherewith I may trade and leave pastime and pleasuring." So he rose without stay or delay, and

repaired to a street wherein all his ten friends lived. He went up to the nearest door and knocked; whereupon a handmaid came out and asked him, "Who art thou?"; and he answered, "Tell thy master that Nur al-Din Ali standeth at the door and saith to him:—Thy slave kisseth thy hand and awaiteth thy bounty." The girl went in and told her master, who cried at her, "Go back and say:—My master is not at home." So she returned to Nur al-Din, and said to him, "O my lord, my master is out." Thereupon he turned away and said to himself, "If this one be a whoreson knave and deny himself, another may not prove himself 14 such knave and whoreson." Then he went up to the next door and sent in a like message to the house-master, who denied himself as the first had done, whereupon he began repeating:—

He is gone who when to his gate thou go'st, ✿ Fed thy famisht maw with his boiled and roast.

When he had ended his verse he said, "By Allah, there is no help but that I make trial of them all: perchance there be one amongst them who will stand me in the stead of all the rest." So he went the round of the ten, but not one of them would open his door to him or show himself or even break a bit of bread before him; whereupon he recited:—

Like a tree is he who in wealth doth wone, ✿ And while fruits he the folk to his fruit shall run:

But when bared the tree of what fruit it bare, ✿ They leave it to suffer from dust and sun.

Perdition to all of this age! I find ✿ Ten rogues for every righteous one.

Then he returned to his slave-girl and his grief had grown more grievous and she said to him, "O my lord, did I not tell thee, none would profit thee with aught of aid?" And he replied, "By Allah, not one of them would show me his face or know me!" "O my lord," quoth she, "sell some of the moveables and household stuff, such as pots and pans, little by little; and expend the proceeds until Allah Almighty shall provide." So he sold all of that was in the house till nothing remained when he turned to Anis al-Jalis and asked her "What shall we do now?"; and she answered, "O my lord, it is my advice that thou rise forthwith and take me down to the bazar and sell me. Thou knowest that thy father bought me for ten thousand dinars: haply Allah may open thee a way to get the same price, and if it be His will to bring us once more together, we shall meet again." "O Anis al-Jalis," cried he, "by Allah it is no light matter for me to be parted from thee for a single hour!" "By Allah, O my lord," she replied, nor is it easy to me either, but Need hath its own law, as the poet said:—

Need drives a man into devious roads, ✿ And pathways doubtful of trend and scope:

No man to a rope[27] will entrust his weight, ✿ Save for cause that calleth for case of rope.

15 Thereupon he rose to his feet and took her,[28] whilst the tears rolled down his cheek like rain; and he recited with the tongue of the case these lines:—

Stay! grant one parting look before we part, ✿ Nerving my heart this severance to sustain:

But, an this parting deal thee pain and bane, ✿ Leave me to die of love and spare thee pain!

Then he went down with her to the bazar and delivered her to the broker and said to him, "O Hájj Hasan,[29] I pray thee note the value of her thou hast to cry for sale." "O my lord Nur al-Din," quoth the broker, "the fundamentals are remembered;"[30] adding, "Is not this the Anis al-Jalis whom thy father bought of me for ten thousand dinars?" "Yes," said Nur al-Din. Thereupon the broker went round to the merchants, but found that all had not yet assembled. So he waited till the rest had arrived and the market was crowded with slave-girls of all nations, Turks, Franks and Circassians; Abyssinians, Nubians and Takrúrís;[31] Tartars, Georgians and others; when he came forward and standing cried aloud, "O merchants! O men of money! every round thing is not a walnut and every long thing a banana is not; all reds are not meat nor all whites fat, nor is every brown thing a date![32] O merchants, I have here this union-pearl that hath no price: at what sum shall I cry her?" "Cry her at four thousand five hundred dinars," quoth one of the traders. The broker opened the door of sale at the sum named and, as he was yet calling, lo! the Wazir Al-Mu'in bin Sawi passed through the bazar and, seeing Nur al-Din Ali waiting at one side, said to himself, "Why is Khakan's son[33] standing about here? Hath this gallows-bird aught remaining wherewith to buy slave-girls?" Then he looked 16 round and, seeing the broker calling out in the market with all the merchants around him, said to himself, "I am sure that he is penniless and hath brought hither the damsel Anis al-Jalis for sale;" adding, "O how cooling and grateful is this to my heart!" Then he called the crier, who came up and kissed the ground before him; and he said to him, "I want this slave-girl whom thou art calling for sale." The broker dared not cross him, so he answered, "O my lord, Bismillah! in Allah's name so be it;" and led forward the damsel and showed her to him. She pleased him much whereat he asked, "O Hasan, what is bidden for this girl?" and tie answered, "Four thousand five hundred dinars to open the door of sale." Quoth Al-Mu'in, "Four thousand five hundred is *my* bid." When the merchants heard this, they held back and dared not bid another dirham, wotting what they did of the Wazir's tyranny, violence and treachery. So Al-Mu'in looked at the broker and said to him, "Why stand still? Go and offer four thousand dinars for me and the five hundred shall be for thyself." Thereupon the broker went to Nur al-Din and said, "O my lord, thy slave is going for nothing!" "And how so?" asked he. The broker answered, "We had opened the biddings for her at four thousand five hundred dinars; when that tyrant, Al-Mu'in bin Sawi, passed through the bazar and, as he saw the damsel she pleased him, so he cried to me:—Call me the buyer at four thousand dinars and thou shalt have five hundred for thyself. I doubt not but that he knoweth that the damsel is thine, and if he would pay thee down her price at once it were well; but I know his injustice and violence; he will give thee a written order upon some of his agents and will send after thee to say to them:—Pay him nothing. So as often as thou shalt go in quest of the coin they will say:—We'll pay thee presently! and they will put thee off day after day, and thou art proud of spirit; till at last, when they are wearied with thine importunity, they will say:—Show us the cheque. Then, as soon as they have got hold

of it they will tear it up and so thou wilt lose the girl's price." When Nur al-Din heard this he looked at the broker and asked him, "How shall this matter be managed?"; and he answered, "I will give thee a counsel which, if thou follow, it shall bring thee complete satisfaction." "And what is that?" quoth Nur al-Din. Quoth the broker, "Come thou to me anon when I am standing in the middle of the market and, taking the girl from my hand, give her a sound cuffing and say to her:—Thou baggage, I have 17 kept my vow and brought thee down to the slave-market, because I swore an oath that I would carry thee from home to the bazar, and make brokers cry thee for sale. If thou do this, perhaps the device will impose upon the Wazir and the people, and they will believe that thou broughtest her not to the bazar but for the quittance of thine oath." He replied, "Such were the best way." Then the broker left him and, returning into the midst of the market, took the damsel by the hand, and signed to the Wazir and said, "O my lord, here is her owner." With this up came Nur al-Din Ali and, snatching the girl from the broker's hand, cuffed her soundly and said to her, "Shame on thee, O thou baggage! I have brought thee to the bazar for quittance of mine oath; now get thee home and thwart me no more as is thy wont. Woe to thee! do I need thy price, that I should sell thee? The furniture of my house would fetch thy value many times over!" When Al-Mu'in saw this he said to Nur al-Din, "Out on thee! Hast thou anything left for selling or buying?" And he would have laid violent hands upon him, but the merchants interposed (for they all loved Nur al-Din), and the young man said to them, "Here am I in your hands and ye all know his tyranny." "By Allah," cried the Wazir, "but for you I had slain him!" Then all signed with significant eyes to Nur al-Din as much as to say, "Take thy wreak of him; not one of us will come between thee and him." Thereupon Nur al-Din, who was stout of heart as he was stalwart of limb, went up to the Wazir and, dragging him over the pommel of his saddle, threw him to the ground. Now there was in that place a puddling-pit for brick-clay,[34] into the midst of which he fell, and Nur al-Din kept pummelling and fisti-cuffing him, and one of the blows fell full on his teeth, and his beard was dyed with his blood. Also there were with the minister ten armed slaves who, seeing their master entreated after this fashion, laid hand on sword-hilt and would have bared blades and fallen on Nur al-Din to cut him down; but the merchants and bystanders said to them, "This is a Wazir and that is the son of a Wazir; haply they will make friends some time or other, in which case you will forfeit the favour of both. Or perchance a blow may befal your lord, and you will all die the vilest of deaths; so it 18 were better for you not to interfere." Accordingly they held aloof and, when Nur al-Din had made an end of thrashing the Wazir, he took his handmaid and fared homewards. Al-Mu'in also went his ways at once, with his raiment dyed of three colours, black with mud, red with blood and ash coloured with brick-clay. When he saw himself in this state, he bound a bit of matting[35] round his neck and, taking in hand two bundles of coarse Halfah-grass,[36] went up to the palace and standing under the Sultan's windows cried

aloud, "O King of the age, I am a wronged man! I am foully wronged!" So they brought him before the King who looked at him; and behold, it was the chief Minister; whereupon he said, "O Wazir who did this deed by thee?" Al-Mu'in wept and sobbed and repeated these lines:—

Shall the World oppress me when thou art in't? ✿ In the lion's presence shall wolves devour?
Shall the dry all drink of thy tanks and I ✿ Under rain-cloud thirst for the cooling shower?

"O my lord," cried he, "the like will befal every one who loveth and serveth thee well." "Be quick with thee," quoth the Sultan, "and tell me how this came to pass and who did this deed by one whose honour is part of my honour." Quoth the Wazir, "Know, O my lord, that I went out this day to the slave-market to buy me a cookmaid, when I saw there a damsel, never in my life long saw I a fairer; and I designed to buy her for our lord the Sultan; so I asked the broker of her and of her owner, and he answered, "She belongeth to Ali son of Al-Fazl bin Khakan. Some time ago our lord the Sultan gave his father ten thousand dinars wherewith to buy him a handsome slave-girl, and he bought this maiden who pleased him; so he grudged her to our lord the Sultan and gave her to his own son. When the father died, the son sold all he had of houses and gardens and household gear, and squandered the price till he was penniless. Then he brought the girl to the market that he might sell her, and he handed her over to the broker to cry and the merchants bid higher and higher on her, until her price 19 reached four thousand dinars; whereupon quoth I to myself:—I will buy this damsel for our lord the Sultan, whose money was paid for her. So I said to Nur al-Din:—O my son, sell her to me for four thousand dinars. When he heard my words he looked at me and cried:—O ill-omened oldster, I will sell her to a Jew or to a Nazarene, but I will not sell her to thee! I do not buy her for myself, said I, I buy her for our lord and benefactor the Sultan. Hearing my words he was filled with rage; and, dragging me off my horse (and I a very old man), beat me unmercifully with his fists and buffeted me with his palms till he left me as thou seest, and all this hath befallen me only because I thought to buy this damsel for thee!" Then the Wazir threw himself on the ground and lay there weeping and shivering. When the Sultan saw his condition and heard his story, the vein of rage started out between his eyes[37] and he turned to his body-guard who stood before him, forty white slaves, smiters with the sword, and said to them, "Go down forthright to the house built by the son of Khakan and sack it and raze it and bring to me his son Nur al-Din with the damsel; and drag them both on their faces with their arms pinioned behind them." They replied, "To hear is to obey;" and, arming themselves, they set out for the house of Nur al-Din Ali. Now about the Sultan was a Chamberlain, Alam[38] al-Din Sanjar hight, who had aforetime been Mameluke to Al-Fazl; but he had risen in the world and the Sultan had advanced him to be one of his Chamberlains. When he heard the King's command and saw the enemies make them ready to slay his old master's son, it was grievous to him: so he went out from before the Sultan and, mounting his beast, rode to Nur al-Din's

house and knocked at the door. Nur al-Din came out and knowing him would have saluted him: but he said, "O my master this is no time for greeting or treating. Listen to what the poet said:—

Fly, fly with thy life if by ill overtaken!
Let thy house speak thy death by its builder forsaken!
For a land else than this land thou may'st reach, my brother,
But thy life tho'lt ne'er find in this world another.[39]

20 "O Alam al-Din what cheer?" asked Nur al-Din, and he answered, "Rise quickly and fly for thy life, thou and the damsel; for Al-Mu'in hath set a snare for you both; and, if you fall into his hands, he will slay you. The Sultan hath despatched forty sworders against you and I counsel you to flee ere harm can hurt you." Then Sanjar put his hand to his purse and finding there forty gold pieces took them and gave them to Nur al-Din, saying, "O my lord receive these and journey with them. Had I more I would give them to thee, but this is not the time to take exception." Thereupon Nur al-Din went in to the damsel and told her what had happened, at which she wrung her hands. Then they fared forth at once from the city, and Allah spread over them His veil of protection, so that they reached the river-bank where they found a vessel ready for sea. Her skipper was standing amidships and crying, "Whoso hath aught to do, whether in the way of provisioning or taking leave of his people; or whoso hath forgotten any needful thing, let him do it at once and return, for we are about to sail"; and all of them saying, "There is naught left to be done by us, O captain!", he cried to his crew, "Hallo there! cast off the cable and pull up the mooring-pole!"[40] Quoth Nur al-Din, "Whither bound, O captain?" and quoth he, "To the House of Peace, Baghdad,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the skipper answered, "To the House of Peace, Baghdad," Nur al-Din Ali and the damsel went on board, and they launched the craft and shook out the sails, and the ship sped forth as though she were a bird on wing; even as said one of them and said right well:—

Watch some tall ship, she'll joy the sight of thee, ✿ The breeze outstripping in her haste to flee;
As when a bird, with widely-spreading wings, ✿ Leaveth the sky to settle on the sea.

21 So the vessel sailed on her fastest and the wind to her was fairest. Thus far concerning them; but as regards the Mamelukes, they went to Nur al-Din's mansion and, breaking open the doors, entered and searched the whole place, but could find no trace of him and the damsel; so they demolished the house and, returning to the Sultan, reported their proceedings; whereupon quoth he, "Make search for them both, wherever they may be;" and they answered, "Hearing is obeying." The Wazir Al-Mu'in had also gone home after the Sultan had bestowed upon him a robe of honour,

and had set his heart at rest by saying, "None shall take blood-wreak for thee save I;" and he had blessed the King and prayed for his long life and prosperity. Then the Sultan bade proclaim about the city, "Oyez, O ye lieges one and all! It is the will of our lord the Sultan that whoso happeneth on Nur al-Din Ali son of Al-Fazl bin Khakan, and bringeth him to the Sultan, shall receive a robe of honour and one thousand gold pieces; and he who hideth him or knoweth his abiding place and informeth not, deserveth whatsoever pains and penalties shall befal him." So all began to search for Nur al-Din Ali, but they could find neither trace nor tidings of him. Meanwhile he and his handmaid sailed on with the wind right aft, till they arrived in safety at Baghdad, and the captain said to them, "This is Baghdad and 'tis the city where security is to be had: Winter with his frosts hath turned away and Prime hath come his roses to display; and the flowers are a-glowing and the trees are blowing and the streams are flowing." So Nur al-Din landed, he and his handmaid and, giving the captain five dinars, walked on a little way till the decrees of Destiny brought them among the gardens, and they came to a place swept and sprinkled, with benches along the walls and hanging jars filled with water.[41] Overhead was a trellis of reed-work and canes shading the whole length of the avenue, and at the upper end was a garden gate, but this was locked. "By Allah," quoth Nur al-Din to the damsel, "right pleasant is this place!"; and she replied, "O my lord sit with me a while on this bench and let us take our ease." So they mounted and sat them down on the bench, after which they washed their faces and hands; and the breeze blew cool on them and they fell asleep and glory be to Him who never sleepeth! 22 Now this garden was named the Garden of Gladness[42] and therein stood a belvedere hight the Palace of Pleasure and the Pavilion of Pictures, the whole belonging to the Caliph Harun al-Rashid who was wont, when his breast was straitened with care, to frequent garden and palace and there to sit. The palace had eighty latticed windows and fourscore lamps hanging round a great candelabrum of gold furnished with wax-candles; and, when the Caliph used to enter, he would order the handmaids to throw open the lattices and light up the rooms; and he would bid Ishak bin Ibrahim the cup-companion and the slave-girls to sing till his breast was broadened and his ailments were allayed. Now the keeper of the garden, Shaykh Ibrahim, was a very old man, and he had found from time to time, when he went out on any business, people pleasuring about the garden gate with their bona robas; at which he was angered with exceeding anger.[43] But he took patience till one day when the Caliph came to his garden; and he complained of this to Harun al-Rashid who said, "Whomsoever thou surprisest about the door of the garden, deal with him as thou wilt." Now on this day the Gardener chanced to be abroad on some occasion and returning found these two sleeping at the gate covered with a single mantilla; whereupon said he, "By Allah, good! These twain know not that the Caliph hath given me leave to slay anyone I may catch at the door; but I will give this couple a shrewd whipping, that none may come near the gate in future." So he cut a green palm-frond[44] and went up to them and, raising his arm till the white of his arm-pit

appeared, was about to strike them, when he bethought himself and said, "O Ibrahim, wilt thou beat them unknowing their case? Haply they are strangers or of the Sons 23 of the Road,[45] and the decrees of Destiny have thrown them here. I will uncover their faces and look at them." So he lifted up the mantilla from their heads and said, "They are a handsome couple; it were not fitting that I should beat them." Then he covered their faces again and, going to Nur al-Din's feet, began to rub and shampoo them,[46] whereupon the youth opened his eyes and, seeing an old man of grave and reverend aspect rubbing his feet, he was ashamed and drawing them in, sat up. Then he took Shaykh Ibrahim"s hand and kissed it. Quoth the old man, "O my son, whence art thou?"; and quoth he, "O my lord, we two are strangers," and the tears started from his eyes. "O my son," said Shaykh Ibrahim, "know that the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!) hath enjoined honour to the stranger;" and added, "Wilt not thou arise, O my son, and pass into the garden and solace thy self by looking at it and gladden thy heart?" "O my lord," said Nur al-Din, "to whom doth this garden belong?;" and the other replied, "O my son, I have inherited it from my folk." Now his object in saying this was to set them at their ease and induce them to enter the garden. So Nur al-Din thanked him and rose, he and the damsel, and followed him into the garden: and lo! it was a garden, and what a garden! The gate was arched like a great hall and over walls and roof ramped vines with grapes of many colours; the red like rubies and the black like ebonies; and beyond it lay a bower of trelliced boughs growing fruits single and composite, and small birds on branches sang with melodious recite, and the thousand-noted nightingale shrilled with her varied shright; the turtle with her cooing filled the site; the blackbird whistled like human wight[47] and the ring-dove moaned like a drinker in grievous plight. The trees grew in perfection all edible growths and fruited all manner fruits which in pairs were bipartite; with the camphor-apricot, the almond-apricot and the apricot "Khorasani" hight; the plum, like the face of beauty, smooth and 24 bright; the cherry that makes teeth shine clear by her sleight, and the fig of three colours, green, purple and white. There also blossomed the violet as it were sulphur on fire by night; the orange with buds like pink coral and marguerite; the rose whose redness gars the loveliest cheeks blush with despight; and myrtle and gilliflower and lavender with the blood-red anemone from Nu'uman hight. The leaves were all gemmed with tears the clouds had dight; the chamomile smiled showing teeth that bite, and Narcissus with his negro[48] eyes fixed on Rose his sight; the citrons shone with fruits embowled and the lemons like balls of gold; earth was carpeted with flowers tinctured infinite; for Spring was come brightening the place with joy and delight; and the streams ran ringing, to the birds' gay singing, while the rustling breeze upspringing attempered the air to temperance exquisite. Shaykh Ibrahim carried them up into the pavilion, and they gazed on its beauty, and on the lamps aforementioned in the latticed windows; and Nur al-Din, remembering his entertainments of time past, cried, "By Allah, this is

a pleasant place; it hath quenched in me anguish which burned as a fire of Ghazá-wood.[49]" Then they sat down and Shaykh Ibrahim set food before them; and they ate till they were satisfied and washed their hands: after which Nur al-Din went up to one of the latticed windows, and, calling to his handmaid fell to gazing on the trees laden with all manner fruits. Presently he turned to the Gardener and said to him, "O Shaykh Ibrahim hast thou no drink here, for folk are wont to drink after eating?" The Shaykh brought him sweet water, cool and pleasant, but he said, "This is not the kind of drink I wanted." "Perchance thou wishest for wine?" "Indeed I do, O Shaykh!" "I seek refuge from it with Allah: it is thirteen years since I did this thing, for the Prophet (Abhak[50]) cursed 25 its drinker, presser, seller and carrier!" "Hear two words of me." "Say on." "If yon cursed ass[51] which standeth there be cursed, will aught of his curse alight upon thee?" "By no means!" "Then take this dinar and these two dirhams and mount yonder ass and, halting afar from the wine-shop, call the first man thou seest buying liquor and say to him:—Take these two dirhams for thyself, and with this dinar buy me some wine and set it on the ass. So shalt thou be neither the presser, nor the buyer, nor the carrier; and no part of the curse will fall upon thee." At this Shaykh Ibrahim laughed and said, "By Allah, O my son, I never saw one wilier of wit than thou art, nor heard aught sweeter than thy speech." So he did as he was bidden by Nur al-Din who thanked him and said, "We two are now dependent on thee, and it is only meet that thou comply with our wishes; so bring us here what we require." "O my son," replied he, "this is my buttery before thee" (and it was the store-room provided for the Commander of the Faithful); "so go in, and take whatso thou wilt, for there is over and above what thou wantest." Nur al-Din then entered the pantry and found therein vessels of gold and silver and crystal set with all kinds of gems, and was amazed and delighted with what he saw. Then he took out what he needed and set it on and poured the wine into flagons and glass ewers, whilst Shaykh Ibrahim brought them fruit and flowers and aromatic herbs. Then the old man withdrew and sat down at a distance from them, whilst they drank and made merry, till the wine got the better of them, so that their cheeks reddened and their eyes wantoned like the gazelle's; and their locks became dishevelled and their brightness became yet more beautiful. Then said Shaykh Ibrahim to himself, "What aileth me to sit apart from them? Why should I not sit with them? When shall I ever find myself in company with the like of these two that favour two moons?" So he stepped forward and sat down on the edge of the daïs, and Nur al-Din said to him, "O my lord, my life on thee, come nearer to us!" He came and sat by them, when 26 Nur al-Din filled a cup and looked towards the Shaykh and said to him, "Drink, that thou mayest try the taste of it!" I take refuge from it with Allah!" replied he; "for thirteen years I have not done a thing of the kind." Nur al-Din feigned to forget he was there and, drinking off the cup, threw himself on the ground as if the drink had overcome him; whereupon Anis al-Jalis glanced at him and said, "O Shaykh Ibrahim see how this husband of mine treateth me;" and he answered, "O

my lady, what aileth him?" "This is how he always serveth me," cried she, "he drinketh awhile, then falleth asleep and leaveth me alone with none to bear me company over my cup nor any to whom I may sing when the bowl goeth round." Quoth the Shaykh (and his mien unstiffened for that his soul inclined towards her), "By Allah, this is not well!" Then she crowned a cup and looking towards him said, "By my life thou must take and drink it, and not refuse to heal my sick heart!" So he put forth his hand and took it and drank it off and she filled a second and set it on the chandelier and said, "O master mine, there is still this one left for thee." "By Allah, I cannot drink it;" cried he, "what I have already drunk is enough for me;" but she rejoined, "By Allah, there is no help for it." So he took the cup and drank; and she filled him a third which he took and was about to drink when behold, Nur al-Din rolled round and sat upright——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nur al-Din sat upright and said, "Ho, Shaykh Ibrahim, what is this? Did I not adjure thee a while ago and thou refusedst, saying:—What, I! 'tis thirteen years ago since I have done such a thing!" "By Allah," quoth the Shaykh (and indeed he was abashed), "no sin of mine this, she forced me to do it." Nur al-Din laughed and they sat down again to wine and wassail, but the damsel turned to her master and said in a whisper, "O my lord, drink and do not press him, that I may show thee some sport with him." Then she began to fill her master's cup and he hers and so they did time after time, till at last Shaykh Ibrahim looked at them and said, "What fashion of good fellowship is this? Allah curse the glutton who keepeth the cup to himself! Why dost thou not give me to drink, O my brother? What manners [27] are these, O blessed one?" At this the two laughed until they fell on their backs; then they drank and gave him to drink and ceased not their carousal till a third part of the night was past. Then said the damsel, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, with thy leave I will get up and light one of these candles." "Do so," he replied, "but light no more than one." So she sprang to her feet and, beginning with one candle, lighted all the eighty and sat down again. Presently Nur al-Din said, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, in what favour am I with thee? May I not light one of these lamps?" "Light one," replied he, "and bother me no more in thy turn!" So he rose and lighted one lamp after another, till he had lighted the whole eighty and the palace seemed to dance with brilliancy. Quoth the Shaykh (and indeed intoxication had overcome him), "Ye two are bolder than I am." Then he rose to his feet and opened all the lattices and sat down again; and they fell to carousing and reciting verses till the place rang with their noisy mirth. Now Allah, the Decreer who decreeth all things and who for every effect appointeth a cause, had so disposed that the Caliph was at that moment sitting in the light of the moon at one of the windows of his palace overlooking the Tigris. He saw the blaze of the lamps and wax candles reflected in the river and, lifting his

eyes, perceived that it came from the Garden Palace which was all ablaze with brilliancy. So he cried, "Here to me with Ja'afar the Barmaki!"; and the last word was hardly spoken ere the Wazir was present before the Commander of the Faithful, who cried at him, "O dog of a Minister, hast thou taken from me this city of Baghdad without saying aught to me?" "What words are these words?" asked Ja'afar; and the Caliph answered, "If Baghdad city were not taken from me, the Palace of Pictures would not be illuminated with lamps and candles, nor would its windows be thrown open. Woe to thee! who durst do a deed like this except the Caliphate had been taken from me?" Quoth Ja'afar (and indeed his side-muscles trembled as he spoke), "Who told thee that the Palace of Pictures was illuminated and the windows thrown open?" Come hither and see," replied the Caliph. Then Ja'afar came close to the Caliph and, looking towards the garden, saw the palace blazing with illumination that rayed through the gloom of the night; and, thinking that this might have been permitted by the keeper for some reason of his own, he wished to make an excuse for him; so quoth he, "O Commander of the Faithful, Shaykh Ibrahim said to me last week:—O my lord 28Ja'afar, I much wish to circumcise my sons during the life of the Commander of the Faithful and thy life. I asked:—What dost thou want?; and he answered:—Get me leave from the Caliph to hold the festival in the Garden Palace. So said I to him:—Go circumcise them and I will see the Caliph and tell him. Thereupon he went away and I forgot to let thee know." "O Ja'afar," said the Caliph, "thou hast committed two offences against me; first in that thou didst not report to me, secondly, thou didst not give him what he sought; for he came and told thee this only as excuse to ask for some small matter of money, to help him with the outlay; and thou gavest him nothing nor toldest me." "O Commander of the Faithful," said Ja'afar, "I forgot." "Now by the rights of my forefathers and the tombs of my forbears," quoth the Caliph, "I will not pass the rest of this night save in company with him; for truly he is a pious man who frequenteth the Elders of the Faith and the Fakirs and other religious mendicants and entertaineth them; doubtless they are now assembled together and it may be that the prayer of one of them will work us weal both in this world and in the next. Besides, my presence may profit and at any rate be pleasing to Shaykh Ibrahim." "O Commander of the Faithful," quoth Ja'afar, "the greater part of the night is passed, and at this time they will be breaking up." Quoth the Caliph, "It matters not: I needs must go to them." So Ja'afar held his peace, being bewildered and knowing not what to do. Then the Caliph rose to his feet and, taking with him Ja'afar and Masrur the eunuch sworder, the three disguised themselves in merchants' gear and leaving the City-palace, kept threading the streets till they reached the garden. The Caliph went up to the gate and finding it wide open, was surprised and said, "See, O Ja'afar, how Shaykh Ibrahim hath left the gate open at this hour contrary to his custom!" They went in and walked on till they came under the pavilion, when the Caliph said, "O Ja'afar, I wish to look in upon them unawares before I show myself, that I may see what they are about and get sight of the elders; for hitherto I have heard no sound

from them, nor even a Fakir calling upon the name of Allah.[52]" Then he looked about and, seeing a 29tall walnut-tree, said to Ja'afar, "I will climb this tree, for its branches are near the lattices and so look in upon them." Thereupon he mounted the tree and ceased not climbing from branch to branch, till he reached a bough which was right opposite one of the windows, and here he took seat and looked inside the palace. He saw a damsel and a youth as they were two moons (glory be to Him who created them and fashioned them!), and by them Shaykh Ibrahim seated cup in hand and saying, "O Princess of fair ones, drinking without music is nothing worth; indeed I have heard a poet say:—

Round with big and little, the bowl and cup, ✿ Take either that moon[53] in his sheen hath crowned:

Nor drink without music, for oft I've seen, ✿ The horse drink best to the whistle's sound!

When the Caliph saw this, the vein of wrath started up between his eyes and he came down and said to the Wazir, "O Ja'afar, never beheld I yet men of piety in such case; so do thou mount this tree and look upon them, lest the blessings of the blest be lost to thee." Ja'afar, hearing the words of the Commander of the Faithful and being confounded by them, climbed to the tree-top and looking in, saw Nur al-Din and the damsel, and Shaykh Ibrahim holding in his hand a brimming bowl. At this sight he made sure of death and, descending, stood before the Commander of the Faithful, who said to him, "O Ja'afar, praise be to Allah who hath made us of those that observe external ordinances of Holy Law and hath averted from us the sin of disguising ourselves after the manner of hypocrites!"[54] But Ja'afar could not speak a word for excess of confusion; so the Caliph looked at him and said, "I wonder how they came hither, and who admitted them into my pavilion! But aught like the beauty of this youth and this damsel my eyes never yet saw!" "Thou sayest sooth, O our Lord the Sultan!" replied Ja'afar (and he hoped to propitiate the Caliph Harun al-Rashid). Then quoth the Caliph, "O Ja'afar, let us both mount the branch opposite the window, that we may 30amuse ourselves with looking at them." So the two climbed the tree and, peering in, heard Shaykh Ibrahim say, "O my lady, I have cast away all gravity mine by the drinking of wine, but 'tis not sweet save with the soft sounds of the lute-strings it combine." "By Allah," replied Anis al-Jalis, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, an we had but some instrument of music our joyance were complete." Hearing this he rose to his feet and the Caliph said to Ja'afar, "I wonder what he is about to do!" and Ja'afar answered, "I know not." The Shaykh disappeared and presently reappeared bringing a lute; and the Caliph took note of it and knew it for that of Abu Ishak the Cup-companion.[55] "By Allah," said the Caliph, "if this damsel sing ill I will crucify all of you; but if she sing well I will forgive them and only gibbet thee." "O Allah cause her to sing vilely!" quoth Ja'afar. Asked the Caliph, "Why so?"; and he answered, "If thou crucify us all together, we shall keep one another company." The Caliph laughed at his speech. Presently the damsel took the lute and, after looking at it and tuning it, she played a measure which made all hearts yearn to her; then she sang these lines:—

O ye that can aid me, a wretched lover, ✿ Whom longing burns nor can rest restore me!

Though all you have done I have well deserved, ✿ I take refuge with you, so exult not o'er me:

True, I am weak and low and vile, ✿ But I'll bear your will and whatso you bore me:

My death at your hands what brings it of glory? ✿ I fear but your sin which of life forlore me!

Quoth the Caliph, "By Allah, good! O Ja'afar, never in my life have I heard a voice so enchanting as this." "Then haply the Caliph's wrath hath passed away," said Ja'afar, and he replied, "Yes, 'tis gone." Thereupon they descended from the tree, and the Caliph said to Ja'afar, "I wish to go in and sit with them and hear the damsel sing before me." "O Commander of the Faithful," replied Ja'afar, "if thou go in to them they will be terribly troubled, and Shaykh Ibrahim will assuredly die of fright." But the Caliph answered, "O Ja'afar, thou must teach me some device wherewith to delude them and whereby I can foregather with them 31 without their knowing me." So they walked towards the Tigris pondering the matter, and presently came upon a fisherman who stood fishing under the pavilion windows. Now some time before this, the Caliph (being in the pavilion) had called to Shaykh Ibrahim and asked him, "What noise is this I hear under the windows?" and he had answered, "It is voices of fisher folk catching fish:" so quoth the Caliph, "Go down and forbid them this place;" and he forbade them accordingly. However that night a fisherman named Karim, happening to pass by and seeing the garden gate open, said to himself, "This is a time of negligence; and I will take advantage of it to do a bit of fishing." So he took his net and cast it, but he had hardly done so when behold, the Caliph came up single-handed and, standing hard by, knew him and called aloud to him, "Ho, Karim!" The fisherman, hearing himself named, turned round, and seeing the Caliph, trembled and his side-muscles quivered, as he cried, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I did it not in mockery of the mandate; but poverty and a large family drove me to what thou seest!" Quoth the Caliph, "Make a cast in my name." At this the fisherman was glad and going to the bank threw his net, then waiting till it had spread out at full stretch and settled down, hauled it up and found in it various kinds of fish. The Caliph was pleased and said, "O Karim, doff thy habit." So he put off a gaberdine of coarse woollen stuff patched in an hundred places whereon the lice were rampant, and a turband which had never been untwisted for three years but to which he had sewn every rag he came upon. The Caliph also pulled off his person two vests of Alexandrian and Ba'lbak silk, a loose inner robe and a long-sleeved outer coat, and said to the fisherman, "Take them and put them on," while he assumed the foul gaberdine and filthy turband and drew a corner of the head-cloth as a mouth-veil[561] before his face. Then said he to the fisherman, "Get thee about thy business!"; and the man kissed the Caliph's feet and thanked him and improvised the following couplets:—

32 Thou hast granted more favours than ever I craved; ✿ Thou hast satisfied needs which my heart enslaved:

I will thank thee and thank whileas life shall last, ✿ And my bones will praise thee in grave engraved!

Hardly had the fisherman ended his verse, when the lice began to crawl over the Caliph's skin, and he fell to catching them on his neck with his right and left and throwing them from him, while he cried, "O fisherman, woe to thee! what be this abundance of lice on thy gaberdine." "O my lord," replied he, "they may annoy thee just at first, but before a week is past thou wilt not feel them nor think of them." The Caliph laughed and said to him, "Out on thee! Shall I leave this gaberdine of thine so long on my body?" Quoth the fisherman, "I would say a word to thee but I am ashamed in presence of the Caliph!"; and quoth he, "Say what thou hast to say." "It passed through my thought, O Commander of the Faithful," said the fisherman, "that, since thou wishest to learn fishing so thou mayest have in hand an honest trade whereby to gain thy livelihood, this my gaberdine besitteth thee right well."[57] The Commander of the Faithful laughed at this speech, and the fisherman went his way. Then the Caliph took up the basket of fish and, strewing a little green grass over it, carried it to Ja'afar and stood before him. Ja'afar thinking him to be Karim the fisherman feared for him and said, "O Karim, what brought thee hither? Flee for thy life, for the Caliph is in the garden to-night and, if he see thee, thy neck is gone." At this the Caliph laughed and Ja'afar recognized him and asked, "Can it be thou, our lord the Sultan?"; and he answered, "Yes, O Ja'afar, and thou art my Wazir and I and thou came hither together; yet thou knowest me not; so how should Shaykh Ibrahim know me, and he drunk? Stay here, till I come back to thee." "To hear is to obey," said Ja'afar. Then the Caliph went up to the door of the pavilion and knocked a gentle knock, whereupon said Nur al-Din, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, some one taps at the door." "Who goes there?" cried the Shaykh and the Caliph replied, "It is I, O Shaykh Ibrahim!" 33 "Who art thou," quoth he, and quoth the other, "I am Karim the fisherman: I hear thou hast a feast, so I have brought thee some fish, and of a truth 'tis good fish." When Nur al-Din heard the mention of fish, he was glad, he and the damsel, and they both said to the Shaykh, "O our lord, open the door and let him bring us his fish." So Shaykh Ibrahim opened and the Caliph came in (and he in fisherman guise), and began by saluting them. Said Shaykh Ibrahim, "Welcome to the blackguard, the robber, the dicer! Let us see thy fish." So the Caliph showed them his catch and behold, the fishes were still alive and jumping, whereupon the damsel exclaimed, "By Allah! O my lord, these are indeed fine fish: would they were fried!" and Shaykh Ibrahim rejoined, "By Allah, O my lady, thou art right." Then said he to the Caliph, "O fisherman, why didst thou not bring us the fish ready fried? Up now and cook them and bring them back to us." "On my head be thy commands!" said the Caliph, "I will fry thee a dish and bring it." Said they, "Look sharp." Thereupon he went out and ran till he came up to Ja'afar when he called to him, "Hallo, Ja'afar!"; and he replied, "Here am I, O Commander of the Faithful, is all well?" "They want the fish fried," said the Caliph, and Ja'afar answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, give it to me and I'll fry it for them." "By the tombs of my forbears," quoth the Caliph, "none shall fry it but I, with mine own hand!" So he went to the gardener's hut, where

he searched and found all that he required, even to salt and saffron and wild marjoram and else besides. Then he turned to the brasier and, setting on the frying-pan, fried a right good fry. When it was done, he laid it on a banana-leaf, and gathering from the garden wind-fallen fruits, limes and lemons, carried the fish to the pavilion and set the dish before them. So the youth and the damsel and Shaykh Ibrahim came forward and ate; after which they washed their hands and Nur al-Din said to the Caliph, "By Allah, O fisherman, thou hast done us a right good deed this night." Then he put hand in pouch and, taking out three of the dinars which Sanjar had given him, said, "O fisherman, excuse me. By Allah had I known thee before that which hath lately befallen me, I had done away the bitterness of poverty from thy heart; but take thou this as the best I can do for thee." Then he threw the gold pieces to the Caliph, who took them and kissed them and put them in pouch. Now his sole object in doing all this was to hear the damsel sing; so he said to Nur al-Din, "Thou hast rewarded me most liberally, but I beg of thy boundless 34 bounty that thou let this damsel sing an air, that I may hear her."[58] So Nur al-Din said, "O Anis al-Jalis!" and she answered "Yes!" and he continued, "By my life, sing us something for the sake of this fisherman who wisheth so much to hear thee." Thereupon she took the lute and struck the strings, after she had screwed them tight and tuned them, and sang these improvised verses:—

The fawn of a maid hent her lute in hand ✿ And her music made us right mettlesome:

For her song gave hearing to ears stone-deaf, ✿ While Brava! Brava! exclaimed the dumb.

Then she played again and played so ravishingly, that she charmed their wits and burst out improvising and singing these couplets:—

You have honoured us visiting this our land, ✿ And your splendour illumined the glooms that blent:

So 'tis due that for you I perfume my place ✿ With rose-water, musk and the camphor-scent!

Hereupon the Caliph was agitated, and emotion so overpowered him that he could not command himself for excess of pleasure, and he exclaimed, "By Allah, good! by Allah, good! by Allah, good!"[59] Asked Nur al-Din, "O fisherman, doth this damsel please thee?" and the Caliph answered, "Ay, by Allah!" Whereupon said Nur al-Din, "She is a gift to thee, a gift of the generous who repenteth him not of his givings and who will never revoke his gift!" Then he sprang to his feet and, taking a loose robe, threw it over the fisherman and bade him receive the damsel and be gone. But she looked at him and said, "O my lord, art thou faring forth without farewell? If it must be so, at least stay till I bid thee good-bye and make known my case." And she began versifying in these verses:—

35 When love and longing and regret are mine, ✿ Must not this body show of ills a sign?

My love! say not, "Thou soon shalt be consoled"; ✿ When state speaks state none shall allay my pine.

If living man could swim upon his tears, ✿ I first should float on waters of these eyne:

O thou, who in my heart infusedst thy love, ✿ As water mingles in the cup with wine,

This was the fear I feared, this parting blow. ✿ O thou whose love my heart-core ne'er shall tyne!
O Bin Khákán! my sought, my hope, my will, ✿ O thou whose love this breast made wholly thine!
Against thy lord the King thou sinn'dst for me, ✿ And winnedst exile in lands peregrine:
Allah ne'er make my lord repent my loss ✿ To cream[60] o' men thou gavest me, one right digne.

When she had ended her verses, Nur al-Din answered her with these lines:—

She bade me farewell on our parting day, ✿ And she wept in the fire of our bane and pains:
"What wilt thou do when fro' thee I'm gone?" ✿ Quoth I, "say this to whom life remains!"

When the Caliph heard her saying in her verse:—

To Karim, the cream of men thou gavest me;

his inclination for her redoubled and it seemed a hard matter and a grievous to part them; so quoth he to the youth, "O my lord, truly the damsel said in her verses that thou didst transgress against her master and him who owned her; so tell me, against whom didst thou transgress and who is it hath a claim on thee?" "By Allah, O fisherman," replied Nur al-Din, "there befel me and this damsel a wondrous tale and a marvellous matter: an 'twere graven with needle-gravers on the eye-corners it would be a warner to whoso would be warned." Cried the Caliph, "Wilt thou not tell me thy story and acquaint me with thy case? Haply it may bring thee relief, for Allah's aid is ever nearhand." "O fisherman," said Nur al-Din, "wilt thou hear our history in verse or in prose?" "Prose is a wordy thing, but verses," rejoined the Caliph, "are pearls on string." Then Nur al-Din bowed his head, and made these couplets:—

36 O my friend! reft of rest no repose I command, ✿ And my grief is redoubled in this far land:
Erst I had a father, a kinder ne'er was; ✿ But he died and to Death paid the deodand:
When he went from me, every matter went wrong ✿ Till my heart was nighbroken, my nature unmanned:
He bought me a handmaid, a sweeting who shamed ✿ A wand of the willow by Zephyr befanned:
I lavisht upon her mine heritage, ✿ And spent like a nobleman puissant and grand:
Then to sell her compelled, my sorrow increased; ✿ The parting was sore but I mote not gainstand:
Now as soon as the crier had called her, there bid ✿ A wicked old fellow, a fiery brand:
So I raged with a rage that I could not restrain, ✿ And snatched her from out of his hireling's hand;
When the angry curmudgeon made ready for blows, ✿ And the fire of a fight kindled he and his band,
I smote him in fury with right and with left, ✿ And his hide, till well satisfied, curried and tanned:
Then in fear I fled forth and lay hid in my house, ✿ To escape from the snares which my foeman had spanned:
So the King of the country proclaimed my arrest; ✿ When access to me a good Chamberlain fand:
And warned me to flee from the city afar, ✿ Disappear, disappoint what my enemies planned:
Then we fled from our home 'neath the wing of the night, ✿ And sought us a refuge by Baghdad strand:
Of my riches I've nothing on thee to bestow, ✿ O Fisher, except the fair gift thou hast scanned:
The loved of my soul, and when I from her part, ✿ Know for sure that I give thee the blood of my heart.[61]

When he had ended his verse, the Caliph said to him, "O my lord Nur al-Din, explain to me thy case more fully." So he told him the whole story from beginning to end, and

the Caliph said to him, "Whither dost thou now intend?" "Allah's world is wide," replied he. Quoth the Caliph, "I will write thee a letter to carry to the Sultan Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, which when he readeth, he will not hurt nor harm thee in aught."—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

37

Now when it was the Thirty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph said to Nur al-Din Ali, "I will write thee a letter to carry to the Sultan Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, which when he readeth, he will not hurt nor harm thee in aught," Nur al-Din asked "What! is there in the world a fisherman who writeth to Kings? Such a thing can never be!"; and the Caliph answered, "Thou sayest sooth, but I will tell thee the reason. Know that I and he learnt in the same school under one schoolmaster, and that I was his monitor. Since that time Fortune befriended him and he is become a Sultan, while Allah hath abased me and made me a fisherman; yet I never send to him to ask aught but he doeth my desire; nay, though I should ask of him a thousand favours every day, he would comply." When Nur al-Din heard this he said, "Good! write that I may see." So the Caliph took ink-case and reed-pen and wrote as follows,—"In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate! But after.[62] This letter is written by Harun al-Rashid, son of Al-Mahdi, to his highness Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, whom I have encompassed about with my favour and made my viceroy in certain of my dominions. The bearer of these presents is Nur al-Din Ali, son of Fazl bin Khakan the Wazir. As soon as they come to thy hand divest thyself forthright of the kingly dignity and invest him therewith; so oppose not my commandment and peace be with thee." He gave the letter to Nur al-Din, who took it and kissed it, then put it in his turband and set out at once on his journey. So far concerning him; but as regards the Caliph, Shaykh Ibrahim stared at him (and he still in fisher garb) and said, "O vilest of fishermen, thou hast brought us a couple of fish worth a score of half-dirhams,[63] and hast gotten three 38 dinars for them; and thinkest thou to take the damsel to boot?" When the Caliph heard this, he cried out at him, and signed to Masrur who discovered himself and rushed in upon him. Now Ja'afar had sent one of the gardener-lads to the doorkeeper of the palace to fetch a suit of royal raiment for the Prince of the Faithful; so the man went and, returning with the suit, kissed the ground before the Caliph and gave it him. Then he threw off the clothes he had on[64] and donned kingly apparel. Shaykh Ibrahim was still sitting upon his chair and the Caliph tarried to behold what would come next. But seeing the Fisherman become the Caliph, Shaykh Ibrahim was utterly confounded and he could do nothing but bite his finger-ends[65] and say, "Would I knew whether am I asleep or am I awake!" At last the Caliph looked at him and cried, "O Shaykh Ibrahim, what

state is this in which I see thee?" Thereupon he recovered from his drunkenness and, throwing himself upon the ground, repeated these verses:—

Pardon the sinful ways I did pursue; ✿ Ruth from his lord to every slave is due:

Confession pays the fine that sin demands; ✿ Where, then, is that which grace and mercy sue?[66]

The Caliph forgave him and bade carry the damsel to the city-palace, where he set apart for her an apartment and appointed slaves to serve her, saying to her, "Know that we have sent thy lord to be Sultan in Bassorah and, Almighty Allah willing, we will dispatch him the dress of investiture and thee with it." Meanwhile, Nur al-Din Ali ceased not travelling till he reached Bassorah, where he repaired to the Sultan's palace and he shouted a loud shout.[67] The Sultan heard him and sent for him; and when he came into his presence, he kissed the ground between his hands and, producing the letter, presented it to him. Seeing the superscription in the writing of the Commander of the Faithful, the Sultan rose to his feet and kissed it three times; and after reading 39 it said, "I hear and I obey Allah Almighty and the Commander of the Faithful!" Then he summoned the four Kazis[68] and the Emirs and was about to divest himself of the rule royal, when behold, in came Al-Mu'in bin Sawi. The Sultan gave him the Caliph's letter and he read it, then tore it to pieces and putting it into his mouth, chewed it[69] and spat it out. "Woe to thee," quoth the Sultan (and indeed he was sore angered); "what induced thee to do this deed?" "Now by thy life! O our lord the Sultan," replied Mu'in, "this man hath never foregathered with the Caliph nor with his Wazir; but he is a gallows-bird, a limb of Satan, a knave who, having come upon a written paper in the Caliph's hand, some idle scroll, hath made it serve his own end. The Caliph would surely not send him to take the Sultanate from thee without the imperial autograph[70] and the diploma of investiture, and he certainly would have despatched with him a Chamberlain or a Minister. But he hath come alone and he never came from the Caliph, no, never! never! never!" "What is to be done?" asked the Sultan, and the Minister answered, "Leave him to me and I will take him and keep him away from thee, and send him in charge of a Chamberlain to Baghdad-city. Then, if what he says be sooth, they will bring us back autograph and investiture; and if not, I will take my due out of this debtor." When the Sultan heard the Minister's words he said, "Hence with thee and him too." Al-Mu'in took trust of him from the King and, carrying him to his own house, cried out to his pages who laid him flat and beat him till he fainted. Then he let put upon his feet heavy shackles and carried him to the jail, where he called the jailor, one Kutayt,[71] who came and kissed the ground before him. Quoth the Wazir, "O Kutayt, I wish thee to take this fellow and throw him into one of the underground cells[72] in the prison and torture him night and day." "To hear is to obey," replied the jailor and, taking Nur al-Din into the prison, locked the door upon him. Then he gave orders to sweep a bench behind the door and, spreading on it a sitting-rug and a leather-cloth, seated Nur al-Din thereon and loosed his shackles and entreated him kindly. The 40 Wazir sent every day enjoining the jailor to beat him, but

he abstained from this, and so continued to do for forty days. On the forty-first day there came a present from the Caliph; which when the Sultan saw, it pleased him and he consulted his Ministers on the matter, when one of them said, "Perchance this present was for the new Sultan." Cried Al-Mu'in, "We should have done well had we put him to death at his first coming;" and the Sultan cried "By Allah, thou hast reminded me of him! Go down to the prison and fetch him, and I will strike off his head." "To hear is to obey," replied Al-Mu'in: then he stood up and said, "I will make proclamation in the city:—Whoso would solace himself with seeing the beheading of Nur al-Din bin al-Fazl bin Khakan, let him repair to the palace! So follower and followed, great and small will flock to the spectacle, and I shall heal my heart and harm my foe." "Do as thou wilt," said the Sultan. The Wazir went off (and he was glad and gay), and ordered the Chief of Police to make the aforementioned proclamation. When the people heard the crier, they all sorrowed and wept, even the little ones at school and the traders in their shops; and some strove to get places for seeing the sight, whilst others went to the prison with the object of escorting him thence. Presently, the Wazir came with ten Mamelukes to the jail and Kutayt the jailor asked him, "Whom seekest thou, O our lord the Wazir?"; whereto he answered, "Bring me out that gallows-bird." But the jailor said, "He is in the sorriest of plights for the much beating I have given him." Then he went into the prison and found Nur al-Din repeating these verses:—

Who shall support me in calamities, ✿ When fail all cures and greater cares arise?

Exile hath worn my heart, my vitals torn; ✿ The World to foes hath turned my firm allies.

O folk, will not one friend amidst you all ✿ Wail o'er my woes, and cry to hear my cries?

Death and its agonies seem light to me, ✿ Since life has lost all joys and jollities:

O Lord of Mustafá,[73] that Science-sea ✿ Sole Intercessor, Guide all-ware, all-wise!

I pray thee free me and my fault forego, ✿ And from me drive mine evil and my woe.

41 The jailor stripped off his clean clothes and, dressing him in two filthy vests, carried him to the Wazir. Nur al-Din looked at him and saw it was his foe that sought to compass his death; so he wept and said, "Art thou, then, so secure against the World? Hast thou not heard the saying of the poet:—

Kisras and Cæsars in a bygone day ✿ Stored wealth; where is it, and ah! where are they?"

"O Wazir," he continued, "know that Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) will do whatso He will!" "O Ali," replied he, "thinkest thou to frighten me with such talk? I mean this very day to smite thy neck despite the noses of the Bassorah folk and I care not; let the days do as they please; nor will I turn me to thy counsel but rather to what the poet saith:—

Leave thou the days to breed their ban and bate, ✿ And make thee strong t' upbear the weight of Fate.

And also how excellently saith another:—

Whoso shall see the death-day of his foe, ✿ One day surviving, wins his bestest wish."

Then he ordered his attendants to mount Nur al-Din upon the bare back of a mule; and they said to the youth (for truly it was irksome to them), "Let us stone him and cut him down though our lives go for it." But Nur al-Din said to them, "Do not so: have ye not heard the saying of the poet?—

Needs must I bear the term by Fate decreed, ✿ And when that day be dead needs must I die:

If lions dragged me to their forest-lair, ✿ Safe should I live till draw my death-day nigh."

Then they proceeded to proclaim before Nur al-Din, "This is the least of the retribution for him who imposeth upon Kings with forgeries." And they ceased not parading him round about Bassorah, till they made him stand beneath the palace-windows and set him upon the leather of blood,[74] and the sworder came up to 42 him and said, "O my lord, I am but a slave commanded in this matter: an thou have any desire, tell it me that I may fulfil it, for now there remaineth of thy life only so much as may be till the Sultan shall put his face out of the lattice." Thereupon Nur al-Din looked to the right and to the left, and before him and behind him and began improvising:—

The sword, the sworder and the blood-skin waiting me I sight, ✿ And cry, Alack, mine evil fate! ah, my calamity!

How is't I see no loving friend with eye of sense or soul? ✿ What! no one here? I cry to all: will none reply to me?

The time is past that formed my life, my death term draweth nigh, ✿ Will no man win the grace of God showing me clemency;

And look with pity on my state, and clear my dark despair, ✿ E'en with a draught of water dealt to cool death's agony?

The people fell to weeping over him; and the headsman rose and brought him a draught of water; but the Wazir sprang up from his place and smote the gugglet with his hand and broke it: then he cried out at the executioner and bade him strike off Nur al-Din's head. So he bound the eyes of the doomed man and folk clamoured at the Wazir and loud wailings were heard and much questioning of man and man. At this moment behold, rose a dense dust-cloud filling sky and wold; and when the Sultan, who was sitting in the palace, descried this, he said to his suite, "Go and see what yon cloud bringeth:" Replied Al-Mu'in, "Not till we have smitten this fellow's neck;" but the Sultan said, "Wait ye till we see what this meaneth." Now the dust-cloud was the dust of Ja'afar the Barmecide, Wazir to the Caliph, and his host; and the cause of his coming was as follows. The Caliph passed thirty days without calling to mind the matter of Nur al-Din Ali,[75] and none reminded him of it, till one night, as he passed by the chamber of Anis al-Jalis, he heard her weeping and singing with a soft sweet voice these lines of the poet:—

In thought I see thy form when farthest far or nearest near; ✿ And on my tongue there dwells a name which man shall ne'er unhear.

Then her weeping redoubled; when lo! the Caliph opened the door and, entering the chamber, found Anis al-Jalis in tears. When she saw him she fell to the ground and kissing his feet three times repeated these lines:—

43 O fertile root and noble growth of trunk; ✿ Ripe-fruitful branch of never sullied race;

I mind thee of what pact thy bounty made; ✿ Far be't from thee thou should'st forget my case!

Quoth the Caliph, "Who art thou?" and she replied, "I am she whom Ali bin Khakan gave thee in gift, and I wish the fulfilment of thy promise to send me to him with the robe of honour; for I have now been thirty days without tasting the food of sleep." Thereupon the Caliph sent for Ja'afar and said to him, "O Ja'afar, 'tis thirty days since we have had news of Nur al-Din bin Khakan, and I cannot but suppose that the Sultan hath slain him; but, by the life of my head and by the sepulchres of my forefathers, if aught of foul play hath befallen him, I will surely make an end of him who was the cause of it, though he be the dearest of all men to myself! So I desire that thou set out for Bassorah within this hour and bring me tidings of my cousin, King Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, and how he hath dealt with Nur al-Din Ali bin Khakan;" adding, "If thou tarry longer on the road than shall suffice for the journey, I will strike off thy head. Furthermore, do thou tell the son of my uncle the whole story of Nur al-Din, and how I sent him with my written orders; and if thou find, O my cousin,[76] that the King hath done otherwise than as I commanded, bring him and the Wazir Al-Mu'in bin Sawi to us in whatsoever guise thou shalt find them."[77] "Hearing and obedience," replied Ja'afar and, making ready on the instant, he set out for Bassorah where the news of his coming had foregone him and had reached to the ears of King Mohammed. When Ja'afar arrived and saw the crushing and crowding of the lieges, he asked, "What means all this gathering?" so they told him what was doing in the matter of Nur al-Din; whereupon he hastened to go to the Sultan and saluting him, acquainted him with the cause why he came and the Caliph's resolve, in case of any foul play having befallen the youth, to put to death whoso should have brought it about. Then he took into custody the King and the Wazir and laid them in ward and, giving order for the release of Nur al-Din Ali, enthroned him as Sultan in the stead of Mohammed bin Sulayman. After this Ja'afar abode three days in Bassorah, the usual 44 guest-time, and on the morning of the fourth day, Nur al-Din Ali turned to him and said, "I long for the sight of the Commander of the Faithful." Then said Ja'afar to Mohammed bin Sulayman, "Make ready to travel, for we will say the dawn-prayer and mount Baghdad-wards;" and he replied, "To hear is to obey." Then they prayed and they took horse and set out, all of them, carrying with them the Wazir, Al-Mu'in bin Sawi, who began to repent him of what he had done. Nur al-Din rode by Ja'afar's side and they stinted not faring on till they arrived at Baghdad, the House of Peace, and going in to the Caliph told him how they had found Nur al-Din nigh upon death. Thereupon the Caliph said to the youth, "Take this sword and smite with it the neck of thine enemy." So he took the sword from his hand and stepped up to Al-Mu'in

who looked at him and said, "I did according to my mother's milk, do thou according to thine."[78] Upon this Nur al-Din cast the sword from his hand and said to the Caliph, "O Commander of the Faithful, he hath beguiled me with his words;" and he repeated this couplet:—

By craft and sleight I snared him when he came; ✿ A few fair words aye trap the noble-game!

"Leave him then," cried the Caliph and, turning to Masrur said, "Rise thou and smite his neck." So Masrur drew his sword and struck off his head. Then quoth the Caliph to Nur al-Din Ali, "Ask a boon of me." "O my lord," answered he, "I have no need of the Kingship of Bassorah; my sole desire is to be honoured by serving thee and by seeing thy countenance." "With love and gladness," said the Caliph. Then he sent for the damsel, Anis al-Jalis, and bestowed plentiful favours upon them both and gave them one of his palaces in Baghdad, and assigned stipends and allowances, and made Nur al-Din Ali bin Fazl bin Khakan, one of his cup-companions; and he abode with the Commander of the Faithful enjoying the pleasantest of lives till death overtook him. "Yet (continued Shahrazad) is not his story in any wise more wondrous than the history of the merchant and his children." The King asked "And what was that?" and Shahrazad began to relate the

7- TALE OF GHANIM BIN AYYUB[79], THE DISTRAUGHT, THE THRALL O' LOVE.

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in times of yore and in years and ages long gone before, there lived in Damascus a merchant among the merchants, a wealthy man who had a son like the moon on the night of his fullness[80] and withal sweet of speech, who was named Ghanim bin 'Ayyúb surnamed the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love. He had also a daughter, own sister to Ghanim, who was called Fitnah, a damsel unique in beauty and loveliness. Their father died and left them abundant wealth,—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the merchant left his two children abundant wealth and amongst other things an hundred loads[81] of silks and brocades, musk-pods and mother o' pearl; and there was written on every bale, "This is of the packages intended for Baghdad," it having been his purpose to make the journey thither, when Almighty Allah took him to Himself, which was in the time of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid. 46 After a while his son took the loads and, bidding farewell to his mother and kindred and townsfolk, went forth with a company of merchants, putting his trust in Allah Almighty, who decreed him safety, so that he arrived without let or stay at Baghdad. There he hired for himself a fair dwelling house which he furnished with carpets and cushions, curtains and hangings; and therein stored his bales and stabled his mules and camels, after which he abode a while resting. Presently the merchants and notables of Baghdad came and saluted him, after which he took a bundle containing ten pieces of costly stuffs, with the prices written on them, and carried it to the merchants' bazar, where they welcomed and saluted him and showed him all honour; and, making him dismount from his beast, seated him in the shop of the Syndic of the market, to whom he delivered the package. He opened it and drawing out the pieces of stuff, sold them for him at a profit of two dinars on every dinar of prime cost. At this Ghanim rejoiced and kept selling his silks and stuffs one after another, and ceased not to do on this wise for a

full year. On the first day of the following year he went, as was his wont, to the Exchange which was in the bazar, but found the gate shut; and enquiring the reason was told, "One of the merchants is dead and all the others have gone to follow his bier,[82] and why shouldst thou not win the meed of good deeds by walking with them?"[83] He replied "Yes," and asked for the quarter where the funeral was taking place, and one directed him thereto. So he purified himself by the Wuzu-ablution[84] and repaired with the other merchants to the oratory, where they prayed over the dead, then walked before the bier to the burial-place, and Ghanim, who was a bashful man, followed them being ashamed to leave them. They presently issued from the city, and passed through the tombs until they reached the grave where they found that the deceased's kith and kin had pitched a tent over the tomb and had brought thither lamps and wax-candles. So they buried the body and sat down while the readers read out and recited the Koran over the grave; and Ghanim sat with them, being overcome with bashfulness and saying to himself "I cannot well go away till they do." They tarried listening to 47 the Koranic perlection till nightfall, when the servants set supper and sweetmeats[85] before them and they ate till they were satisfied; then they washed their hands and again took their places. But Ghanim's mind was preoccupied with his house and goods, being in fear of robbers, and he said to himself, "I am a stranger here and supposed to have money: if I pass the night abroad the thieves will steal my money-bags and my bales to boot." So when he could no longer control his fear he arose and left the assembly, having first asked leave to go about some urgent business; and following the signs of the road he soon came to the city-gate. But it was midnight and he found the doors locked and saw none going or coming nor heard aught but the hounds baying and the wolves howling. At this he exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! I was in fear for my property and came back on its account, but now I find the gate shut and I am in mortal fear for my life!" Then he turned back and, looking out for a place where he could sleep till morning, presently found a Santon's tomb, a square of four walls with a date-tree in the central court and a granite gateway. The door was wide open; so he entered and would fain have slept, but sleep came not to him; and terror and a sense of desolation oppressed him, for that he was alone amidst the tombs. So he rose to his feet and, opening the door, looked out and lo! he was ware of a light afar off in the direction of the city-gate; then walking a little way towards it, he saw that it was on the road whereby he had reached the tomb. This made him fear for his life, so he hastily shut the door and climbed to the top of the date-tree where he hid himself in the heart of the fronds. The light came nearer and nearer till it was close to the tomb; then it stopped and he saw three slaves, two bearing a chest and one with a lanthorn, an adze and a basket containing some mortar. When they reached the tomb, one of those who were carrying the case said, "What aileth thee O Sawab?"; and said the other, "What is the matter O Kafur?"[86] Quoth he, "Were we not here at supper-tide and did we not leave the door open?" "Yes," replied the other, "that is true." "See,"

said Kafur, "now it is shut and barred." "How weak are your wits!" cried the third who bore the adze and his 48 name was Bukhayt,[87] "know ye not that the owners of the gardens use to come out from Baghdad and tend them and, when evening closes upon them, they enter this place and shut the door, for fear lest the wicked blackmen, like ourselves, should catch them and roast 'em and eat 'em."[88] "Thou sayest sooth," said the two others, "but by Allah, however that may be, none amongst us is weaker of wits than thou." "If ye do not believe me," said Bukhayt, "let us enter the tomb and I will rouse the rat for you; for I doubt not but that, when he saw the light and us making for the place, he ran up the date-tree and hid there for fear of us." When Ghanim heard this, he said in himself, "O curstest of slaves! May Allah not have thee in His holy keeping for this thy craft and keenness of wit! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! How shall I win free of these blackamoors?" Then said the two who bore the box to him of the adze, "Swarm up the wall and open the gate for us, O Bukhayt, for we are tired of carrying the chest on our necks; and when thou hast opened the gate thou shalt have one of those we catch inside, a fine fat rat which we will fry for thee after such excellent fashion that not a speck of his fat shall be lost." But Bukhayt answered, "I am afraid of somewhat which my weak wits have suggested to me: we should do better to throw the chest over the gateway; for it is our treasure." "If we throw it 'twill break," replied they; and he said, "I fear lest there be robbers within who murder folk and plunder their goods, for evening is their time of entering such places and dividing their spoil." "O thou weak o' wits," said both the bearers of the box, "how could they ever get in here!"[89] Then they set down the chest and climbing over the wall dropped inside and opened the gate, whilst the third slave (he that was called Bukhayt) stood by them holding the adze, the lanthorn and the hand-basket containing the mortar. After this they locked the gate and sat down; and presently one of them said, "O my brethren, we are wearied with walking and with lifting up and setting down the chest, and with unlocking and locking the gate; and now 'tis midnight, and we have no breath 49 left to open, a tomb and bury the box: so let us rest here two or three hours, then rise and do the job. Meanwhile each of us shall tell how he came to be castrated and all that befel him from first to last, the better to pass away our time while we take our rest." Thereupon the first, he of the lanthorn and whose name was Bukhayt, said, "I'll tell you my tale." "Say on," replied they; so he began as follows the

TALE OF THE FIRST EUNUCH BUKHAYT.

Know, O my brothers, that when I was a little one, some five years old, I was taken home from my native country by a slave-driver who sold me to a certain

Apparitor.[90] My purchaser had a daughter three years old, with whom I was brought up, and they used to make mock of me, letting me play with her and dance for her[91] and sing to her, till I reached the age of twelve and she that of ten; and even then they did not forbid me seeing her. One day I went in to her and found her sitting in an inner room, and she looked as if she had just come out of the bath which was in the house; for she was scented with essences and reek of aromatic woods, and her face shone like the circle of the moon on the fourteenth night. She began to sport with me, and I with her. Now I had just reached the age of puberty; so my prickle stood at point, as it were a huge key. Then she threw me on my back and, mounting astraddle on my breast, fell a-wriggling and a-bucking upon me till she had uncovered my yard. When she saw it standing with head erect, she hent it in hand and began rubbing it upon the lips of her little slit[92] outside her petticoat-trousers. Thereat hot lust stirred in me and I threw my arms 50round her, while she wound hers about my neck and hugged me to her with all her might, till, before I knew what I did, my pizzle split up her trousers and entered her slit and did away her maidenhead. When I saw this, I ran off and took refuge with one of my comrades. Presently her mother came in to her; and, seeing her in this case, fainted clean away. However she managed the matter advisedly and hid it from the girl's father out of good will to me; nor did they cease to call to me and coax me, till they took me from where I was. After two months had passed by, her mother married her to a young man, a barber who used to shave her papa, and portioned and fitted her out of her own monies; whilst the father knew nothing of what had passed. On the night of consummation they cut the throat of a pigeon-poult and sprinkled the blood on her shift.[93] After a while they seized me unawares and gelded me; and, when they brought her to her bridegroom, they made me her Agha,[94] her eunuch, to walk before her wheresoever she went, whether to the bath or to her father's house. I abode with her a long time enjoying her beauty and loveliness by way of kissing and clipping and coupling with her,[95] till she died, and her husband and mother and father died also; when they seized me for the Royal Treasury as being the property of an intestate, and I found my way hither, where I became your comrade. This, then, O my brethren, is the cause of my cullions being cut off; and peace be with you! He ceased and his fellow began in these words the 51

TALE OF THE SECOND EUNUCH, KAFUR.

Know, O my brothers that, when beginning service as a boy of eight, I used to tell the slave-dealers regularly and exactly one lie every year, so that they fell out with one another, till at last my master lost patience with me and, carrying me down to the

market, ordered the brokers to cry, "Who will buy this slave, knowing his blemish and making allowance for it?" He did so and they asked him, "Pray, what may be his blemish?" and he answered, "He telleth me one single lie every year." Now a man that was a merchant came up and said to the broker, "How much do they allow for him with his blemish?" "They allow six hundred dirhams," he replied; and said the other, "Thou shalt have twenty dirhams for thyself." So he arranged between him and the slave-dealer who took the coin from him and the broker carried me to the merchant's house and departed, after receiving his brokerage. The trader clothed me with suitable dress, and I stayed in his service the rest of my twelvemonth, until the new year began happily. It was a blessed season, plenteous in the produce of the earth, and the merchants used to feast every day at the house of some one among them, till it was my master's turn to entertain them in a flower-garden without the city. So he and the other merchants went to the garden, taking with them all that they required of provaunt and else beside, and sat eating and carousing and drinking till mid-day, when my master, having need of some matter from his home, said to me, "O slave, mount the she-mule and hie thee to the house and bring from thy mistress such and such a thing and return quickly." I obeyed his bidding and started for the house but, as I drew near it, I began to cry out and shed tears, whereupon all the people of the quarter collected, great and small; and my master's wife and daughters, hearing the noise I was making, opened the door and asked me what was the matter. Said I, "My master was sitting with his friends beneath an old wall, and it fell on one and all of them; and when I saw what had happened to them, I mounted the mule and came hither in haste to tell you." When my master's daughters and wife heard this, they screamed and rent their raiment and beat their faces, whilst the neighbours came around them. Then the wife overturned the furniture of the house, one thing upon another, and tore 52down the shelves and broke the windows and the lattices and smeared the walls with mud and indigo, saying to me, "Woe to thee, O Kafur! come help me to tear down these cupboards and break up these vessels and this chinaware,[96] and the rest of it." So I went to her and aided her to smash all the shelves in the house with whatever stood upon them, after which I went round about the terrace-roofs and every part of the place, spoiling all I could and leaving no china in the house unbroken till I had laid waste the whole, crying out the while "Well-away! my master!" Then my mistress fared forth bare-faced wearing a head-kerchief and naught else, and her daughters and the children sallied out with her, and said to me, "O Kafur, go thou before us and show us the place where thy master lieth dead, that we may take him from under the fallen wall and lay him on a bier and bear him to the house and give him a fine funeral." So I went forth before them crying out, "Alack, my master!"; and they after me with faces and heads bare and all shrieking, "Alas! Alas for the man!" Now there remained none in the quarter, neither man nor woman, nor epicene, nor youth nor maid, nor child nor old trot, but went with us smiting their faces and weeping bitterly, and I led them leisurely through the whole city. The folk

asked them what was the matter, whereupon they told them what they had heard from me, and all exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" Then said one of them, "He was a personage of consequence; so let us go to the Governor and tell him what hath befallen him." When they told the Governor,—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fortieth Night,[97]

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when they told the Governor, he rose and mounted and, taking with him 53 labourers, with spades and baskets, went on my track, with many people behind him; and I ran on before them, howling and casting dust on my head and beating my face, followed by my mistress and her children keening for the dead. But I got ahead of them and entered the garden before them, and when my master saw me in this state, I smiting my face and saying, "Well-away! my mistress Alas! Alas! Alas! who is left to take pity on me, now that my mistress is gone? Would I had been a sacrifice for her!", he stood aghast and his colour waxed yellow and he said to me, "What aileth thee O Kafur! What *is* the matter?" "O my lord," I replied, "when thou sentest me to the house, I found that the saloon-wall had given way and had fallen like a layer upon my mistress and her children!" "And did not thy mistress escape?" "No, by Allah, O my master; not one of them was saved; the first to die was my mistress, thine elder daughter!" "And did not my younger daughter escape?"; "No, she did not!" "And what became of the mare-mule I use to ride, is she safe?" "No, by Allah, O my master, the house-walls and the stable-walls buried every living thing that was within doors, even to the sheep and geese and poultry, so that they all became a heap of flesh and the dogs and cats are eating them and not one of them is left alive." "And hath not thy master, my elder son, escaped?" "No, by Allah! not one of them was saved, and now there is naught left of house or household, nor even a sign of them: and, as for the sheep and geese and hens, the cats and dogs have devoured them." When my master heard this the light became night before his sight; his wits were dazed and he so lost command of his senses that he could not stand firm on his feet: he was as one struck with a sudden palsy and his back was like to break. Then he rent his raiment and plucked out his beard and, casting his turband from off his head, buffetted his face till the blood ran down and he cried aloud, "Alas, my children! Alas, my wife! Alas, my calamity! To whom ever befel that which hath befallen me?" The merchants, his friends, also cried aloud at his crying and wept for his weeping and tore their clothes, being moved to pity of his case; and so my master went out of the garden, smiting his face with such violence that from excess of pain he staggered like one drunken with wine. As he and the merchants came forth from the garden-gate, behold, they saw a great cloud of dust and heard a loud noise of crying and lamentation; so they looked and lo! it was the Governor with his attendants and the townsfolk, a world of people, who had 54 come out to look on, and my master's family following them, all screaming and crying

aloud and weeping exceeding sore weeping. The first to address my owner were his wife and children; and when he saw them he was confounded and laughed[98] and said to them, "How is it with all of you and what befel you in the house and what hath come to pass to you?" When they saw him they exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah for thy preservation!" and threw themselves upon him and his children hung about him crying, "Alack, our father! Thanks to Allah for thy safety, O our father!" And his wife said to him, "Art thou indeed well? Laud to Allah who hath shown us thy face in safety!" And indeed she was confounded and her reason fled when she saw him, and she asked, "O, my lord, how didst thou escape, thou and thy friends the merchants?"; and he answered her, "And how fared it with thee in the house?" Quoth they, "We were all well, whole and healthy, nor hath aught of evil befallen us in the house, save that thy slave Kafur came to us, bareheaded with torn garments and howling:—Alas, the master! Alas the master! So we asked him:—What tidings, O Kafur? and he answered:—A wall of the garden hath fallen on my master and his friends the merchants, and they are all crushed and dead!" "By Allah," said my master, "he came to me but now howling:—Alas, my mistress! Alas, the children of the mistress!, and said:—My mistress and her children are all dead, every one of them!" Then he looked round and seeing me with my turband rent in rags round my neck, howling and weeping with exceeding weeping and throwing dust upon my head, he cried out at me. So I came to him and he said, "Woe to thee, O ill-omened slave! O whoreson knave! O thou damned breed! What mischief thou hast wrought? By Allah! I will flog thy skin from thy flesh and cut thy flesh from thy bones!" I rejoined, "By Allah, thou canst do nothing of the kind with me, O my lord, for thou boughtest me with my blemish; and there are honest men to bear witness against thee that thou didst so accepting the condition, and that thou knewest of my fault which is to tell one lie every year. Now this is only a half-lie, but by the end of the year I will tell the other half, then will the lie stand whole and complete." "O dog, son of a dog!", cried my master, "O most accursed of slaves, is this all of it but a half-lie? Verily if it be a half-lie 'tis a whole calamity! Get thee from me, thou art free in 55the face of Allah!" "By Allah," rejoined I, "if thou free me, I will not free thee till my year is completed and I have told thee the half-lie which is left. When this is done, go down with me to the slave-market and sell me as thou boughtest me to whoso will buy me with my blemish; but thou shalt not manumit me, for I have no handicraft whereby to gain my living;[99] and this my demand is a matter of law which the doctors have laid down in the Chapter of Emancipation."[100] While we were at these words, up came the crowd of people, and the neighbours of the quarter, men, women and children, together with the Governor and his suite offering condolence. So my master and the other merchants went up to him and informed him of the adventure, and how this was but a half-lie, at which all wondered, deeming it a whole lie and a big one. And they cursed me and reviled me, while I stood laughing and grinning at them, till at last I asked, "How shall my master slay me when he bought me with this my blemish?" Then my master

returned home and found his house in ruins, and it was I who had laid waste the greater part of it,[101] having broken things which were worth much money, as also had done his wife, who said to him, "'Twas Kafur who broke the vessels and chinaware." Thereupon his rage redoubled and he struck hand upon hand exclaiming, "By Allah! in my life never saw I a whoreson like this slave; and he saith this is but a half-lie! How, then, if he had told me a whole lie? He would ruin a city, aye or even two." Then in his fury he went to the Governor, and they gave me a neat thing in the bastinado-line and made me eat stick till I was lost to the world and a fainting-fit came on me; and, whilst I was yet senseless, they brought the barber who docked me and gelded me[102] and cauterised the wound. 56 When I revived I found myself a clean eunuch with nothing left, and my master said to me, "Even as thou hast burned my heart for the things I held dearest, so have I burnt thy heart for that of thy members whereby thou settest most store!" Then he took me and sold me at a profit, for that I was become an eunuch. And I ceased not bringing trouble upon all, wherever I was sold, and was shifted from lord to lord and from notable to notable, being sold and being bought, till I entered the palace of the Commander of the Faithful. But now my spirit is broken and my tricks are gone from me, so—alas!—are my ballocks. When the two slaves heard his history, they laughed at him and chaffed him and said, "Truly thou art skite[103] and skite-son! Thou liedest an odious lie." Then quoth they to the third slave, "Tell us thy tale." "O sons of my uncle," quoth he, "all that ye have said is idle: I will tell you the cause of my losing my testicles, and indeed I deserved to lose even more, for I futtered both my mistress and my master's eldest son and heir: but my story is a long one and this is not the time to tell it; for the dawn, O my cousins, draweth near and if morning come upon us with this chest still unburied, we shall get into sore disgrace and our lives will pay for it. So up with you and open the door and, when we get back to the palace, I will tell you my story and the cause of my losing my precious stones." Then he swarmed up and dropped down from the wall inside and opened the door, so they entered and, setting down the lantern, dug between four tombs a hole as long as the chest and of the same breadth. Kafur plied the spade and Sawab removed the earth by baskets-full till they reached the depth of the stature of a man;[104] when they laid the chest in the hole and threw back the earth over it: then they went forth and shutting the door disappeared from Ghanim's eyes. When all was quiet and he felt sure that he was left alone in the place, his thought was busied about what the chest 57 contained and he said to himself, "Would that I knew the contents of that box!" However, he waited till day broke, when morning shone and showed her sheen: whereupon he came down from the date-tree and scooped away the earth with his hands, till the box was laid bare and disengaged from the ground. Then he took a large stone and hammered at the lock till he broke it and, opening the lid, beheld a young lady, a model of beauty and loveliness, clad in the richest of garments and jewels of gold and such necklaces of precious stones that, were the Sultan's country

evened with them, it would not pay their price. She had been drugged with Bhang, but her bosom, rising and falling, showed that her breath had not departed. When Ghanim saw her, he knew that some one had played her false and hocussed her; so he pulled her out of the chest and laid her on the ground with her face upwards. As soon as she smelt the breeze and the air entered her nostrils, mouth and lungs, she sneezed and choked and coughed; when there fell from out her throat a pill of Cretan Bhang, had an elephant smelt it he would have slept from night to night. Then she opened her eyes and glancing around said, in sweet voice and gracious words, "Woe to thee O wind! there is naught in thee to satisfy the thirsty, nor aught to gratify one whose thirst is satisfied! Where is Zahr al-Bostan?" But no one answered her, so she turned her and cried out, "Ho Sabíhah! Shajarat al-Durr! Núr al-Hudá! Najmat al-Subh! be ye awake? Shahwah, Nuzhah, Halwá, Zarífah, out on you, speak![105]" But no one answered; so she looked all around and said, "Woe's me! have they entombed me in the tombs? O Thou who knowest what man's thought enwombs and who givest compensation on the Day of Doom, who can have brought me from amid hanging screens and curtains veiling the Harím-rooms and set me down between four tombs?" All this while Ghanim was standing by: then he said to her, "O my lady, here are neither screened rooms nor palace-Haríms nor yet tombs; only the slave henceforth devoted to thy love, Ghanim bin Ayyub, sent to thee by the Omniscient One above, that all thy troubles He may remove and win for thee every wish that doth behove!" Then he held his peace. She was reassured by 58 his words and cried, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God, and I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!"; then she turned to Ghanim and, placing her hands before her face, said to him in the sweetest speech, "O blessed youth, who brought me hither? See, I am now come to myself." "O my lady," he replied, "three slave-eunuchs came here bearing this chest;" and related to her the whole of what had befallen him, and how evening having closed upon him had proved the cause of her preservation, otherwise she had died smothered.[106] Then he asked her who she was and what was her story, and she answered, "O youth, thanks be to Allah who hath cast me into the hands of the like of thee! But now rise and put me back into the box; then fare forth upon the road and hire the first camel-driver or muleteer thou findest to carry it to thy house. When I am there, all will be well and I will tell thee my tale and acquaint thee with my adventures, and great shall be thy gain by means of me." At this he rejoiced and went outside the tomb. The day was now dazzling bright and the firmament shone with light and the folk had begun to circulate; so he hired a man with a mule and, bringing him to the tomb, lifted the chest wherein he had put the damsel and set it on the mule. Her love now engrossed his heart and he fared homeward with her rejoicing, for that she was a girl worth ten thousand gold pieces and her raiment and ornaments would fetch a mint of money. As soon as he arrived at his house he carried in the chest and opening it——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Forty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ghanim son of Ayyub arrived with the chest at his house, he opened it and took out the young lady, who looked about her and, seeing that the place was handsome, spread with carpets and dight with cheerful colours and other deckings; and noting the stuffs up-piled and packed bales and other else than that, knew that he was a substantial merchant and a man of much money. Thereupon she uncovered her face and looked at him, and lo! he was a 59 fair youth; so when she saw him she loved him and said, "O my lord, bring us something to eat." "On my head and mine eyes!" replied he; and, going down to the bazar, bought a roasted lamb and a dish of sweetmeats and with these dry fruits and wax-candles, besides wine and whatsoever was required of drinking materials, not forgetting perfumes. With all this gear he returned to the house; and when the damsel saw him she laughed and kissed him and clasped his neck. Then she began caressing him, which made his love wax hotter till it got the mastery of his heart. They ate and drank and each had conceived the fondest affection; for indeed the two were one in age and one in loveliness; and when night came on Ghanim bin Ayyub, the Distraught, the Thrall of Love, rose and lit the wax candles and lamps till the place blazed with light;[107] after which he produced the wine-service and spread the table. Then both sat down again, he and she, and he kept filling and giving her to drink, and she kept filling and giving him to drink, and they played and toyed and laughed and recited verses; whilst their joy increased and they clove in closer love each to each (glory be to the Uniter of Hearts!). They ceased not to carouse after this fashion till near upon dawn when drowsiness overcame them and they slept where they were, apart each from other, till the morning.[108] Then Ghanim arose and going to the market, bought all they required of meat and vegetables and wine and what not, and brought them to the house; whereupon both sat down to eat and ate their sufficiency, when he set on wine. They drank and each played with each, till their cheeks flushed red and their eyes took a darker hue and Ghanim's soul longed to kiss the girl and to lie with her and he said, "O my lady, grant me one kiss of that dear mouth: perchance 'twill quench the fire of my heart." "O Ghanim," replied she, "wait till I am drunk and dead to the world; then steal a kiss of me, secretly and on such wise that I may not know thou hast kissed me." Then she rose and taking off her upper dress sat in a thin shift of fine linen and a silken head-kerchief.[109] At this passion inflamed Ghanim and he said to her, "O my lady, wilt 60 thou not vouchsafe me what I asked of thee?" "By Allah," she replied, "that may not be thine, for there is written upon my trouser-string[110] a hard word!" Thereupon Ghanim's heart sank and desire grew on him as its object offered difficulties; and he improvised these verses:—

I asked the author of mine ills ✿ To heal the wound with one sweet kiss:

No! No! she cried,[111] for ever no! ✿ But I, soft whispering, urged yes:

Quoth she, Then take it by my leave, ✿ When smiles shall pardon thine amiss:
By force, cried I? Nay, she replied ✿ With love and gladness eke I wis.
Now ask me not what next occurred ✿ Seek grace of God and whist of this!
Deem what thou wilt of us, for love ✿ By calumnies the sweeter is:
Nor after this care I one jot ✿ Whether my foe be known or not.

Then his affection increased and love-fires rose hotter in his heart, while she refused herself to him saying, "Thou canst not possess me." They ceased not to make love and enjoy their wine and wassail, whilst Ghanim was drowned in the sea of love and longing; but she redoubled in coyness and cruelty till the night brought on the darkness and let fall on them the skirts of sleep. Thereupon Ghanim rose and lit the lamps and wax-candles, and refreshed the room and removed the table; then he took her feet and kissed them and, finding them like fresh cream, pressed his face[112] on them and said to her, "O my lady, take pity on one thy love hath ta'en and thine eyes hath slain; for indeed I were heart-whole but for thy bane!" And he wept somewhat. "O my lord, and light of my eyes," quoth she, "by Allah, I love thee in very sooth and I trust to thy truth, but I know that I may not be thine." "And what is the obstacle?" asked he; when she answered, "To-night I will tell thee my tale, that thou mayst accept my excuse." Then she threw herself upon him and winding her arms like a necklace about his neck, kissed him and caressed him and promised him her favours; and they ceased not playing and laughing till love gat the firmest hold upon both their hearts. And so it continued a whole month, both passing the night on a single carpet-bed, but whenever he would enjoy her, she put him off; whilst mutual love 61 increased upon them and each could hardly abstain from other. One night, as he lay by her side, and both were warm with wine, Ghanim passed his hand over her breasts and stroked them; then he slipped it down to her waist as far as her navel. She awoke and, sitting up, put her hand to her trousers and finding them fast tied, once more fell asleep. Presently, he again felt her and sliding his hand down to her trouser-string, began pulling at it, whereupon she awoke and sat upright. Ghanim also sat up by her side and she asked him, "What dost thou want?" "I want to lie with thee," he answered, "and that we may deal openly and frankly with each other." Quoth she, "I must now declare to thee my case, that thou mayst know my quality; then will my secret be disclosed to thee and my excuse become manifest to thee." Quoth he, "So be it!" Thereat she opened the skirt of her shift and, taking up her trouser-string, said to him, "O my lord, read what is worked on the flat of this string:" so he took it in hand, and saw these words broidered on it in gold, "I AM THINE, AND THOU ART MINE, O COUSIN OF THE APOSTLE!"[113] When he read this, he withdrew his hand and said to her, "Tell me who thou art!" "So be it," answered she; "know that I am one of the concubines of the Commander of the Faithful, and my name is Kut al-Kulub—the Food of Hearts. I was brought up in his palace and, when I grew to woman's estate, he looked on me and, noting what share of beauty and loveliness the Creator

had given me, loved me with exceeding love, and assigned me a separate apartment, and gave me ten slave-girls to wait on me and all these ornaments thou seest me wearing. On a certain day he set out for one of his provinces, and the Lady Zubaydah came to one of the slave-girls in my service and said to her:—I have something to require of thee. What is it, O my lady? asked she and the Caliph's wife answered:—When thy mistress Kut al-Kulub is asleep, put this piece of Bhang into her nostrils or drop it into her drink, and thou shalt have of me as much money as will satisfy thee. With love and gladness; replied the girl and took the Bhang from her, being a glad woman because of the money and because aforetime she had been one of Zubaydah's slaves. So she put the Bhang in my drink, and when it was night I drank, and the drug had no sooner settled in my stomach than 62 I fell to the ground, my head touching my feet, and knew naught of my life but that I was in another world. When her device succeeded, she bade put me in this chest, and secretly brought in the slaves and the doorkeepers and bribed them; and, on the night when thou wast perched upon the date-tree, she sent the blacks to do with me as thou sawest. So my delivery was at thy hands, and thou broughtest me to this house and hast entreated me honourably and with thy kindest. This is my story, and I wot not what is become of the Caliph during my absence. Know then my condition and divulge not my case." When Ghanim heard her words and knew that she was a concubine of the Caliph, he drew back, for awe of the Caliphate beset him, and sat apart from her in one of the corners of the place, blaming himself and brooding over his affair and patiencing his heart bewildered for love of one he could not possess. Then he wept for excess of longing, and plained him of Fortune and her injuries, and the world and its enmities (and praise be to Him who causeth generous hearts to be troubled with love and the beloved, and who endoweth not the minds of the mean and miserly with so much of it as eveneth a grain-weight!). So he began repeating:—

The lover's heart for his beloved must meet ✿ Sad pain, and from her charms bear sore defeat:

What is Loves taste? They asked and answered I, ✿ Sweet is the taste but ah! 'tis bitter-sweet.

Thereupon Kut al-Kulub arose and took him to her bosom and kissed him; for the love of him was firm fixed in her heart, so that she disclosed to him her secret and all the affection she felt; and, throwing her arms round Ghanim's neck like a collar of pearls, kissed him again and yet again. But he held off from her in awe of the Caliph. Then they talked together a long while (and indeed both were drowned in the sea of their mutual love); and, as the day broke, Ghanim rose and donned his clothes and going to the bazar, as was his wont, took what the occasion required and returned home. He found her weeping; but when she saw him she checked herself and, smiling through her tears, said, "Thou hast desolated me, O beloved of my heart. By Allah, this hour of absence hath been to me like a year![114] I have explained to thee my condition in the excess of my eager love for thee; so come now near me, and forget the past and have thy will of me." But he interrupted her crying, "I seek refuge with

Allah! This thing may never be. How shall the dog sit in the lion's stead? What is the lord's is unlawful to the slave!" So he withdrew from her, and sat down on a corner of the mat. Her passion for him increased with his forbearance; so she seated herself by his side and caroused and played with him, till the two were flushed with wine, and she was mad for her own dishonour. Then she sang these verses:—





63 The lover's heart is like to break in twain: ✿ Till when these coy denials ah! till when?

O thou who fliest me sans fault of mine, ✿ Gazelles are wont at times prove tame to men:

Absence, aversion, distance and disdain, ✿ How shall young lover all these ills sustain?

Thereupon Ghanim wept and she wept at his weeping, and they ceased not drinking till nightfall, when he rose and spread two beds, each in its place. "For whom is this second bed?" asked she, and he answered her, "One is for me and the other is for thee: from this night forth we must not sleep save thus, for that which is the lord's is unlawful to the thrall." "O my master!" cried she, "let us have done with this, for all things come to pass by Fate and Fortune." But he refused, and the fire was lighted in her heart and, as her longing waxed fiercer, she clung to him and cried, "By Allah, we will not sleep save side by side!" "Allah forefend!" he replied and prevailed against her and lay apart till the morning, when love and longing redoubled on her and distraction and eager thirst of passion. They abode after this fashion three full-told months, which were long and longsome indeed, and every time she made advances to him, he would refuse himself and say, "Whatever belongeth to the master is unlawful to the man." Now when time waxed tiresome and tedious to her and anguish and distress grew on her, she burst out from her oppressed heart with these verses:—

64 How long, rare beauty! wilt do wrong to me? ✿ Who was it bade thee not belong to me?

With outer charms thou weddest inner grace ✿ Comprising every point of piquancy:

Passion thou hast infused in every heart, ✿ From eyelids driven sleep by deputy:

Erst was (I wot) the spray made thin of leaf ✿ O Cassia-spray! Unlief thy sin I see:[115]

The hart erst hunted I: how is't I spy ✿ The hunter hunted (fair my hart!) by thee?

Wondrouser still I tell thee aye that I ✿ Am trapped while never up to trap thou be!

Ne'er grant my prayer! For if I grudge thyself ✿ To thee, I grudge my *me* more jealously;

And cry so long as life belong to me, ✿ Rare beauty how, how long this wrong to me?

They abode in this state a long time, and fear kept Ghanim aloof from her. So far concerning these two; but as regards the Lady Zubaydah, when, in the Caliph's absence she had done this deed by Kut al-Kulub she became perplexed, saying to herself, "What shall I tell my cousin when he comes back and asks for her? What possible answer can I make to him?" Then she called an old woman, who was about her and discovered her secret to her saying, "How shall I act seeing that Kut al-Kulub died by such untimely death?" "O my lady," quoth the old crone, "the time of the Caliph's return is near; so do thou send for a carpenter and bid him make thee a figure of wood in the form of a corpse. We will dig a grave for it midmost the palace and there bury it: then do thou build an oratory over it and set therein lighted candles and lamps, and order each and every in the palace to be clad in black.[116] Furthermore command thy handmaids and eunuchs as soon as they know of the Caliph's returning from his journey, to spread straw over the vestibule-floors and, when the Commander of the Faithful enters and asks what is the matter, let them say:—Kut al-Kulub is dead, and may Allah abundantly compensate thee for the loss of her![117]; and, for the

high esteem in which she was held of our mistress, she hath buried her in her own palace. When he hears this he will weep and it shall be grievous to him; then will he cause perlections of the Koran to be made for her and he 65 will watch by night at her tomb. Should he say to himself:—Verily Zubaydah, the daughter of my uncle, hath compassed in her jealousy the death of Kut al-Kulub; or, if love-longing overcome him and he bid her be taken out of her tomb, fear thou not; for when they dig down and come to the image in human shape he will see it shrouded in costly grave-clothes; and, if he wish to take off the winding-sheet that he may look upon her, do thou forbid him or let some other forbid him, saying:—The sight of her nakedness is unlawful. The fear of the world to come will restrain him and he will believe that she is dead and will restore the figure to its place and thank thee for thy doings; and thus thou shalt escape, please Almighty Allah, from this slough of despond." When the Lady Zubaydah heard her words, she commended the counsel and gave her a dress of honour and a large sum of money, ordering her to do all she had said. So the old woman set about the business forthright and bade the carpenter make her the aforesaid image; and, as soon as it was finished, she brought it to the lady Zubaydah, who shrouded it and buried it and built a sepulchre over it, wherein they lighted candles and lamps, and laid down carpets about the tomb. Moreover she put on black and she spread abroad in the Harim that Kut al-Kulub was dead. After a time the Caliph returned from his journey and went up to the palace, thinking only of Kut al-Kulub. He saw all the pages and eunuchs and handmaids habited in black, at which his heart fluttered with extreme fear; and, when he went in to the Lady Zubaydah, he found her also garbed in black. So he asked the cause of this and they gave him tidings of the death of Kut al-Kulub, whereon he fell a-swooning. As soon as he came to himself, he asked for her tomb, and the Lady Zubaydah said to him, "Know, O Prince of the Faithful, that for especial honour I have buried her in my own palace." Then he repaired in his travelling-garb[118] to the tomb that he might wail over her, and found the carpets spread and the candles and lamps lighted. When he saw this, he thanked Zubaydah for her good deed and abode perplexed, halting between belief and unbelief till at last suspicion overcame him and he gave order to open the grave and take out the body. When he saw the shroud and would have removed it to look upon her, the fear of Allah Almighty restrained him, and the old woman 66 (taking advantage of the delay) said, "Restore her to her place." Then he sent at once for Fakirs and Koran-readers, and caused perlections to be made over her tomb and sat by the side of the grave, weeping till he fainted; and he continued to frequent the tomb and sit there for a whole month,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Forty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph ceased not to frequent the tomb for the period of a whole month, at the end of which time it so

happened one day that he entered the Serraglio, after dismissing the Emirs and Wazirs, and lay down and slept awhile; and there sat at his head a slave-girl fanning him, and at his feet a second rubbing and shampooing them. Presently he awoke and, opening his eyes, shut them again and heard the handmaid at his head saying to her who was at his feet, "A nice business this, O Khayzarán!" and the other answered her "Well, O Kazíb al-Bán?"[119] "Verily" said the first, "our lord knoweth naught of what hath happened and sitteth waking and watching by a tomb wherein is only a log of wood carved by the carpenter's art." "And Kut al-Kulub," quoth the other, "what hath befallen her?" She replied, "Know that the Lady Zubaydah sent a pellet of Bhang by one of the slave-women who was bribed to drug her; and when sleep overpowered her she let put her in a chest, and ordered Sawab and Kafur and Bukhayt to throw her amongst the tombs." "What dost thou say, O Kazíb al-Bán;" asked Khayzarán, "is not the lady Kut al-Kulub dead?" "Nay, by Allah!" she answered "and long may her youth be saved from death! but I have heard the Lady Zubaydah say that she is in the house of a young merchant named Ghanim bin Ayyub of Damascus, hight the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love; and she hath been with him these four months, whilst our lord is weeping and watching by night at a tomb wherein is no corpse." They kept on talking this sort of talk, and the Caliph gave ear to their words; and, by the time they had ceased speaking, he knew right well that the tomb was a feint and a fraud, and that Kut al-Kulub had 67 been in Ghanim's house for four months. Whereupon he was angered with exceeding anger and rising up, he summoned the Emirs of his state; and his Wazir Ja'afar the Barmaki came also and kissed the ground between his hands. The Caliph said to him in fury; "Go down, O Ja'afar, with a party of armed men and ask for the house of Ghanim son of Ayyub: fall upon it and spoil it and bring him to me with my slave-girl, Kut al-Kulub, for there is no help but that I punish him!" "To hear is to obey," said Ja'afar; and setting out with the Governor and the guards and a world of people, repaired to Ghanim's house. Now about that time the youth happened to have brought back a pot of dressed meat and was about to put forth his hand to eat of it, he and Kut al-Kulub, when the lady, happening to look out saw calamity surrounding the house on every side; for the Wazir and the Governor, the night-guard and the Mamelukes with swords drawn had girt it as the white of the eye girdeth the black. At this she knew that tidings of her had reached the Caliph, her lord; and she made sure of ruin, and her colour paled and her fair features changed and her favour faded. Then she turned to Ghanim and said to him, "O my love? fly for thy life!" "What shall I do," asked he, "and whither shall I go, seeing that my money and means of maintenance are all in this house?"; and she answered, "Delay not lest thou be slain and lose life as well as wealth." "O my loved one and light of mine eyes!" he cried, "How shall I do to get away when they have surrounded the house?" Quoth she, "Fear not;" and, stripping off his fine clothes, dressed him in ragged old garments, after which she took the pot and, putting in it bits of broken bread and a saucer of meat,[120] placed the whole in a basket and setting it upon his head said, "Go out in this

guise and fear not for me who wotteth right well what thing is in my hand for the Caliph."[121] So he went out amongst them, bearing the basket with its contents, and the Protector vouchsafed him His protection and he escaped the snares and perils that beset him, by the blessing of his good conscience and pure conduct. Meanwhile Ja'afar dismounted and entering the house, saw Kut al-Kulub who had dressed and decked herself in splendid raiments and ornaments and filled a chest with gold and jewellery and precious stones and rarities and 68 what else was light to bear and of value rare. When she saw Ja'afar come in, she rose and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O my lord, the Reed hath written of old the rede which Allah decreed!"[122] "By Allah, O my lady," answered Ja'afar, "he gave me an order to seize Ghanim son of Ayyub;" and she rejoined, "O my lord, he made ready his goods and set out therewith for Damascus and I know nothing more of him; but I desire thee take charge of this chest and deliver it to me in the Harim of the Prince of the Faithful." "Hearing and obedience," said Ja'afar, and bade his men bear it away to the head-quarters of the Caliphate together with Kut al-Kulub, commanding them to entreat her with honour as one in high esteem. They did his bidding after they had wrecked and plundered Ghanim's house. Then Ja'afar went in to the Caliph and told him all that had happened, and he ordered Kut al-Kulub to be lodged in a dark chamber and appointed an old woman to serve her, feeling convinced that Ghanim had debauched her and slept with her. Then he wrote a mandate to the Emir Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Zayni, his viceroy in Damascus, to this effect:—"The instant thou shalt receive this our letter, seize upon Ghanim bin Ayyub and send him to us." When the missive came to the viceroy, he kissed it and laid it on his head; then he let proclaim in the bazars, "Whoso is desirous to plunder, away with him to the house of Ghanim son of Ayyub."[123] So they flocked thither, when they found that Ghanim's mother and sister had built him a tomb[124] in the midst of the house and sat by it weeping for him; whereupon they seized the two without telling them the cause and, after spoiling the house, carried them before the viceroy. He questioned them concerning Ghanim and both replied, "For a year or more we have had no news of him." So they restored them to their place. Thus far concerning them; but as regards Ghanim, when he saw his wealth spoiled and his ruin utterest he wept over himself till his heart well-nigh brake. Then he fared on at random till the last 69 of the day, and hunger grew hard on him and walking wearied him. So coming to a village he entered a mosque[125] where he sat down upon a mat and propped his back against the wall; but presently he sank to the ground in his extremity of famine and fatigue. There he lay till dawn, his heart fluttering for want of food; and, owing to his sweating, the lice[126] coursed over his skin; his breath waxed fetid and his whole condition was changed. When the villagers came to pray the dawn-prayer, they found him prostrate, ailing, hunger-lean, yet showing evident signs of former affluence. As soon as prayers were over, they drew near him; and, understanding that he was starved with hunger and cold, they gave him

an old robe with ragged sleeves and said to him, "O stranger, whence art thou and what sickness is upon thee?" He opened his eyes and wept but returned no answer; whereupon one of them, who saw that he was starving, brought him a saucer of honey and two barley scones. He ate a little and they sat with him till sun-rise, when they went to their work. He abode with them in this state for a month, whilst sickness and weakliness grew upon him; and they wept for him and, pitying his condition, took counsel with one another upon his case and agreed to forward him to the hospital in Baghdad.[127] Meanwhile behold, two beggar-women, who were none other than Ghanim's mother and sister,[128] came into the mosque and, when he saw them, he gave them the bread that was at his head; and they slept by his side that night but he knew them not. Next day the villagers brought a camel and said to the cameleer, "Set this sick man on thy beast and carry him to Baghdad and put him down at the Spital-door; so haply he may be medicined and be healed and thou shalt have thy hire."[129] "To hear is to comply," said the man. So they brought 70 Ghanim, who was asleep, out of the mosque and set him, mat and all, on the camel; and his mother and sister came out among the crowd to gaze upon him, but they knew him not. However, after looking at him and considering him carefully they said, "Of a truth he favours our Ghanim, poor boy!; can this sick man be he?" Presently, he woke and finding himself bound with ropes on a camel's back, he began to weep and complain,[130] and the village-people saw his mother and sister weeping over him, albeit they knew him not. Then they fared forth for Baghdad, but the camel-man forewent them and, setting Ghanim down at the Spital-gate, went away with his beast. The sick man lay there till dawn and, when the folk began to go about the streets, they saw him and stood gazing on him, for he had become as thin as a toothpick, till the Syndic of the bazar came up and drove them away from him, saying, "I will gain Paradise through this poor creature; for if they take him into the Hospital, they will kill him in a single day."[131] Then he made his young men carry him to his house, where they spread him a new bed with a new pillow,[132] and he said to his wife, "Tend him carefully;" and she replied, "Good! on my head be it!" Thereupon she tucked up her sleeves and warming some water, washed his hands, feet and body; after which she clothed him in a robe belonging to one of her slave-girls and made him drink a cup of wine and sprinkled rose-water over him. So he revived and complained, and the thought of his beloved Kut al-Kulub made his grief redouble. Thus far concerning him; but as regards Kut al-Kulub, when the Caliph was angered against her,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Forty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph was angered against Kut al-Kulub, he ordered her to a dark chamber where she abode eighty days, at the end of which the Caliph, happening to pass on a certain day the place where she 71 was, heard her repeating poetry, and after she ceased reciting her verse, saying,

"O my darling, O my Ghanim! how great is thy goodness and how chaste is thy nature! thou didst well by one who did ill by thee and thou guardedst his honour who garred thine become dishonour, and his Harim thou didst protect who to enslave thee and thine did elect! But thou shalt surely stand, thou and the Commander of the Faithful, before the Just Judge, and thou shalt be justified of him on the Day when the Lord (to whom be honour and glory!) shall be Kazi and the Angels of Heaven shall be witnesses!" When the Caliph heard her complaint, he knew that she had been wronged and, returning to the palace, sent Masrur the Eunuch for her. She came before him with bowed head and eyes tearful and heart sorrowful; and he said to her, "O Kut al-Kulub, I find thou accusest me of tyranny and oppression, and thou avouchest that I have done ill by one who did well by me. Who is this who hath guarded my honour while I garred his become dishonour? Who protected my Harim and whose Harim I wrecked?" "He is Ghanim son of Ayyub," replied she, "for he never approached me in wantonness or with lewd intent, I swear by thy munificence, O Commander of the Faithful!" Then said the Caliph, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! Ask what thou wilt of me, O Kut al-Kulub." "O Prince of the Faithful!", answered she, "I require of thee only my beloved Ghanim son of Ayyub." He did as she desired, whereupon she said, "O Lord of the Moslems, if I bring him to thy presence, wilt thou bestow me on him?"; and he replied, "If he come into my presence, I will give thee to him as the gift of the generous who revoketh not his largesse." "O Prince of True Believers," quoth she, "suffer me to go and seek him; haply Allah may unite me with him:" and quoth he, "Do even as thou wilt." So she rejoiced and, taking with her a thousand dinars in gold, went out and visited the elders of the various faiths and gave alms in Ghanim's name.[133] Next day she walked to the merchants' bazar and disclosed her object to the Syndic and gave him money, saying, "Bestow this in charity to the stranger!" On the following Friday she fared to the bazar (with other thousand dinars) and, entering the goldsmiths' and jewellers' market-street, called the Chief and presented to him a thousand 72 dinars with these words, "Bestow this in charity to the stranger!" The Chief looked at her (and he was the Syndic who had taken in Ghanim) and said, "O my lady, wilt thou come to my house and look upon a youth, a stranger I have there and see how goodly and graceful he is?" Now the stranger was Ghanim, son of Ayyub, but the Chief had no knowledge of him and thought him to be some wandering pauper, some debtor whose wealth had been taken from him, or some lover parted from his beloved. When she heard his words her heart fluttered[134] and her vitals yearned, and she said to him, "Send with me one who shall guide me to thy house." So he sent a little lad who brought her to the house wherein was the head man's stranger-guest and she thanked him for this. When she reached the house, she went in and saluted the Syndic's wife, who rose and kissed the ground between her hands, for she knew her. Then quoth Kut al-Kulub, "Where is the sick man who is with thee?" She wept and replied, "Here is he, O my lady; by Allah, he is come of good folk and he beareth the signs of gentle breeding: you see

him lying on yonder bed." So she turned and looked at him: and she saw something like him, but he was worn and wasted till he had become lean as a toothpick, so his identity was doubtful to her and she could not be certain that it was he. Yet pity for him possessed her and she wept saying, "Verily the stranger is unhappy, even though he be a prince in his own land!"; and his case was grievous to her and her heart ached for him, yet she knew him not to be Ghanim. Then she furnished him with wine and medicines and she sat awhile by his head, after which she mounted and returned to her palace and continued to visit every bazar in quest of her lover. Meanwhile Ghanim's mother and sister Fitnah arrived at Baghdad and met the Syndic, who carried them to Kut al-Kulub and said to her, "O Princess of beneficent ladies, there came to our city this day a woman and her daughter, who are fair of favour and signs of good breeding and dignity are apparent in them, though they be dressed in hair-cloth and have each one a wallet hanging to her neck; and their eyes are tearful and their hearts are sorrowful. So I have brought them to thee that thou mayst give them refuge, and rescue them from beggary, 73 for they are not of asker-folk and, if it please Allah, we shall enter Paradise through them." "By Allah, O my master," cried she, "thou makest me long to see them! Where are they?", adding, "Here with them to me!" So he bade the eunuch bring them in; and, when she looked on them and saw that they were both of distinguished beauty, she wept for them and said, "By Allah, these are people of condition and show plain signs of former opulence." "O my lady," said the Syndic's wife, "we love the poor and the destitute, more especially as reward in Heaven will recompense our love; and, as for these persons, haply the oppressor hath dealt hardly with them and hath plundered their property and harried their houses." Then Ghanim's mother and sister wept with sore weeping, remembering their former prosperity and contrasting it with their present poverty and miserable condition; and their thoughts dwelt upon son and brother, whilst Kut al-Kulub wept for their weeping; and they said, "We beseech Allah to reunite us with him whom we desire, and he is none other but my son named Ghanim bin Ayyub!" When Kut al-Kulub heard this, she knew them to be the mother and sister of her lover and wept till a swoon came over her. When she revived she turned to them and said, "Have no fear and sorrow not, for this day is the first of your prosperity and the last of your adversity!" ——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Forty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kut al-Kulub had consoled them she bade the Syndic lead them to his house and let his wife carry them to the Hamman and dress them in handsome clothes and take care of them and honour them with all honour; and she gave him a sufficient sum of money. Next day, she mounted and, riding to his house, went in to his wife who rose up and kissed her hands and thanked her for her kindness. There she saw Ghanim's mother and sister

whom the Syndic's wife had taken to the Hammam and clothed afresh, so that the traces of their former condition became manifest upon them. She sat talking with them awhile, after which she asked the wife about the sick youth who was in her house and she replied, "He is in the 74same state." Then said Kut al-Kulub, "Come, let us go and visit him." So she arose, she and the Chief's wife and Ghanim's mother and sister, and went in to the room where he lay and sat down near him. Presently Ghanim bin Ayyub, the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love, heard them mention the name of Kut al-Kulub; whereupon life returned to him, emaciated and withered as he was, and he raised his head from the pillow and cried aloud, "O Kut al-Kulub!" She looked at him and made certain it was he and shrieked rather than said, "Yes, O my beloved!" "Draw near to me;" said he, and she replied, "Surely thou art Ghanim bin Ayyub?"; and he rejoined "I am indeed!" Hereupon a swoon came upon her; and, as soon as Ghanim's mother and his sister Fitnah heard these words, both cried out "O our joy!" and fainted clean away. When they all recovered, Kut al-Kulub exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah who hath brought us together again and who hath reunited thee with thy mother and thy sister!" And she related to him all that had befallen her with the Caliph and said, "I have made known the truth to the Commander of the Faithful, who believed my words and was pleased with thee; and now he desireth to see thee," adding, "He hath given me to thee." Thereat he rejoiced with extreme joy, when she said, "Quit not this place till I come back" and, rising forthwith, betook herself to her palace. There she opened the chest which she had brought from Ghanim's house and, taking out some of the dinars, gave them to the Syndic saying, "Buy with this money for each of them four complete suits of the finest stuffs and twenty kerchiefs, and else beside of whatsoever they require;" after which she carried all three to the baths and had them washed and bathed and made ready for them consommés, and galangale-water and cider against their coming out. When they left the Hammam, they put on the new clothes, and she abode with them three days feeding them with chicken meats and bouillis, and making them drink sherbet of sugar candy. After three days their spirits returned; and she carried them again to the baths, and when they came out and had changed their raiment, she led them back to the Syndic's house and left them there, whilst she returned to the palace and craved permission to see the Caliph. When he ordered her to come in, she entered and, kissing the ground between his hands, told him the whole story and how her lord, Ghanim bin Ayyub, yclept the Distraught, the Thrall o' Love, and his mother and sister were now in Baghdad. When 75the Caliph heard this, he turned to the eunuchs and said, "Here with Ghanim to me." So Ja'afar went to fetch him; but Kut al-Kulub forewent him and told Ghanim, "The Caliph hath sent to fetch thee before him," and charged him to show readiness of tongue and firmness of heart and sweetness of speech. Then she robed him in a sumptuous dress and gave him dinars in plenty, saying, "Be lavish of largesse to the Caliph's household as thou goest in to him." Presently Ja'afar, mounted on his Nubian mule, came to fetch

him; and Ghanim advanced to welcome the Wazir and, wishing him long life, kissed the ground before him. Now the star of his good fortune had risen and shone brightly; and Ja'afar took him; and they ceased not faring together, he and the Minister, till they went in to the Commander of the Faithful. When he stood in the presence, he looked at the Wazirs and Emirs and Chamberlains, and Viceroys and Grandees and Captains, and then at the Caliph. Hereupon he sweetened his speech and his eloquence and, bowing his head to the ground, broke out in these extempore couplets:—

May that Monarch's life span a mighty span, ✿ Whose lavish of largesse all lieges scan:
None other but he shall be Kaysar hight, ✿ Lord of lordly hall and of haught Divan:
Kings lay their gems on his threshold-dust ✿ As they bow and salam to the mighty man;
And his glances foil them and all recoil, ✿ Bowing beards aground and with faces wan:
Yet they gain the profit of royal grace, ✿ The rank and station of high soldan.
Earth's plain is scant for thy world of men, ✿ Camp there in Kaywán's[135] Empyrean!
May the King of Kings ever hold thee dear; ✿ Be counsel thine and right steadfast plan,
Till thy justice spread o'er the wide-spread earth ✿ And the near and the far be of equal worth.

When he ended his improvisation the Caliph was pleased by it and marvelled at the eloquence of his tongue and the sweetness of his speech,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Forty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph, after marvelling at his eloquence of tongue and sweetness of speech, said to him, "Draw near to me." So he drew near and quoth the King, "Tell me thy tale and declare to me thy case." So Ghanim sat down and related to him what had befallen him in Baghdad, of his sleeping in the tomb and of his opening the chest after the three slaves had departed, and informed him, in short, of everything that had happened to him from commencement to conclusion—none of which we will repeat for interest fails in twice told tales. The Caliph was convinced that he was a true man; so he invested him with a dress of honour, and placed him near himself in token of favour, and said to him, "Acquit me of the responsibility I have incurred."[136] And Ghanim so did, saying, "O our lord the Sultan, of a truth thy slave and all things his two hands own are his master's." The Caliph was pleased at this and gave orders to set apart a palace for him and assigned to him pay and allowances, rations and donations, which amounted to something immense. So he removed thither with sister and mother; after which the Caliph, hearing that his sister Fitnah was in beauty a very "fitnah,"[137] a mere seduction, demanded her in marriage of Ghanim who replied, "She is thy handmaid as I am thy slave." The Caliph thanked him and gave him an hundred thousand dinars, then summoned the witnesses and the Kazi, and on one and the same day they wrote out the two contracts of marriage between the Caliph and Fitnah and between Ghanim

bin Ayyub and Kut al-Kulub; and the two marriages were consummated on one and the same night. When it was morning, the Caliph gave orders to record the history of what had befallen Ghanim from first to last and to deposit it in the royal muniment-rooms, that those who came after him might read it and marvel at the dealings of Destiny and put their trust in Him who created the night and the day. Yet, O auspicious King, this story to which thou hast deigned give ear is on no wise more wondrous than the

8- TALE OF KING OMAR BIN AL-NU'UMAN AND HIS SONS SHARRKAN AND ZAU AL-MAKAN, AND WHAT BEFEL THEM OF THINGS SELD-SEEN AND PEREGRINE.[138]

The King asked her, "And what was their story?" and she answered:—It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there was in the City of Safety, Baghdad, before the Caliphate of Abd al-Malik bin Marwán,[139] a King, Omar bin al-Nu'uman hight, who was of the mighty giants and had subjected the Chosroes of Persia and the Kaysars of Eastern Rome; for none could warm himself at his fire;[140] nor could any avail to meet him in the field of foray and fray; and, when he was an-angered, there came forth from his nostrils sparks of flame. He had made himself King over all quarters, and Allah had subjected to him all His creatures; his word went forth to all great cities and his hosts had harried the farthest lands. East and West had come under his command with whatsoever regions lay interspersed between them, Hind and Sind and Sin,[141] the Holy Land, Al-Hijaz, the rich mountains of Al-Yaman and the archipelagos of India and China. Moreover, he 78 reigned supreme over the north country and Diyár Bakr, or Mesopotamia, and over Sudán, the Eastern Negro-land and the Islands of the Ocean, and all the far famed rivers of the earth, Sayhún and Jayhún,[142] Nile and Euphrates. He sent envoys and ambassadors to capitals the most remote, to provide him with true report; and they would bring back tidings of justice and peace, with assurance of loyalty and obedience and of prayers in the pulpits for King Omar bin al-Nu'uman; for he was, O Ruler of the Age, a right noble King; and there came to him presents of rarities and toll and tribute from all lands of his governing. This mighty monarch had a son yclept Sharrkan,[143] who was likest of all men to his father and who

proved himself one of the prodigies of his time for subduing the brave and bringing his contemporaries to bane and ban. For this his father loved him with love so great none could be greater, and made him heir to the kingdom after himself. This Prince grew up till he reached man's estate and was twenty years old, and Allah subjected His servants to him, by reason of his great might and prowess in battle. Now his father, King Omar, had four wives legally married, but Allah had vouchsafed him no son by them, save Sharrkan, whom he had begotten upon one of them, and the rest were barren. Moreover he had three hundred and sixty concubines, after the number of days in the Coptic year, who were of all nations; and he had furnished for each and every a private chamber within his own palace. For he had built twelve pavilions, after the number of the months, each containing thirty private chambers, which thus numbered three hundred and three score, wherein he lodged his handmaids: and he appointed according to law for each one her night, when he lay with her and came not again to her for a full year;[144] and on this wise he abode for a length of time. Meanwhile his son Sharrkan was making himself renowned in all quarters of the world and his father was proud of him and his might waxed and grew mightier; so that he passed 79 all bounds and bore himself masterfully and took by storm castles and cities. Presently, by decree of the Decreer, a handmaid among the handmaids of Omar bin Nu'uman became pregnant; and, her pregnancy being announced to the Harim, the King was informed thereof; whereupon he rejoiced with exceeding joy and said, "Haply 'twill be a son, and so all my offspring will be males!" Then he documented the date of her conception and entreated her with all manner of kindness. But when the tidings came to Sharrkan, he was troubled and the matter seemed to him a sore one and a grievous; and he said, "Verily one cometh who shall dispute with me the sovereignty:" so quoth he to himself, "If this concubine bear a male child I will kill it:" but he kept that intention hidden in his heart. Such was the case with Sharrkan; but what happened in the matter of the damsel was as follows. She was a Roumiyah, a Greek girl, by name Sofiyah or Sophia,[145] whom the King of Roum and Lord of Cæsarea had sent to King Omar as a present, together with great store of gifts and of rarities: she was the fairest of favour and loveliest of all his handmaids and the most regardful of her honour; and she was gifted with a wit as penetrating as her presence was fascinating. Now she had served the King on the night of his sleeping with her, saying to him, "O King! I desire of the God of the Heavens that he bless thee this night with a male child by me, so I may bring him up with the best of rearing, and enable him to reach man's estate perfect in intelligence, good manners and prudent bearing"[146]—a speech which much pleased the King. During her pregnancy she was instant in 80 prayer, fervently supplicating the Lord to bless her with a goodly male child and make his birth easy to her; and Allah heard her petition so that after her months were accomplished she sat safely upon the birth-stool.[147] Now the King had deputed a eunuch to let him know if the child she should bring forth were male or

female; and in like way his son Sharrkan had sent one to bring him tidings of the same. In due time Sophia was delivered of a child, which the midwives examined and found to be a girl with a face sheenier than the moon. So they announced this to all present in the room, whereupon the King's messenger carried the news to him; and Sharrkan's eunuch did the like with his master, who rejoiced with exceeding joy. But, after the two had departed, quoth Sophia to the midwives, "Wait with me awhile, for I feel as if there were still somewhat in my womb." Then she cried out and the pains of child-bed again took her; and Allah made it easy to her and she gave birth to a second child. The wise women looked at it and found it a boy like the full moon, with forehead flower-white, and cheek ruddy-bright with rosy light; whereupon the mother rejoiced, as did the eunuchs and attendants and all the company; and Sophia was delivered of the after-birth whilst all in the palace sent forth the trill of joy.[148] The rest of the concubines 81 heard it and envied her lot; and the tidings reached Omar son of Al-Nu'uman, who was glad and rejoiced at the excellent news. Then he rose and went to her and kissed her head, after which he looked at the boy; and, bending over him, kissed him, whilst the damsels struck the tabors and played on instruments of music; and the King gave order that the boy should be named Zau al-Makan and his sister Nuzhat al-Zaman.[149] They answered "Hearing and obedience," and did his bidding; so he appointed wet nurses and dry nurses and eunuchs and attendants to serve them; and assigned them rations of sugar and diet-drinks and unguents and else beside, beyond the power of tongue to rehearse. Moreover the people of Baghdad, hearing that Allah had blessed their King with issue, decorated the city and made proclamation of the glad tidings with drum and tom-tom; and the Emirs and Wazirs and high dignitaries came to the palace and wished King Omar bin al-Nu'uman joy of his son, Zau al-Makan, and of his daughter Nuzhat al-Zaman, wherefor he thanked them and bestowed on them dresses of honour and further favoured them with gifts, and dealt largesse to all, gentle and simple, who were present. After this fashion he did for four days full told, and he lavished upon Sophia raiment and ornaments and great store of wealth; and, every few days he would send a messenger to ask after her and the new-borns. And when four years had gone by, he provided her with the wherewithal to rear the two children carefully and educate them with the best of instructions. All this while his son Sharrkan knew not that a male child had been born to his father, Omar son of Al-Nu'uman, having news only that he had been blessed with the birth of Nuzhat al-Zaman; and they hid the intelligence from him, until days and years had sped by, whilst he was busied in battling with the brave and fighting single-handed against the knights. One day, as King Omar was sitting in his palace, his Chamberlains came in to him and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O King there be come Ambassadors from the King of Roum, Lord of Constantinople the Great, and they desire admission to thee and submission to thy decree: if the King command us to introduce them we will so do; and, if not, there is no disputing his behest." He bade them enter and, when they came in, he turned to them and, courteously receiving

them, asked them of their case, and what was the cause of their coming. They 82 kissed the ground before him and said, "O King glorious and strong! O lord of the arm that is long! know that he who despatched us to thee is King Afridun,[150] Lord of Ionia-land[151] and of the Nazarene armies, the sovereign who is firmly established in the empery of Constantinople, to acquaint thee that he is now waging fierce war and fell with a tyrant and a rebel, the Prince of Cæsarea; and the cause of this war is as follows. One of the Kings of the Arabs in past time, during certain of his conquests, chanced upon a hoard of the time of Alexander,[152] whence he removed wealth past compute; and, amongst other things, three round jewels, big as ostrich eggs, from a mine of pure white gems whose like was never seen by man. Upon each were graven charcts in Ionian characters, and they have many virtues and properties, amongst the rest that if one of these jewels be hung round the neck of a newborn child, no evil shall befal him and he shall neither wail, nor shall fever ail him as long as the jewel remain without fail.[153] When the Arab King laid hands upon them and learned their secrets, he sent to King Afridun presents of certain rarities and amongst them the three jewels afore mentioned; and he equipped for the mission two ships, one bearing the treasure and the other men of might to guard it from any who might offer hindrance on the high seas, albeit well assured that none would dare waylay his vessels, for that he was King of the Arabs, and more by token that their course lay over waters subject to the King of Constantinople and they were bound to his port; nor were there on the shores of that sea any save the subjects of the Great King, Afridun. The two ships set out and voyaged till they drew near our city, when there sallied out on them certain corsairs from that country and amongst them troops from the Prince of Cæsarea, who took all the treasures and rarities in the ships, together with the three jewels, and slew the crews. When our King heard of this, he sent an army against them, but they routed it; then he marched a second and a stronger but they put this 83 also to flight, whereupon the King waxed wroth and swore that he would not go forth[154] against them save in his own person at the head of his whole army; nor would he turn back from them till he had left Cæsarea of Armenia[155] in ruins and had laid waste all the lands and cities over which her Prince held sway. So he sent us to the Lord of the age and the time, Sultan Omar bin al-Nu'uman, King of Baghdad and of Khorasan, desiring that he aid us with an army, so may honour and glory accrue to him; and he hath also forwarded by us somewhat of various kinds of presents, and of the King's grace he beggeth their acceptance and the friendly boon of furtherance." Then the Ambassadors kissed the ground before him——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Forty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that, after the Ambassadors and retinue from the Constantinopolitan King had kissed the ground before Omar and had delivered their embassage, they brought out the presents, which were fifty damsels of

the choicest from Græcia-land, and fifth Mamelukes in tunics of brocade, belted with girdles of gold and silver, each wearing in his ears hoops of gold with pendants of fine pearls costing a thousand ducats every one. The girls were adorned in like fashion and were clad in stuffs worth a treasury of money. When the King saw them, he rejoiced in them and accepted them; then he bade the Ambassadors be honourably entreated and, summoning his Wazirs, took counsel with them of what he should do. Herewith rose up among them a Wazir, an ancient man, Dandán[156] hight, who kissed the ground before Omar and said, "O King, there is nothing better to do in this matter than equip an army valiant and victorious, and set over it thy son Sharrkan with us as his lieutenants; and this rede commendeth itself to me on two counts: first, because the King of Roum hath invoked thine assistance and hath sent thee gifts which thou hast accepted; and, secondly, because while no enemy dareth attack our country, thine 84 army may go forth safely and, should it succour the King of Græcia-land and defeat his foe, the glory will be thine. Moreover, the news of it will be noised abroad in all cities and countries; and especially, when the tidings shall reach the Islands of the Ocean and the Kings of Mauritania shall hear it, they will send thee offerings of rarities and pay thee tribute of money." The King, pleased by the Wazir's words and approving his rede, gave him a dress of honour and said to him, "Of the like of thee should Kings ask counsel, and it seemeth fit that thou shouldst conduct the van of our army and our son Sharrkan command the main battle." Then he sent for his son who came and kissed ground before him and sat down; and he expounded to him the matter, telling him what the Ambassadors and the Wazir Dandan had said, and he charged him to take arms and equip himself for the campaign, enjoining him not to gainsay Dandan in aught he should do. Moreover, he ordered him to pick out of his army ten thousand horsemen, armed cap-à-pie and inured to onset and stress of war. Accordingly, Sharrkan arose on the instant, and chose out a myriad of horsemen, after which he entered his palace and mustered his host and distributed largesse to them, saying, "Ye have delay of three days." They kissed the earth before him in obedience to his commands and began at once to lay in munitions, and provide provisions for the occasion; whilst Sharrkan repaired to the armouries and took therefrom whatsoever he required of arms and armour, and thence to the stable where he chose horses of choice blood and others. When the appointed three days were ended, the army drew out to the suburbs of Baghdad city;[157] and King Omar came forth to take leave of his son who kissed the ground before him and received from the King seven parcels of money.[158] Then he turned to Dandan and commended to his care the army of his son; and the Wazir kissed the ground before him and answered, "I hear and I obey;" and lastly he charged Sharrkan that he should consult the Wazir on all occasions, which he promised to do. After this, the King returned to his city and Sharrkan ordered the officers to muster their troops in battle-array. So they mustered them and their 85 number was ten thousand horsemen, besides footmen and camp-followers.

Then they loaded their baggage on their beasts and the war-drums beat and the trumpets blared and the bannerols and standards were unfurled, whilst Sharrkan mounted horse, with the Wazir Dandan by his side, and the colours fluttering over their heads. So the host fared forth and stinted not faring, with the Ambassadors preceding them, till day departed and night drew nigh, when they alighted and encamped for the night. And as soon as Allah caused the morn to morrow, they mounted and hied on, guided by the Ambassadors, for a space of twenty days; and by the night of the twenty-first they came to a fine and spacious Wady well grown with trees and shrubbery. Here Sharrkan ordered them to alight and commanded a three days' halt, so they dismounted and pitched their tents, spreading their camp over the right and the left slopes of the extensive valley, whilst the Wazir Dandan and the Ambassadors of King Afridun pitched in the sole of the Wady.[159] As for Sharrkan, he tarried behind them for awhile till all had dismounted and had dispersed themselves over the valley-sides; he then slacked the reins of his steed, being minded to explore the Wady and to mount guard in his own person, because of his father's charge and owing to the fact that they were on the frontier of Græcia-land and in the enemy's country. So he rode out alone after ordering his armed slaves and his body-guard to camp near the Wazir Dandan, and he fared on along the side of the valley till a fourth part of the night was passed, when he felt tired and drowsiness overcame him, so that he could no longer urge horse with heel. Now he was accustomed to take rest on horseback; so when slumber overpowered him, he slept and the steed ceased not going on with him till half the night was spent and entered one of the thickets[160] which was dense with growth; but Sharrkan awoke not until his horse stumbled over wooded ground. Then he started from sleep and found himself among the trees; and the moon arose and shone brightly over the two horizons, Eastern and Western. He was startled when he found himself alone in this place and said the say 86 which ne'er yet shamed its sayer, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" But as he rode on, in fear of wild beasts, behold, the moon spread her glad light over a meadow as if 'twere of the meads of Paradise; and he heard pleasant voices and a loud noise of talk and laughter captivating the senses of men. So King Sharrkan alighted and, tying his steed to one of the trees, went over a little way till he came upon a stream and heard a woman talking in Arabic and saying, "Now by the truth of the Messiah, this is not well of you! but whoso utters a word, I will throw her and truss her up with her own girdle[161]!" He kept walking in the direction of the sound and when he reached the further side he looked and behold, a stream was gushing and flowing, and antelopes at large were frisking and roving, and wild cattle amid the pasture moving, and birds expressed joy and gladness in their divers tongues, and that place was purfled with all manner flowers and green herbs, even as a poet described it in these couplets:—

Most beautiful is earth in budding bloom, ✿ When lucid waters course through plain and wood:

No work but His th' All-great, th' All-glorious, ✿ Giver of all gifts, Giver of all good!

And as Sharrkan considered the place, he saw in it a Christian Monastery within whose enceinte a castle towered high in air catching the light of the moon.[162] Through the midst of the convent passed a stream, the water flowing amongst its gardens; and upon the bank sat the woman whose voice he had heard, while before her stood ten handmaids like moons and wearing various sorts of raiment and ornaments that dazed and dazzled the beholder, high-bosomed virgins, as saith of them the poet in these couplets:—

The mead is bright with what is on't ✿ Of merry maidens debonnair:

Double its beauty and its grace ✿ Those trooping damsels slender-fair:

Virgins of graceful swimming gait ✿ Ready with eye and lip to ensnare;

And like the tendril'd vine they loose ✿ The rich profusion of their hair:

Shooting their shafts and arrows from ✿ Beautiful eyes beyond compare;

Overpowering and transpiercing ✿ Every froward adversaire.

87 Sharrkan gazed upon the ten girls and saw in their midst a lady like the moon at fullest, with ringleted hair and forehead sheeny-white, and eyes wondrous wide and black and bright, and temple-locks like the scorpion's tail; and she was perfect in essence and attributes, as the poet said of her in these couplets:—

She beamed on my sight with a wondrous glance, ✿ And her straight slender stature enshamed the lance:

She burst on my sight with cheeks rosy-red, ✿ Where all manner of beauties have habitance:

And the locks on her forehead were lowering as night ✿ Whence issues a dawn-tide of happiest chance.

Then Sharrkan heard her say to the handmaids, "Come ye on, that I may wrestle with you and gravel you, ere the moon set and the dawn break!" So each came up to her in turn and she grounded them forthright, and pinioned them with their girdles, and ceased not wrestling and pitching them until she had overthrown one and all. Then there turned to her an old woman who was before her, and the beldam said as in wrath, "O strumpet, dost thou glory in grounding these girls? Behold I am an old woman, yet have I thrown them forty times! So what hast thou to boast of? But if thou have the strength to wrestle with me, stand up that I may grip thee and set thy head between thy heels!" The young lady smiled at her words, but she was filled with inward wrath, and she jumped up and asked, "O my lady Zát al-Dawáhí,[163] by the truth of the Messiah, wilt thou wrestle with me in very deed, or dost thou jest with me?"; and she answered, "Yea,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the young lady asked Zat al-Dawahi, "By the truth of the Messiah, wilt wrestle with me or dost jest?", and she answered, "Yea, I will wrestle with thee in very deed" (Sharrkan looking on the while), the damsel cried, "Rise up for the fall an thou have spunk so to do." When the

old woman heard this, she raged with exceeding 88 rage, and her body-hair stood on end like the bristles of a fretful hedgehog.[164] Then she sprang to her feet, whilst the damsel stood up to her, and said, "Now by the truth of the Messiah, I will not wrestle with thee unless I be naked, Mistress whore!"[165] So she loosed her petticoat-trousers and, putting her hand under her clothes, tore them off her body; then twisted up a silken kerchief into cord-shape, girt it round her middle and became as she were a scald-head Ifritah or a spotted snake. With this she inclined towards the damsel and said, "Do thou as I have done." All this time, Sharrkan was gazing at the twain, and laughing at the beldam's loathly semblance. So the damsel leisurely rose and, taking a sash of Yamani stuff, passed it twice round her waist, then she tucked up her trousers and displayed two calves of alabaster carrying a mound of crystal, smooth and rounded, and a stomach which exhaled musk from its dimples, as it were a bed of Nu'uman's anemones; and breasts like double pomegranates. Then the old woman leant towards her, and the two laid hold either of each, while Sharrkan raised his head Heavenwards and prayed Allah that the belle might beat the beldam. Presently the young woman gat beneath the old woman; and, gripping her waist-cloth with the left and circling her neck with the right hand, hoisted her off the ground with both; whereupon the old woman strove to free herself and, in so doing fell on her back arsiversy, with her legs high in air and her hairy bush between them showed manifest in the moonshine; furthermore she let fly two great farts[166] one of which blew up the dust from the earth's face and the other steamed up to the gate of Heaven. Sharrkan laughed till he fell back upon the ground. Then he arose and, baring his brand looked right and left, but he saw no one save the old woman sprawling on her back, and said to himself, "He lied not who named thee Lady of Calamities! Verily thou knewest her prowess by her performance upon the others." So he drew near them to hear what should pass between them. Then the young lady went 89 up to the old one and, throwing a wrapper of thin silk upon her nakedness, helped her to don her clothes and made excuses saying, "O my lady Zat al-Dawahi, I intended only to throw thee and not all this, but thou triedst to twist out of my hands; so laud to Allah for safety!" She returned her no answer, but rose in her shame and walked away till out of sight, leaving the handmaids prostrate and pinioned, with the fair damsel standing amongst them. Quoth Sharrkan to himself, "Every luck hath its cause. Sleep did not fall upon me nor the war-horse bear me hither save for my good fortune; for doubtless this maid and what is with her shall become booty to me." So he made towards his steed and mounted and heeled[167] him on, when he sped as the shaft speeds from the bow, and in his hand he still hent his brand bare of sheath, which he brandished shouting the while his war-cry, "Allah is All-mighty[168]!" When the damsel saw him she sprang to her feet and, taking firm stand on the bank of the stream, whose breadth was six ells, the normal cubits, made one bound and landed clear on the farther side,[169] where she turned and cried out with a loud voice, "Who art thou, O thou fellow, that breakest in

upon our privacy and pastime, and that too hanger in hand as if charging a host? Whence camest thou and whither art thou going? Speak sooth, for truth will stand thee in good stead, and lie not, for lies come of villein-breed. Doubtless thou hast wandered this night from thy way, that thou chancedst upon this place whence escape were the greatest of mercies; for thou art now in an open plain and, did we shout but a single shout, would come to our rescue four thousand knights.[170] So tell me what thou wantest; and if thou wouldst only have us set thee on the right road, we will do so." When Sharrkan heard her words he replied, "I am a stranger of the Moslems, who fared forth this night single-handed, seeking for spoil; nor could this moonlight show me a fairer booty than these ten maidens; so 90 I shall seize them and rejoin my comrades with them." Quoth she, "I would have thee know that as for the booty thou hast not come at it; and, as for the handmaids, by Allah, they shall never be thy spoil. Have I not told thee that to lie is villein-vile?" Quoth he, "The wise man is he who taketh warning by others." Thereupon quoth she, "By the truth of the Messiah, did I not fear that thy death would be on my hands, I would shout a shout should fill the mead for thee with war steeds and with men of might, but I take pity upon the stranger. So, if thou seek booty, I require of thee that thou alight from thy steed and swear to me, by thy faith, that thou wilt not advance against me aught like arms in hand, and we will wrestle, I and thou. If thou throw me, set me on thy steed and take all of us to thy booty; but if I throw thee, thou shalt become under my command. Swear this to me, for I fear thy treachery: indeed it hath become a common saw, Where Perfidy is innate there Trust is a weakly mate. Now an thou wilt swear I will return and draw near to thee and tackle thee." Answered Sharrkan (and indeed he lusted to seize her and said in his soul, "Truly she knoweth not that I am a champion of champions"); "Swear me by what oath thou wilt and by what thou deemest most binding, and I will not approach thee with aught till thou hast made thy preparation and sayest:—Draw near that I wrestle with thee. If thou throw me, I have money wherewithal to ransom myself; and if I throw thee, 'twill be booty and booty enough for me!" Rejoined the damsel, "I am content herewith!" and Sharrkan was astounded at her words and said, "And by the truth of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and keep!) I too am content on the other part!" Then said she, "Swear to me by Him who sprite in body dight and dealt laws to rule mankind aright, that thou wilt not offer me aught of violence save by way of wrestling; else mayst thou die without the pale of Al-Islam." Sharrkan replied, "By Allah! were a Kazi to swear me, even though he were a Kazi of the Kazis,[171] he would not impose upon me such an oath as this!" Then he sware to her by all she named and tied his steed to a tree; but he was drowned in the sea of thought, saying in himself, "Praise be to Him who fashioned 91 her from dirty water!"[172] Then he girt himself and made ready for wrestling, and said to her, "Cross the stream to me;" but she replied, "It is not for me to come over to thee: if thou wilt, pass thou over here to me." "I cannot do that," quoth he, and quoth she, "O boy, I will

come across to thee." So she tucked up her skirts and, leaping, landed on the other side of the stream by his side; whereupon he drew near to her and bent him forwards and clapped palms.[173] But he was confounded by her beauty and loveliness; for he saw a shape which the Hand of Power had tanned with the dye-leaves of the Jánn, which had been fostered by the Hand of Beneficence and fanned by the Zephyrs of fair fortune and whose birth a propitious ascendant had greeted. Then she called out to him, "O Moslem, come on and let us wrestle ere the break of morning," and tucked up her sleeves from a fore-arm like fresh curd, which illumined the whole place with its whiteness; and Sharrkan was dazzled by it. Then he bent forwards and clapped his palms by way of challenge, she doing the like, and caught hold of her, and the two grappled and gripped and interlocked hands and arms. Presently he shifted his hands to her slender waist, when his finger tips sank into the soft folds of her middle, breeding languishment, and he fell a trembling like the Persian reed in the 92 roaring gale. So she lifted him up and, throwing him to the ground, sat upon his breast with hips and hinder cheeks like mounds of sand, for his soul had lost mastery over his senses. Then she asked him, "O Moslem! the slaying of Nazarenes is lawful to you folk; what then hast thou to say about being slain thyself?"; and he answered, "O my lady, thy speech as regards slaying me is not other than unlawful; for our prophet Mohammed (whom Allah bless and preserve!) prohibited the slaying of women and children, old men and monks!" "As it was thus revealed to your Prophet," she replied, "it behoveth us to render the equivalent of his mercy; so rise. I give thee thy life, for generosity is never lost upon the generous." Then she got off his breast and he rose and stood shaking the dust from his head against the owners of the curved rib, even women; and she said to him, "Be not ashamed; but verily one who entereth the land of Roum in quest of booty, and cometh to assist Kings against Kings, how happeneth it that he hath not strength enough to defend himself from one made out of the curved rib?" "'Twas not for lack of strength in me," he answered; "nor didst thou throw me by thy force; it was thy loveliness overthrew me; so if thou wilt grant me another bout, it will be of thy courtesy." She laughed and said, "I grant thee thy request: but these handmaids have long been pinioned and their arms and sides are weary, and it were only right I should loose them, for haply this next wrestling bout will be long." Then she went to the slave-girls and, unbinding them, said to them in the tongue of Greece, "Get ye to some safe place, till I foil this Moslem's lust and longing for you." So they went away, whilst Sharrkan kept gazing at them and they kept turning to look at the two. Then each approached the adversary and he set his breast against hers, but when he felt waist touch waist, his strength failed him; and she, waxing ware of this, lifted him with her hands swiftlier than the blinding leven-flash, and threw him to the ground. He fell on his back,[174] and then she said to him, "Rise: I give thee thy life a second time. I spared thee in the first count because of thy Prophet, for that he made unlawful the slaying of women; and I do so on the second count because of thy weakliness and the greenness of thine years and thy strangerhood; but I charge thee, if

there be in the Moslem army sent by Omar bin 93al-Nu'uman to succour the King of Constantinople, a stronger than thou, send him hither and tell him of me: for in wrestling there are shifts and trips, catches and holds, such as the feint or falsing and the snap or first grip, the hug, the feet-catch, the thigh-bite,[175] the jostle and the leg-lock." "By Allah, O my lady," quoth Sharrkan (and indeed he was highly incensed against her), "had I been Master al-Safdí, Master Mohammed Kimál or Ibn al-Saddí,[176] as they were in their prime, I had kept no note of these shifts thou mentionest; for O my mistress, by Allah, thou hast not grassed me by thy strength, but by the blandishments of thy back-parts; for we men of Mesopotamia so love a full-formed thigh that nor sense was left me nor foresight. But now, an thou wish, thou shalt try a third fall with me while my wits are about me, and this last match is allowed me by the laws of the game which sayeth the best of three: moreover I have regained my presence of mind." When she heard his words she said to him, "Hast thou not had a belly-full of this wrestling, O vanquished one? However come on, an thou wilt; but know that this must be the last round." Then she bent forward and challenged him and Sharrkan did likewise, setting to it in real earnest and being right cautious about the throw: so the two strove awhile and the damsel found in him a strength such as she had not observed before and said to him, "O Moslem, thou art now on thy mettle." "Yes," he replied, "thou knowest that there remaineth to me but this one round, after which each of us will wend a different way." She laughed and he laughed too;[177] then she overreached at his thigh and caught firm hold of it unawares, which made him greet the ground and fall full on his back. She laughed at him and said, "Art thou an eater of bran? Thou art like a Badawi's bonnet which falleth off with every touch or else the Father of Winds[178] that droppeth before a puff of air. Fie upon thee, O thou poor thing!" adding, "Get thee back to the Moslem army and send us other than 94thyself, for thou failest of thews; and proclaim for us, among the Arabs and Persians, the Turks and Daylamites,[179] whoso hath might in him, let him come to us." Then she made a spring and landed on the other side of the stream and said to Sharrkan, laughing, "Parting with thee is right grievous to me, O my lord; but get thee to thy mates before dawn, lest the Knights come upon thee and pick thee up on their lance-points. Thou hast no strength to defend thee against a woman, so how couldst thou hold thine own amongst men of might and Knights?" Sharrkan was confounded and called to her (as she turned from him making towards the convent), "O my lady, wilt thou go away and leave the miserable stranger, the broken hearted slave of love?" So she turned to him laughing and said, "What is thy want? I will grant thee thy prayer." "Have I set foot in thy country and tasted the sweetness of thy courtesy," replied he, "and shall I return without eating of thy victual and tasting thy hospitality; I who have become one of thy servitors!" "None baulk kindliness save the base," she rejoined, "honour us in Allah's name, on my head and eyes be it! Mount thy steed and ride along the brink of the stream over against me, for now thou art my

guest." At this Sharrkan was glad and, hastening back to his horse, mounted and walked him abreast of her, and she kept faring on till they came to a drawbridge[180] built of beams of the white poplar, hung by pullies and steel-chains and made fast with hooks and padlocks. When Sharrkan looked, he saw awaiting her upon the bridge the same ten handmaids whom she had thrown in the wrestling-bouts; and, as she came up to them, she said to one in the Greek tongue, "Arise and take the reins of his horse and conduct him across into the convent." So she went up to Sharrkan and led him over, much puzzled and perturbed with what he saw, and saying to himself, "O would that the Wazir Dandan were here with me that his eyes might look upon these fairest of favours." Then he turned to the young lady and said to her, "O marvel of loveliness, now I have two claims upon thee; first the claim of good-fellowship, and secondly for that thou hast carried me to thy home and offered me thy hospitality. I am now under thy commandance 95 and thy guidance; so do me one last favour by accompanying me to the lands of Al-Islam; where thou shalt look upon many a lion-hearted warrior and thou shalt learn who I am." When she heard this she was angered and said to him, "By the truth of the Messiah, thou hast proved thyself with me a man of keen wit; but now I see what mischief there is in thy heart, and how thou canst permit thyself a speech which proveth thy traitorous intent. How should I do as thou sayest, when I wot that if I came to that King of yours, Omar bin al-Nu'uman, I should never get free from him? For truly he hath not the like of me or behind his city walls or within his palace-halls, Lord of Baghdad and of Khorasan though he be, who hath built for himself twelve pavilions, in number as the months of the year, and in each a concubine after the number of the days; and if I come to him he would not prove shy of me, for your folk believe I am lawful to have and to hold as is said in your writ:—Or those women whom your right hand shall possess as slaves.[181] So how canst thou speak thus to me? As for thy saying:—Thou shalt look upon the braves of the Moslems, by the truth of the Messiah, thou sayest that which is not true, for I saw your army when it reached our land, these two days ago; and I did not see that your ordinance was the ordinance of Kings, but I beheld only a rabble of tribesmen gathered together. And as to thy words:—Thou shalt know who I am, I did not do thee kindness because of thy dignity but out of pride in myself; and the like of thee should not talk thus to the like of me, even wert thou Sharrkan, Omar bin al-Nu'uman's son, the prowest name in these days!" "Knowest thou Sharrkan?" asked he; and she answered "Yes! and I know of his coming with an army numbering ten thousand horsemen; also that he was sent by his sire with this force to gain prevalence for the King of Constantinople." "O my lady," said Sharrkan, "I adjure thee by thy religion, tell me the cause of all this, that sooth may appear to me clear of untruth, and with whom the fault lies." "Now by the virtue of thy faith," she replied, "did I not fear lest the news of me be bruited abroad that I am of the daughters of Roum, I would adventure myself and sally forth 96 single-handed against the ten thousand horsemen

and slay their leader, the Wazir Dandan and vanquish their champion Sharrkan.[182] Nor would aught of shame accrue to me thereby, for I have read books and studied the rules of good breeding in the language of the Arabs. But I have no need to vaunt my own prowess to thee, more by token as thou hast proved in thy proper person my skill and strength in wrestling; and thou hast learnt my superiority over other women. Nor, indeed, had Sharrkan himself been here this night and it were said to him:—Clear this stream, could he have done it; and I only long and lust that the Messiah would throw him into my hands in this very convent, that I might go forth to him in the habit of a man and drag him from his saddle-seat and make him my captive and lay him in bilboes."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Forty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Nazarene damsel said to Sharrkan (and he listening impatiently enow), "Verily if Sharrkan fell into my hands, I would go forth to him in the habit of a man and drag him from his saddle-seat and make him my captive and lay him in bilboes," pride and passion and knightly

jealousy took possession of him and he desired to discover and declare himself and to lay on load; but her loveliness restrained him and he began repeating:—

An faulty of one fault the Beauty prove, ✿ Her charms a thousand advocates shall move.

So she went up and Sharrkan after her; and, when he saw the maiden's back and hinder cheeks that clashed against each other, like rollers in the rolling sea, he extemporised these couplets:—

97 For her sins is a pleader that brow, ✿ And all hearts its fair pleading must trow:

When I saw it I cried, "To-night ✿ The moon at its fullest doth show;

Tho' Balkís' own Ifrit[183] try a bout, ✿ Spite his force she would deal him a throw.

The two fared on till they reached a gate over which rose a marble archway. This she opened and ushered Sharrkan into a long vestibule, vaulted with ten connected arches, from each of which hung a crystal lamp glistening like a spark of fire. The handmaids met her at the further end bearing wax candles of goodly perfume, and wearing on their heads golden fillets crusted with all manner bezel-gems,[184] and went on before her (Sharrkan still following), till they reached the inner convent. There the Moslem saw couches and sofas ranged all around, one opposite the other and all overhung with curtains flowered in gold. The monastery floor was paved with every kind of vari-coloured marbles and mosaic-work, and in the midst stood a basin that held four-and-twenty jetting fountains of gold, whence the water ran like molten silver; whilst at the upper end stood a throne spread with silks fit only for Kings. Then said the damsel, "Ascend, O my lord, this throne." So he went up to it and sat down and she withdrew to remain absent for some time. Sharrkan asked of her from one of the servants who answered him, "She hath gone to her dormitory; but we will serve thee even as she ordered." So they set before him viands of rare varieties, and he ate his sufficiency, when they brought him a basin of gold and an ewer of silver, and he washed his hands. Then his thoughts reverted to his army, knowing not what had befallen it in his absence and calling to mind also how 98 he had forgotton his father's injunctions: so he was troubled about his case, repenting of what he had done till the dawn broke and the day appeared; when he lamented and sighed and became drowned in the sea of sadness and repeated:—

I am not lost to prudence, but indeed ✿ Here I'm bewildered, what shall be my rede?

Would any aid me in mine ails of love, ✿ By my own might and sleight would I be free'd:

But ah! my heart is lost and passion-shent: ✿ To none save Allah can I trust my need!

When he ended his verse behold, there came up to him a rare show and a fair, more than twenty maidens like crescents encompassing the young lady, who shone in their midst as the full moon among the constellations guarding and girding her. She was clad in brocades befitting Kings; her breasts were like twin pomegranates, a woven zone set with all kinds of jewels tightly clasped her waist which expanded below into jutting hips; and her hinder cheeks stood out as a mound of crystal[185] supporting a

silvern shaft. When Sharrkan looked at her his wits went nigh to fly away from him with delight; and he forgot army and Wazir as he gazed on her fair head decked and dight with a net-work of pearls set off by divers sorts of gems. Handmaids on her right and handmaids on her left bore her train, as she paced with dainty graceful gait in all the pride of seemlihead. He sprang to his feet seeing such beauty and loveliness, and cried aloud, "Beware and beware of that zone rarely fair!" and broke out into these couplets:—

With heavy back-parts, high breasts delicate, ✿ And lissome form that sways with swimming gait,
She deftly hides love-longing in her breast; ✿ But I may never hide its ban and bate:
While hosts of followers her steps precede,[186] ✿ Like pearls now necklaced and now separate.

She gazed upon him for a long time and considered him till she was assured of him, when she came up to him and said, "In very 99sooth the place is honoured and illumined by thee, O Sharrkan! How sped thy night, O hero, after we went away and left thee?"; adding, "Verily lying is a vile thing and a shameful, especially in great Kings! and thou art Crown-Prince Sharrkan, son and heir of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman; so henceforth make no secret of thy rank and condition, nor let me hear aught from thee but the truth; for leasing bequeatheth hate and despite. And as thou art pierced by the shaft of Fate, be resignation thine and abide content to wait." When he heard her words he saw that artifice availed him naught and he acknowledged the truth, saying, "I am Sharrkan, bin Omar bin al-Nu'uman, whom fortune hath afflicted, and cast into this place; so whatso thou willest, do it in my case!" She hung her head groundwards a long while, then turned to him and said, "Be of good cheer and let thine eyes be cool and clear;[187] for thou art the guest of my hospitality, and bread-and-salt hath made a tie between me and thee; wherefore thou art in my ward and under my safeguard. Have no fear for, by the truth of the Messiah, if all on earth sought to do thee hurt they should not come at thee, till life had left my body for thy sake: indeed thou art now under the charge of the Messiah and of me." Hereat she sat her down by his side and fell to playing with him, till his alarm subsided and he knew that had she desired to slay him, she would have done so during the past night. Presently she bespoke in the Grecian tongue one of her slave-girls, who went away and soon came back bringing a beaker and a tray of food; but Sharrkan abstained from eating and said to himself, "Haply she hath put somewhat in this meat." She knew what was in his thought; so she turned to him and said, "By the truth of the Messiah, the case is not on such wise, nor is there aught in this meat of what thou suspectest! Had my mind been set on slaying thee, I had slain thee ere now." Then she walked up to the tray and ate of every dish a mouthful; whereupon Sharrkan came forward and ate too. She was pleased at this and both ate till they were satisfied. They washed their hands and after that she rose and ordered a handmaid to bring perfumes and herbs of sweet savour, wines of all colours and kinds and a wine-service with vessels of gold, silver and crystal. She filled a first goblet and drank it off before offering it to him, even as

she had done with the food: then she downed a second and handed it 100 to him. He drank and she said to him, "O Moslem, see how thou art here in all solace and delight of life!" And she ceased not to drink and ply him with drink, till he took leave of his wits,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Forty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel ceased not to drink and ply Sharrkan with drink till he took leave of his wits, for the wine and the intoxication of love he bore her. Presently she said to the slave-girl, "O Marjánah[188]! bring us some instruments of music!" "To hear is to obey," said the handmaid and going out, returned in the twinkling of an eye with a Damascus lute,[189] a Persian harp, a Tartar pipe, and an Egyptian dulcimer. The young lady took the lute and, after tuning each several string, began in gentle undersong to sing, softer, than zephyr's wing and sweeter than Tasmin[190]-spring, with heart safe and secure from everything the couplets following:—

Allah assain those eyne! What streams of blood they shed! ✿ How many an arrowy glance those lids of thine have sped.

I love all lovers who to lovers show them dure; ✿ Twere wrong to rue the love in wrong-head born and bred:

Haply fall hapless eye for thee no sleeping kens! ✿ Heaven help the hapless heart by force of thee misled!

Thou doomest me to death who art my king, and I ✿ Ransom with life the deemster who would doom me dead.

Thereupon each and every of the maidens rose up and taking an instrument, played and recited couplets in the Roumi tongue; then their mistress sang also and seeing Sharrkan in ecstasies 101 asked him, "O Moslem, dost thou understand what I say?"; and he answered, "Nay, my ecstasy cometh from the beauty of thy finger-tips." She laughed and continued, "If I sing to thee in Arabic what wouldst thou do?" "I should no longer," quoth he, "be master of my senses." Then she took an instrument and, changing the measure, began singing these verses:—

The smack of parting's myrrh to me, ✿ How, then, bear patience' aloë?

I'm girt by ills in trinity ✿ Severance, distance, cruelty!

My freedom stole that fairest she, ✿ And parting irks me bitterly.

When she ended her verse, she looked at Sharrkan and found him lost to existence, and he lay for a while stretched at full length and prone among the maidens.[191] Then he revived and, remembering the songs, again inclined to mirth and merriment; and the twain returned to their wine and wassail, and continued their playing and toying, their pastime and pleasure till day ceased illuminating and night drooped her wing. Then the damsel went off to her dormitory and when Sharrkan asked after her they answered, "She is gone to her sleeping-chamber," whereto he rejoined, "Under Allah's ward and His good guard!" As soon as it was morning, a handmaid came to him and said to him, "My mistress biddeth thee to her." So he rose and followed her and, as he

drew near her lodging, the damsels welcomed him with smitten tabrets and songs of greeting, and led him through a great door of ivory studded with pearls and jewels. Thence they passed with him into a tall and spacious hall, at the upper end of which was a wide daïs carpeted with all kinds of silks, and round it open lattices commanding a view of trees and streams. About the saloon were figures carved in human form, and fashioned on such wise that the air passed through them and set in motion musical instruments within, so that the beholder would fancy they spoke.[192] Here sat the young lady, looking at the figures; but when she saw Sharrkan, she sprang to her feet and, taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her side, and asked him how he had passed the night. He blessed her and the two sat talking awhile till she asked him, "Knowest thou aught touching lovers and 102 slaves of love?"; and he answered "Yes! I wot somewhat in verse on that matter." "Let me hear it," quoth she, so he began quoting:—

Pleasure and health, good cheer, good appetite ✿ To Azzah, freest with our name and fame!

By Allah! would I near her off she flies ✿ At tangent, granting less the more I claim:

I dote on Azzah, but when clear I off ✿ My rivals, clears me too that dearest dame;

Like wandering wight that chose for shade a cloud ✿ Which, ere siesta done, thin air became.

When she heard this she said, "Verily Al-Kuthayyir[193] was conspicuous for sweet speech and chaste, and he was superlative in his praise of Azzah when he sang (and she began to recite):—

"Did Azzah deal behest to Sun o' noon, ✿ The judge had 'judged her beauty's bestest boon;

And girls who come to me and carp at her, ✿ God make their rosy cheeks her sandal-shoon!"

"And indeed," quoth she, "'twas said that Azzah boasted exceeding beauty and loveliness." Then she asked Sharrkan saying, "O Prince, dost thou know aught of Jamíl's[194] verses to Buthaynah? if so repeat to us somewhat of them;" and he answered, "Yes, I know them better than any;" whereupon he began repeating these couplets:—

"Jamíl, in Holy war go fight!" to me they say: ✿ What war save fight for fair ones would I e'er essay?

To me their every word and work are mere delight, ✿ And martyrs clepe I all they slay in fight and fray:

An ask I, "O Buthaynah! what's this love, I pray, ✿ Which eats my heart? quoth she "'Twill stay for ever and aye!"

And when I cry, "Of wits return some small display ✿ For daily use," quoth she, "Far, far 'tis fled away!"

Thou seekst my death; naught else thy will can satisfy ✿ While I no goal espy save thee and thee alway.

103 "Thou hast spoken right well," said she, "O King's son, and Jamíl also spoke excellently well. But what would Buthaynah have done with him that he saith in his hemistich:—

Thou seekst my death; naught else thy will can satisfy?"

"O my lady," quoth Sharrkan, "she willed to do him what thou willest to do with me, and even that will not satisfy thee." She laughed at his opportune reply and they

ceased not carousing till Day put out her light and Night came in darkness dight. Then she rose and went to her dormitory and slept, while Sharrkan slept in his place till morning dawned. As soon as he awoke, the handmaids came to him with tabrets and other instruments of mirth and merriment, as wont; and, kissing the ground between his hands, said to him, "Bismillah!—in Allah's name—be so kind as to come[195]: our mistress biddeth thee to her presence!" So he rose and accompanied the slave-girls who surrounded him, playing on tabrets and other instruments of music, till they passed from that saloon into another and a yet more spacious hall, decorated with pictured likenesses and figures of birds and beasts, passing all description. Sharrkan marvelled at the art and artifice of the place and began reciting:—

He pluckt fruits of her necklace in rivalry, ✿ And her breast-pearls that bedded in gold-mine lie.

Pure water on silvern bars is her brow, ✿ And her cheeks show roses with rubies vie:

Meseems in her eyne that the violet's hue ✿ Lies purpling set in the Ithmid's[196] dye.

104 When the lady saw Sharrkan, she stood up to him in honour and, taking his hand, seated him by her side and asked, "O son of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, hast thou any cunning in the game of chess?" "Yes," he answered, "but do not thou with me as said the poet:—

I speak and longing love upties me and unties me; ✿ Till with her honey-dew of inner lip she plies me:

I brought the chess-board and my liefest lover plays me ✿ With white and black,[197] but black-cum-white ne'er satisfies me:

'Twas as if King for Castle I were fain to place me ✿ Till wilful loss of game atwixt two queens surprise me:

And if I seek to read intent in eyes that eye me ✿ Oh man! that glance askance with hint of wish defies me."

Then she brought the chess-board and played with him; but Sharrkan, instead of looking at her moves, kept gazing at her fair mouth, and putting knight in place of elephant and elephant[198] in stead of knight. She laughed and said to him, "If thy play be after this fashion, thou knowest naught of the game." "This is only our first," replied he, "judge not by this bout." When she beat him he replaced the pieces in position and played again with her; but she beat him a second time, a third, a fourth and a fifth. So she turned to him and said, "Thou art beaten in everything;" and he replied, "O my lady, how should one playing with the like of thee avoid being beaten?" Then she bade bring food, and they ate and washed their hands; after which the wine was set before them and they drank. Presently, she took the dulcimer, for her 105 hand was cunning in smiting it, and she began repeating to an accompaniment these couplets:—

Twixt the close-tied and open-wide no medium Fortune knoweth; ✿ Now ebb and flow then flow and ebb this wise her likeness showeth:

Then drink her wine the syne she's thine and smiling thou dost find her; ✿ Anon she'll fall and fare away when all thy good forth goeth.

They ceased not to carouse till nightfall and this day was pleasanter even than the first. When darkness set in, the lady betook her to her dormitory, leaving him alone

with the handmaids; so he threw himself on the ground and slept till dawn, when the damsels came to him with tambourines and other instruments according to custom. Seeing them he roused him hastily and sat up; and they carried him to their mistress, who came to meet him and, taking him by the hand, seated him by her side. Then she asked him how he had passed his night, whereat he prayed that her life be prolonged; and she took the lute and sang to it these verses which she improvised:—

Ne'er incline thee to part ✿ Which embitters the heart;

E'en the sun when he sets ✿ Shall in pallor depart.

While they were solacing themselves after this fashion, behold, there arose a great and sudden clamour, and a confused crowd of knights and men rushed in, holding drawn swords that glittered and gleamed in their hands, and cried aloud in the Grecian tongue, "Thou hast fallen into our hands, O Sharrkan, so make thee sure of death!" When he heard this, he said to himself, "By Allah, she hath entrapped me and held me in play, till her men should come. These are the Knights with whom she threatened me; but 'tis I who have thrown myself into this strait." Then he turned towards the young lady to reproach her, but saw that she had changed colour and her face was pale; and she sprang to her feet and asked the crowd, "Who are ye?" "O most gracious Princess and peerless union-pearl," answered the leading Knight, "dost thou weet who is yon man by thy side?" "Not I," she replied, "who may he be?" Quoth the Patrician, "This is of towns the highwayman! This is he who rideth in the horseman's van! This is Sharrkan, son of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman! This is he that forceth fortalice and penetrateth every impregnable place! The news of him reached King Hardub, thy father, by report of the ancient dame Zat al-Dawahi; and thy sire, our sovereign, hath 106 made sure that thou hast rendered good service to the army of the Greeks by taking captive this ominous lion." When she heard this, she looked at the Knight and asked him, "What be thy name?" and he answered, "I am Masurah, son of thy slave Mausúrah bin Káshardah, Knight of Knights." "And how?" quoth she, "durst thou enter my presence without leave?" Quoth he, "O my lady, when I came to the gate, none forbade me, neither chamberlain nor porter, but all the doorkeepers rose and forewent us as of wont; although, when others come, they leave them standing at the gate while they ask permission to admit them. But this is not a time for long talking, when the King is expecting our return with this Prince, the scorpion-sting[199] of the Islamitic host, that he may kill him and drive back his men whither they came, without the bane of battling with them." "These words be ill words," rejoined the Princess, "and Dame Zat al-Dawahi lied, avouching an idle thing and a vain, whereof she weeteth not the truth; for by the virtue of the Messiah, this man who is with me is not Sharrkan, nor is he a captive, but a stranger who came to us seeking our hospitality, and I made him my guest. So even were we assured that this be Sharrkan and were it proved to us that it is he beyond a doubt, I say it would ill befit mine honour that I should deliver into your hands one who hath entered under my

protection. So make me not a traitor to my guest and a disgrace among men; but return to the King, my father, and kiss the ground before him, and inform him that the case is contrariwise to the report of the Lady Zat al-Dawahi." "O Abrizah," replied Masurah, the Knight, "I cannot return to the King's majesty without his debtor and enemy." Quoth she (and indeed she had waxed very wroth), "Out on thee! Return to him with my answer, and no blame shall befal thee!" Quoth Masurah, "I will not return without him." Thereupon her colour changed and she exclaimed, "Exceed not in talk and vain words; for verily this man had not come in to us, were he not assured that he could of himself and single-handed make head against an hundred riders; and if I said to him:—Thou art Sharrkan, son of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, he would answer, Yes. But 'tis not of your competence to let or hinder him; for if you so do, he will not turn back from you till he hath slain all that are in this place. Behold, here he is by my side, and 107 I will bring him before you sword and targe in hand." "Albeit I were safe from thy wrath," answered Masurah the Knight, "I am not safe from that of thy father, and when I see him, I shall sign to the Knights to take him captive, and we will carry him to the King bound and in abject sort." When she heard this, she said, "The matter shall not pass thus, for 'twould be blazoning mere folly. This man is but one and ye are an hundred Knights: so if you would attack him come out against him, one after one, that it may appear to the King which is the valiant amongst you."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Princess Abrizah said to the Knight, "This man is but one, and ye are an hundred: so if ye would attack him, come out against him, one after one, that it may appear to the King which is the valiant." Quoth Masurah, the Knight, "By the truth of the Messiah, thou sayest sooth, and none but I shall sally out against him first." Quoth she, "Wait till I go to him and acquaint him with the case and hear what answer he will make. If he consent, 'tis well; but if he refuse, ye shall on no wise come to him, for I and my handmaids and whosoever is in the convent will be his ransom." So she went to Sharrkan and told him the news, whereat he smiled and knew that she had not informed any of the Emirs; but that tidings of him had been bruited and blazed abroad, till the report reached the King, against her wish and intent. So he again began reproaching himself and said, "How came I to adventure and play with my life by coming to the country of the Greeks?" But hearing the young lady's proposal he said to her, "Indeed their onset, one after one, would be overburdensome to them. Will they not come out against me, ten by ten?" "That would be villeiny," said she; "Let one have at one." When he heard this, he sprang to his feet and made for them with his sword and battle-gear; and Masurah, the Knight, also sprang up and bore down upon him. Sharrkan met him like a lion and delivered a shoulder cut[200] which clove him to the middle, and the blade came 108 out gleaming and glittering from his back and bowels. When the lady beheld that

swashing blow, Sharrkan's might was magnified in her sight and she knew that when she overthrew him in the wrestle it was not by her strength but by her beauty and loveliness. So she turned to the Knights and said, "Take wreak for your chief!" Thereupon out came the slain man's brother, a fierce and furious Knight, and rushed upon Sharrkan, who delayed not, but smote him also with the shoulder-cut and the sword came out glittering from his vitals. Then cried the Princess, "O ye servants of the Messiah, avenge your comrade!" So they ceased not charging down upon him, one after one; and Sharrkan also ceased not playing upon them with the blade, till he had slain fifty knights, the lady looking on the while. And Allah cast a panic into the hearts of the survivors, so that they held back and dared not meet him in the duello, but fell upon him in a body; and he laid on load with heart firmer than a rock, and smote them and trod them down like straw under the threshing-sled,[201] till he had driven sense and soul out of them. Then the Princess called aloud to her damsels, saying, "Who is left in the convent?"; and they replied, "None but the gate-keepers;" whereupon she went up to Sharrkan and took him to her bosom, he doing the same, and they returned to the palace, after he had made an end of the melée. Now there remained a few of the Knights hiding from him in the cells of the monastery, and when the Princess saw this she rose from Sharrkan's side and left him for a while, but presently came back clad in closely-meshed coat of ring-mail and holding in her hand a fine Indian scymitar. And she said, "Now by the truth of the Messiah, I will not be a niggard of myself for my guest; nor will I abandon him though for this I abide a reproach and a byword in the land of the Greeks." Then she took reckoning of the dead and found that he had slain fourscore of the Knights, and other twenty had taken to flight.[202] When she 109 saw what work he had made with them she said to him, "Allah bless thee, O Sharrkan! The Cavaliers may well glory in the like of thee." Then he rose and wiping his blade clean of the blood of the slain began reciting these couplets:—

How oft in the mellay I've cleft the array, ✿ And given their bravest to lions a prey:

Ask of me and of them when I proved me prow ✿ O'er creation, on days of the foray and fray:

When I left in the onslaught their lions to lie ✿ On the sands of the lowlands[203] in fieriest day.

When he ended his verse, the Princess came up to him with smiles and kissed his hand; then she doffed her hauberk and he said to her, "O lady mine, wherefore didst thou don that coat of mail and bare thy brand?" "To guard thee against these caitiffs,"[204] she replied. Then she summoned the gate-keepers and asked them, "How came ye to admit the King's Knights into my dwelling without leave of me?"; and they answered, "O Princess, it is not our custom to ask leave of thee for the King's messengers, and especially for the chief of his Knights." Quoth she, "I think ye were minded only to disgrace me and murder my guest;" and bade Sharrkan smite their necks. He did so and she cried to the rest of her servants, "Of a truth, they deserved even more than that!" Then turning to Sharrkan, she said to him, "Now that there hath

become manifest to thee what was concealed, thou shalt be made acquainted with my history. Know, then, that I am the daughter of King Hardub of Roum; my name is Abrizah and the ancient dame, yclept Zat al-Dawahi, is my grandmother by the sword side. She it certainly is who told my father of thee, and as surely she will compass a sleight to slay me, more by token as thou hast slain my father's chivalry and it is noised abroad that I have separated myself from the Nazarenes and have become no better than I should be with the Moslems. Wherefore it were wiser that I leave this dwelling while Zat al-Dawahi is on my track; but I require of thee the like kindness and courtesy I have shown thee, for enmity will presently befal 110 between me and my father on thine account. So do not thou neglect to do aught that I shall say to thee, remembering all this betided me not save by reason of thee." Hearing her words, Sharrkan joyed greatly; his breast broadened and his wits flew from him for delight, and he said, "By Allah, none shall come at thee, while life is in my bosom! But hast thou patience to bear parting from thy parents and thy people?" "Even so," she answered; and Sharrkan swore to her and the two plighted their troth. Then said she, "Now is my heart at ease; but there remaineth one other condition for thee." "What is it?" asked he and she answered, "It is that thou return with thy host to thine own country." Quoth he, "O lady mine, my father, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, sent me to wage war upon thy sire, on account of the treasure he plundered from the King of Constantinople, and amongst the rest three great jewels, noted givers of good fortune." Quoth she, "Cheer thy heart and clear thine eyes: I will tell thee the whole of the tale and the cause of our feud with the King of Constantinople. Know that we have a yearly festival, hight the Convent-Feast, whereat Kings from all quarters and the noblest women are wont to congregate; thither also come merchants and traders with their wives and families, and the visitors abide there seven days. I was wont to be one of them; but, when there befel enmity between us, my father forbade me to be present at the festival for the space of seven years. One year, it chanced that amongst the daughters of the great who resorted to the patron, as was their custom, came a daughter of the King of Constantinople, a beautiful girl called Sophia. They tarried at the monastery six days and on the seventh the folk went their ways;[205] but Sophia said, I will not return to Constantinople save by water. So they equipped for her a ship in which she embarked with her suite; and making sail they put out to sea; but as they were voyaging behold, a contrary wind caught them and drove the vessel from her course till, as Fate and Fortune would have it, she fell in with a Nazarene craft from the Camphor Island[206] carrying a crew of five hundred armed Franks, who had been cruising about a long time. When they sighted the sails of the ship, wherein Sophia and her women were, they gave 111 chase in all haste and in less than an hour they came up with her, when they laid the grappling-irons aboard her and captured her. Then taking her in tow they made all sail for their own island and were but a little distant from it when the wind veered round and, splitting their sails, drove them on to

a shoal which lies off our coast. Thereupon we sallied forth and, looking on them as spoil driven to us by Fate,[207] boarded and took them; and, slaying the men, made prize of the wreck, wherein we found the treasures and rarities in question and forty maidens, amongst whom was the King's daughter, Sophia. After the capture we carried the Princess and her women to my father, not knowing her to be a daughter of King Afridun of Constantinople; and he chose out for himself ten including her; and divided the rest among his dependants. Presently he set apart five damsels, amongst whom was the King's daughter, and sent them to thy father, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, together with other gifts, such as broadcloth[208] and woollen stuffs and Grecian silks. Thy father accepted them and chose out from amongst the five girls Sophia, daughter of King Afridun; nor did we hear more of her till the beginning of this year, when her father wrote to my father in words unfitting for me to repeat, rebuking him with menaces and saying to him:—Two years ago, you plundered a ship of ours which had been seized by a band of Frankish pirates in which was my daughter Sophia, attended by her maidens numbering some threescore. Yet ye informed me not thereof by messenger or otherwise; nor could I make the matter public, lest reproach befal me amongst the Kings, by reason of my daughter's honour. So I concealed my case till this year, when I wrote to certain Frankish corsairs and sought news of my daughter from the Kings of the Isles. They replied:—By Allah we carried her not forth of thy realm; but we have heard that King Hardub rescued her from certain pirates. And they told me the whole tale. Then he added in the writing which he writ to my father:—Except you wish to be at feud with me and design to disgrace me and dishonour my daughter, you will, the instant my letter reacheth you, send my daughter back to me. But if you slight my letter and disobey my commandment, 112 I will assuredly make you full return for your foul dealing and the baseness of your practices.[209] When my father read this letter and understood the contents,[210] it vexed him and he regretted not having known that Sophia, King Afridun's daughter, was among the captured damsels, that he might have sent her back to her sire; and he was perplexed about the case because, after so long a time, he could not send to King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and demand her back from him, especially as he had lately heard that Heaven had granted him boon of babe by this Sophia. So when we pondered that truth, we knew that this letter was none other than a grievous calamity; and my father found nothing for it but to write an answer to King Afridun, making his excuses and swearing to him by strong oaths that he knew not his daughter to be among the bevy of damsels in the ship and setting forth how he had sent her to King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, who had gotten the blessing of issue by her. When my father's reply reached King Afridun he rose up and sat down,[211] and roared and foamed at the mouth crying:—What! shall he take captive my daughter and even her with slave-girls and pass her on from hand to hand sending her for a gift to Kings, and they lie with her without marriage-contract? By the Messiah and the true Faith, said he, I will not desist till I have taken my blood-vengeance for this and have wiped

out my shame; and indeed I will do a deed which the chroniclers shall chronicle after me! So he bided his time till he devised a device and laid notable toils and snares, when he sent an embassy to thy father, King Omar, to tell him that which thou hast heard: accordingly thy father equipped thee and an army with thee and sent thee to King Afridun, whose object is to seize thee and thine army to boot. As for the three jewels whereof he told thy father when asking his aid, there was not one soothfast word in that matter, for they were with Sophia, his daughter; and my father took them from her, when he got possession of her and of her maidens, and gave them to me in free gift, and they are now with me. So go thou to thy host and turn them back ere they be led deep into, and shut in by, the land of 113 the Franks and the country of the Greeks; for as soon as you have come far enough into their interior, they will stop the roads upon you and there will be no escape for you till the Day of retribution and retaliation. I know that thy troops are still halting where thou leftest them, because thou didst order a three days' rest; withal they have missed thee all this time and they wot not what to do." When Sharrkan heard her words, he was absent awhile in thought; then he kissed Princess Abrizah's hand and said, "Praise be to Allah who hath bestowed thee on me and appointed thee to be the cause of my salvation and the salvation of whoso is with me! But 'tis grievous to me to part from thee and I know not what will become of thee after my departure." "Go now to thine army," she replied, "and turn them back, while ye are yet near your own country. If the envoys be still with them, lay hands on them and keep them, that the case may be made manifest to you; and, after three days, I will be with you all and we will enter Baghdad together." As he turned to depart she said, "Forget not the compact which is between me and thee;" then she rose to bid[212] him farewell and embrace him and quench the fire of desire, so she took leave of him and, throwing her arms round his neck, wept with exceeding weeping, and repeated these verses:—

I bade adieu, my right hand wiped my tears away, ✿ The while my left hand held her in a close embrace:

"Fearest thou naught," quoth she, "of shame?" I answered "Nay, ✿ The lover's parting day is lover's worst disgrace."

Then Sharrkan left her and walked down from the convent. They brought his steed, so he mounted and rode down-stream to the drawbridge which he crossed and presently threaded the woodland paths and passed into the open meadow. As soon as he was clear of the trees he was aware of horsemen which made him stand on the alert, and he bared his brand and rode cautiously; but as they drew near and exchanged curious looks he recognized them and behold, it was the Wazir Dandan and two of his Emirs. When they saw him and knew him, they dismounted and saluting him, asked the reason of his absence; whereupon he told them all that had passed between him and Princess Abrizah from first to 114 last. The Wazir returned thanks to Almighty Allah for his safety and said,[213] "Let us at once leave these lands; for the envoys who came with us are gone to inform the King of our approach, and haply he will hasten to fall

on us and take us prisoners." So Sharrkan cried to his men to saddle and mount, which they did and, setting out at once, they stinted not faring till they reached the sole of the valley wherein the host lay. The Ambassadors meanwhile had reported Sharrkan's approach to their King, who forthright equipped a host to lay hold of him and those with him. But Sharrkan, escorted by the Wazir Dandan and the two Emirs, had no sooner sighted the army, than he raised the cry "March! March!" They took horse on the instant and fared through the first day and second and third day, nor did they cease faring for five days; at the end of which time they alighted in a well-wooded valley, where they rested awhile. Then they again set out and stayed not riding for five and twenty days which placed them on the frontiers of their own country. Here, deeming themselves safe, they halted to rest; and the country people came out to them with guest-gifts for the men and provender and forage for the beasts. They tarried there two days after which, as all would be making for their homes, Sharrkan put the Wazir Dandan in command, bidding him lead the host back to Baghdad. But he himself remained behind with an hundred riders, till the rest of the army had made one day's march: then he called "To horse!" and mounted with his hundred men. They rode on two parasangs'[214] space till they arrived at a gorge between two mountains and lo! there arose before them a dark cloud of sand and dust. So they checked their steeds awhile till the dust opened and lifted, discovering beneath it an hundred cavaliers, lion-faced and in mail-coats cased. As soon as they drew within earshot of Sharrkan and his meiny they cried out to them, saying, "By the virtue of John and Mary, we have won to 115 our wish! We have been following you by forced marches, night and day, till we forewent you to this place. So dismount and lay down your arms and yield yourselves, that we may grant you your lives." When Sharrkan heard this, his eyes stood out from his head and his cheeks flushed red and he said "How is it, O Nazarene dogs, ye dare enter our country and overmarch our land? And doth not this suffice you, but ye must adventure your selves and address us in such unseemly speech? Do you think to escape out of our hands and return to your country?" Then he shouted to his hundred horsemen, "Up and at these hounds, for they even you in number!" So saying, he bared his sabre and bore down on them, he and his, but the Franks met them with hearts firmer than rocks, and wight clashed against wight, and knight dashed upon knight, and hot waxed the fight, and sore was the affright, and nor parley nor cries of quarter helped their plight; and they stinted not to charge and to smite, right hand meeting right, nor to hack and hew with blades bright-white, till day turned to night and gloom oppressed the sight. Then they drew apart and Sharrkan mustered his men and found none wounded save four only, who showed hurts but not death-hurts. Said he to them, "By Allah, my life long have I waded in the clashing sea of fight and I have met many a gallant sprite, but none so unfrightened of the sword that smites and the shock of men that affrights like these valiant Knights!" "Know, O King," said they, "that there is among them a Frankish cavalier who is their leader and, indeed, he is a man of valour and fatal is his spear-thrust: but, by Allah, he spares

us great and small; for whoso falls into his hands he lets him go and forbears to slay him. By Allah, had he willed he had killed us all." Sharrkan was astounded when he heard what the Knight had done and such high report of him, so he said, "When the morn shall morrow, we will draw out and defy them, for we are an hundred to their hundred; and we will seek aid against them from the Lord of the Heavens." So they rested that night in such intent; whilst the Franks gathered round their Captain and said, "Verily this day we did not win our will of these;" and he replied, "At early dawn when the morrow shall morn, we will draw out and challenge them, one after one." They also rested in that mind, and both camps kept guard until Almighty Allah sent the light of day-dawn. Thereupon King Sharrkan and his hundred riders took horse and rode forth to the plain, where they 116found the Franks ranged in line of battle; and Sharrkan said to his followers, "Our foes have determined like ourselves to do their devoir; so up and at them and lay on load." Then came forth an Herald of the Franks and cried out, saying, "Let there be no general engagement betwixt us this day, save by the duello, a champion of yours against a champion of ours." Whereupon one of Sharrkan's riders dashed out from the ranks and drave between the two lines crying, "Ho! who is for smiting? Let no dastard engage me this day nor nidering!" Hardly had he made an end of his vaunt, when there sallied forth to him a Frankish cavalier, armed cap-à-pie and clad in a surcoat of gold stuff, riding on a grey-white steed,[215] and he had no hair on his cheeks. He urged his charger on to the midst of the battle-plain and the two fell to derring-do of cut and thrust, but it was not long before the Frank foined the Moslem with the lance-point; and, toppling him from his steed, took him prisoner and led him off crestfallen. His folk rejoiced in their comrade and, forbidding him to go out again to the field, sent forth another, to whom sallied out another Moslem, brother to the captive, and offered him battle. The two fell to, either against other, and fought for a little while, till the Frank bore down upon the Moslem and, falsing him with a feint, tumbled him by a thrust of the lance-heel from his destrier and took him prisoner. After this fashion the Moslems ceased not dashing forwards, one after one, and the Franks to unhorse them and take them captive, till day departed and the night with darkness upstarted. Now they had captured of the Moslems twenty cavaliers, and when Sharrkan saw this, it was grievous to him and he mustered his men and said to them, "What is this thing that hath befallen us? To-morrow, I myself will go forth to the field and offer singular combat to their chief and learn what is the cause of his entering our land and warn him against doing battle with our band. If he persist, we will punish him with death, and if he prove peaceable we will make peace with him." They nighted on this wise till Allah Almighty caused the morn to dawn, when mounted the twain and drew up for battle fain; and Sharrkan was going forth to the plain, but behold, more than one half of the Franks dismounted and remained on foot before one of them who was mounted, till they reached the midst of the battle-plain. Sharrkan 117looked at that horseman and lo! he was their chief. He was clad in

a surcoat of blue satin and a close-ringed mail shirt; his face was as the moon when it rises and no hair was upon his cheeks. He hent in hand an Indian scymitar and he rode a sable steed with a white blaze on brow, like a dirham; and he smote the horse with heel till he stood almost in the midst of the field when, signing to the Moslems, he cried out in fluent Arab speech, "Ho, Sharrkan! Ho, son of Omar bin al-Nu'uman! Ho, thou who forcest fortalice and overthrowest cities and countries! up and out to battle-bout, and blade single-handed wield with one who halves with thee the field! Thou art Prince of thy people and I am Prince of mine; and whoso overcometh his adversary, him let the other's men obey and come under his sway." Hardly had he ended his speech, when out came Sharrkan with a heart full of fury, and urging his steed into the midst of the field, closed like a raging lion with the Frank who encountered him with wariness and steadfastness and met him with the meeting of warriors. Then they fell to foining and hewing, and they stinted not of onset and offset, and give and take, as they were two mountains clashing together or two seas together dashing; nor did they cease fighting until day darkened and night starkened. Then they drew apart and each returned to his own party; but as soon as Sharrkan foregathered with his comrades, he said, "Never looked I on the like of this cavalier: he hath one quality I have not yet seen in any and this it is that, when his foemen uncovereth a place for the death-blow, he reverseth his weapon and smiteth with the lance-heel! In very deed I know not what will be the issue 'twixt him and me; but 'tis my wish that we had in our host his like and the like of his men." Then he went to his rest for the night and, when morning dawned, the Frank came forth and rode down to the mid-field, where Sharrkan met him; and they fell to fighting and to wheeling, left and right; and necks were stretched out to see the sight, nor did they stint from strife and sword-play and lunge of lance with main and might, till the day turned to night and darkness overwhelmed the light. Then the twain drew asunder and returned each to his own camp, where both related to their comrades what had befallen them in the duello; and at last the Frank said to his men, "To-morrow shall decide the matter!" So they both passed that night restfully till dawn; and, as soon as it was day, they mounted and each bore down on other and ceased not to fight till half the day was 118 done. Then the Frank bethought him of a ruse; first urging his steed with heel and then checking him with the rein, so that he stumbled and fell with his rider; thereupon Sharrkan threw himself on the foe, and would have smitten him with the sword fearing lest the strife be prolonged, when the Frank cried out to him, "O Sharrkan, champions are not wont to do thus! This is the act of a man accustomed to be beaten by a woman."[216] When Sharrkan heard this, he raised his eyes to the Frank's face and gazing steadfastly at him, recognized in him Princess Abrizah with whom that pleasant adventure had befallen him in the convent; whereupon he cast brand from hand and, kissing the earth before her, asked her, "What moved thee to a deed like this?"; and she answered, "I desired to prove thy prowess afield and test thy doughtiness in tilting and jousting. These that are with me are my handmaids, and they are all clean maids; yet they have vanquished thy

horsemen in fair press and stress of plain; and had not my steed stumbled with me, thou shouldst have seen my might and prowess in combat." Sharrkan smiled at her speech and said, "Praise be to Allah for safety and for my reunion with thee, O Queen of the age." Then she cried out to her damsels to loose the twenty captives of Sharrkan's troop and dismount. They did as she bade and came and kissed the earth before her and Sharrkan who said to them, "It is the like of you that Kings keep in store for the need-hour." Then he signed to his comrades to salute the Princess; so all alighted and kissed the earth before her, for they knew the story. After this, the whole two hundred took horse, and fared on night and day for six days' space, till they drew near to Baghdad, when they halted and Sharrkan bade Abrizah and her handmaids doff the Frankish garb that was on them——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sharrkan bade Princess Abrizah and her damsels doff the garb that was on them and don the garments of daughters of Greece; and thus did they. Then he despatched a company of his companions to Baghdad [119] to acquaint his father Omar bin al-Nu'uman, with his arrival and report that he was accompanied by Princess Abrizah, daughter of King Hardub, Lord of Græcia-land. They halted forthright in the place they had reached, and Sharrkan also halted and all nighted there; and when Almighty Allah made morning dawn, Sharrkan and his company and Abrizah and her company took horse and fared on towards the city; when lo! on the way they met the Wazir Dandan, who had come out amongst a thousand horse, to honour Abrizah and Sharrkan, by especial commandment of King Omar Son of Al-Nu'uman. When the two drew near, they turned towards them and kissed ground before them; then they mounted again and escorted them into the city and went up with them to the palace. Sharrkan walked in to his father, who rose and embraced him and questioned him of his case. So he told him all that Abrizah had told him, and what had passed between them and said, "She hath parted from her sire and departed from her reign and hath chosen to take part with us and to make her abode with us; and indeed (he said to his father) the King of Constantinople hath plotted to do us a mischief, because of his daughter Sophia, for that the King of Greece had made known to him her story and the cause of her being given to thee; and he (the Grecian King) not knowing her to be daughter of King Afridun, Lord of Constantinople; and, had he known that, he would not have bestowed her upon thee, but he would have restored her to her parent. And of a verity (he continued) we were saved from these perils only by the Lady Abrizah, and never saw we a more valiant than she." And he went on to tell his father all that had passed from first to last of the wrestling and the single-fighting. When King Omar heard the story of Sharrkan, Abrizah was exalted in his eyes, and he longed to see her and question her. Thereupon Sharrkan went out to her and said, "The King calleth for thee;" she replied, "I hear

and I obey;" and he took her and brought her in to his father, who was seated on his throne and who, having dismissed his high officers, was attended only by his eunuchs. The Princess entered and kissing the ground between his hands, saluted him in choice terms. He was amazed at her eloquent speech and thanked her for her dealing with his son Sharrkan and bade her be seated. So she sat down and unveiled her face;[217] and, when the King saw her beauty, his reason fled his head and he made her draw near and showed her 120 favour, appointing her an especial palace for herself and her damsels, and assigning them solde and allowances. Then began he to ask her of the three jewels aforesaid, and she answered, "Here be they with me, O King of the age!" So saying, she rose and going to her lodging, unpacked her baggage and from it brought out a box and from the box a casket of gold. She opened the casket and taking out those three jewels, kissed them and gave them to the King. Then she went away bearing his heart with her. After her going the King sent for his son Sharrkan and gave him one jewel of the three, and when he enquired of the other two replied, "O my son! I mean to give one to thy brother Zau al-Makan, and the other to thy sister Nuzhat al-Zaman." But when Sharrkan heard that he had a brother (for to that time he knew only of his sister) he turned to his sire and said to him, "O King, hast thou a son other than myself?" He answered, "Yes, and he is now six years old;" adding that his name was Zau al-Makan and that he and Nuzhat al-Zaman were twins, born at a birth. This news was grievous to Sharrkan, but he kept his secret and said, "The blessing of Allah Most High be upon them!"; and he cast the jewel from his hand and shook the dust off his clothes. Quoth the King, "How do I see thee change thy manner when hearing of this, considering that after me thou becomest heir of the kingdom. Of a truth the troops have sworn to thee and the Emirs and Grandees have taken the oath of succession to thee; and this one of the three jewels is thine." Sharrkan bowed his head to the ground and was ashamed to bandy words with his parent so he accepted the jewel and went away, knowing not what to do for exceeding wrath, and stayed not walking till he had entered Abrizah's palace. As he approached she stood up to meet him and thanked him for what he had done and prayed for blessings on him and his sire. Then she sat down and seated him by her side; but when he had taken his place she saw rage in his face and questioned him, whereupon he told her that Allah had blessed his father with two children by Sophia, a boy and a girl, and that he had named the boy Zau al-Makan and the girl Nuzhat al-Zaman; adding, "He hath kept the other two jewels for them and hath given me one of thine, so I left it behind; I knew naught of Zau al-Makan's birth till this day, and the twain are now six years old. So when I learnt this, wrath possessed me; and I tell thee the reason of my rage and hide nothing from thee. But now I fear lest my father take thee to wife, for he loveth thee and I saw in him signs of desire for thee: so what wilt 121 thou say, if he wish this?" Quoth she, "Know, O Sharrkan, that thy father hath no dominion over me, nor can he have me without my consent; and if he prevail over me by force, I will take my own

life. As for the three jewels, it was not my intent that he should give any of them to either of his children and I had no thought but that he would lay them up in his treasury with his things of price; but now I desire of thy favour that thou make me a present of the jewel which he gave thee, if thou have accepted it." "Hearkening and obedience," replied Sharrkan, and gave it to her. Then said she, "Fear nothing," and talked with him awhile and continued, "I fear lest my father hear that I am with you and sit not patiently under my loss, but do his endeavours to find me; and to that end he may ally himself with King Afridun, on account of his daughter Sophia, and both come on thee with armies and so there befal great turmoil." When Sharrkan heard these words, he said to her, "O my lady, if it please thee to sojourn with us, take no thought of them; though there gather together against us all that be on land and on sea." "'Tis well," rejoined she; "if ye entreat me fair, I will tarry with you, and if ye deal evilly by me, I will depart from you." Then she bade her slave-maidens bring food; so they set the tables, and Sharrkan ate a little and went away to his own house, disturbed and perturbed. Such was his case; but regarding the affairs of his father, Omar bin al-Nu'uman, after dismissing his son Sharrkan he arose and, taking the other two jewels, betook himself to the Lady Sophia, who stood up when she saw him and remained standing till he was seated. Presently, his two children, Zau al-Makan and Nuzhat al-Zaman, came to him and he kissed them and hung a jewel round each one's neck, at which they rejoiced and kissed his hands. Then went they to their mother, who joyed in their joy and wished the King long life; so he asked her, "Why hast thou not informed me all this time that thou art the daughter of King Afridun, Lord of Constantinople, that I might have honoured thee still more and enlarged thee in dignity and raised thy rank?" "O King," answered Sophia, "and what could I desire greater or higher than this my standing with thee, overwhelmed as I am with thy favours and thy benefits? And, furthermore, Allah hath blessed me with two children by thee, a son and a daughter." Her reply pleased the King and after leaving her, he set apart for her and her children a wondrous fine palace. Moreover, he appointed for them eunuchs and attendants and doctors of law and doctors of 122philosophy and astrologers and physicians and surgeons to do them service; and in every way he redoubled his favour and entreated them with the best of treatment. And presently he returned to the palace of his dominion and to his Court where he distributed justice among the lieges. So far concerning him and Sophia and her children; but in the matter of Abrizah the King was greatly occupied with love of her and burnt with desire of her night and day; and every night, he would go in to her and converse with her and pay his court to her, but she gave him no answer, only saying, "O King of the age! I have no desire for men at this present." When he saw her withdraw from him, his passion waxed hotter and his longing and pining increased until, when weary of this, he summoned his Wazir Dandan and, opening his very heart to him, told him of his love for Princess Abrizah, daughter of Hardub, and informed him how she refused to yield to his wishes and how desire for her was doing him to die, for that he could

get no grace of her. The Wazir, hearing these words, said to the King, "As soon as it is dark night, take thou a piece of Bhang the measure of a miskal, about an ounce, and go in to her and drink somewhat of wine with her. When the hour of ending the carousal shall draw near, fill her a last cup and dropping therein the Bhang, give it to her to drink, and she will not reach her sleeping-chamber ere the drug take effect on her. Then do thou go in to her and take thy will of her; and such is my advice."[218] "Thy rede is aright," quoth the King, and seeking his treasury, he took thence a piece of concentrated Bhang, if an elephant smelt it he would sleep from year to year. This he put in his bosom-pocket and waited till some little of the night went by, when he betook himself to the palace of Princess Abrizah, who seeing him stood up to receive him; but he bade her sit down. So she sat down, and he sat by her, and he began to talk with her of wine and wassail, whereupon she furnished the carousing-table[219] and placed it before him. Then she set on the drinking vessels and lighted the candles and ordered to bring dried fruits and sweetmeats and all that pertaineth to drinking. So they fell to tippling 123 and the King ceased not to pledge her till drunkenness crept into her head; and seeing this he took out the bit of Bhang from his pocket and, holding it between his fingers, filled a cup with his own hand and drank it off. Then filling a second he said, "To thy companionship!"; and dropped the drug into her cup, she knowing naught of it. She took it and drank it off; then she rose and went to her sleeping-chamber. He waited for less than an hour till he was assured that the dose had taken effect on her and had robbed her of her senses, when he went in to her and found her thrown on her back: and she had doffed her petticoat-trousers and the air raised the skirt of her shift and discovered what was between her thighs. When the King saw the state of things and found a lighted candle at her head and another at her feet, shining upon what her thighs enshrined he took leave of his five senses for lust and Satan seduced him and he could not master himself, but put off his trousers and fell upon her and abated her maidenhead. Then he rose off her and went to one of her women, by name Marjánah, and said, "Go in to thy lady and speak with her." So she went in to her mistress and found her lying on her back insensible, with the blood running down to the calves of her legs, whereupon she took a kerchief and wiped away the blood and lay by her that night. As soon as Almighty Allah brought the dawn, the handmaid Marjanah washed her mistress's hands and feet and brought rose-water and bathed her face and mouth with it, whereupon she sneezed and yawned and cast up from her inside that bit of Bhang like a bolus.[220] Then she revived and washed her hands and mouth and said to Marjanah, "Tell me what hath befallen me." So she told her what had passed and how she had found her, lying on her back, with the blood running down, wherefore she knew that King Omar bin al-Nu'uman had lain with her and had undone her and taken his will of her. At this she grieved with exceeding grief and retired into privacy, saying to her damsels, "Deny me to whoso would come in to me and say to him that I am ill, till I see what Allah will do with me." Presently the news of her sickness came to the King; so he sent her sherbets

and 124sugar electuaries. Some months she thus passed in solitude, during which time the King's flame cooled and his desire for her was quenched, so that he abstained from her. Now she had conceived by him, and when the months of child-breeding had gone by, her pregnancy appeared and her belly swelled, and the world was straitened upon her, so she said to her handmaid Marjanah, "Know that it is not the folk who have wronged me, but I who sinned against my own self[221] in that I left my father and mother and country. Indeed, I abhor life, for my spirit is broken and neither courage nor strength is left me. I used, when I mounted my steed, to have the mastery of him, but now I am unable to ride. If I be brought to bed among them I shall be dishonoured before my hand-women and every one in the palace will know that he hath taken my maidenhead in the way of shame; and if I return to my father, with what face shall I meet him or with what face shall I have recourse to him? How well quoth the poet:—

Say, what shall solace one who hath nor home nor stable stead ✿ Nor cup-companion, nor a cup, nor place to house his head?"

Marjanah answered her, "It is thine to command; I will obey;" and Abrizah said, "I desire at once to leave this place secretly, so that none shall know of me but thou; and return to my father and my mother, for when flesh stinketh, there is naught for it but its own folk and Allah shall do with me e'en as He will." "O Princess," Marjanah replied, "what thou wouldest do is well." Then she made matters ready and kept her secret and waited for some days till the King went out to chase and hunt, and his son Sharrkan betook himself to certain of the fortresses to sojourn there awhile. Then said she to Marjanah, "I wish to set out this night, but how shall I do against my destiny? For already I feel the pangs of labour and child-birth, and if I abide other four or five days, I shall be brought to bed here, and I shall be unable to travel to my country. But this is what was written on my forehead." Then she considered awhile, and said to Marjanah, "Look us out a man who will go with us and serve us by the way, for I have no strength to bear arms." "By Allah, O my lady," replied Marjanah, "I know none but a black slave called 125Al-Ghazban,[222] who is one of the slaves of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman; he is a valiant wight, and he keepeth guard at our palace gate. The King appointed him to attend us, and indeed we have overwhelmed him with our favours; so, look ye, I will go out and speak with him of this matter, and promise him some monies and tell him that, if he have a mind to tarry with us, I will marry him to whom he will. He told me before to-day that he had been a highwayman; so if he consent to us we shall win our wish and reach to our own land." She rejoined, "Call him, that I may talk with him;" whereupon Marjanah fared forth and said to the slave, "O Ghazban, Allah prosper thee, so thou fall in with what my lady saith to thee!" Then she took him by the hand and brought him to the Princess, whose hands he kissed, but as she beheld him, her heart took fright at him. "However," she said to herself, "of a truth, Need giveth the law;" and she approached to speak with him, yet her heart started away from him. Presently she said, "O Ghazban, say me, wilt thou help me

against the perfidies of Fortune and conceal my secret if I discover it to thee?" When the slave saw her, his heart was taken by storm and he fell in love with her forthright and could not but reply, "O my mistress, whatsoever thou biddest me do, I will not depart therefrom." Quoth she, "I would have thee take me at this hour and take this my handmaid and saddle us two camels and two of the King's horses and set on each horse a saddle-bag of goods and somewhat of provaunt, and go with us to our own country; where, if thou desire to abide with us, I will marry thee to her thou shalt choose of my handmaidens; or, if thou prefer return to thine own land, we will marry thee and give thee whatso thou desirest after thou hast taken of money what shall satisfy thee." When Al-Ghazban heard this, he rejoiced with great joy and replied, "O my lady, I will serve both of you with mine eyes and will go at once and saddle the horses." Then he went away gladsome and saying to himself, "I shall get my will of them; and if they will not yield to me, I will kill them both and take their riches." But he kept this his intent to himself, and presently returned with two camels and three head of horses, one of which he rode, and Princess Abrizah made Marjanah mount the second, she mounting the third, albeit she was in labour-pains and possessed not her soul for anguish. And the slave ceased not 126 travelling with them night and day through the passes of the mountains, till there remained but a single march between them and their own country; when the travail pangs came upon Abrizah and she could no longer resist; so she said to Al-Ghazban, "Set me down, for the pains of labour are upon me;" and cried to Marjanah, "Do thou alight and sit by me and deliver me" Then Marjanah dismounted from her horse, and Al-Ghazban did in like sort, and they made fast the bridles and helped the Princess to dismount, for she was aswoon from excess of anguish. When Al-Ghazban saw her on the ground, Satan entered into him and he drew his falchion and brandishing it in her face, said, "O my lady, vouchsafe me thy favours." Hearing these words she turned to him and said, "It remaineth for me only that I yield me to negro slaves, after having refused Kings and Braves!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fifty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Princess Abrizah said to the black slave Al-Ghazban, "It remaineth for me only that I yield me to negro slaves, after having refused Kings and Braves!" And she was wroth with him and cried, "Woe to thee! what words are these thou sayest? Out on thee, and talk not thus in my presence and know that I will never consent to what thou sayest, though I drink the cup of death. Wait till I have cast my burden and am delivered of the after-birth, and then, if thou be able thereto, do with me as thou wilt; but, an thou leave not lewd talk at this time, assuredly I will slay myself with my own hand and quit the world and be at peace from all this." And she began reciting extempore[223]:—

O spare me, thou Ghazban, indeed enow for me ✿ Are heavy strokes of time, mischance and misery!

Whoredom my Lord forfends to all humanity; ✿ Quoth He, "Who breaks my bidding Hell for home shall see!"

And if thou leave not suing me to whoredom's way ✿ Against th' Almighty's choicest gift, my chastity,
Upon my tribesmen I with might and main will call ✿ And gather all, however far or near they be;
And with Yamáni blade were I in pieces hewn, ✿ Ne'er shall he sight my face who makes for villeiny,
The face of free-born come of noble folk and brave; ✿ What then can be to me the seed of whoreson slave?





127When Ghazban heard these lines he was wroth exceedingly; his eyes reddened with blood and his face became a dusty-grey[224]; his nostrils swelled, his lips protruded and the repulsiveness of his aspect redoubled. And he repeated these couplets:—

Ho thou, Abrizah, mercy! leave me not for I ✿ Of thy love and Yamáni[225] glance the victim lie
My heart is cut to pieces by thy cruelty, ✿ My body wasted and my patience done to die:
From glances ravishing all hearts with witchery ✿ Reason far flies, the while desire to thee draws nigh;
Though at thy call should armies fill the face of earth ✿ E'en now I'd win my wish and worlds in arms defy!

When Abrizah heard these words, she wept with sore weeping and said to him, "Woe to thee, O Ghazban! How dareth the like of thee to address me such demand, O base-born and obscene-bred? Dost thou deem all folk are alike?" When the vile slave heard this from her, he waxt more enraged and his eyes grew redder: and he came up to her and smiting her with the sword on her neck wounded her to the death. Then he drove her horse before him with the treasure and made off with himself to the mountains. Such was the case with Al-Ghazban; but as regards Abrizah, she gave birth to a son, like the moon, and Marjanah took the babe and did him the necessary offices and laid him by his mother's 128side; and lo and behold! the child fastened to its mother's breast and she dying.[226] When Marjanah saw this, she cried out with a grievous cry and rent her raiment and cast dust on her head and buffeted her cheeks till blood flowed, saying, "Alas, my mistress! Alas, the pity of it! Thou art dead by the hand of a worthless black slave, after all thy knightly prowess!" And she ceased not weeping when suddenly a great cloud of dust arose and walled the horizon[227]; but, after awhile, it lifted and discovered a numerous conquering host. Now this was the army of King Hardub, Princess Abrizah's father, and the cause of his coming was that when he heard of his daughter and her handmaids having fled to Baghdad, and that they were with King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, he had come forth, leading those with him, to seek tidings of her from travellers who might have seen her with the King. When he had gone a single day's march from his capital, he espied three horsemen afar off and made towards them, intending to ask whence they came and seek news of his daughter. Now these three whom he saw at a distance were his daughter and Marjanah and the slave Al-Ghazban; and he made for them to push enquiry. Seeing this the villain blackamoor feared for himself; so he killed Abrizah and fled for his life. When they came up, King Hardub saw his daughter lying dead and Marjanah weeping over her, and he threw himself from his steed and fell fainting to the ground. All the riders of his company, the Emirs and Wazirs, took foot and forthright pitched their tents on the mountain and set up for the King a great pavilion, domed and circular, without which stood the grandees of the realm. When Marjanah saw her master, she at once recognized him and her tears redoubled; and, when he came to himself, he questioned her and she told him all that had passed and said, "Of a truth he that hath slain thy daughter is a black slave belonging to King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, and she informed 129him how Sharrkan's father had dealt with the Princess." When King

Hardub heard this, the world grew black in his sight and he wept with sore weeping. Then he called for a litter and, therein laying his dead daughter, returned to Cæsarea and carried her into the palace, where he went in to his mother, Zat al-Dawahi, and said to that Lady of Calamities, "Shall the Moslems deal thus with my girl? Verily King Omar bin al-Nu'uman despoiled her of her honour by force, and after this, one of his black slaves slew her. By the truth of the Messiah, I will assuredly take blood-revenge for my daughter and clear away from mine honour the stain of shame; else will I kill myself with mine own hand!" And he wept passing sore. Quoth his mother, "None other than Marjanah killed thy daughter, for she hated her in secret;" and she continued to her son, "Fret not for taking the blood-wit of thy daughter, for, by the truth of the Messiah, I will not turn back from King Omar bin al-Nu'uman till I have slain him and his sons; and of a very truth I will do with him a deed, passing the power of Sage and Knight, whereof the chroniclers shall tell chronicles in all countries and in every place: but needs must thou do my bidding in all I shall direct, for whoso be firmly set on the object of his desire shall surely compass his desire." "By the virtue of the Messiah," replied he, "I will not cross thee in aught thou shalt say." Then quoth she, "Bring me a number of handmaids, high-bosomed virgins, and summon the wise men of the age and let them teach them philosophy and the rules of behaviour before Kings, and the art of conversation and making verses; and let them talk with them of all manner science and edifying knowledge. And the sages must be Moslems, that they may teach them the language and traditions of the Arabs, together with the history of the Caliphs and the ancient annals of the Kings of Al-Islam; and if we persevere in this for four years' space, we shall gain our case. So possess thy soul in patience and wait; for one of the Arabs saith:—If we take man-bote after years forty the time were short to ye. When we have taught the girls these things, we shall be able to work our will with our foe, for he doteth on women and he hath three hundred and sixty concubines, whereto are now added an hundred of the flowers of thy handmaidens who were with thy daughter, she that hath found mercy.[228] As soon as I have made an end of their education, as described to thee, I will 130 take them and set out with them in person." When King Hardub heard his mother's words, he rejoiced and arose and kissed her head; and at once despatched messengers and couriers to lands sundry and manifold to fetch him Moslem sages. They obeyed his commands and fared to far countries and thence brought him the sages and the doctors he sought. When these came into presence, he honoured them with notable honours and bestowed dresses on them and appointed to them stipends and allowances and promised them much money whenas they should have taught the damsels. Then he committed the handmaidens to their hands——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fifty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the sages and the doctors stood in presence of King Hardub, he honoured them with notable honours and committed the handmaidens to their hands, enjoining that these be instructed in all manner of knowledge, philosophy and polite accomplishments; and they set themselves to do his bidding. Such was the case with King Hardub; but as for King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, when he returned from coursing and hunting and entered his palace, he sought Princess Abrizah but found her not, nor any one knew of her nor could any give him news of her. This was grievous to him and he said, "How could the lady leave the palace unknown of any? Had my kingdom been at stake in this case, it were in perilous condition there being none to govern it! I will never again go to sport and hunt till I have stationed at the gates those who shall keep good guard over them!" And he was sore vexed and his breast was straitened for the loss of Princess Abrizah. Hereupon behold, his son Sharrkan returned from his journey; and the father told him what had happened, and informed him how the lady had fled, whilst he was chasing and hunting, whereat he grieved with exceeding grief. Then King Omar took to visiting his children every day and making much of them and brought them learned men and doctors to teach them, appointing for them stipends. When Sharrkan saw this, he raged with exceeding rage and envied thereupon his brother and sister till the signs of chagrin appeared in his face and he ceased not to languish by reason of this matter: so one day his father said to him, "Why do I see thee grown weak in body and yellow of face?" "O my father," replied Sharrkan, [131]"every time I see thee fondle my brother and sister and make much of them, jealousy seizeth on me, and I fear lest it grow on me till I slay them and thou slay me in return. And this is the reason of my weakness of body and change of complexion. But now I crave of thy favour that thou give me one of thy castles outlying the rest, that I may abide there the remnant of my life, for as the sayer of bywords saith:—Absence from my friend is better and fitter for me; and, Whatso eye doth not perceive, that garreth not heart to grieve." And he bowed his head towards the ground. When King Omar bin al-Nu'uman heard his words and knew the cause of his ailment and of his being broken down, he soothed his heart and said to him, "O my son, I grant thee this and I have not in my reign a greater than the Castle of Damascus, and the government of it is thine from this time." Thereupon he forthright summoned his secretaries of state and bade them write Sharrkan's patent of investiture to the viceroyalty of Damascus of Syria. And when they had written it, he equipped him and sent with him the Wazir Dandan, and invested him with the rule and government and gave him instructions as to policy and regulations; and took leave of him, and the grandees and officers of state did likewise, and he set out with his host. When he arrived at Damascus, the townspeople beat the drums and blew the trumpets and decorated the city and came out to meet him in great state; whilst all the notables and grandees paced in procession, and those who stood to the right of the throne walked on his right flank, and the others to the left. Thus far concerning Sharrkan; but as

regards his father, Omar bin al-Nu'uman, soon after the departure of his son, the children's tutors and governors presented themselves before him and said to him, "O our lord, thy children have now learnt knowledge and they are completely versed in the rules of manners and the etiquette of ceremony." The King rejoiced thereat with exceeding joy and conferred bountiful largesse upon the learned men, seeing Zau al-Makan grown up and flourishing and skilled in horsemanship. This Prince had reached the age of fourteen and he occupied himself with piety and prayers, loving the poor, the Olema and the Koran-students, so that all the people of Baghdad loved him, men and women. One day, the procession of the Mahmil[229] of Irák passed round 132 Baghdad before its departure for the pilgrimage to Meccah and visitation of the tomb of the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!). When Zau al-Makan saw the Mahmil procession he was seized with longing desire to become a pilgrim,[230] so he went in to his sire and said, "I come to ask thy leave to make the pilgrimage." But his father forbade him saying, "Wait till next year and I will go and thou too." When the Prince saw that the matter was postponed, he betook himself to his sister Nuzhat al-Zaman, whom he found standing at prayer. As soon as she had ended her devotions he said to her, "I am dying with desire of pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah at Meccah and to visit the tomb of the Prophet, upon whom be peace! I asked my father's leave, but he forbade me that, so I mean to take privily somewhat of money and set out on the pilgrimage without his knowledge." "Allah upon thee," exclaimed she, "take me with thee and deprive me not of visitation to the tomb of the Prophet, whom Allah bless and keep!" And he answered, "As soon as it is dark night, do thou come forth from this place, without telling any." Accordingly, when it was the middle of the night she arose and took somewhat of money and donned a man's habit; and she ceased not walking to the palace-gate, where she found Zau al-Makan with camels ready for marching. So he mounted and mounted her; and the two fared on till they were in the midst of the Iraki[231] pilgrim-party, and they ceased not marching and Allah wrote safety for them, till they entered Meccah the Holy and stood upon Arafat and performed the pilgrimage-rites. Then they made a visitation to the tomb of the Prophet (whom Allah bless and assain!) and thought to return with the pilgrims to their native land. But Zau al-Makan said to his sister, "O my sister, it is in my mind to visit the Holy House,[232] Jerusalem, and Abraham the Friend of Allah[233] (on whom be peace!)." "I also desire so to 133 do," replied she. So they agreed upon this and he fared forth and took passage for himself and her and they made ready and set out in the ship with a company of Jerusalem palmers. That very night the sister fell sick of an aguish chill, and was grievously ill, but presently recovered, after which the brother also sickened. She tended him during his malady and they ceased not wayfaring till they arrived at Jerusalem, but the fever increased on him and he grew weaker and weaker. They alighted at a Khan and there hired a lodging; but Zau al-Makan's sickness ceased not to increase on him, till he was wasted with leanness and

became delirious. At this, his sister was greatly afflicted and exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! This is the decree of Allah!" They sojourned in that place awhile, his weakness ever increasing and she attending him and buying necessaries for him and for herself, till all the money she had was expended and she became so poor that she had not so much as a dirham left. Then she sent a servant of the Khan to the bazar with some of her clothes, and he sold them and she spent the price upon her brother; then sold she something more and she ceased not selling all she had, piece by piece, till nothing was left but an old rug. Whereupon she wept and exclaimed, "Verily is Allah the Orderer of the past and the future!" Presently her brother said to her, "O my sister, I feel recovery drawing near and my heart longeth for a little roast meat." "By Allah! O my brother," replied she, "I have no face to beg; but to-morrow I will enter some rich man's house and serve him and earn somewhat for our living." Then she bethought herself awhile and said, "Of a truth 'tis hard for me to leave thee and thou in this state, but I must despite myself!" He rejoined, "Allah forbid! Thou wilt be put to shame; but there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" And he wept and she wept too. Then she said, "O my brother, we are strangers who have dwelt here a full year, but none hath yet knocked at our door. Shall we then die of hunger? I know no resource but that I go out and do service and earn somewhat to keep us alive, till thou recover from thy sickness, when we will travel back to our native land." She sat weeping awhile and he wept too, propped upon his elbow. Then Nuzhat al-Zaman arose and, veiling her head with a bit of camlet,[234] which 134 had been of the cameleer's clothes and which the owner had forgotten and left with them; she kissed the head of her brother and embraced him and went forth from him, weeping and knowing not whither she should wend. And she stinted not going and her brother Zau al-Makan awaiting her return till the supper-time; but she came not, and he watched for her till the morning morrowed but still she returned not; and this endured till two days went by. He was greatly troubled thereat and his heart fluttered for her, and hunger was sore upon him. At last he left the chamber and, calling the servant of the caravanserai, said, "I wish thee to bear me to the bazar." So he carried him to the market-street and laid him down there; and the people of Jerusalem gathered round him and were moved to tears seeing his condition. He signed to them begging for somewhat to eat; so they brought him some money from certain of the merchants who were in the bazar, and bought food and fed him therewith; after which they carried him to a shop, where they spread him a mat of palm-leaves and set an ewer of water at his head. When night fell, all the folk went away, sore concerned for him and, in the middle of the night, he called to mind his sister and his sickness redoubled on him, so that he abstained from eating and drinking and became insensible to the world around him. Then the bazar-people arose and took for him from the merchants thirty-seven dirhams, and hiring a camel, said to the driver, "Carry this sick man to Damascus and leave him in the hospital; haply he may be cured and recover health." "On my head be it!" replied the camel-

man; but he said to himself, "How shall I take this sick man to Damascus, and he nigh upon death?" So he carried him away to a place and hid with him till the night, when he threw him down on the ash-heap near the fire-hole of a Hammam and went his way. When morning dawned the Stoker[235] of the bath came to his work and, finding Zau al-Makan cast on his back, exclaimed, "Why did they not throw their dead body any where but here?" So saying, he gave him a kick and he moved; whereupon quoth the Fireman, "Some one of you who hath eaten a bit of Hashish and hath thrown himself down in whatso place it be!" Then he looked at his face and saw his hairless cheeks and his grace and comeliness; so he took pity on him and knew that he was sick and a stranger in the land. 135 And he cried, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! verily, I have sinned against this youth, for indeed the Prophet (whom Allah bless and keep!) enjoineth honour to the stranger, more especially when the stranger is sick." Then he carried him home and went in with him to his wife and bade her tend him. So she spread him a sleeping-rug and set a cushion under his head, then warmed water for him and washed therewith his hands and feet and face. Meanwhile, the Stoker went to the market and bought some rose-water and sugar, and sprinkled Zau al-Makan's face with the water and gave him to drink of the sherbet. Then he fetched a clean shirt and put it on him. With this, Zau al-Makan sniffed the zephyr of health and recovery returned to him; and he sat up and leant against the pillow. Hereat the Fireman rejoiced and exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah for the welfare of this youth! O Allah, I beseech Thee by Thy knowledge of hidden things, that Thou make the salvation of this youth to be at my hands!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fifty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Fireman exclaimed, "O Allah, I beseech Thee of Thy knowledge of hidden things, that thou make this young man's life the work of my hands!" And he ceased not to nurse him for three days, giving him to drink of sherbet of sugar and willow-flower water and rose-water; and doing him all manner of service and kindness, till health began to return to his body and Zau al-Makan opened his eyes. Presently came in the Fireman and, seeing him sitting up and showing signs of amendment, said to him, "What is now thy state, O my son?" "Praise be to Allah," replied Zau al-Makan, "I am well and like to recover, if such be the will of Allah Almighty at this time." The Stoker praised the Lord of All for this and, wending fast to the market, bought ten chickens, which he carried to his wife and said, "Kill two of these for him every day, one at dawn of day and the other at fall of day." So she rose up and killed a fowl and brought it to him boiled, and fed him with the flesh and made him drink its broth. When he had done eating, she fetched hot water and he washed his hands and lay back upon the pillow, whereupon she covered him up with the coverlet, and 136 he slept till the time of the mid-afternoon prayer. Then she arose and killed another fowl and boiled it; after which she

cut it up and, bringing it to Zau al-Makan, said, "Eat, O my son!" While he was eating; behold, her husband entered and seeing her feeding him, sat down at his head and said to him, "How is it with thee now, O my son?" "Thanks be to Allah for recovery!" he replied: "may the Almighty requite thee thy kindness to me." At this the Fireman rejoiced and going out, bought sherbet of violets and rose-water and made him drink it. Now the Stoker used to work at the Hammam all day for a wage of five dirhams, whereof he spent every day, for Zau al-Makan, one dirham upon sugar and sherbet of rose-water and willow-flower water,[236] and another dirham for fowls; and he ceased not to entreat him thus kindly during a whole month, till the traces of illness ceased from him and he was once more sound and whole. Thereupon the Fireman and his wife rejoiced and asked him, "O my son, wilt thou go with me to the bath?"; whereto he answered, "Yes!" So the Stoker went to the bazar and fetched a donkey-boy, and he mounted Zau al-Makan on the ass and supported him in the saddle till they came to the bath. Then he made him sit down and seated the donkey-boy in the furnace-room and went forth to the market and bought lote-leaves and lupin-flour,[237] with which he returned to the bath and said to Zau al-Makan, "O my master, in Allah's name, walk in and I will wash thy body." So they entered the inner room of the bath, and the Fireman took to rubbing Zau al-Makan's legs and began to wash his body with the leaves and meal, when there came to them a bathman, whom the bath-keeper had sent to Zau al-Makan; and he, seeing the Stoker washing and rubbing him, said, "This is doing injury to the keeper's rights." Replied the Fireman, "The master overwhelmeth us with his favours!" Then the bathman proceeded to shave Zau al-Makan's head, after which he and the Stoker washed themselves and returned to the house, where he clad Zau al-Makan in a shirt of fine stuff and a robe of his own; and gave him a handsome turband and girdle and a light kerchief which he wound about his neck. Meanwhile the Fireman's wife had killed and cooked two chickens; so, as soon as Zau al-Makan entered and seated 137 himself on the carpet, the husband arose and, dissolving sugar in willow-flower water, made him drink of it. Then he brought the food-tray and, cutting up the chickens, fed him with the flesh and gave him the broth to drink till he was satisfied; when he washed his hands and praised Allah for recovery, and said to the Fireman, "Thou art he whom the Almighty vouchsafed to me and made the cause of my cure!" "Leave this talk," replied the other, "and tell us the cause of thy coming to this city and whence thou art. Thy face showeth signs of gentle breeding." "Tell me first how thou camest to fall in with me," said Zau al-Makan; "and after I will tell thee my story." Rejoined the Fireman, "As for that, I found thee lying on the rubbish-heap by the door of the fire-house, as I went to my work near the morning, and knew not who had thrown thee there. So I carried thee home with me; and this is all my tale." Quoth Zau al-Makan, "Glory to Him who quickeneth the bones, though they be rotten! Indeed, O my brother, thou hast not done good save to one worthy of it, and thou shalt presently gather its fruitage." And he added, "But where am I now?" "Thou art in the city of Jerusalem," replied the Stoker; whereupon

Zau al-Makan called to mind his strangerhood and remembered his separation from his sister and wept. Then he discovered his secret to the Fireman and told him his story and began repeating:

In love they bore me further than my force would go, ✿ And for them made me suffer resurrection-throe:
Oh, have compassion, cruel! on this soul of mine ✿ Which, since ye fared, is pitied by each envious foe;
Nor grudge the tender mercy of one passing glance ✿ My case to lighten, easing this excess of woe:
Quoth I "Heart, bear this loss in patience!" Patience cried ✿ "Take heed! no patience in such plight I'm wont to show."

Then he redoubled his weeping, and the Fireman said to him, "Weep not, but rather praise Allah for safety and recovery." Asked Zau al-Makan, "How far is it hence to Damascus?" Answered the other, "Six days' journey." Then quoth Zau al-Makan, "Wilt thou send me thither?" "O my lord," quoth the Stoker, "how can I allow thee to go alone, and thou a youth and a stranger to boot? If thou would journey to Damascus, I am one who will go with thee; and if my wife will listen to and obey me and accompany me, I will take up my abode there; for it is no light matter to part with thee." Then said he to his wife, "Wilt 138 thou travel with me to Damascus of Syria or wilt thou abide here, whilst I lead this my lord thither and return to thee? For he is bent upon going to Damascus of Syria and, by Allah, it is hard to me to part with him, and I fear for him from highway-men." Replied she, "I will go with you both;" and he rejoined, "Praised be Allah for accord, and we have said the last word!" Then he rose and selling all his own goods and his wife's gear——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five-and-Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Fireman and his wife agreed with Zau al-Makan to travel with him Damascus-wards. Then the Stoker sold his goods and his wife's gear and bought a camel and hired an ass for Zau al-Makan; and they set out, and ceased not wayfaring for six days till they reached Damascus. And they arrived there towards eventide; when the Fireman went forth and, as was his wont, bought some meat and drink. They had dwelt but five days in Damascus, when his wife sickened and, after a short illness, was translated to the mercy of Almighty Allah. Her death was a heavy matter to Zau al-Makan, for he was grown used to her as she had tended him assiduously; and the Fireman grieved for her with excessive grief. Presently the Prince turned to the Stoker and finding him mourning, said to him, "Grieve not, for at this gate we must all go in." Replied he, "Allah make weal thy lot, O my son! Surely He will compensate us with His favours and cause our mourning to cease. What sayst thou, O my son, about our walking abroad to view Damascus and cheer thy spirits?" Replied Zau al-Makan, "Thy will is mine." So the Fireman arose and placed his hand in that of Zau al-Makan and the two walked on till they came to the stables of the Viceroy of Damascus, where they found camels laden with chests and carpets and brocaded stuffs, and horses ready saddled and Bactrian dromedaries,

while Mamelukes and negro slaves and folk in a hubbub were running to and fro. Quoth Zau al-Makan, "I wonder to whom belong all these chattels and camels and stuffs!" So he asked one of the eunuchs, "Whither this dispatching?" and he answered, "These are presents sent by the Emir of Damascus to King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, with the tribute of 139Syria." Now when Zau al-Makan heard his father's name, his eyes brimmed over with tears, and he began repeating:—

Oh ye gone from the gaze of these lidded eyne, ✿ Ye whose sight in my spirit shall ever dwell!

Your charms are gone, but this heart of me ✿ Hath no sweet, and no pleasures its sour dispel;

If Allah's grace make us meet again, ✿ In long-drawn love-tale my love I'll tell.

And when he had ended his verse, he wept and the Fireman said to him, "O my son, we hardly believed that thy health had returned;[238] so take heart and do not weep, for I fear a relapse for thee." And he ceased not comforting and cheering him, whilst Zau al-Makan sighed and moaned over his strangerhood and separation from his sister and his family; and tears streamed from his eyes and he recited these couplets:—

Get thee provaunt in this world ere thou wend upon thy way; ✿ And know how surely Death descends thy life-lot to waylay:

All thy worldly goods are pride and the painfullest repine; ✿ All thy worldly life is vexing of thy soul in vain display:

Say is not worldly wone like a wanderer's place of rest, ✿ Where at night he "nakhs[239]" his camels and moves off at dawn of day?

And he continued to weep and wail over his separation; whilst the Fireman also bewept the loss of his wife, yet ceased not to comfort Zau al-Makan till morning dawned. When the sun rose, he said to him, "Meseemeth thou yearnest for thy native land?" "Yes," replied Zau al-Makan, "and I can no longer tarry here; so I will commend thee to Allah's care and set out with these folk and journey with them, little by little, till I come to my motherland." Said the Stoker, "And I with thee; for of a truth I cannot bear to part with thee. I have done thee kindly service and I mean to complete it by tending thee on thy travel." At this, Zau al-Makan rejoiced and said, "Allah abundantly requite thee for me!" and was pleased with the idea of their travelling together. The Fireman at once went forth and bought another 140ass, selling the camel; and laid in his provaunt and said to Zau al-Makan, "This is for thee to ride by the way; and, when thou art weary of riding, thou canst dismount and walk." Said Zau al-Makan, "May Allah bless thee and aid me to requite thee! for verily thou hast dealt with me more lovingly than one with his brother." Then he waited till it was dark night, when he laid the provisions and baggage on that ass and set forth upon their journey. This much befel Zau al-Makan and the Fireman; but as regards what happened to his sister Nuzhat al-Zaman, when she left her brother in the Khan where they abode and, wrapped in the old camlet, went out to seek service with some one, that she might earn wherewithal to buy him the roast meat he longed for, she fared on, weeping and knowing not whither to go, whilst her mind was occupied with thoughts

of her brother and of her family and her native land. So she implored Allah Almighty to do away with these calamities from them and began versifying:—

Dark falls the night and Passion comes sore pains to gar me dree, ✿ And pine upstirs those ceaseless pangs which work my tormentry,

And cease not separation-flames my vitals to consume, ✿ And drives me on destruction-way this sorrow's ecstacy;

And longing breeds me restlessness; desire for ever fires, ✿ And tears to all proclaim what I would keep in secrecy:

No cunning shift is known to me a meeting to secure, ✿ That I may quit this sickly state, may cure my malady:

The love which blazeth in my heart is fed with fancy-fuel, ✿ The lover from its hell of fire must bear Hell's agony![240]

O thou who blamest me for all befel me, 'tis enough, ✿ Patient I bear whatever wrote the Reed of Doom for me:

By Love I swear I'll never be consoled, no, never more; ✿ I swear the oath of Love's own slaves who know no perjury:

O Night, to chroniclers of Love the news of me declare; ✿ That sleep hath fed mine eyelids of thy knowledge witness bear!

Then she walked on, weeping and turning right and left as she went, when behold, there espied her an old Badawi[241] who had come 141 into the town from the desert with wild Arabs other five. The old man took note of her and saw that she was lovely, but she had nothing on her head save a piece of camlet, and, marvelling at her beauty, he said to himself, "This charmer dazzleth men's wits but she is in squalid condition, and whether she be of the people of this city or she be a stranger, I needs must have her." So he followed her, little by little, till he met her face to face and stopped the way before her in a narrow lane, and called out to her, asking her case, and said, "Tell me, O my little daughter! art thou a free-woman or a slave?" When she heard this, she said to him, "By thy life, do not add to my sorrows!" Quoth he, "Allah hath blessed me with six daughters, of whom five died and only one is left me, the youngest of all; and I came to ask thee if thou be of the folk of this city or a stranger; that I might take thee and carry thee to her, to bear her company so as to divert her from pining for her sisters. If thou have no kith and kin, I will make thee as one of them and thou and she shall be as my two children." Nuzhat al-Zaman bowed her head in bashfulness when she heard what he said and communed with herself, "Haply I may trust myself to this old man." Then she said to him, "O nuncle, I am a maiden of the Arabs and a stranger and I have a sick brother; but I will go with thee to thy daughter on one condition, which is, that I may spend only the day with her and at night may return to my brother. If thou strike this bargain I will fare with thee, for I am a stranger and I was high in honour among my tribe, and I awoke one morning to find myself vile and abject. I came with my brother from the land of Al-Hijaz and I fear lest he know not where I am." When the Badawi heard this, he said to himself, "By Allah, I have got my desire!" Then he turned to her and replied, "There shall none be dearer to me than thou; I wish thee only to bear my daughter company by day and thou shalt go to thy

brother at earliest nightfall. Or, if thou wilt, bring him over to dwell with us." And the Badawi ceased not to console her heart and coax her, till she trusted in him and agreed to serve him. Then he 142 walked on before her and, when she followed him, he winked to his men to go in advance and harness the dromedaries and load them with their packs and place upon them water and provisions, ready for setting out as soon as he should come up with the camels. Now this Badawi was a base-born churl, a highway thief and a traitor to the friend he held most lief, a rogue in grain, past master of plots and chicane. He had no daughter and no son and was only passing through the town when, by the decree of the Decreer, he fell in with this unhappy one. And he ceased not to hold her in converse on the highway till they came without the city of Jerusalem and, when outside, he joined his companions and found they had made ready the dromedaries. So the Badawi mounted a camel, having seated Nuzhat al-Zaman behind him and they rode on all night. Then she knew that the Badawi's proposal was a snare and that he had tricked her; and she continued weeping and crying out the whole night long, while they journeyed on making for the mountains, in fear any should see them. Now when it was near dawn, they dismounted from their dromedaries and the Badawi came up to Nuzhat al-Zaman and said to her, "O city-strumpet, what is this weeping? By Allah, an thou hold not thy peace, I will beat thee to death, O thou town-filth!" When she heard this she loathed life and longed for death; so she turned to him and said, "O accursed old man, O gray-beard of hell, how have I trusted thee and thou hast played me false, and now thou wouldst torture me?" When he heard her reply he cried out, "O lazy baggage, dost thou dare to bandy words with me?" And he stood up to her and beat her with a whip, saying, "An thou hold not thy peace, I will kill thee!" So she was silent awhile, then she called to mind her brother and the happy estate she had been in and she shed tears secretly. Next day, she turned to the Badawi and said to him, "How couldst thou play me this trick and lure me into these bald and stony mountains, and what is thy design with me?" When he heard her words he hardened his heart and said to her, "O lazy baggage of ill-omen and insolent! wilt thou bandy words with me?" and he took the whip and came down with it on her back till she felt faint. Then she bowed down over his feet and kissed[242] them; and he left beating 143 her and began reviling her and said, "By the rights of my bonnet,[243] if I see or hear thee weeping, I will cut out thy tongue and stuff it up thy coynte, O thou city-filth!" So she was silent and made him no reply, for the beating pained her; but sat down with her arms round her knees and, bowing her head upon her collar, began to look into her case and her abasement after her lot of high honour; and the beating she had endured; and she called to mind her brother and his sickness and forlorn condition, and how they were both strangers in a far country, which drave her tears down her cheeks and she wept silently and began repeating:—

Time hath for his wont to upraise and debase, ✿ Nor is lasting condition for human race:

In this world each thing hath appointed turn; ✿ Nor may man transgress his determined place:

How long these perils and woes? Ah woe ✿ For a life, all woeful in parlous case!
Allah bless not the days which have laid me low ✿ I' the world, with disgrace after so much grace!
My wish is baffled, my hopes cast down, ✿ And distance forbids me to greet his face:
O thou who passeth that dear one's door, ✿ Say for me, these tears shall flow evermore!

When she had finished her verses, the Badawi came up to her and, taking compassion on her, bespoke her kindly and wiped away her tears. Then he gave her a barley-scone and said, "I love not one who answereth at times when I am in wrath: so henceforth give me no more of these impertinent words and I will sell thee to a good man like myself, who will do well with thee, even as I have done." "Yes; whatso thou doest is right," answered she; and when the night was longsome upon her and hunger burnt her, she ate very little of that barley bread. In the middle of the night the Badawi gave orders for departure——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six-and-Fiftieth Night.

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Badawi gave the barley scone to Nuzhat al-Zaman and promised he would sell her to a good man like himself, she replied, "Whatso thou doest is right!" and, about midnight, when hunger burned her,[244] she ate a very little of that barley-bread and the Badawi ordered his party to set out; so they loaded their loads and he mounted a camel setting Nuzhat al-Zaman behind him. Then they journeyed and ceased not journeying for three days, till they entered the city of Damascus and alighted at the Sultan's Khan, hard by the Viceroy's Gate. Now she had lost her colour by grief and the fatigue of such travelling, and she ceased not to weep over her misfortunes. So the Badawi came up to her and said, "O thou city-filth, by the right of my bonnet, if thou leave not this weeping, I will sell thee to none but a Jew!" Then he arose and took her by the hand and carried her to a chamber, and walked off to the bazar, and he went round to the merchants who dealt in slave-girls, and began to parley with them, saying, "I have brought a slave-girl whose brother fell ill, and I sent him to my people about Jerusalem, that they might tend him till he is cured. As for her I want to sell her, but after the dog her brother fell sick, the separation from him was grievous to her, and since then she doth nothing but weep, and now I wish that whoso is minded to buy her of me speak softly to her and say:—Thy brother is with me in Jerusalem ill; and I will be easy with him about her price." Then one of the merchants came up to him and asked, "How old is she?" He answered "She is a virgin, just come to marriageable age, and she is endowed with sense and breeding and wit and beauty and loveliness. But from the day I sent her brother to Jerusalem, her heart hath been yearning for him, so that her beauty is fallen away and her value lessened." Now when the merchant heard this, he set forth with the Badawi and said, "O Shaykh[245] of the Arabs, I will go

with thee and buy of thee this girl whom thou praisest so highly for wit and manners and beauty and loveliness; and I will pay thee her price 145 but it must be upon conditions which if thou accept, I will give thee ready money, and if thou accept not I will return her to thee." Quoth the Badawi, "An thou wilt, take her up to the Sultan Sharrkan, son of Omar bin al-Nu'uman lord of Baghdad and of the land of Khorasan, and condition me any conditions thou likest, for when thou hast brought her before King Sharrkan, haply she will please him, and he will pay thee her price and a good profit for thyself to boot." Rejoined the merchant, "It happens that I have just now something to ask from him, and it is this that he write me an order upon the office, exempting me from custom-dues and also that he write me a letter of recommendation to his father, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman. So if he take the girl, I will weigh[246] thee out her price at once." "I agree with thee to this condition," answered the Badawi. So they returned together to the place where Nuzhat al-Zaman was and the wild Arab stood at the chamber door and called out, saying, "O Nájiyah[247]!" which was the name wherewith he had named her. When she heard him, she wept and made no answer. Then he turned to the merchant and said to him, "There she sitteth; go to her and look at her and speak to her kindly as I enjoined thee." So the trader went up to her in courteous wise and saw that she was wondrous beautiful and loveable, especially as she knew the Arabic tongue; and he said to the Badawi, "If she be even as thou saidest, I shall get of the Sultan what I will for her." Then he bespake her, "Peace be on thee, my little maid! How art thou?" She turned to him and replied, "This also was registered in the Book of Destiny." Then she looked at him and, seeing him to be a man of respectable semblance with a handsome face, she said to herself, "I believe this one cometh to buy me;" and she continued, "If I hold aloof from him, I shall abide with my tyrant and he will do me to death with beating. In any case, this person is handsome of face and maketh me hope for better treatment from him than from my brute of a Badawi. May be he cometh only to hear me talk; so I will give him a fair answer." All this while her eyes were fixed on the ground; then she raised them to him and said in a sweet voice, "And upon thee be peace, O my lord, and Allah's mercy and His 146 benediction![248] This is what is commanded of the Prophet, whom Allah bless and preserve! As for thine enquiry how I am, if thou wouldst know my case, it is such as thou wouldst not wish but to thy foe." And she held her peace. When the merchant heard what she said, his fancy took wings for delight in her and, turning to the Badawi, he asked him, "What is her price, for indeed she is noble?" Thereupon the Badawi waxed angry and answered, "Thou wilt turn me the girl's head with this talk! Why dost thou say that she is noble,[249] while she is of the scum of slave-girls and of the refuse of folk? I will not sell her to thee!" When the merchant heard this, he knew the man to be weak of wits and said to him, "Calm thyself, for I will buy her of thee with these blemishes thou mentionest." "And how much wilt thou give me for her?" enquired the Badawi. Replied the merchant, "Name thy price for her: none should

name the son save his sire." Rejoined the Badawi, "None shall name it but thou thyself." Quoth the merchant to himself, "This wildling is a rudesby and a maggotty head. By Allah, I cannot tell her price, for she hath won my heart with her fair speech and good looks; and, if she can read and write, it will be complete fair luck to her and to her purchaser. But this Badawi does not know her worth." Then he turned and said to him, "O Shaykh of the Arabs, I will give thee in ready money, clear of the tax and the Sultan's dues, two hundred gold pieces." Now when the Badawi heard this, he flew into a violent rage and cried at the merchant, saying, "Get up and go thy ways! By Allah, wert thou to offer me two hundred dinars for the bit of camlet she weareth, I would not sell it to thee. And now I will not sell her, but will keep her by me, to pasture the camels and grind my grist." And he cried out to her, saying, "Come here, thou stinkard! I will not sell thee." Then he turned to the merchant and said to him, "I used to think thee a man of judgment; but, by the right of my bonnet, if thou begone not from me, I will let thee hear what shall not please thee!" Quoth the merchant to himself, "Of a truth this Badawi is mad and knoweth not her 147 value, and I will say no more to him about her price at the present time; for by Allah, were he a man of sense, he would not say:—By the rights of my bonnet! By the Almighty, she is worth the kingdom of the Chosroes and I have not her price by me, but if he ask even more, I will give him what he will, though it be all my goods." Then he turned and said to him, "O Shaykh of the Arabs, take patience and calm thyself and tell me what clothes she hath with thee?" Cried the Badawi, "And what hath the baggage to do with clothes? By Allah, this camlet in which she is wrapped is ample for her." "With thy leave," said the merchant, "I will unveil her face and examine her even as folk examine slave-girls whom they think of buying."[250] Replied the other, "Up and do what thou wilt and Allah keep thy youth! Examine her outside and inside and, if thou wilt, strip off her clothes and look at her when she is naked." Quoth the trader, "Allah forfend! I will look at naught save her face."[251] Then he went up to her and was put to shame by her beauty and loveliness,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Fifty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the merchant went up to Nuzhat al-Zaman and was put to shame by her beauty and loveliness, so he sat by her side and asked her, "O my mistress, what is thy name?" She answered, "Dost thou ask what is my name this day or what it was before this day?" Thereupon the merchant enquired, "Hast thou then two names: to day's and yesterday's?" "Yes," replied she, "my name in the past was Nuzhat al-Zaman, the Delight of the Age; but my name at this present is Ghussat[252] al-Zaman, the Despight of the Age." When the merchant heard this his eyes brimmed over with tears and quoth he to her, "Hast thou not a sick brother?" "Ay by Allah, O my lord, I have," quoth she, "but fortune hath parted me and him and he lieth sick in Jerusalem." The merchants head was confounded at the

sweetness 148 of her speech and he said to himself, "Verily, the Badawi spake the truth of her." Then she called to mind her brother and his sickness and his strangerhood and her separation from him in his hour of weakness and her not knowing what had befallen him; and she thought of all that had happened to her with the Badawi and of her severance from her mother and father and native land; and the tears coursed down her cheeks and fast as they started they dropped; and she began reciting:—

Allah, where'er thou be, His aid impart ✿ To thee, who distant dwellest in my heart!

Allah be near thee how so far thou fare; ✿ Ward off all shifts of Time, all dangers thwart!

Mine eyes are desolate for thy vanisht sight, ✿ And start my tears—ah me, how fast they start!

Would Heaven I kenned what quarter or what land ✿ Homes thee, and in what house and tribe thou art;

An fount of life thou drain in greenth of rose, ✿ While drink I tear-drops for my sole desart?

An thou 'joy slumber in those hours, when I ✿ Feel 'twixt my side and couch coals' burning smart?

All things were easy save to part from thee, ✿ For my sad heart this grief is hard to dree.

When the merchant heard her verses, he wept and put out his hand to wipe away the tears from her cheeks; but she let down her veil over her face, saying, "Heaven forbid, O my lord!"[253] Then the Badawi, who was sitting at a little distance watching them, saw her cover her face from the merchant while about to wipe the tears from her cheeks; and he concluded that she would have hindered him from handling her: so he rose and running to her, dealt her, with a camel's halter he had in his hand, such a blow on the shoulders that she fell to the ground on her face. Her eyebrow struck a stone which cut it open, and the blood streamed down her cheeks; whereupon she screamed a loud scream and felt faint and wept bitterly. The merchant was moved to tears for her and said in himself, "There is no help for it but that I buy this damsel, though at her weight in gold, and free her from this tyrant." And he began to revile the Badawi whilst Nuzhat al-Zaman lay insensible. When she came to herself, she wiped away the tears and blood from her face; and she bound up her head: then, raising 149 her glance to heaven, she besought her Lord with a sorrowful heart and began repeating:—

And pity one who erst in honour throve, ✿ And now is fallen into sore disgrace.

She weeps and bathes her cheeks with railing tears, ✿ And asks "What cure can meet this fatal case?"

When she had ended her verse, she turned to the merchant and said in an undertone, "By the Almighty, do not leave me with a tyrant who knoweth not Allah the Most High! If I pass this night in his place, I shall kill myself with my own hand: save me from him, so Allah save thee from Gehenna-fire." Then quoth the merchant to the Badawi, "O Shaykh of the Arabs, this slave is none of thine affair; so do thou sell her to me for what thou wilt." "Take her," quoth the Badawi, "and pay me down her price, or I will carry her back to the camp and there set her to feed the camels and gather their dung."[254] Said the merchant, "I will give thee fifty thousand dinars for her."

"Allah will open!"[255] replied the Badawi. "Seventy thousand," said the merchant. "Allah will open!" repeated the Badawi: "this is not the capital spent upon her, for she hath eaten with me barley-bread to the value of ninety thousand gold pieces." The merchant rejoined, "Thou and thine and all thy tribe in the length of your lives have not eaten a thousand ducats' worth of barley; but I will say thee one word, wherewith if thou be not satisfied, I will set the Viceroy of Damascus on thee and he will take her from thee by force." The Badawi continued, "Say on!" "An hundred thousand," quoth the merchant. "I have sold her to thee at that price," answered the Badawi; "I shall be able to buy salt with her." The merchant laughed and, going to his lodgings, brought the money and put it into the hand of the Badawi, who took it and made off, saying to himself, "Needs must I go to Jerusalem where, haply, I shall happen on her brother, and I will bring him here and sell him also." So he mounted and journeyed till he arrived at Jerusalem, where he went to the Khan and asked for Zau al-Makan, but could not find him. Such was the case with him; but for what regards the merchant and Nuzhat al-Zaman, when he took 150 her he threw some of his clothes over her and carried her to his lodgings——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight-and-Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the trader saved Nuzhat al-Zaman from the Badawi and bore her to his lodgings and robed her in the richest raiment, he went down with her to the bazar, where he bought her what ornaments she chose and put them in a satin bag, which he set before her, saying, "All is for thee and I ask nothing of thee in return but that, when I lead thee to the Sultan, Viceroy of Damascus, thou acquaint him with the price I paid for thee, albeit it was little compared with thy value: and, if seeing thee he buy thee of me, thou tell him how I have dealt with thee and ask of him for me a royal patent, and a written recommendation wherewith I can repair to his father, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, Lord of Baghdad, to the intent that he may forbid the tax on my stuffs or any other goods in which I traffic." When she heard his words, she wept and sobbed, and the merchant said to her, "O my lady, I observe that, every time I mention Baghdad, thine eyes are tearful: is there any one there whom thou lovest? If it be a trader or the like, tell me; for I know all the merchants and so forth there and, if thou wouldst send him a message, I will bear it for thee." Replied she, "By Allah, I have no acquaintance among merchant-folk and the like! I know none there but King Omar bin Nu'uman, Lord of Baghdad." When the merchant heard her words, he laughed and rejoiced with exceeding joy and said in himself, "By Allah, I have won my wish!" Then he said to her, "Hast thou been shown to him in time past?" She answered, "No, but I was brought up with his daughter and he holdeth me dear and I have high honour with him; so if thou wouldst have the King grant thee thy desire, give me ink-case and paper and I will write thee a letter; and when thou reachest the city of Baghdad, do

thou deliver it into the hand of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and say to him:—Thy handmaid, Nuzhat al-Zaman, would have thee to know that the chances and changes of the nights and days have struck her as with a hammer, and have smitten her so that she hath been sold from place to place; and she sendeth thee her 151 salams. And, if he ask further of her, say that I am now with the Viceroy at Damascus." The merchant wondered at her eloquence, and his affection for her increased and he said to her, "I cannot but think that men have played upon thine understanding and sold thee for money. Tell me, dost thou know the Koran by heart?" "Yes," answered she; "and I am also acquainted with philosophy and medicine and the prolegomena of science and the commentaries of Galen, the physician, on the canons of Hippocrates; and I have commented him and I have read the Tazkirah and have commented the Burhán; and I have studied the Simples of Ibn Baytár, and I have something to say of the canon of Meccah, by Avicenna. I can ree riddles and can solve ambiguities, and discourse upon geometry and am skilled in anatomy. I have read the books of the Sháfi'í[256] school and the Traditions of the Prophet and syntax; and I can argue with the Olema and discourse of all manner learning. Moreover I am skilled in logic and rhetoric and arithmetic and the making of talismans and almanacs, and I know thoroughly the Spiritual Sciences[257] and the times appointed for religious duties and I understand all these branches of knowledge." Then quoth she to the merchant, "Bring me ink-case and paper, that I write thee a letter which shall aid thee on thy journey to Baghdad and enable thee to do without passports." Now when the merchant heard this, he cried out, "Brava! Brava![258] Then O happy he in whose palace thou shalt be!" Thereupon he brought her paper and ink-case and a pen of brass and bussed the earth before her face to do her honour. She took a sheet and handled the reed and wrote therewith these verses:—

152 I see all power of sleep from eyes of me hath flown; ✿ Say, did thy parting teach these eyne on wake to wone?

What makes thy memory light such burnings in my heart? ✿ Hath every lover strength such memories to own?

How sweet the big-dropped cloud which rained on summer-day; ✿ 'Tis gone: and ere I taste its sweets afar 'tis flown:

I pray the wind with windy breath to bring some news ✿ From thee, to lover-wight wi' love so woe-begone:

Complains to thee a lover of all hope forlorn, ✿ For parting-pangs can break not only heart but stone.

And when she had ended writing the verses she continued, "These words are from her who saith that melancholy destroyeth her and that watching wasteth her; in the murk of whose night is found no light and darkness and day are the same in her sight. She tosseth on the couch of separation and her eyes are blackened with the pencils of sleeplessness; she watcheth the stars arise and into the gloom she strains her eyes: verily, sadness and leanness have consumed her strength and the setting forth of her case would run to length. No helper hath she but tears and she reciteth these verses:—

No ring-dove moans from home on branch in morning light, ✿ But shakes my very frame with sorrow's killing might:

No lover sigheth for his love or gladdeth heart ✿ To meet his mate, but breeds in me redoubled blight

I bear my plaint to one who has no ruth for me; ✿ Ah me, how Love can part man's mortal frame and sprite!"

Then her eyes welled over with tears, and she wrote also these two couplets:—

"Love smote my frame so sore on parting day, ✿ That severance severed sleep and eyes for aye

I waxt so lean that I am still a man, ✿ But for my speaking, thou wouldst never say."

Then she shed tears and wrote at the foot of the sheet, "This cometh from her who is far from her folk and her native land, the sorrowful-hearted woman Nuzhat al-Zaman." In fine, she folded the sheet and gave it to the merchant, who took it and kissed it and understood its contents and exclaimed, "Glory to Him who fashioned thee!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine-and-Fiftieth Night,

She said, It reached me, O auspicious King, that Nuzhat al-Zaman wrote the letter and gave it to the merchant; and he took it and read it and understood the contents and exclaimed, "Glory to 153 Him who fashioned thee!" Then he redoubled his kindness and made himself pleasant to her all that day; and when night came, he sallied out to the bazar and bought some food, wherewith he fed her; after which he carried her to the Hammam and said to the bath-woman, "As soon as thou hast made an end of washing her head, dress her and send and let me know of it." And she replied "Hearing is obeying." Meanwhile he fetched food and fruit and wax-candles and set them on the bench in the outer room of the bath; and when the tire-woman had done washing her, she dressed her and led her out of the bath and seated her on the bench. Then she sent to tell the merchant, and Nuzhat al-Zaman went forth to the outer room, where she found the tray spread with food and fruit. So she ate and the tire-woman with her, and gave the rest to the people and keeper of the bath. Then she slept till the morning, and the merchant lay the night in a place apart from her. When he aroused himself from sleep he came to her and waking her, presented her with a shift of fine stuff and a head-kerchief worth a thousand dinars, a suit of Turkish embroidery and walking boots purfled with red gold and set with pearls and gems. Moreover, he hung in each of her ears a circlet of gold with a fine pearl therein, worth a thousand dinars, and threw round her neck a collar of gold with bosses of garnet and a chain of amber beads that hung down between her breasts over her navel. Now to this chain were attached ten balls and nine crescents, and each crescent had in its midst a bezel of ruby, and each ball a bezel of balass: the value of the chain was three thousand dinars and each of the balls was priced at twenty thousand dirhams, so that the dress she wore was worth in all a great sum of money. When she had put these on, the merchant bade her adorn herself, and she adorned herself to the utmost beauty; then she let fall

her fillet over her eyes and she fared forth with the merchant preceding her. But when folk saw her, all wondered at her beauty and exclaimed, "Blessed be Allah, the most excellent Creator! O lucky the man in whose house she shall be!" And the trader ceased not walking (and she behind him) till they entered the palace of Sultan Sharrkan; when he sought an audience and, kissing the earth between his hands, said, "O auspicious King, I have brought thee a rare gift, unmatched in this time and richly gifted with beauty and with good qualities." Quoth the King, "Let me see it." So the merchant went out and brought her, she following him till he made her stand before 154King Sharrkan. When he beheld her, blood yearned to blood, though she had been parted from him in childhood and though he had never seen her, having only heard a long time after her birth that he had a sister called Nuzhat al-Zaman and a brother Zau al-Makan, he having been jealous of them, because of the succession. And such was the cause of his knowing little about them. Then, having placed her before the presence, the merchant said, "O King of the age, besides being peerless in her time for beauty and loveliness, she is also versed in all learning, sacred and profane, including the art of government and the abstract sciences." Quoth the King to the trader, "Take her price, according as thou boughtest her, and go thy ways." "I hear and I obey," replied the merchant; "but first write me a patent, exempting me for ever from paying tithe on my merchandise." Said the King, "I will do this, but first tell me what price thou paidest for her." Said the merchant, "I bought her for an hundred thousand dinars, and her clothes cost me another hundred thousand." When the Sultan heard these words, he declared, "I will give thee a higher price than this for her;" and, calling his treasurer, said to him, "Pay this merchant three hundred and twenty thousand ducats; so will he have an hundred and twenty thousand dinars profit." Thereupon the Sultan summoned the four Kazis and paid him the money in their presence and then he said, "I call you to witness that I free this my slave-girl and purpose to marry her." So the Kazis wrote out the deed of emancipation and the contract of marriage, when the Sultan scattered much gold on the heads of those present; and the pages and the eunuchs picked up this largesse. Then, after paying him his monies, Sharrkan bade them write for the merchant a perpetual patent, exempting him from toll, tax or tithe upon his merchandise and forbidding each and every in all his government to molest him, and lastly bestowed on him a splendid dress of honour.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the full Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Sharrkan bade them write for the merchant a mandate, after paying him his monies; and they wrote a perpetual patent, 155exempting him from the tithe upon his merchandise and forbidding any in his government to molest him; and lastly bestowed upon him a splendid dress of honour. Then all about him retired, and none remained save the Kazis and the

merchant, whereupon said he to the judges, "I wish you to hear such discourse from this damsel as may prove her knowledge and accomplishments in all claimed for her by this trader, that we ascertain the truth of his assertions." They answered, "There is no evil in that!"; and he commanded the curtain to be let down between him and those with him and the maiden and those with her; and the women about the damsel behind the curtains began to wish her joy and kiss her hands and feet, when they learned that she was become the King's wife. Then they came round her and took off her dresses easing her of the weight of her clothes and began to look upon her beauty and loveliness. Presently the wives of the Emirs and Wazirs heard that King Sharrkan had bought a handmaiden unmatched for her beauty and learning and philosophy and account-keeping, and versed in all branches of knowledge, that he had paid for her three hundred and twenty thousand dinars, and that he had set her free and had written a marriage-contract with her and had summoned the four Kazis to make trial of her, how she would answer all their questions and hold disputation with them. So they asked leave of their husbands and repaired to the palace wherein was Nuzhat al-Zaman. When they came in to her, they found the eunuchs standing before her; and, as soon as she saw the wives of the Emirs and Wazirs and Grandees of the realm coming to call upon her, she arose to them on her feet and met them with courtesy, her handmaidens standing behind her, and she received them saying, "Ye be welcome!" The while she smiled in their faces so as to win their hearts; and she promised them all manner of good and seated them in their proper stations, as if she had been brought up with them; so all wondered at her beauty and loveliness and said to one another, "This damsel is none other than a Queen, the daughter of a King." Then they sat down, magnifying her worth and said to her, "O our lady, this our city is illumined by thee, and our country and abode and birthplace and reign are honoured by thy presence. The kingdom indeed is thy kingdom and the palace is thy palace, and we all are thy handmaids; so, by Allah, do not shut us out from thy favours and from the sight of thy beauty." And she thanked them for this. All this while the curtains were let down between Nuzhat al-Zaman and 156 the women with her, on the one side, and King Sharrkan and the four Kazis and the merchant seated by him on the other. Presently King Sharrkan called to her and said, "O Queen, the glory of thine age, this merchant hath described thee as being learned and accomplished; and he claimeth that thou art skilled in all branches of knowledge, even to astrology: so let us hear something of all this he hath mentioned, and favour us with a short discourse on such subjects." She replied, saying:—"O King, to hear is to obey.[259] The first subjects whereof I will treat are the art of government and the duties of Kings and what behoveth governors of commandments according to religious law, and what is incumbent on them in respect of satisfactory speech and manners. Know then, O King, that all men's works tend either to religious or to laical life, for none attaineth to religion save through this world, because it is the best road to futurity. Now the works of this world are not ordered save by the doings of its people, and men's doings are

divided into four divisions, government, commerce, husbandry and craftmanship. Now government requireth perfect administration with just and true judgment; for government is the pivot of the edifice of the world, which world is the road to futurity; since Allah Almighty hath made the world for His servants as viaticum to the traveller for the attainment of his goal; and it befitteth each man that he receive of it such measure as shall bring him to Allah, and that he follow not herein his own mind and his individual lust. If folk would take of worldly goods with justice and equity, all cause of contention would be cut off; but they take thereof with violence and after their own desires, and their persistence therein giveth rise to contentions; so they have need of the Sultan, that he do justice between them and order their affairs; and, if the King restrain not his folk from one another, the strong will drive the weak to the wall. Hence Ardeshir[260] saith, Religion and Kingship be twins; religion is a hidden treasure and the King is its keeper; and the Divine Ordinances and men's intelligence point out that it behoveth the people to adopt a Sultan who shall withhold oppressor from oppressed and do the weak justice against the strong and 157 restrain the violence of the proud and the rebels against rule. For know, O King, that according to the measure of the Sultan's good morals, even so will be the time; as saith the Apostle of Allah (on whom be peace and salvation!), There be two classes who, if they be good, the people will be good; and if they be bad, the people will be bad, even the Olema and the Emirs. And it is said by a certain sage:—There be three kinds of Kings, the King of the Faith, the King who protecteth things to which reverence is due, and the King of his own lusts. The King of the Faith obligeth his subjects to follow their faith, and it behoveth he be the most faithful,[261] for it is by him that they take pattern in the things of the Faith; and it becometh the folk to obey him in whatso he commandeth according to Divine Ordinance; but he shall hold the discontented in the same esteem as the contented, because of submission to the decrees of Destiny. As for the King who protecteth things to be reverenced, he upholdeth the things of the Faith and of the World and compelleth his folk to follow the Divine Law and to preserve the rights of humanity; and it fitteth him to unite Pen and Sword; for whoso declineth from what Pen hath written, his feet slip and the King shall rectify his error with the sharp Sword and dispread his justice over all mankind. As for the King of his own lusts, he hath no religion but the following his desire and, as he feareth not the wrath of his Lord who set him on the throne, so his Kingdom inclineth to deposition and the end of his pride is in the house of perdition. And sages say, The King hath need of many people, but the people have need of but one King; wherefore it beseemeth that he be well acquainted with their natures, that he reduce their discord to concord, that with his justice he encompass them all and with his bounties overwhelm them all. And know, O King, that Ardeshir, styled Jamr Shadíd, or the Live Coal, third of the Kings of Persia, conquered the whole world and divided it into four divisions and, for this purpose, gat for himself four seal-rings, one for each division. The first seal was that of the sea and the police of prohibition and on it was written, Alternatives. The second

was the seal of tribute and of the receipt of monies, and on it was written, Building up. The third was the seal of the provisioning department and on it was written, Plenty. The fourth was the seal of the oppressed, and on it was written, 158Justice. And these usages remained valid in Persia until the revelation of Al-Islam. Chosroes also wrote his son, who was with the army:—Be not thou too open-handed with thy troops, or they will be too rich to need thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Chosroes wrote his son:—Be not thou too open-handed with thy troops, or they will be too rich to need thee; nor be thou niggardly with them, or they will murmur against thee. Give thy giving deliberately and confer thy favours advisedly; open thy hand to them in time of success and stint them not in time of distress. There is a legend that a desert Arab came once to the Caliph Al-Mansúr[262] and said, Starve thy dog and he shall follow thee. When the Caliph heard his words, he was enraged with the Arab, but Abu 'l-Abbás of Tús said to him, I fear that if some other than thou should show him a scone, the dog would follow him and leave thee alone. Thereupon the Caliph Al-Mansúr's wrath subsided and he knew that the wild Arab had intended no offence and ordered him a present. And know, O King, that Abd al-Malik bin Marwán wrote to his brother Abd al-Aziz, when he despatched him to Egypt, as follows:—Pay heed to thy Secretaries and thy Chamberlains, for the Secretaries will acquaint thee with established matters and the Chamberlains with matters of official ceremony, whilst thine expenditure will make thy troops known to thee. Omar bin Al-Khattab[263] (whom Allah accept!) when engaging a servant was in the habit of conditioning him with four conditions; the first that he should not ride the baggage-beasts, the second that he should not wear fine clothes, the third that he should not eat of the spoil and the 159fourth that he should not put off praying till after the proper period. It is said that there is no wealth more profitable than understanding, and there is no understanding like common sense and prudence, and there is no prudence like piety; that there is no means of drawing near to God like good morals, no measure like good breeding, no traffic like good works and no profit like earning the Divine favour; that there is no temperance like standing within the limits of the law, no science like that of meditation, no worship like obeying the Divine commands, no faith like modesty, no calculation like self-abasement and no honour like knowledge. So guard the head and what it containeth and the belly and what it compriseth; and think of death and doom ere it ariseth. Saith Ali (whose face Allah honour!), Beware of the wickedness of women and be on thy guard against them: consult them not in aught;[264] but grudge not complaisance to them, lest they greed for intrigue. And eke quoth he, whoso leaveth the path of moderation his wits become perplexed; and there be rules for this which we will mention, if it be Allah's will. And Omar (whom Allah accept!) saith,

there are three kinds of women, firstly the true-believing, Heaven-fearing, love-full and fruit-full, who helpeth her mate against fate, not helping fate against her mate; secondly, she who loveth her children but no more and, lastly, she who is a shackle Allah setteth on the neck of whom He will. Men be also three: the wise when he exerciseth his own judgement; the wiser who, when befalleth somewhat whereof he knoweth not the issue, seeketh folk of good counsel and acteth by their advice; and the unwise-irresolute ignoring the right way nor heeding those who would guide him straight. Justice is indispensable in all things; even slave-girls have need of justice; and men quote as an instance highway robbers who live by violenting mankind, for did they not deal equitably among themselves and observe justice in dividing their booty, their order would fall to pieces.[265] In short, for the rest, the Prince of noble qualities is Beneficence-cum-Benevolence; and how excellent is the saying of the poet:—

By open hand and ruth the youth rose to his tribe's command; ✿ Go and do likewise for the same were easy task to thee.

160 And quoth another:—

In ruth and mildness surety lies and mercy wins respect; ✿ And Truth is best asylum for the man of soothfast soul:

Whoso for wealth of gold would win and wear the world's good word, ✿ On glory's course must ever be the first to gain the goal.

And Nuzhat al-Zaman discoursed upon the policy of Kings till the bystanders said, "Never have we seen one reason of rule and government like this damsel! Haply she will let us hear some discourse upon subject other than this." When she heard their words and understood them she said, "As for the chapter of good breeding, it is wide of comprehension, being a compend of things perfect. Now it so happened that one day there came to the Caliph Mu'áwiyah[266] one of his companions, who mentioned the people of Irak and the goodness of their wit; and the Caliph's wife Maysun, mother of Yezid, heard his words. So, when he was gone, she said to the Caliph:—O Prince of the Faithful, I would thou let some of the people of Irak come in and talk to thee, that I may hear their discourse. Therewith Mu'awiyah said to his attendants, See who is at the door? And they answered, The Banu Tamím. Let them come in, said he. So they came in and with them Al-Ahnaf son of Kays.[267] Then quoth Mu'awiyah:—Enter, O Abu Bahr, and drew a curtain between himself and Maysun, that she might hear what they said without being seen herself; then he said to Al-Ahnaf:—O Son of the Sea, draw near and tell me what counsel thou hast for me. Quoth Al-Ahnaf, Part thy hair and trim thy moustachio and pare thy nails and pluck thine armpits and shave thy pubes[268] and ever use the toothstick 161 because therein be two-and-seventy virtues, and make the Ghusl or complete ablution on Friday, as an expiation for all between the Fridays."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ahnaf bin Kays replied to Al-Mu'awiyah's[269] question, "And ever use the toothstick, because therein be two-and-seventy virtues and make the complete Friday ablution as an expiation for all between the two Fridays." Quoth Mu'awiyah, "What is thy counsel to thyself?" "To set my feet firmly on the ground, to move them deliberately and watch over them with mine eyes!" "How dost thou order thyself when thou goest in to one not of the nobles of thy tribe?" "I lower mine eyes modestly and I salute first; I avoid what concerneth me not and I spare my words!" "And how when thou goest in to thine equals?" "I give ear to them when they speak and I do not assail them when they err!" "When thou goest in to thy chiefs?" "I salute without making any sign and await the reply: if they bid me draw near, I draw near; and if they draw off from me I withdraw!" "How dost thou with thy wife?" Quoth Ahnaf, "Excuse me from answering this, O Commander of the Faithful!"; but Mu'awiyah cried, "I conjure thee inform me." He said, "I entreat her kindly and show her familiarity and am large in expenditure, for woman was created of a crooked rib."[270] "And how dost thou when thou hast a mind to lie with her?" "I bid her perfume herself and kiss her till she is moved to desire; then, should it be as thou knowest,[271] I throw her on her back. If the seed abide in her womb I say:—O Allah make it blessed and let it not be a wastrel, but fashion it into the best of fashions![272] Then I rise from her to ablution 162 and first I pour water over my hands and then over my body and lastly, I praise Allah for the joy He hath given me." Said Mu'awiyah, "Thou hast answered right well and now tell me what be thy requirements?" Said Ahnaf, "I would have thee rule thy subjects in the fear of Allah and do even-handed justice between them." Thereupon Ahnaf rose to his feet and left the Caliph's presence, and when he had gone Maysun said, "Were there but this man in Irak, he would suffice to it." Then continued Nuzhat al-Zaman, "And all this is a section of the chapter of good-breeding, and know O King, that Mu'aykib was intendant of the public treasury during the Caliphate of Omar bin al-Khattáb,"—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nuzhat al-Zaman continued, "Know, O King, that Mu'aykib was intendant of the public treasury during the Caliphate of Omar bin Al-Khattab; and it so befel him that he saw Omar's son and gave him a dirham out of the treasury. Thereupon, quoth Mu'aykib, I returned to my own house, and while I was sitting there behold, a messenger came to me from Omar and I was afraid and went to him, and when I came into his presence, in his hand was the dirham I had given his son. He said to me, Woe to thee, Mu'aykib! I have found somewhat concerning thy soul. I asked, And what is that?; and he answered, It is that thou hast shown thyself a foe to the followers of Mohammed (on whom be peace and

salvation!) in the matter of this dirham, and thou wilt have to account for it on Resurrection Day.[273] And Omar also wrote a letter to Abú Músá al-Ashári[274] as follows:—When these presents reach thee, give the people what is theirs and remit to me the rest. And he did so. Now when Othmán succeeded to the Caliphate, he wrote a like letter to Abu Musa, who did his bidding and sent 163 him the tribute accordingly, and with it came Ziyád.[275] And when Ziyad laid the tribute before Othman, the Caliph's son came in and took a dirham, whereupon Ziyad shed tears. Othman asked Why weepest thou?; and Ziyad answered, I once brought Omar bin Al-Khattab the like of this and his son took a dirham, whereupon Omar bade snatch it from his hand. Now thy son hath taken of the tribute, yet I have seen none say aught to him or snatch the money from him. Then Othman[276] cried, And where wilt thou find the like of Omar? Again Zayd bin Aslam relates of his father that he said:—I went out one night with Omar till we approached a blazing fire. Quoth Omar, O Aslam, I think these must be travellers who are suffering from the cold. Come, let us join them. So we walked on till we came to them and behold! we found a woman who had lighted a fire under a cauldron and by her side were two children, both a-wailing. Said Omar, Peace be with you, O folk of light (for it was repugnant to him to say 'folk of fire'),[277] what aileth you? Said she, The cold and the night trouble us. He asked, What aileth these little people that they weep?; and she answered, They are hungry. He enquired, And what is in this cauldron?; and she replied, It is what I quiet them withal, and Allah will question Omar bin Al-Khattab of them, on the Day of Doom. He said, And what should Omar know of their case? Why then, rejoined she, should he manage people's affairs and yet be unmindful of them? Thereupon Omar turned to me (continued 164 Aslam) and cried, Come with us! So we set off running till we reached the pay-department of his treasury, where he took out a sack containing flour and a pot holding fat and said to me, Load these on my back! Quoth I, O Commander of the Faithful, I will carry them for thee. He rejoined, Wilt thou bear my load for me on the Day of Resurrection? So I put the things on his back, and we set off, running, till we threw down the sack hard by her. Then he took out some of the flour and put it in the cauldron; and, saying to the woman, Leave it to me, he began blowing the fire under the cauldron. Now he was a long-bearded man[278] and I saw the smoke issuing from between the hairs of his beard till the flour was cooked, when he took some of the fat and threw it in and said to the woman, Feed them while I cool it for them. So they fell to eating till they had eaten their fill, and he left the rest with her. Then he turned to me and said, O Aslam, I see it was indeed hunger made them weep; and I am glad I did not go away ere I found out the cause of the light I saw."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nuzhat al-Zaman continued, "It is related that Omar passed by a flock of sheep, kept by a Mameluke, and asked him

to sell him a sheep. He answered, They are not mine. Thou art the man I sought, said Omar, and bought him and freed him; whereupon the slave exclaimed, O Allah, as thou hast bestowed on me the lesser emancipation; 165 so vouchsafe me the greater![279] It is also said that Omar bin Al-Khattab was wont to give his servants sweet milk and himself eat coarse fare, and to clothe them softly and himself wear rough garments. He rendered unto all men their due, and exceeded in his giving to them. He once gave a man four thousand dirhams and added thereto a thousand, wherefore it was said to him, Why dost thou not increase to thy son as thou increasest to this man? He answered, This man's father stood firm at the battle-day of Ohod.[280] Al-Hasan relates that Omar once came back from foray with much money, and that Hafsah[281] approached him and said, O Commander of the Faithful, the due of kinship! O Hafsah! replied he, verily Allah hath enjoined us to satisfy the dues of kinship, but not with the monies of the True Believers. Indeed, thou pleasest thy family, but thou angerest thy father. And she went away trailing her skirts.[282] The son of Omar said, I implored the Lord to show me my father one year after his death, till at last I saw him wiping the sweat from his brow and asked him, How is it with thee, O my father? He answered, But for my Lord's mercy thy father surely had perished." Then said Nuzhat al-Zaman, "Hear, O auspicious King, the second division of the first chapter of the instances of the followers of the Apostle and other holy men. Saith Al-Hasan al-Basrí,[283] Not a soul of the sons of Adam goeth forth of the world without regretting three things, failure to enjoy what he hath amassed, failure to compass what he hoped, failure to provide himself with sufficient viaticum for that whereto he goeth.[284] It was said to Sufyan,[285] Can a man be a religious and yet possess wealth? He replied, Yes, so he be patient when grieved and be thankful when he hath received. Abdullah bin Shaddád, being about to die, sent for his son Mohammed and admonished him, saying, O my son, I see the Summoner of Death 166 summoning me, and so I charge thee to fear Allah both in public and private, to praise Allah and to be soothfast in thy speech, for such praise bringeth increase of prosperity, and piety in itself is the best of provision for the next world; even as saith one of the poets:—

I see not happiness lies in gathering gold; ✿ The man most pious is man happiest:

In truth the fear of God is best of stores, ✿ And God shall make the pious choicely blest."

Then quoth Nuzhat al-Zaman, "Let the King also give ear to these notes from the second section of the first chapter." He asked her what be they?; and she answered, "When Omar bin Abd al-Aziz[286] succeeded to the Caliphate, he went to his household and laying hands on all that was in their hold, put it into the public treasury. So the Banu Umayyah flew for aid to his father's sister, Fátimah, daughter of Marwán, and she sent to him saying, I must needs speak to thee. So she came to him by night and, when he had made her alight from her beast and sit down, he said to her, O aunt, it is for thee to speak first, since thou hast something to ask: tell me then what thou wouldst with me. Replied she, O Commander of the Faithful, it is thine to speak first,

for thy judgment perceiveth that which is hidden from the intelligence of others. Then said Omar, Of a verity Allah Almighty sent Mohammed as a blessing to some and a bane to others; and He elected for him those with him, and commissioned him as His Apostle and took him to Himself,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nuzhat al-Zaman continued thus, "Said Omar, Verily Allah commissioned as His Apostle Mohammed (upon whom be the benediction of Allah and His salvation!), for a blessing to some and a bane to others; and He elected for him those with him and took him to 167 Himself, leaving the people a stream whereof they might drink. After him Abu Bakr[287] the Truth-teller became Caliph and he left the river as it was, doing what was pleasing to Allah. Then arose Omar and worked a work and strove in holy war and strife whereof none might do the like. But when Othman arose to power he diverted a streamlet from the stream, and Mu'awiyah in his turn diverted from it several streamlets; and without ceasing in like manner, Yezid and the Banu Marwán such as Abd al-Malik and Walíd and Sulaymán[288] drew away water from the stream, and the main course dried up, till rule devolved upon me, and now I am minded to restore the stream to its normal condition. When Fatimah heard this, she said, I came wishing only to speak and confer with thee, but if this be thy word, I have nothing to say to thee. Then she returned to the Ommiades and said to them, Now take ye the consequences of your act when ye allied yourselves by marriage with Omar bin Al-Khattab[289]." And it is also said that when Omar was about to die, he gathered his children round him, and Maslamah[290] bin Abd al-Malik said to him, O Prince of the Faithful, how wilt thou leave thy children paupers and thou their protector? None can hinder thee in thy lifetime from giving them what will suffice them out of the treasury; and this indeed were better than leaving the good work to him who shall rule after thee. Omar looked at him with a look of wrath and wonder and presently replied, O Maslamah, I have defended them from this sin all the days of my life, and shall I make them miserable after my death? Of a truth my sons are like other men, either obedient to Almighty Allah who will prosper them, or disobedient and I will not help them in their disobedience. Know, O Maslamah, 168 that I was present, even as thou, when such an one of the sons of Marwán was buried, and I fell asleep by him and saw him in a dream given over to one of the punishments of Allah, to whom belong Honour and Glory! This terrified me and made me tremble, and I vowed to Allah, that if ever I came to power, I would not do such deeds as the dead man had done. I have striven to fulfil this vow all the length of my life and I hope to die in the mercy of my Lord. Quoth Maslamah:—A certain man died and I was present at his burial, and when all was over I fell asleep and I saw him as a sleeper seeth a dream, walking in a garden of flowing waters clad in white clothes. He came up to me and said: O Maslamah, it is

for the like of this that rulers should rule. Many are the instances of this kind, and quoth one of the men of authority, I used to milk the ewes in the Caliphate of Omar bin Abd al-Aziz, and one day I met a shepherd, among whose sheep I saw a wolf or wolves. I thought them to be dogs, for I had never before seen wolves; so I asked, What dost thou with these dogs? They are not dogs, but wolves, answered the shepherd. Quoth I, Can wolves be with sheep and not hurt them? Quoth he, When the head is whole, the body is whole.[291] Omar bin Abd al-Aziz once preached from a pulpit of clay and, after praising and glorifying Allah Almighty, said three words as follows, O folk, make clean your inmost hearts, that your outward lives may be clean to your brethren, and abstain ye from the things of the world. Know that between us and Adam there is no one man alive among the dead. Dead are Abd al-Malik and those who forewent him, and Omar also shall die and those who forewent him. Asked Maslamah, O Commander of the Faithful, an we set a pillow behind thee, wilt thou lean on it a little while? But Omar answered, I fear lest it be a fault about my neck on Resurrection Day. Then he gasped with the death rattle and fell back in a faint; whereupon Fatimah cried out, saying, Ho, Maryam! Ho, Muzáhim![292] Ho, such an one! Look to this man! And she began to pour water on him weeping, till he revived from his swoon; and, seeing her in tears said to her, What causeth thee to weep, O Fatimah? She replied, O Commander of the Faithful, I saw thee lying prostrate before us and thought of thy prostration in death before Almighty Allah, of thy departure from the world 169 and of thy separation from us. This is what made me weep. Answered he, Enough, O Fatimah, for indeed thou exceedest. Then he would have risen, but fell down and Fatimah strained him to her and said, "Thou art to me as my father and my mother, O Commander of the Faithful! We cannot speak to thee, all of us." Then quoth Nuzhat al-Zaman to her brother Sharrkan and the four Kazis, "Here endeth the second section of the first chapter."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nuzhat al-Zaman said to her brother Sharrkan and the four Kazis, "Here endeth the second section of the first chapter. And it so happened that Omar bin Abd al-Aziz wrote to the people of the festival at Meccah as follows:—I call Allah to witness, in the Holy Month, in the Holy City and on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage,[293] that I am innocent of your oppression and of his wrongs that doth wrong you, in that I have neither commanded this nor purposed it, neither hath any report of aught thereof hitherto reached me, nor have I compassed any knowledge thereof; and I trust that a cause for pardon will be found in that none hath authority from me to oppress any man, for I shall assuredly be questioned concerning every one opprest. And if any of my officers swerve from the right and act otherwise than the Holy Book and the Traditions of the Apostle do authorise, obey him not so that he may return to the way of righteousness. He said

also (Allah accept of him!), I do not wish to be relieved from death, because it is the supreme thing for which the True Believer is rewarded. Quoth one of 170 authority, I went to the Prince of the Faithful, Omar bin Abd al-Aziz, who was then Caliph, and saw before him twelve dirhams, which he ordered for deposit in the public treasury. So I said to him, O Commander of the Faithful, thou impoverishest thy children and reducest them to beggary having nothing whereon to live. An thou wouldst appoint somewhat by will to them and to those who are poor of the people of thy house, it were well. Draw near to me, answered he: so I drew near to him and he said, Now as for thy saying, Thou beggarest thy children; provide for them and for the poor of thy household, it is without reason; for Allah of a truth will replace me to my children and to the poor of my house, and He will be their guardian. Verily, they are like other men; he who feareth Allah, right soon will Allah provide for him a happy issue, and he that is addicted to sins, I will not uphold him in his sin against Allah. Then he summoned his sons who numbered twelve, and when he beheld them his eyes dropped tears and presently he said to them, Your Father is between two things; either ye will be well to do, and your parent will enter the fire, or ye will be poor and your parent will enter Paradise; and your father's entry into Paradise is liefer to him than that ye should be well to do.[294] So arise and go, Allah be your helper, for to Him I commit your affair! Khálid bin Safwán[295] said, Yúsuf bin Omar[296] accompanied me to Hishám bin Abd al-Malik,[297] and as I met him he was coming forth with his kinsmen and attendants. He alighted and a tent was pitched for him. When the people had taken their seats, I came up to the side of the carpet whereon he sat reclining and looked at him; and, waiting till my eyes met his eyes, bespoke him thus, May Allah fulfil His bounty to thee, O Commander of the Faithful, I have an admonition for thee, which hath come down to us from the history of the Kings preceding thee! At this, he 171 sat up whenas he had been reclining and said to me, Bring what thou hast, O son of Safwan! Quoth I, O Commander of the Faithful, one of the Kings before thee went forth in a time before this thy time, to this very country and said to his companions, Saw ye ever any state like mine and say me, hath such case been given to any man even as it hath been given unto me? Now there was with him a man of those who survive to bear testimony to Truth; upholders of the Right and wayfarers in its highway, and he said to him, O King, thou askest of a grave matter. Wilt thou give me leave to answer? Yes, replied the King, and the other said, Dost thou judge thy present state to be short-lasting or everlasting? It is temporary, replied the King. How then, rejoined the man, do I see thee exulting in that which thou wilt enjoy but a little while and whereof thou wilt be questioned for a long while, and for the rendering an account whereof thou shalt be as a pledge which is pawned? Quoth the King, Whither shall I flee and what must I seek for me? That thou abide in thy kingship, replied the other, or else robe thee in rags[298] and apply thyself to obey Almighty Allah thy Lord until thine appointed hour. I will come to thee again at daybreak. Khalid bin Safwan

further relates that the man knocked at the door at dawn and behold, the King had put off his crown and resolved to become an anchorite, for the stress of his exhortation. When Hishám bin Abd al-Malik heard this, he wept till his beard was wet; and, bidding his rich apparel be put off, shut himself up in his palace. Then the grandees and dependants came to Khalid and said, What is this thou hast done with the Commander of the Faithful? Thou hast troubled his pleasure and disturbed his life!" Then quoth Nuzhat al-Zaman, addressing herself to Sharrkan, "How many instances of admonition are there not in this chapter! Of a truth I cannot report all appertaining to this head in a single sitting"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nuzhat al-Zaman continued, speaking to Sharrkan, "Know, O King, that 172 in this chapter be so many instances of admonition that of a truth I cannot report all appertaining to this head in a single sitting but, with length of days, O King of the age, all will be well." Then said the Kazis, "O King, of a truth this damsel is the wonder of the world, and of our age the unique pearl! Never heard we her like in the length of time or in the length of our lives." And they called down blessings on the King and went away. Then Sharrkan turned to his attendants and said, "Begin ye to prepare the marriage festival and make ready food of all kinds." So they forthright did his bidding as regards the viands, and he commanded the wives of the Emirs and Wazirs and Grandees depart not until the time of the wedding-banquet and of the unveiling of the bride. Hardly came the period of afternoon-prayer when the tables were spread with whatso heart can desire or eye can delight in of roast meats and geese and fowls; and the subjects ate till they were satisfied. Moreover, Sharrkan had sent for all the singing-women of Damascus and they were present, together with every slave-girl of the King and of the notables who knew how to sing. And they went up to the palace in one body. When the evening came and darkness starkened they lighted candles, right and left, from the gate of the citadel to that of the palace; and the Emirs and Wazirs and Grandees marched past before King Sharrkan, whilst the singers and the tire-women took the damsel to dress and adorn her, but found she needed no adornment. Meantime King Sharrkan went to the Hammam and coming out, sat down on his seat of estate, whilst they paraded the bride before him in seven different dresses: after which they eased her of the weight of her raiment and ornaments and gave such injunctions as are enjoined upon virgins on their wedding-nights. Then Sharrkan went in unto her and took her maidenhead;[299] and she at once conceived by him and, when she announced it, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and commanded the savants to record the date of her conception. On the morrow he went forth and seated himself on his throne, and the high officers came in to him and gave him joy. Then he called his private secretary and bade him write a letter to his father, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, saying that he

had bought him a damsel, who excels in learning and good breeding and who is mistress of all kinds of knowledge. Moreover he 173 wrote, "There is no help but that I send her to Baghdad to visit my brother Zau al-Makan and my sister Nuzhat al-Zaman. I have set her free and married her and she hath conceived by me." And he went on to praise her wit and salute his brother and sister together with the Wazir Dandan and all the Emirs. Then he sealed the letter and despatched it to his father by a post-courier who was absent a whole month, after which time he returned with the answer and presented it in the presence. Sharrkan took it and read as follows, "After the usual Bismillah, this is from the afflicted distracted man, from him who hath lost his children and home by bane and ban, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, to his son Sharrkan. Know that, since thy departure from me, the place is become contracted upon me, so that no longer I have power of patience nor can I keep my secret: and the cause thereof is as follows. It chanced that when I went forth to hunt and course Zau al-Makan sought my leave to fare Hijaz-wards, but I, fearing for him the shifts of fortune, forbade him therefrom until the next year or the year after. My absence while sporting and hunting endured for a whole month"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Omar bin al-Nu'uman wrote in his letter, "My absence while sporting and hunting endured for a whole month, and when I returned I found that thy brother and sister had taken somewhat of money and had set out with the pilgrim-caravan for pilgrimage by stealth. When I knew this, the wide world narrowed on me, O my son! but I awaited the return of the caravan, hoping that haply they would come back with it. Accordingly, when the palmers appeared I asked concerning the twain, but they could give me no news of them; so I donned mourning for them, being heavy at heart, and in sleep I have no part and I am drowned in the tears of my eyes." Then he wrote in verse:—

That pair in image quits me not one single hour, ✿ Whom in my heart's most honourable place I keep:

Sans hope of their return I would not live one hour, ✿ Without my dreams of them I ne'er would stretch me in sleep.

The letter went on, "And after the usual salutations to thee and 174 thine, I command thee neglect no manner of seeking news of them, for indeed this is a shame to us." When Sharrkan read the letter, he felt grief for his father and joy for the loss of his brother and sister. Then he took the missive and went in with it to Nuzhat al-Zaman who knew not that he was her brother, nor he that she was his sister, albeit he often visited her both by night and by day, till the months were accomplished and she sat down on the stool of delivery. Allah made the child-birth easy to her and she bare a daughter, whereupon she sent for Sharrkan and seeing him she said to him, "This is thy daughter: name her as thou wilt." Quoth he, "It is usual to name children on the seventh day after birth."[300] Then he bent over the child to kiss it and he saw, hung

about its neck, a jewel, which he knew at once for one of those which Princess Abrizah had brought from the land of the Greeks. Now when he saw the jewel hanging from his babe's neck he recognised it right well, his senses fled and wrath seized on him; his eyes rolled in rage and he looked at Nuzhat al-Zaman and said to her, "Whence hadst thou this jewel, O slave girl?" When she heard this from Sharrkan she replied, "I am thy lady, and the lady of all in thy palace! Art thou not ashamed to say to me, Slave-girl? I am a Queen, daughter of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman." Hearing this, he was seized with trembling and hung his head earthwards,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Sixty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious king, that when Sharrkan heard these words, his heart fluttered and his colour waxed yellow and he was seized with trembling and he hung his head earthwards, for he knew that she was his sister by the same father. Then he lost his senses; and, when he revived, he abode in amazement, but did not discover his identity to her and asked, "O my lady, say, art thou in sooth the daughter of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman?" "Yes," answered she; and he continued, 175"Tell me the cause of thy leaving thy sire and of thy being sold for a slave." So she related to him all that had befallen her from beginning to end, how she had left her brother sick in the Sanctified City, Jerusalem, and how the Badawi had kidnapped her and had sold her to the trader. When Sharrkan heard this, he was certified of her being his sister on the sword-side and said to himself, "How can I have my sister to wife? By Allah, needs must I marry her to one of my chamberlains; and, if the thing get wind, I will declare that I divorced her before consummation and married her to my Chief Chamberlain." Then he raised his head and sighing said, "O Nuzhat al-Zaman, thou art my very sister and I cry:—I take refuge with Allah from this sin whereinto we have fallen, for I am Sharrkan, son of Omar bin al-Nu'uman." She looked at him and knew he spoke the truth; and, becoming as one demented, she wept and buffetted her face, exclaiming, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! Verily have we fallen into mortal sin![3011] What shall I do and what shall I say to my father and my mother when they ask me, Whence hadst thou thy daughter?" Quoth Sharrkan, "It were meetest that I marry thee to my Chamberlain and let thee bring up my daughter in his house, that none may know thou be my sister. This hath befallen us from Almighty Allah for a purpose of his own, and nothing shall cover us but thy marriage with this Chamberlain, ere any know." Then he fell to comforting her and kissing her head and she asked him, "What wilt thou call the girl?" "Call her Kuzia-Fakan,"[3021] answered he. Then he gave the mother in marriage to the Chief Chamberlain, and transferred her to his house with the child, which they reared on the laps of the slave-girls, and fed with milk and dosed with powders. Now all this occurred whilst the brother, Zau al-Makan, still tarried with the Fireman at Damascus. One day there came to King Sharrkan a courier from his father, with a letter which he

took and read and found therein, "After the Bismillah know, O beloved King, that I am afflicted with sore affliction for the loss of my children: sleep ever faileth me and wakefulness ever assaileth me. I send thee this letter that, as soon [176] as thou receivest it, thou make ready the monies and the tribute, and send them to us, together with the damsel whom thou hast bought and taken to wife; for I long to see her and hear her discourse; more especially because there hath come to us from Roum-land an old woman of saintly bearing and with her be five damsels, high-bosomed virgins, endowed with knowledge and good-breeding and all arts and sciences befitting mortals to know; and indeed tongue faileth me to describe this old woman and these who with her wend; for of a truth they are compendiums of perfections in learning and accomplishments. As soon as I saw them I loved them, and I wished to have them in my palace and in the compass of my hand; for none of the Kings owneth the like of them; so I asked the old woman their price and she answered:—I will not sell them but for the tribute of Damascus. And I, by Allah, did not hold this price exorbitant, indeed it is but little, for each one of them is worth the whole valuation. So I agreed to that and took them into my palace, and they remain in my possession. Wherefore do thou forward the tribute to us that the woman may return to her own country; and send to us the damsel to the end that she may dispute with them before the doctors; and, if she prevail over them, I will return her to thee accompanied by the tribute of Baghdad."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the full Seventieth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Omar son of Al-Nu'uman said in his letter, "And send to us the damsel to the end that she may dispute with them before the doctors; and, if she prevail over them, I will return her to thee accompanied with the tribute of Baghdad." As soon as Sharrkan knew the contents, he went in to his brother-in-law and said to him, "Bring the damsel to whom I married thee;" and when she came he showed her the letter and said, "O my sister! what answer wouldst thou advise me make to this letter?" Replied she, "Seek advice from thyself!" and presently added (for she yearned after her people and her native land), "Send me together with my husband the Chamberlain, to Baghdad, that I may tell my father my tale and let him know whatso befel me with the Badawi who sold me to the merchant, and that I also inform him how thou boughtest me [177] of the trader and gavest me in marriage to the Chamberlain, after setting me free." "Be it so," replied Sharrkan. Then Sharrkan took his daughter, Kuzia Fakan, and committed her to the charge of the wet-nurses and the eunuchs, and he made ready the tribute in haste, bidding the Chamberlain travel with the Princess and the treasure to Baghdad. He also furnished him two travelling litters; one for himself and the other for his wife. And the Chamberlain replied, "To hear is to obey." Moreover Sharrkan collected camels and mules and wrote a letter to his father and committed it to the Chamberlain; then

he bade farewell to his sister, after he had taken the jewel from her and hung it round his daughter's neck by a chain of pure gold; and she and her husband set out for Baghdad the same night. Now it so happened that Zau al-Makan and his friend the Fireman had come forth from the hut in which they were, to see the spectacle, and they beheld camels and Bukhti[303] dromedaries and bât-mules and torches and lanterns alight; and Zau al-Makan enquired about the loads and their owner and was told that it was the tribute of Damascus going to King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, Lord of the City of Baghdad. He then asked, "Who be the leader of the caravan?" and they answered, "The Head Chamberlain who hath married the damsel so famous for learning and science." Thereupon Zau al-Makan wept with bitter weeping and was minded of his mother and his father and his sister and his native land, and he said to the Stoker, "I will join this caravan and, little by little, will journey homewards." Quoth the Fireman, "I would not suffer thee to travel single-handed from the Holy City to Damascus, then how shall I be sure of thy safety when thou farest for Baghdad? But I will go with thee and care for thee till thou effectest thine object." "With joy and good will," answered Zau al-Makan. Then the Fireman gat him ready for the journey and hired an ass and threw saddle-bags over it and put therein something of provaunt; and, when all was prepared, he awaited the passage of the caravan. And presently the Chamberlain came by on a dromedary and his footmen about him. Then Zau al-Makan mounted the ass and said to his companion, "Do thou mount with me." But he replied, "Not so: I will be thy servant." Quoth 178 Zau al-Makan, "There is no help for it but thou ride awhile." "'Tis well," quoth the Stoker; "I will ride when I grow tired." Then said Zau al-Makan, "O my brother, soon shalt thou see how I will deal with thee, when I come to my own folk." So they fared on till the sun rose and, when it was the hour of the noonday sleep[304] the Chamberlain called a halt and they alighted and reposed and watered their camels. Then he gave the signal for departure and, after five days, they came to the city of Hamah,[305] where they set down and made a three day's halt;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that they halted in the city of Hamah three days; they then fared forwards and ceased not travelling till they reached another city. Here also they halted three days and thence they travelled till they entered the province Diyár Bakr. Here blew on them the breezes of Baghdad, and Zau al-Makan bethought him of his father and mother and native land, and how he was returning to his sire without his sister: so he wept and sighed and complained, and his regrets grew on him, and he began improvising these couplets:—

Sweetheart! How long must I await by so long-suffering tried? ✿ Nor cometh messenger to tell me where thou dost abide:

Ah me! in very sooth our meeting-time was short enow: ✿ Would Heaven shorter prove to me the present parting-tide!

Now hend my hand and ope my robe and thou within shall sight ✿ How wasted are the limbs of me and yet the waste I hide:

When say they "Comfort take for loss of love" I but reply ✿ "By Allah, till the Day of Doom no comfort shall betide!"

179 Thereupon said to him the Fireman, "Leave this weeping and wailing, for we are near the Chamberlain's tent." Quoth Zau al-Makan, "Needs must I recite somewhat of verse; haply it may quench the fire of my heart." "Allah upon thee," cried the other, "cease this lamentation till thou come to thine own country; then do what thou wilt, and I will be with thee wherever thou art." Replied Zau al-Makan, "By Allah! I cannot forbear from this!" Then he turned his face towards Baghdad and the moon was shining brightly and shedding her light on the place, and Nuzhat al-Zaman could not sleep that night, but was restless and called to mind her brother and wept. And while she was in tears, she heard Zau al-Makan weeping and improvising the following distichs:—

"Al-Yaman's[306] leven-gleam I see, ✿ And sore despair despaireth me

For friend who erst abode wi' me ✿ Crowning my cup with gladdest gree;

It minds me o' one who jilted me ✿ To mourn my bitter liberty.

Say sooth, thou fair sheet-lightning! shall ✿ We meet once more in joy and glee?

O blamer! spare to me thy blame ✿ My Lord hath sent this dule to dree,

Of friend who left me, fain to flee; ✿ Of Time that breeds calamity:

All bliss hath fled the heart of me ✿ Since Fortune proved mine enemy.

He[307] brimmed a bowl of merest pine, ✿ And made me drain the dregs, did he:

I see me, sweetheart, dead and gone ✿ Ere I again shall gaze on thee.

Time! prithee bring our childhood back, ✿ Restore our happy infancy,

When joy and safety 'joyed we ✿ From shafts that now they shoot at me!

Who aids the hapless stranger-wight, ✿ That nights in fright and misery,

That wastes his days in lonely grief, ✿ For "Time's Delight"[308] no more must be?

Doomed us despite our will to bear ✿ The hands of base-borns cark and care.

When he ended his verse he cried out and fell down in a fainting-fit. 180 This is how it fared with him; but as regards Nuzhat al-Zaman, when she heard that voice in the night, her heart was at rest and she rose and in her joy she called the Chief Eunuch, who said to her, "What is thy will?" Quoth she, "Arise and bring me him who recited verses but now." Replied he, "Of a truth I did not hear him"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nuzhat al-Zaman heard her brother reciting, she called the Chief Eunuch and said to him, "Go, fetch me the

man who is repeating this poetry!" Replied he, "Of a truth I heard him not and I wot him not and folks are all sleeping." But she said, "Whomsoever thou seest awake, he is the reciter." So he went, yet found none on wake save the Stoker; for Zau al-Makan was still insensible, and when his companion saw the Eunuch standing by his head he was afraid of him. Then said the Eunuch, "Art thou he who repeated poetry but now and my lady heard him?" The Stoker fancied that the dame was wroth with the reciter; and, being afraid, he replied, "By Allah, 'twas not I!" Rejoined the Eunuch, "Who then was the reciter?: point him out to me. Thou must know who it was, seeing that thou art awake." The Fireman feared for Zau al-Makan and said in himself, "Haply the Eunuch will do him some hurt"; so he answered, "By Allah, I know not who it was." Said the Eunuch, "By Allah, thou liest, for there is none on wake here but thou! So needs must thou know him." "By Allah," replied the Fireman, "I tell thee the truth!: some passer-by, some wayfarer must have recited the verses and disturbed me and kept me awake; Allah requite him!" Quoth the Eunuch, "If thou happen upon him, point him out to me and I will lay hands on him and bring him to the door of our lady's litter;[309] or do thou take him with thine own hand." Said the Fireman, "Go thou back and I will bring him to thee." So the Eunuch left him and went his ways; and, going in to his mistress, told her all this and said to her, "None knoweth who it was; it must have been some passer-by, some wayfarer." And she was silent. Meanwhile, Zau 181 al-Makan came to himself and saw that the moon had reached the middle Heavens; the breath of the dawn-breeze[310] breathed upon him and his heart was moved to longing and sadness; so he cleared his throat and was about to recite verses, when the Fireman asked him, "What wilt thou do?" Answered Zau al-Makan, "I have a mind to repeat somewhat of poetry, that I may quench therewith the fire of my heart." Quoth the other, "Thou knowest not what befel me whilst thou wast a-faint, and how I escaped death only by beguiling the Eunuch." "Tell me what happened," quoth Zau al-Makan. Replied the Stoker, "Whilst thou wast aswoon there came up to me but now an Eunuch, with a long staff of almond-tree wood in his hand, who took to looking in all the people's faces, as they lay asleep, and asked me who it was recited the verses, finding none awake but myself. I told him in reply it was some passer-by, some wayfarer; so he went away and Allah delivered me from him; else had he killed me. But first he said to me:—If thou hear him again, bring him to us." When Zau al-Makan heard this he wept and said, "Who is it would forbid me to recite? I will surely recite, befal me what may; for I am near mine own land and care for none." Rejoined the Fireman, "Thy design is naught save to lose thy life;" and Zau al-Makan retorted, "Needs must I recite verses." "Verily," said the Stoker, "Needs must there be a parting between me and thee in this place, albeit I had intended not to leave thee, till I had brought thee to thy native city and reunited thee with thy mother and father. Thou hast now tarried with me a year and a half and I have never harmed thee in aught. What ails thee, then, that thou must needs recite verses, seeing that we are tired out with walking and watching and all the folk are asleep, for they require sleep to rest them of

their fatigue?" But Zau al-Makan answered, "I will not be turned away from my purpose."[311] Then grief moved him and he threw off concealment and began repeating these couplets:—

182 Stand thou by the homes and hail the lords of the ruined stead; ✿ Cry thou for an answer, belike reply to thee shall be sped:

If the night and absence irk thy spirit kindle a torch ✿ Wi' repine; and illuminate the gloom with a gleaming gleed:

If the snake of the sand-dunes hiss, I shall marvel not at all! ✿ Let him bite so I bite those beauteous lips of the luscious red:

O Eden, my soul hath fled in despite of the maid I love: ✿ Had I lost hope of Heaven my heart in despair were dead.

And he also improvised the two following distichs:

We were and were the days enthralled to all our wills, ✿ Dwelling in union sweet and homed in fairest site:

Who shall restore the home of the beloved, where showed ✿ Light of the Place for aye conjoined with Time's Delight?[312]

And as he ceased his verses, he shrieked three shrieks and fell senseless to the ground and the Fireman rose and covered him. When Nuzhat al-Zaman heard the first improvisation, she called to mind her father and her mother and her brother and their whilom home; then she wept and cried at the Eunuch and said to him, "Woe to thee! He who recited the first time hath recited a second time and I heard him hard by. By Allah, an thou fetch him not to me, I will assuredly rouse the Chamberlain on thee, and he shall beat thee and cast thee out. But take these hundred dinars and give them to the singer and bring him to me gently, and do him no hurt. If he refuse, hand to him this purse of a thousand dinars, then leave him and return to me and tell me, after thou hast informed thyself of his place and his calling and what countryman he is. Return quickly and linger not."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nuzhat al-Zaman sent the Eunuch to make enquiries concerning the singer and said, "Beware how thou come back to me and report, I could not find him." So the Eunuch went out and laid about the people and trod in their tents, but found none awake, all being asleep for weariness, till he came to the Stoker and saw him sitting up, with his head uncovered. So he drew near and seizing him by the hand, said to him, "It was thou didst recite the verses!" The Fireman was afeard for his life and replied, "No, by Allah, O chief of the people, it was not I!" But the Eunuch said, "I will not leave thee till thou show me who it was that recited the verses, for 183I dread returning to my lady without him." Now when the Fireman heard these words he feared for Zau al-Makan and wept with exceeding weeping and said to the Eunuch, "By Allah, it was not I, and I know him not. I only heard some passer-by, some wayfarer, recite verses: so do not thou commit

sin on me, for I am a stranger and come from the Holy City of Jerusalem; and Abraham, the friend of Allah, be with you all." "Rise up and fare with me," rejoined the Eunuch, "and tell my lady this with thine own mouth, for I have seen none awake save thyself." Quoth the Stoker, "Hast thou not come and seen me sitting in the place where I now am, and dost thou not know my station? Thou wottest none can stir from his place, except the watchmen seize him. So go thou to thy station and if thou again meet any one after this hour reciting aught of poetry, whether he be near or far, it will be I or some one I know, and thou shalt not learn of him but by me." Then he kissed the Eunuch's head and spake him fair till he went away; but the Castrato fetched a round and, returning secretly, came and stood behind the Fireman, fearing to go back to his mistress without tidings. As soon as he was gone, the Stoker arose and aroused Zau al-Makan and said to him, "Come, sit up, that I may tell thee what hath happened." So Zau al-Makan sat up, and his companion told him what had passed, and he answered, "Let me alone; I will take no heed of this and I care for none, for I am near mine own country."[313] Quoth the Stoker, "Why wilt thou obey thy flesh and the devil? If thou fear no one, I fear for thee and for my life, so Allah upon thee! recite nothing more of verses till thou come to thine own land. Indeed, I had not deemed thee so ill-conditioned. Dost thou not know that this lady is the wife of the Chamberlain and is minded to chastise thee for disturbing her? Belike, she is ill or restless for fatigue of the journey and the distance of the place from her home, and this is the second time she hath sent the Eunuch to look for thee." However Zau al-Makan paid no heed to the Fireman's words but cried out a third time and began versifying with these couplets:—

184 I fly the carper's injury, ✿ Whose carping sorely vexeth me:

He chides and taunts me, wotting not ✿ He burns me but more grievously.

The blamer cries "He is consoled!" ✿ I say, "My own dear land[314] to see:"

They ask, "Why be that land so dear?" ✿ I say "It taught me in love to be:"

They ask, "What raised its dignity?" ✿ I say, "What made my ignomy:"

Whate'er the bitter cup I drain, ✿ Far be fro' me that land to flee:

Nor will I bow to those who blame, ✿ And for such love would deal me shame.

Hardly had he made an end of his verses and come to a conclusion, when the Eunuch (who had heard him from his hiding-place at his head) came up to him; whereupon the Fireman fled and stood afar off to see what passed between them. Then said the Eunuch to Zau al-Makan, "Peace be with thee, O my lord!" "And on thee be peace," replied Zau al-Makan, "and the mercy of Allah and His blessings!" "O my lord," continued the Eunuch——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Eunuch said to Zau al-Makan, "O my lord, I have sought thee these several times this night, for my mistress biddeth thee to her." Quoth Zau al-Makan, "And who be this bitch that seeketh for me? Allah curse her and curse her husband with her!"[315] And he began to revile the Eunuch, who could make him no answer, because his mistress had charged him to do Zau al-Makan no hurt, nor bring him save of his own especial free will; and, if he would not accompany him, to give him the thousand dinars. So the Castrato began to speak him fair and say to him, "O my lord, take this purse and go with me. We will do thee no unright, O my son, nor wrong thee in aught; but our object is that thou bend thy gracious steps with me to my mistress, to receive her answer and return in weal and safety: and thou shalt have a handsome present as one who bringeth good news." When Zau al-Makan heard this, he arose and went with the Eunuch and walked among the sleeping folk, stepping over them; whilst the Fireman followed after them from afar, and kept his eye upon him and said to himself, "Alas the pity of his youth! To-morrow they will hang him." And he ceased not following them till he approached their station,[316] without any 185 observing him. Then he stood still and said, "How base it will be of him, if he say it was I who bade him recite the verses!" This was the case of the Stoker; but as regards what befel Zau al-Makan, he ceased not walking with the Eunuch till he reached his station and the Castrato went in to Nuzhat al-Zaman and said, "O my lady, I have brought thee him whom thou soughtest, and he is a youth, fair of face and bearing the marks of wealth and gentle breeding." When she heard this, her heart fluttered and she cried, "Let him recite some verses, that I may hear him nearhand, and after ask him his name and his condition and his native land." Then the Eunuch went out to Zau al-Makan and said to him, "Recite what verses thou knowest, for my lady is here hard by, listening to thee, and after I will ask thee of thy name and thy native country and thy condition." Replied he, "With love and gladness but, an thou ask my name, it is erased and my trace is unplaced and my body awaste. I have a story, the beginning of which is not known nor can the end of it be shown, and behold, I am even as one who hath exceeded in wine-drinking and who hath not spared himself; one who is afflicted with distempers and who wandereth from his right mind, being perplexed about his case and drowned in the sea of thought." When Nuzhat al-Zaman heard this, she broke out into excessive weeping and sobbing, and said to the Eunuch, "Ask him if he have parted from one he loveth even as his mother or father." The Castrato asked as she bade him, and Zau al-Makan replied, "Yes, I have parted from every one I loved: but the dearest of all to me was my sister, from whom Fate hath separated me." When Nuzhat al-Zaman heard this, she exclaimed, "Allah Almighty reunite him with what he loveth!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nuzhat al-Zaman heard his words she said, "Allah reunite him with what he loveth!" Then quoth she to the Eunuch, "Tell him to let me hear somewhat anent his separation from his countrymen and his country." The Eunuch did so, and Zau al-Makan sighed heavily and began repeating these couplets[317]:—

186 Is not her love a pledge by all mankind confest? ✿ The house that hometh Hinda be for ever blest!
Her love all levels; man can reck of naught beside; ✿ Naught or before or after can for man have zest.
'Tis though the vale is paved with musk and ambergris ✿ That day when Hinda's footstep on its face is prest:
Hail to the beauty of our camp, the pride of folk, ✿ The dearling who enslaves all hearts by her behest:
Allah on "Time's Delight" send large-dropped clouds that teem ✿ With genial rain but bear no thunder in their breast.

And also these:—

I vow to Allah if at home I sight ✿ My sister Nuzhat al-Zamáni hight,
I'll pass the days in joyance and delight ✿ Mid bashful minions, maidens soft and white:
To sound of harps in various modes they smite ✿ Draining the bowl, while eyes rain lively light
'Neath half-closed lids, a-sipping lips red-bright ✿ By stream-bank flowing through my garden-site.

When he had finished his verse, Nuzhat al-Zaman lifted up a skirt of the litter-curtain and looked at him. As soon as her eyes fell on his face, she knew him for certain and cried out, "O my brother! O Zau al-Makan!" He also looked at her and knew her and cried out, "O my sister! O Nuzhat al-Zaman!" Then she threw herself upon him and he gathered her to his bosom and the twain fell down in a fainting fit. When the Eunuch saw this case, he wondered at them and throwing over them somewhat to cover them, waited till they should recover. After a while they came to themselves, and Nuzhat al-Zaman rejoiced with exceeding joy: oppression and depression left her and gladness took the mastery of her, and she repeated these verses:—

Time sware my life should fare in woeful waste; ✿ Forsworn art Time, expiate thy sin in haste![318]
Comes weal and comes a welcome friend to aid; ✿ To him who brings good news, rise, gird thy waist:
I spurnèd old-world tales of Eden-bliss; ✿ Till came I Kausar[319] on those lips to taste.

187 When Zau al-Makan heard this, he pressed his sister to his breast; tears streamed from his eyes for excess of joy and he repeated these couplets[320]:—

Long I lamented that we fell apart, ✿ While tears repentant railèd from these eyne;
And sware, if Time unite us twain once more, ✿ "Severance" shall never sound from tongue of mine:
Joy hath so overwhelmed me that excess ✿ Of pleasure from mine eyes draws gouts of brine:
Tears, O mine eyes, have now become your wont ✿ Ye weep for pleasure and you weep for pine!

They sat awhile at the litter-door till she said to him, "Come with me into the litter and tell me all that hath befallen thee, and I will tell thee what happened to me." So they entered and Zau al-Makan said, "Do thou begin thy tale." Accordingly she told him all that had come to her since their separation at the Khan and what had happened

to her with the Badawi; how the merchant had bought her of him and had taken her to her brother Sharrkan and had sold her to him; how he had freed her at the time of buying; how he had made a marriage-contract with her and had gone in to her and how the King, their sire, had sent and asked for her from Sharrkan. Then quoth she, "Praised be Allah who hath vouchsafed thee to me and ordained that, even as we left our father together, so together shall we return to him!" And she added, "Of a truth my brother Sharrkan gave me in marriage to this Chamberlain that he might carry me to my father. And this is what befel me from first to last; so now tell me how it hath fared with thee since I left thee." Thereupon he told her all that had happened to him from beginning to end; and how Allah vouchsafed to send the Fireman to him, and how he had journeyed with him and spent his money on him and had served him night and day. She praised the Stoker for this and Zau al-Makan added, "Of a truth, O my sister, this Fireman hath dealt with me in such benevolent wise as would not lover with lass nor sire with son, for that he fasted and gave me to eat, and he walked whilst he made me ride; and I owe my life to him." Said she, "Allah willing, we will requite him for all this, according to our power." Then she called 188 the Eunuch, who came and kissed Zau al-Makan's hand, and she said, "Take thy reward for glad tidings, O face of good omen! It was thy hand reunited me with my brother; so the purse I gave thee and all in it are thine. But now go to thy master and bring him quickly to me." The Castrato rejoiced and, going in to the Chamberlain, summoned him to his mistress. Accordingly, he came in to his wife and finding Zau al-Makan with her, asked who he was. So she told him all that had befallen them both, first and last, and added, "Know, O Chamberlain, that thou hast married no slave-girl; far from it, thou hast taken to wife the daughter of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman for I am Nuzhat al-Zaman, and this is my brother, Zau al-Makan." When the Chamberlain heard the story he knew it to be sooth, and its manifest truth appeared to him and he was certified that he was become King Omar bin al-Nu'uman's son-in-law, so he said to himself, "'Twill be my fate to be made viceroy of some province."[321] Then he went up to Zau al-Makan and gave him joy of his safety and reunion with his sister, and bade his servants forthwith make him ready a tent and one of the best of his own horses to ride. Thereupon said Nuzhat al-Zaman, "We are now near our country and I would be left alone with my brother, that we may enjoy each other's company and take our fill of it ere we reach Baghdad; for we have been parted a long, long time." "Be it as thou biddest," replied the Chamberlain, and, going forth from them, sent them wax-candles and various kinds of sweetmeats, together with three suits of the costliest for Zau al-Makan. Then he returned to the litter and related the good he had done and Nuzhat al-Zaman said to him, "Bid the Eunuch bring me the Fireman and give him a horse to ride and ration him with a tray of food morning and evening, and let him be forbidden to leave us." The Chamberlain called the Castrato and charged him to do accordingly; so he replied, "I hear and I obey;" and he took his pages with him and went out in search of the Stoker till he found him in the rear of the caravan, girthing his ass and

preparing for flight. The tears were running adown his cheeks, out of fear for his life and grief for his separation from Zau al-Makan; and he was saying to himself, "Indeed, I warned him for the love of Allah, but he would not listen to me; Oh would I knew what is become of him!" Ere he had done speaking the Eunuch was standing by his head whilst the pages surrounded him. 189 The Fireman turned and seeing the Eunuch and the pages gathered around him became yellow with fear——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Stoker girthed his ass for flight and bespake himself, saying, "Oh would I knew what is become of him!"; ere he had done speaking the Castrato was standing by his head and his side-muscles quivered for fear and he lifted up his voice and cried, "Verily he knoweth not the value of the good offices I have done him! I believe he hath denounced me to the Eunuch (hence these pages get about me) and he hath made me an accomplice in his crime." Then the effeminated one cried at him, saying, "Who was it recited the verses? O liar! why didst thou say:—I never repeated these couplets, nor do I know who repeated them; when it was thy companion? But now I will not leave thee between this place and Baghdad, and what betideth thy comrade shall betide thee." Quoth the Fireman, "What I feared hath befallen me." And he repeated this couplet:—

'Twas as I feared the coming ills discerning: ✿ But unto Allah we are all returning.

Then the Eunuch cried upon the pages, saying, "Take him off the ass." So they carried him along with the caravan, surrounded by the pages, as the white contains the black of the eye; and the Castrato said to them, "If a hair of him be lost, you will be lost with it." And he bade them privily treat him with honour and not humiliate him. But when the Stoker saw himself beset by the pages, he despaired of his life and turning to the Eunuch, said to him, "O Chief, I am neither this youth's brother nor am I akin to him, nor is he sib to me; but I was a Fireman in a Hammam and found him cast out, in his sickness, on the dung-heap." Then the caravan fared on and the Stoker wept and imagined in himself a thousand things, whilst the Eunuch walked by his side and told him nothing, but said to him, "Thou disturbedst our mistress by reciting verses, thou and this youth: but fear nothing for thyself;" and kept laughing at him the while to himself. Whenever the caravan halted, they served him with food, and he and the Castrato 190 ate from one dish.[322] Then the Eunuch bade his lads bring a gugglet of sugared sherbet and, after drinking himself, gave it to the Fireman, who drank; but all the while his tears never dried, out of fear for his life and grief for his separation from Zau al-Makan and for what had befallen them in their strangerhood. So they both travelled on with the caravan, whilst the Chamberlain now rode by the door of his wife's litter, in attendance on Zau al-Makan and his sister, and now gave an eye to the Fireman; and Nuzhat al-Zaman and her brother occupied themselves with converse and mutual condolence; and they ceased not after this fashion till they came within

three days' journey from Baghdad. Here they alighted at eventide and rested till the morning morrowed; and as they awoke and they were about to load the beasts, behold, there appeared afar off a great cloud of dust that darkened the firmament till it became black as gloomiest night.[323] Thereupon the Chamberlain cried out to them, "Stay, and your loading delay!"; then, mounting with his Mamelukes, rode forward in the direction of the dust-cloud. When they drew near, suddenly appeared under it a numerous conquering host like the full-tide sea, with flags and standards, drums and kettledrums, horsemen and footmen. The Chamberlain marvelled at this; and when the troops saw him, there detached itself from amongst them a plump of five hundred cavaliers, who fell upon him and his suite and surrounded them, five for one; whereupon said he to them, "What is the matter and what are these troops, that ye do this with us?" Asked they, "Who art thou; and whence comest thou, and whither art thou bound?" and he answered, "I am the Chamberlain of the Emir of Damascus, King Sharrkan, son of Omar bin al-Nu'uman, Lord of Baghdad and of the land of Khorasan, and I bring tribute and presents from him to his father in Baghdad." When the horsemen heard his words they let their head-kerchiefs fall over their faces and wept, saying, "In very sooth King Omar is dead and he died not but of poison. So fare ye forwards; no harm shall befal you till you join his Grand Wazir, Dandan." Now when the Chamberlain heard this, he wept sore and exclaimed, "Oh for our disappointment in this our journey!" Then he and all his suite wept till they had come 191 up with the host and sought access to the Wazir Dandan, who granted an interview and called a halt and, causing his pavilion to be pitched, sat down on a couch therein and commanded to admit the Chamberlain. Then he bade him be seated and questioned him; and he replied that he was Chamberlain to the Emir of Damascus and was bound to King Omar with presents and the tribute of Syria. The Wazir, hearing the mention of King Omar's name, wept and said, "King Omar is dead by poison, and upon his dying the folk fell out amongst themselves as to who should succeed him, until they were like to slay one another on this account; but the notables and grandees and the four Kazis interposed and all the people agreed to refer the matter to the decision of the four judges and that none should gainsay them. So it was agreed that we go to Damascus and fetch thence the King's son, Sharrkan, and make him Sultan over his father's realm. And amongst them were some who would have chosen the cadet, Zau al-Makan, for, quoth they, his name be Light of the Place, and he hath a sister Nuzhat al-Zaman hight, the Delight of the Time; but they set out five years ago for Al-Hijaz and none wotteth what is become of them." When the Chamberlain heard this, he knew that his wife had told him the truth of her adventures; and he grieved with sore grief for the death of King Omar, albeit he joyed with exceeding joy, especially at the arrival of Zau al-Makan, for that he would now become Sultan of Baghdad in his father's stead.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sharrkan's Chamberlain heard of the death of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman he mourned, but he rejoiced because of his wife and her brother Zau al-Makan who would become Sultan of Baghdad in his father's stead. So he turned to the Wazir Dandan and said to him, "Verily your tale is a wonder of wonders! Know, O Chief Wazir, that here, where you have encountered me, Allah hath given you rest from fatigue and bringeth you your desire after the easiest of fashions, for that His Almighty Will restoreth to you Zau al-Makan and his sister Nuzhat al-Zaman; whereby we will settle the matter as we easily can." When the Minister heard these 192 words he rejoiced with great joy and said, "O Chamberlain, tell me the tale of the twain and what befel them and the cause of their long absence." So he repeated to him the whole story and told him that Nuzhat al-Zaman was his wife and related to him the adventures of Zau al-Makan from first to last. As soon as he had ended his tale, the Wazir sent for the Emirs and Wazirs and Chief Officers and acquainted them with the matter; whereat they rejoiced with great joy and wondered at the happy chance. Then they gathered in a body and went in to the Chamberlain and did their service to him, kissing the ground between his hands; and the Wazir Dandan also rose and went out to meet him and stood before him in honour. After this, the Chamberlain held on that day a Divan-council; and he and the Wazir sat upon a throne, whilst all the Emirs and Grandees and Officers of State took their places before them, according to their several ranks.[324] Then they melted sugar in rose-water and drank, after which the Emirs sat down to hold council and permitted the rest of the host to mount and ride forward leisurely, till they should make an end of their debate and overtake them. So the officers kissed the ground between their hands and mounting, rode onwards, preceded by the standards of war. When the grandees had finished their conference, they took horse and rejoined the host; and the Chamberlain approached the Wazir Dandan and said, "I deem it well to ride on before you, and precede you, that I may get ready a place for the Sultan and notify him of your coming and of your choosing him as Sultan over the head of his brother Sharrkan." "Aright thou reckest," answered the Wazir. Then the Chamberlain rose up in haste and Dandan also stood up to do him honour and brought him presents, which he conjured him to accept. In similar guise did all the Emirs and Grandees and Officers of State, bringing him gifts and calling down blessings on him and saying to him, "Haply thou wilt mention our case to Sultan Zau al-Makan and speak to him to continue us in our dignities."[325] The Chamberlain promised all they required and bade his pages be ready to march, whereupon the Wazir Dandan sent with him tents and bade the tent-pitchers set them up at a day's journey from the city. And they did his bidding. Then the Chamberlain mounted and rode forward, full of joy and saying to himself, "How blessed is this 193 journey!"; and indeed his wife was exalted in his eyes, she and her brother Zau al-Makan. They made all haste over their wayfare, till

they reached a place distant a day's journey from Baghdad, where the Chamberlain called a halt for rest, and bade his men alight and make ready a sitting place for the Sultan Zau al-Makan, son of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, while he rode forward with his Mamelukes and, alighting at a distance from Nuzhat al-Zaman's litter, commanded the eunuchs to ask leave of admission to the presence. They did so and she gave permission; whereupon he went in to her and conversed with her and her brother; and told them of the death of their father; and of Zau al-Makan, how the heads of the people had made him King over them in the stead of his sire; and he gave them joy of the kingdom. They both wept for their father and asked the manner of his being killed; but the Chamberlain answered, "The news rests with the Wazir Dandan who will be here to-morrow leading all the host; and it only remaineth for thee, O King, to do what they counsel, since they have unanimously chosen thee Sultan; for if thou do not this, they will choose some one else and thou canst not be sure of thy life with another Sultan. Haply he will kill thee, or discord may befal between you twain and the kingdom pass out of the hands of both." Zau al-Makan bowed his head awhile and then said, "I accept this position;" for indeed there was no refusing; and he was certified that the Chamberlain had counselled him well and wisely and set him on the right way. Then he added, "O my uncle, how shall I do with my brother Sharrkan?" "O my son," replied the Chamberlain, "thy brother will be Sultan of Damascus and thou Sultan of Baghdad; so take heart of grace and get ready thy case." Zau al-Makan accepted this and the Chamberlain presented him with a suit of royal raiment and a dagger[326] of state, which the Wazir Dandan had brought with him; then leaving him he bade the tent-pitchers choose a spot of rising ground and set up thereon a spacious pavilion, wherein the Sultan might sit to receive the Emirs and Grandees. Moreover he ordered the kitcheners to cook rich viands and serve them and he commanded the water-carriers to dispose the water-troughs. They did as he bade them and presently arose a cloud of dust from the ground and spread till it walled the 194 horizon round. After awhile, the dust dispersed and there appeared under it the army of Baghdad and Khorasan, a conquering host like the full-tide sea.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Chamberlain bade the tent-pitchers set up a pavilion spacious enough to receive the subjects flocking to their Sultan, they planted a splendid Sháhmiyánah[327] befitting Kings. And as they ended their labours behold, a dust cloud spired aloft and the breeze made it lift and beneath it showed a conquering host; and presently it appeared that this was the army of Baghdad and Khorasan preceded by the Wazir Dandan. And in it all rejoiced at the accession of the "Light of the Place." Now Zau al-Makan had donned robes of royal estate and girt himself with the sword of state: so the Chamberlain brought him a steed and he mounted, surrounded by the Mamelukes and all the company from the

tents on foot, to do him service, and he rode on until he came to the great pavilion, where he sat down and he laid the royal dagger across his thighs, whilst the Chamberlain stood in attendance on him and his armed slaves stationed themselves under the entrance-awning of the Sháhmiyánah, with drawn swords in their hands. Presently, up came the troops and the host and craved admission; so the Chamberlain went in to Zau al-Makan and asked his leave, whereupon he bade admit them, ten by ten. The Chamberlain acquainted them with the King's commands, to which they replied, "We hear and we obey;" and all drew up before the pavilion-entrance. Then he took ten of them and carried them through the vestibule into the presence of Sultan Zau al-Makan, whom when they saw, they were awed; but he received them with most gracious kindness and promised them all good. So they gave him joy of his safe return and invoked Allah's blessings upon him, after which they took the oath of fealty never to gainsay him in aught and they kissed ground before him and withdrew. Then other ten entered and he entreated them as he had entreated the others; and they ceased not to enter, ten by ten, till none was left 195 but the Wazir Dandan. Lastly the Minister went in and kissed the ground before Zau al-Makan, who rose to meet him, saying, "Welcome, O Wazir and sire sans peer! Verily, thine acts are those of a counsellor right dear, and judgement and foreseeing clear are in the hands of the Subtle of Lere." Then bade he the Chamberlain forthwith go out and cause the tables to be spread and order all the troops thereto. So they came and ate and drank. Moreover the Sultan commanded his Wazir Dandan call a ten days' halt of the army, that he might be private with him and learn from him how and wherefore his father had been slain. The Wazir obeyed the commands of the Sultan with submission and wished him eternity of glory and said, "This needs must be!" He then repaired to the heart of the encampment and ordered the host to halt ten days. They did as he bade them and, moreover, he gave them leave to divert themselves and ordered that none of the lords in waiting should attend upon the King for service during the space of three days. Then the Wazir went to the Sultan and reported all to him, and Zau al-Makan waited until nightfall, when he went in to his sister Nuzhat al-Zaman and asked her, "Dost thou know the cause of my father's murder or not?" "I have no knowledge of the cause," she answered, and drew a silken curtain before herself, whilst Zau al-Makan seated himself without the curtain and commanded the Wazir to the presence and, when he came, said to him, "I desire thou relate to me in detail the cause of the killing of my sire, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman!" Know then, O King, replied Dandan, that King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, when he returned to Baghdad from his chasing and hunting and entered the city, enquired for thee and thy sister, but could not find you and knew that you twain had gone on the Pilgrimage; whereat he was greatly grieved and much angered, and his breast was straitened and he abode thus half a year, seeking news of you from all who came and went, but none could give him any tidings. Now while we were in attendance upon him one day, after a whole year had sped since ye were lost to his sight, lo! there came to us an ancient dame with signs of

being a devotee, accompanied by five damsels, high-bosomed virgins like moons, endowed with such beauty and loveliness as tongue faileth to describe; and, to crown their perfections of comeliness, they could read the Koran and were versed in various kinds of learning and in the histories of bygone peoples. Then that old woman sought audience of the King, and he bade admit her; whereupon she entered the presence 196 and kissed the ground between his hands. I was then sitting by his side and he, seeing in her the signs of asceticism and devoutness, made her draw near and take seat hard by him. And when she had sat down she addressed him and said, "Know, O King, that with me are five damsels, whose like no King among the Kings possesseth; for they are endowed with wit and beauty and loveliness and perfection. They read the Koran and the Traditions and are skilled in all manner of learning and in the history of bygone races. They stand here between thy hands to do thee service, O King of the Age, and it is by trial that folk are prized or despised." Thy father, who hath found mercy;[328] looked at the damsels and their favour pleased him; so he said to them, "Let each and every of you make me hear something of what she knoweth anent the history of the folk of yore and of peoples long gone before!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan said unto King Zau al-Makan:—Thy father, who hath found mercy, glanced at the damsels and their favour pleased him and he said to them, "Let each and every of you make me hear something of what she knoweth anent the history of the folk of yore and of peoples long gone before!" Thereupon one of them came forward and, kissing the ground before him, spake as follows.[329] "Know, O King, that it behoveth one of good-breeding to eschew impertinence and adorn himself with excellencies, and observe the Divine injunctions and avoid mortal sins; and to this he should apply himself with the assiduity of one who, if he stray therefrom, falleth into perdition; for the foundation of good breeding is virtuous behaviour. And know that the chief cause and reason of man's existence is the endeavour after life everlasting, and the right way thereto is the service of Allah. Wherefore it behoveth thee to deal beneficently with the people: and swerve not from this canon, 197 for the mightier men are in dignity, the more their need of prudence and foresight; and indeed Monarchs need this more than the many, for the general cast themselves into affairs, without taking thought to the issue thereof. Be thou prodigal of thy life and thy good in the way of Allah, and know that, if an enemy dispute with thee, thou mayst dispute with him and refute him with proofs and be proof against him; but as for thy friend, there is none can judge between thee and him save righteousness and fair-dealing. Choose, therefore, thy friend for thyself, after thou hast proved him. If he be of the brotherhood of futurity,[330] let him be zealous in observing the externals of the Holy Law and versed in its inner meaning, as far as may be; and if he be of the brotherhood of the world, let him be

free-born, sincere, neither a fool nor a perverse, for the fool man is such that even his parents might well flee from him, and a liar cannot be a true friend. Indeed the word, Siddík[331] ('friend') deriveth from Sidk ('truth') that welleth up from the bottom of the heart; and how can this be the case, when falsehood is manifest upon the tongue? And know, that the observance of the Law profiteth him who practiseth it: so love thy brother, if he be of this quality and do not cast him off, even if thou see in him that which irketh thee, for a friend is not like a wife, whom one can divorce and re-marry: nay, his heart is like glass: once broken, it may not be mended. And Allah bless him who saith:—

Ware how thou hurtest man with hurt of heart; ✿ 'Tis hard to win thee back the heart offended:
For hearts indeed, whence love is alien made, ✿ Like broken-glass may nevermore be mended."

The maiden continued and concluded with pointing out to us what sages say, "The best of brethren is he who is the most constant in good counsel; the best of action is that which is fairest in its consequence, and the best of praise is not that which is in the mouths of men. It is also said:—It behoveth not the servant to neglect thanking Allah especially for two favours, health and reason. Again it is said:—Whoso honoureth himself, his lust is a light matter to him, and he who maketh much of his small troubles, 198 Allah affiicteth him with the greater; he who obeyeth his own inclination neglecteth his duties and he who listeneth to the slanderer loseth the true friend. He who thinketh well of thee, do thou fulfill his thought of thee. He who exceedeth in contention sinneth, and he who against unright standeth not on ward, is not safe from the sword. Now will I tell thee somewhat of the duties of Kazis and judges. Know, O King, that no judgement serveth the cause of justice save it be given after proof positive, and it behoveth the judge to treat all people on the same level, to the intent that the great may not hunger for oppression nor the small despair of justice. Furthermore he should extract proof from the complainant and impose an oath upon the defendant; and mediation is admissible between Moslems, except it be a compromise sanctioning the unlawful or forbidding the lawful.[332] If thou shalt have done aught during the day, of which thy reason is doubtful but thy good intention is proved, thou (O Kazi) shouldst revert to the right, for to do justice is a religious obligation and to return to that which is right is better than persistence in wrong. Then (O judge) thou shouldest study precedents and the law of the case and do equal justice between the suitors, withal fixing thine eyes upon the truth and committing thine affair to Allah (be He extolled and exalted!). And require thou proof of the complainant, and if he adduce evidence let him have due benefit of it; and if not, put the defendant to his oath; for this is the ordinance of Allah. Receive thou the testimony of competent Moslem witnesses, one against other, for Almighty Allah hath commanded judges to judge by externals, He Himself taking charge of the inner and secret things. It behoveth the judge also to avoid giving judgement, whilst suffering from stress of pain or hunger,[333] and that in his decisions between folk he seek the face

of Allah Almighty, for he whose intent is pure and who is at peace with himself, Allah shall guarantee him against what is between him and the people. Quoth al-Zuhri[334]:—There are three things for which, if they be found in a Kazi, he should be deposed; namely, if he honour the base, if he love praise and if he fear dismissal. And Omar bin Abd al-Aziz once deposed a Kazi, who asked him, Why hast thou dismissed me? It hath reached me, answered Omar, that thy converse 199 is greater than thy condition. It is said also that Iskandar[335] said to his Kazi:—I have invested thee with this function and committed to thee in it my soul and mine honour and my manliness; so do thou guard it with thy sense and thine understanding. To his Cook he said, Thou art the Sultan of my body; so look thou tender it as thine own self. To his Secretary he said, Thou art the controller of my wit: so do thou watch over me in what thou writest for me and from me." Thereupon the first damsel backed out from the presence and a second damsel came forward.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the full Eightieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan said to Zau al-Makan:—Thereupon the first damsel backed out from the presence and a second damsel came forward and, kissing the ground seven times before the King thy father, spake as follows, "The sage Lukmán[336] said to his son, There be three who are known only in three several cases; the merciful man is unknown save in time of wrath, the brave only in battle, and thy friend in time of need. It is said that the oppressor shall be deprest though by people praised, and that the opprest is at rest though by people blamed. Quoth Allah Almighty,[337] Assuredly deem not that those who rejoice in what they have done, and who love to be praised for what they have not done, shall escape reckoning of punishment: indeed there is reserved for them a grievous penalty. And he said[338] (on whom be salvation and salutation!):—Works are according to intention and to each man is attributed that which he intendeth. He said also:—In the body is a part which being sound the rest is sound, and which being unsound the whole is unsound. And this is the heart. Now this heart is the most marvellous of what is in man, since it is that 200 which ordereth his whole affair: If covetise stir in it, desire destroyeth him; and if affliction master it, anguish slayeth him; if anger rage in it, danger is hard upon him; if it be blest with contentment, he is safe from discontent; if fear surprise it, he is full of mourning; and if calamity overtake it, affliction betideth him. If a man gain the use of wealth, peradventure he is diverted thereby from the remembrance of his Lord; if poverty choke him, his heart is distracted by woe, or if disquietude waste his heart, weakness causeth him to fall. Thus, in any case, nothing profiteth him but that he be mindful of Allah and occupy himself with gaining his livelihood in this world and securing his place in the next. It was asked of a certain sage, Who is the most ill-conditioned of men?; and he answered, The man whose lusts master his manhood and whose mind soareth over

high, so that his knowledge dispreadeth and his excuse diminisheth; and how excellently saith the poet:—

Freest am I of all mankind fro' meddling wight ✿ Who, seeing others err, self-error ne'er can sight:
Riches and talents are but loans to creature lent; ✿ Each wears the cloak of that he bears in breast and sprite:
If by mistaken door attempt on aught thou make, ✿ Thou shalt go wrong; and if the door be right, go right!"

Continued the maiden, "As for anecdotes of devotees, quoth Hishám bin Bashar:—I asked Omar bin Ubayd, What is true piety?; and he answered, The Apostle of Allah (to whom be salutation and salvation!) hath explained it when he sayeth, The pious is he who forgetteth not the grave nor calamity and who preferreth that which endureth to that which passeth away; who counteth not the morrow as of his days but reckoneth himself among the dead. And it is related that Abu Zarr[339] used to say, Want is dearer to me than wealth, and unheal is dearer to me than health. Quoth one of the listeners, May Allah have mercy on Abu Zarr! For my part, I say, Whoso putteth his trust in the goodness of the election of Almighty Allah should be content with that condition which Allah hath chosen for him. Quoth one of the Companions of the Prophet, Ibn Abi Aufa[340] once prayed with us the dawn-prayer. When he had done, he recited, O Thou 201 Enwrapped![341] till he came to where Allah saith, When there shall be a trumping on the trumpet, and fell down dead. It is said that Sabit al-Banáni wept till he well-nigh lost his eyes. They brought him a man to medicine him who said to him, I will cure thee, provided thou obey my bidding. Asked Sabit, In what matter? Quoth the leach, In that thou leave weeping! What is the worth of mine eyes?, rejoined Sabit, if they do not weep? Quoth a man to Mohammed bin Abdillah, Exhort thou me!"—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan said to Zau al-Makan:—Thus spake the second handmaid to the King who hath found mercy, Omar bin al-Nu'uman. "Quoth a man to Mohammed bin Abdillah, Exhort thou me! I exhort thee, replied he, to be a self-ruler, an abstainer in this world, and in the next a greedy slave. How so? asked the other and Mohammed answered, The abstinent man in this world conquereth both the world that is and the world to come. And quoth Ghaus bin Abdillah, There were two brothers among the sons of Israel, one of whom said to the other, What be the most perilous[342] thing thou hast done? Replied the brother, I once came upon a nest of young birds; so I took out one and threw it back into the nest; but among the chickens were some which drew apart from it. This is the most perilous thing I ever did; now what be the most perilous thing thou hast ever done? He rejoined, When I arise for prayer I am fearful that it is only for the sake of the reward. Now their father heard these words and exclaimed, O Allah, an say they sooth take them to Thyself! It was declared by one of the wise men, Verily, these were of the most virtuous of children. Quoth Sa'id bin Jubayr,[343] I was once in

company with Fuzalah 202 bin 'Ubayd and said to him, Exhort thou me! Replied he, Bear in mind these two necessaries, Shun syntheism[344] and harm not any of Allah's creatures. And he repeated these two couplets:—

Be as thou wilt, for Allah still is bounteous Lord, ✿ And care-dispeller; dread not therefore bane and ban
To two things only never draw thee nigh, nor give ✿ Partner to Allah, trouble to thy brother-man."

And how well saith the poet:—

An thou of pious works a store neglect ✿ And after death meet one who *did* collect,
Thou shalt repent thou diddest not as he, ✿ Nor madest ready as he did elect."

Then the third damsel came forward, after the second had withdrawn, and said, "Of a truth, the chapter of piety is exceeding wide; but I will mention what occurreth to me thereof, concerning the pious of old. Quoth a certain holy man, I congratulate myself in death, though I am not assured of rest therein, save that I know death interveneth between a man and his works; so I hope for the doubling of good works and the docking off of ill works. And Itá'a al-Salamí, when he had made an end of an exhortation, was wont to tremble and grieve and weep sore; and as they asked him why he did this he answered, I desire to enter upon a grave matter, and it is the standing up before Almighty Allah to do in accordance with my exhortation. In similar guise Zayn al-Abidín,[345] son of Al-Husayn, was wont to tremble when he rose to pray. Being asked the cause of this, he replied, Know ye not before whom I stand and whom I address? It is said that there lived near Sufyán al-Thauri[346] a blind man who, when the month of Ramazán came, went out with the folk to pray,[347] but remained silent and hung 203 back. Said Sufyan, On the Day of Resurrection he shall come with the people of the Koran and they will be distinguished by increase of honour from their fellows. Quoth Sufyan, Were the soul established in the heart as befitteth, it would fly away for joy and pining for Paradise, and for grief and fear of hell-fire. It is related also of Sufyan al-Thauri that he said, To look upon the face of a tyrant is a sin." Then the third damsel retired and came forward the fourth, who said, "Here am I to treat of sundry traditions of pious men which suggest themselves to me. It is related that Bishr Barefoot[348] said, I once heard Khálid say, Beware of secret polytheism. I asked, What may secret polytheism be?; and he answered, When one of you in praying prolong his inclinations and prostrations till a cause of impurity[349] come upon him. And one of the sages said, Doing works of weal expiateth what is ill. Quoth Ibrahim,[350] I supplicated Bishr Barefoot to acquaint me with some theological mysteries; but he said, O my son, this knowledge it behoveth us not to teach to every one; of every hundred five, even as the legal alms upon money. Said Ibrahim, I thought his reply excellent and approved of it and while I was praying behold, Bishr was also praying: so I stood behind him[351] making the prayer-bow till the Mu'ezzin called his call. Then rose a man of tattered appearance and said, O folk, beware of a truth which bringeth unweal, for there is no harm in a lie bringing weal,[352] and in 204 time of need no choice we heed: speech booteth not in the absence

of good qualities even as silence hurteth not in the presence of good. Presently I saw Bishr drop a danik,[353] so I picked it up and exchanged it for a dirham which I gave him. Quoth he, I will not take it. Quoth I, It is perfectly lawful change; but he rejoined I cannot take in exchange the riches of the present world for those of the future world. It is related also that Bishr Barefoot's sister once went to Ahmad bin Hanbal"[354]——— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan continued to bespeak Zau al-Makan on this wise:—And quoth the maiden to thy father, "Bishr Barefoot's sister once went to Ahmad bin Hanbal and said to him, O Imam of the Faith, we are a family that spin thread by night and work for our living by day; and oftentimes the cressets of the watch of Baghdad pass by and we on the roof spinning by their light. Is this forbidden to us? Asked Ahmad:—Who art thou? I am the sister of Bishr Barefoot, answered she. Rejoined the Imam, O household of Bishr, I shall never cease to drink full draughts of piety from your hearts. Quoth one of the sages, When Allah willeth well to His servant He openeth upon him the gate of action. Malik bin Dinár,[355] when he passed through the bazar and saw aught he desired, was wont to say:—O soul, take patience, for I will not accord to thee what thou desirest. He said also (Allah accept him!), The salvation of the soul lies in resistance to it and its damnation in submission to it. Quoth Mansúr bin Ammár,[356] I made a pilgrimage and was faring Meccahwards by way of Cufa, and the night was overcast, when I heard a voice crying out from the deeps of the darkness saying, O Allah, I swear by Thy Greatness 205 and Thy Glory, I meant not through my disobedience to transgress against Thee; for indeed I am not ignorant of Thee; but my fault is one Thou didst foreordain to me from eternity without beginning;[357] so do Thou pardon my transgression, for indeed I disobeyed Thee of my ignorance! When he had made an end of his prayer he recited aloud the verse, O true believers, save your souls and those of your families from the fire whose fuel is men and stones.[358] Then I heard a fall, but not knowing what it was I passed on. When the morning morrowed, as we went our way, behold, we fell in with a funeral-train, followed by an old woman whose strength had left her. I asked her of the dead, and she answered:—This is the funeral of a man who passed by us yesterday whilst my son was standing at prayer and after his prayers he recited a verse from the Book of Allah Almighty when the man's gall-bladder burst and he fell dead." Therewith the fourth damsel retired and the fifth came forward and said, "I here will also repeat what occurreth to me regarding the acts of devotees in olden time. Maslamah bin Dinár used to say:—By making sound the secret thoughts, sins great and small are covered; and, when the servant of Allah is resolved to leave sinning, victory cometh to him. Also quoth he, Every worldly good which doth not draw one nearer to Allah is a calamity, for a little of this world distracteth from a mickle of the world to come and a mickle of the present

maketh thee forget the whole of the future. It was asked of Abú Házim,[359] Who is the most prosperous of men?; and he answered, Whoso spendeth his life in submission to Allah. The other enquired, And who is the most foolish of mankind? Whoso selleth his future for the worldly goods of others, replied Abu Házim. It is reported of Moses[360] (on whom be peace!) that when he came to the waters of Midian he exclaimed:—O Lord, verily I stand in need of the good which thou shalt send down to me.[361] And he asked of his Lord and not of his folk. There came 206 two damsels and he drew water for them both and allowed not the shepherds to draw first. When the twain returned, they informed their father Shu'ayb (on whom be peace!) who said, Haply, he is hungry, adding to one of them, Go back to him and bid him hither. Now when she came to Moses, she veiled her face and said, My father biddeth thee to him that he may pay thee thy wage for having drawn water for us. Moses was averse to this and was not willing to follow her. Now she was a woman large in the back parts, and the wind blowing upon her garment[362] discovered the hinder cheeks to Moses; which when Moses saw, he lowered his eyes and said to her, Get thee behind while I walk in front. So she followed him till he entered the house of Shu'ayb where supper was ready,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan continued to Zau al-Makan:—Now, quoth the fifth damsel to thy sire, "When Moses (on whom be peace!) entered the home of Shu'ayb where supper was ready, Shu'ayb said to him, O Moses, I desire to pay thee thy wage for having drawn water for these two. But Moses answered, I am of a household which selleth nothing of the fashion of the next world[363] for what is on earth of gold and silver." Then quoth Shu'ayb, O youth! nevertheless thou art my guest, and it is my wont and that of my forbears to honour the guest by setting food before him. So Moses sat down and ate. Then Shu'ayb hired Moses for eight pilgrimages, that is to say, eight years, and made his wage marriage with one of his two daughters, and Moses' service to him was to stand for her dowry. As saith the Holy Writ of him:—Verily I will give thee one of these my two daughters in marriage, on condition that thou serve me for hire eight pilgrimages: and if thou fulfil ten years, it is in 207 thine own breast; for I seek not to impose a hardship on thee.[364] A certain man once said to one of his friends whom he had not met for many days:—Thou hast made me desolate, for that I have not seen thee this long while. Quoth the other, I have been distracted from thee by Ibn Shiháb: dost thou know him? Quoth his friend, Yes, he hath been my neighbour these thirty years, but I have never spoken to him. He replied, Verily thou forgettest Allah in forgetting thy neighbour! If thou lovedst Allah thou wouldst love thy neighbour. Knowest thou not that a neighbour hath a claim upon his neighbour,[365] even as the right of kith and kin? Said Huzayfah, "We entered Meccah with Ibráhím bin Adham, and Shakik al-Balkhí was

also making a pilgrimage that year. Now we met whilst circumambulating the Ka'abah and Ibrahim said to Shakik, What is your fashion in your country? Replied Shakik, When we are blest with our daily bread we eat, and when we hunger we take patience. This wise, said Ibrahim, do the dogs of Balkh; but we, when blest with plenty, do honour to Allah and when an-hungered we thank Him. And Shakik seated himself before Ibrahim and said to him, Thou art my master. Also said Mohammed bin Imrán, A man once asked of Hátim the Deaf[366] What maketh thee to trust in Allah? Two things, answered he, I know that none save myself shall eat my daily bread, so my heart is at rest as to that; and I know that I was not created without the knowledge of Allah, and am abashed before Him." Then the fifth damsel retired and the ancient dame came forward and, kissing the ground before thy father nine times, said, "Thou hast heard, O King, what these all have spoken on the subject of piety; and I will follow their example in relating what hath reached me of the famous men of past times. It is said that the Imam al-Sháfi'í departed the night into three portions, the first for study, the second for sleep and the third for prayer. The Imam Abú Hanífah[367] was wont also to pass half the night in prayer. One 208 day a man pointed him out to another, as he walked by and remarked, Yonder man watcheth the whole night. When he heard this Abu Hanifah said, I was abashed before Allah to hear myself praised for what was not in me; so after this he used to watch the whole night. And one of the Sages hath said:—

Who seeketh for pearl in the Deep dives deep; ✿ Who on high would hie robs his night of sleep.

Al-Rabí a relates that Al-Shafi'i used to recite the whole Koran seventy times during the month of Ramazán, and that in his daily prayers. Quoth Al-Shafi'i (Allah accept him!), During ten years I never ate my fill of barley-bread, for fullness hardeneth the heart and deadeneth the wit and induceth sleep and enfeebleth one from standing up to pray.[368] It is reported of Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Sakrá that he said, I was once talking with Omar and he observed to me, Never saw I a more God-fearing or eloquent man than Mohammed bin Idris al-Sháfi'í. It so happened I went out one day with Al-Háris bin Labíb al-Saffár, who was a disciple of Al-Muzani[369] and had a fine voice and he read the saying of the Almighty:—This shall be a day whereon they shall not speak to any purpose, nor shall they be permitted to excuse themselves.[370] I saw Al-Shafi'i's colour change; his skin shuddered with horripilation, he was violently moved and he fell down in a fainting fit. When he revived he said, I take refuge with Allah from the stead of the liars and the lot of the negligent! O Allah, before whom the hearts of the wise abase themselves, O Allah, of Thy beneficence accord to me the remission of my sins, adorn me with the curtain of Thy protection and pardon me my shortcomings, by the magnanimity of Thy Being! Then I rose and went away. Quoth one of the pious, When I entered Baghdad, Al-Shafi'i was there. So I sat down on the river-bank to make the ablution before prayer; and behold, there passed me one who said, O youth, make thy Wuzu-ablution well and Allah will make it well for thee in

this world and in the next. I turned and lo! there was a man behind whom came a company of people. So I hastened to finish my 209ablution and followed him. Presently, he turned and asked me, Say, dost thou want aught? Yes, answered I; I desire that thou teach me somewhat of that which Allah Almighty hath taught thee. He said, Know then that whoso believeth in Allah shall be saved, and whoso jealously loveth his faith shall be delivered from destruction, and whoso practiseth abstinence in this world, his eyes shall be solaced on the morrow of death. Shall I tell thee any more? I replied, Assuredly; and he continued, Be thou of the world that is, heedless; and of the world to come, greediest. Be truthful in all thy dealings, and thou shalt be saved with the Salvationists. Then he went on and I asked about him and was told that he was the Imam Al-Shafi'i. Al-Shafi'i was wont to remark, I love to see folk profit by this learning of mine, on condition that nothing of it be attributed to me."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan continued to Zau al-Makan:—The old woman bespake thy sire, saying, "The Imam Al-Shafi'i was wont to remark, I love to see folk profit by this learning of mine on condition that nothing of it be attributed to me. He also said:—I never disputed with any one, but I would that Almighty Allah should give him the knowledge of the Truth and aid him to dispread it: nor did I ever dispute with anyone at all but for the showing forth of the Truth, and I reck not whether Allah manifest it by my tongue or by His. He said also (whom Allah accept!), if thou fear to grow conceited of thy lore, then bethink thee Whose grace thou seekest and for what good thou yearnest and what punishment thou dreadest. It was told to Abu Hanífah that the Commander of the Faithful, Abú Ja'afar al-Mansúr, had appointed him Kazi and ordered him a salary of ten thousand dirhams; but he would not accept of this; and, when the day came on which the money was to be paid him, he prayed the dawn-prayer, then covered his head with his robe and spoke not. When the Caliph's messenger came with the money, he went in to the Imam and accosted him, but he would not speak to him. So the messenger said, Verily this money is lawfully thine. I know that it is lawfully mine, replied he: but I 210abhor that the love of tyrants get a hold upon my heart.[371] Asked the other, If thou go in to them canst thou not guard thyself from loving them. Answered Abu Hanifah, Can I look to enter the sea without my clothes being wet? Another of Al-Shafi'i's sayings (Allah accept him!) is:—

Oh soul of me, an thou accept my rede, ✿ Thou shalt be wealthy and of grace entire:

Cast off ambitious hopes and vain desires; ✿ How many a death was done by vain desire!"

Among the sayings of Sufyán al-Thaurí, with which he admonished Ali bin al-Hasan al-Salamí was, Be thou a man of truth and 'ware lies and treachery and hypocrisy and pride. Be not indebted save to Him who is merciful to His debtors; and let thine

associate be one who shall dissociate thee from the world. Be ever mindful of death and be constant in craving pardon of Allah and in beseeching of Allah peace for what remaineth of thy life. Counsel every True Believer, when he asketh thee concerning the things of his faith; and beware of betraying a Believer, for whoso betrayeth a Believer, betrayeth Allah and His Apostle. Avoid dissensions and litigation; and leave that which causeth doubt in thee for things which breed no doubt:[372] so shalt thou be at peace. Enjoin beneficence and forbid malevolence: so shalt thou be loved of Allah. Adorn thine inner man and Allah shall adorn thine outer man. Accept the excuse of him who excuseth self to thee and hate not any one of the Moslems. Draw near unto those who withdraw from thee and excuse those that misuse thee: so shalt thou be the friend of the Prophets. Let thine affairs, both public and private, be in Allah's charge, and fear Him with the fear of one who knoweth he is dead and who fareth towards Resurrection and Judgement-stead between the hands of the Lord of Dread; and remember that to one of two houses thou art sped, either for Heavens eterne or to the Hell fires that burn." Thereupon the old woman sat down beside the damsels. Now when thy father, who hath found mercy, heard their discourse, he knew that they were the most accomplished of the people of their time; and, seeing their beauty and 211 loveliness and the extent of their wisdom and lore, he showed them all favour. Moreover, he turned to the ancient dame and treated her with honour, and set apart for her and her damsels the palace which had lodged Princess Abrizah, daughter of the King of Greece, to which he bade carry all the luxuries they needed. They abode with him ten days and the old woman abode with them; and, whenever the King visited them, he found her absorbed in prayer, watching by night and fasting by day; whereby love of her took hold upon his heart and he said to me, "O Wazir, verily this old woman is of the pious, and awe of her is strong in my heart." Now on the eleventh day, the King visited her, that he might pay her the price of the damsels; but she said to him, "O King, know that the price of these maidens surpasseth the competence of men; indeed I seek not for them either gold or silver or jewels, be it little or much." Now when thy father heard these words he wondered and asked her, "O my lady and what is their price?"; whereto she answered, "I will not sell them to thee save on condition that thou fast, watching by night a whole month, and abstaining by day, all for the love of Allah Almighty; and, if thou do this, they are thy property to use in thy palace as thou please. So the King wondered at the perfection of her rectitude and piety and abnegation; she was magnified in his eyes and he said, "Allah make this pious woman to profit us!" Then he agreed with her to fast for a month as she had stipulated, and she said to him, "I will help thee with the prayers I pray for thee and now bring me a gugglet of water." They brought one and she took it and recited over it and muttered spells, and sat for an hour speaking in speech no one understood or knew aught thereof. Lastly she covered it with a cloth and, sealing it with her signet-ring, gave it to thy sire, saying, "When thou hast fasted the first ten days, break thy fast on the eleventh night with what is in this gugglet, for it will root out the love of

the world from thy heart and fill it with light and faith. As for me to-morrow I will go forth to my brethren, the Invisible[373] Controuls, for I yearn after them, and I will return to 212 thee when the first ten days are past." Thy father took the gugglet and arose and set it apart in a closet of his palace, then locked the door and put the key in his pocket. Next day the King fasted and the old woman went her ways. And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighty-fifth Night,

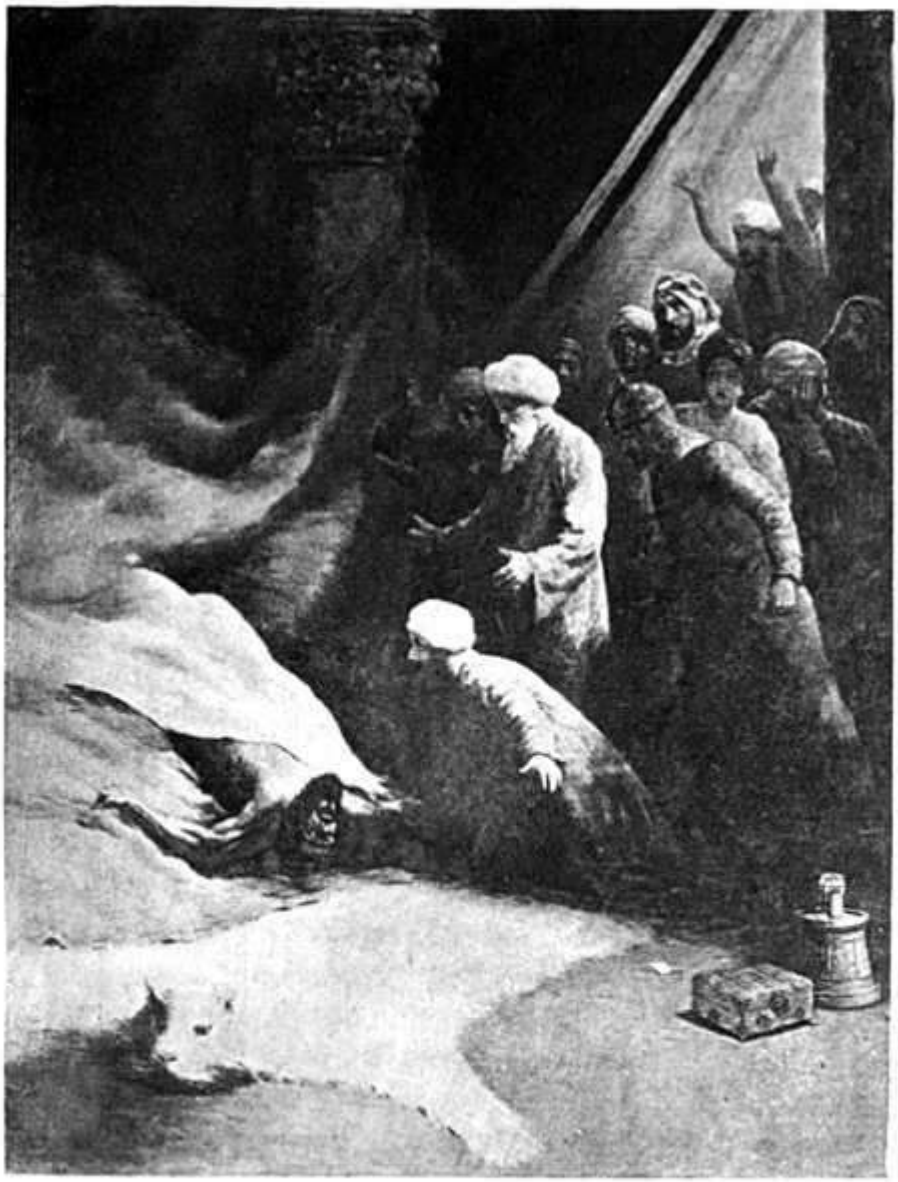
She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan thus continued to Zau al-Makan:—Now when came the day for the Sultan's fast, the old woman went her ways. And after he had accomplished the ten days thereof, on the eleventh he opened the gugglet and drank what was therein and found it cordial to his stomach. Within the second ten days of the month the old woman returned, bringing sweetmeats wrapped in a green leaf, like no leaf of known tree. She went in to thy sire and saluted him; and, when he saw her, he rose to her saying, "Welcome, O pious lady!" "O King," quoth she, "the Invisible Controuls salute thee, for I told them of thee, and they rejoiced in thee and have sent thee their Halwá,[374] which is of the sweetmeats of the other world. Do thou break thy fast on it at the end of the day." The King rejoiced at this with great joy, and exclaimed, "Praised be Allah, who hath given me brethren of the Invisible World!" Thereupon he thanked the ancient dame and kissed her hands; and he honoured her and the damsels with exceeding honour. She went forth for the twenty days of thy father's fast, at the end of which time she came to him and said, "Know, O King, that I told the Invisible Controuls of the love which is between me and thee, and informed them how I had left the maidens with thee, and they were glad that the damsels should belong to a King like thee; for they were wont, when they saw them, to be strenuous in offering on their behalf prayers and petitions ever granted. So I would fain carry them to the Invisible Controuls that they may benefit by the breath of their favour, and peradventure, they shall not return to thee without some treasure of the treasures of the earth, that thou, after completing thy fast, mayst occupy thyself with their raiment and help thyself by the money they shall bring thee, to the extent of thy 213 desires." When thy sire heard her words, he thanked her for them and said, "Except that I fear to cross thee, I would not accept the treasure or aught else; but when wilt thou set out with them?" Replied she, "On the seven-and-twentieth night; and I will bring them back to thee at the head of the month, by which time thou wilt have accomplished thy fast and they will have had their courses and be free from impurity; and they shall become thine and be at thy disposal. By Allah, each damsel of them is worth many times thy kingdom!" He said, "I know it, O pious lady!" Then quoth the old woman, "There is no help but that thou send with them someone in thy palace who is dear to thee, that she may find solace and seek a blessing of the Invisible Controuls." Quoth he, "I have a Greek slave called Sophia, by whom I have been blessed with two children, a girl and a boy; but they were lost

years ago. Take her with thee that she may get the blessing."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan continued to Zau al-Makan:—Quoth thy sire to the ancient woman when she demanded the handmaids of him, "I have a Greek slave called Sophia, by whom I have been blest with two children, a girl and a boy, but they were lost years ago; so take her with thee, haply she may get the benediction and, belike, the Invisible Controuls will sue Allah for her that her two children may be restored to her." "Thou hast said well," replied she; "for that indeed was her grievousest want." Thy sire gave not over finishing his fast till the old woman said to him, "O my son, I am going to the Invisible Controuls; so bring me Sophia." Accordingly, he summoned her and she came forthright, and he delivered her to the old woman who mixed her up with the other damsels. Then she went in to her chamber and bringing out a sealed cup, presented it to the Sultan saying, "On the thirtieth day, do thou repair to the Hammam and when thou comest out, enter one of the closets in thy palace and drink what is in this cup. Then sleep, and thou shalt attain what thou seekest, and peace be with thee!" Thereat the King was glad and thanked her and kissed her hands. Quoth she, "I commend thee to Allah's care;" whereat quoth he, 214"And when shall I see thee again, O pious lady? In very sooth I love not to part with thee." Then she called down blessings on him and departed with the five damsels and the Queen; whilst the King fasted after her departure other three days, till the month ended, when he arose and went to the Hammam and coming out, shut himself up in a closet of his palace, commanding that none should go in to him. There, after making fast the door, he drank what was in the cup and lay down to sleep; and we sat awaiting him till the end of the day, but he did not come out and we said, "Perchance he is tired with the bath and with watching by night and fasting by day; wherefore he sleepeth." So we waited till next day; but still he did not come forth. Then we stood at the closet-door and cried aloud so haply he might awake and ask what was the matter. But nothing came of that; so at last we lifted up the door;[375] and, going in, found him dead, with his flesh torn into strips and bits and his bones broken.[376] When we saw him in this condition it was grievous to us, and we took up the cup and found within its cover a piece of paper whereon was inscribed, "Whoso doeth evil leaveth no regrets, and this be the reward of him who playeth traitor with the daughters of Kings and who debaucheth them; and we make known to all who fall upon this scroll that Sharrkan, when he came to our country, seduced our Queen Abrizah; nor did that suffice him but he must needs take her from us and bring her to you. Then he[377] sent her away in company of a black slave who slew her, and we found her lying dead on the desert sward and thrown out to wild beasts. This be no kingly deed, and he who did this is requited with naught but what he merited. So do ye suspect none of having killed him, for no one slew him but the

cunning witch, whose name is Zat al-Dawahi. And behold, I have taken the King's wife, Sophia, and have carried her to her father, Afridun King of Constantinople. Moreover, there is no help for it but that we wage war upon you and kill you and take your country from you, and ye shall be cut 215 off even to the last man, nor shall a living soul be spared by Death nor one who bloweth fire with his breath, save he who Cross and Belt[378] worshippeth." When we read this paper, we knew that the ancient woman had beguiled us and carried out her plot against us: whereupon we cried aloud and buffeted our faces and wept sore when weeping availed us naught. And the troops fell out as to whom they should make Sultan; some would have thee, and others would have thy brother Sharrkan; and we ceased not to dispute about this for the space of a month, at the end of which certain of us drew together and agreed to repair to thy brother Sharrkan: so we set out and journeyed on till we fell in with thee. And such is the manner of the death of Sultan Omar bin al-Nu'uman! Now when the Wazir Dandan had made an end of his story, Zau al-Makan and his sister, Nuzhat al-Zaman, wept; and the Chamberlain, who wept also, said to Zau al-Makan, "O King, weeping will avail thee naught; nor shall aught profit thee but that thou harden thy heart and strengthen thy stress and stablish thy sovranty; for verily whoso leaveth the like of thee is not dead." Thereupon Zau al-Makan gave over his weeping and caused his throne to be set up without the pavilion, and then commanded the army to pass in review-order before him. And the Chamberlain sat by his side and all the armour-bearers[379] behind him, whilst the Wazir Dandan and the rest of the Emirs and Grandees stood each in his dividual stead. Then quoth King Zau al-Makan to the Minister Dandan, "Inform me concerning my sire's treasures;" and he replied, "I hear and I obey;" and gave him to know of the late King's hoards and monies, and what was in the treasury of amassed wealth and jewels, and acquainted him with other precious things. So Zau al-Makan opened his hand to the army, and gave a sumptuous robe of honour to the Wazir Dandan, saying, "Thou continuest in office." Whereupon 216 Dandan kissed the ground before him and wished him long life. Then he bestowed dresses on the Emirs, after which he said to the Chamberlain, "Bring out before me the tribute of Damascus that is with thee." So he was shown the chests of money and rarities and jewels, when he took them and parted them all amongst the troops,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Eighty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Zau al-Makan ordered the Chamberlain to bring out before him what he had brought of the tribute of Damascus; and, when he was shown the chests of money and rarities and jewels, he took them and parted them all amongst the troops, till nothing was left. And the Emirs kissed the ground before him and wished him long life, saying, "Never saw we a King, who

gave the like of these gifts." Then all went away to their tents and when it was morning he gave orders for marching. So they marched for three days, till, on the fourth day, they drew near to Baghdad. When they entered the city, they found it decorated, and Zau al-Makan, the Sultan, went up to his father's palace and sat down on the throne, whilst the Emirs of the army and the Wazir Dandan and the Chamberlain of Damascus stood between his hands. Then he bade his private secretary write a writ to his brother Sharrkan, acquainting him with all that had passed, from first to last, and he concluded, "As soon as thou hast read this letter, make ready thine affair and join us with thine army, that we may turn to Holy War upon the Infidels and take man-bote for our father and wipe out the stain upon our honour." Then he folded the letter and sealed it with his seal-ring and said to the Minister Dandan, "None shall carry this letter but thou; and it behoveth thee speak my brother fair and say to him:—If thou have a mind to thy father's kingdom, it is thine, and thy brother shall be Viceroy for thee in Damascus; for to this effect am I instructed by him." So the Wazir went down from before him and made ready for his march. Then Zau al-Makan bade set apart a magnificent house for the Fireman and furnished it with the best of furniture and long is the tale of that Fireman.[380] Presently Zau al-Makan went out chasing and hunting 217 and, as he was returning to Baghdad, one of the Emirs presented him with blood-horses and with beauteous handmaids whose description the tongue evades. One of the damsels pleased him: so he went in unto her and knew her that night, and she conceived by him forthright. After a while, the Wazir Dandan returned from his journey, bringing him news of his brother Sharrkan and that he was then on his way to him, and said, "It were fitting thou go forth to meet him." Zau al-Makan replied, "I hear and I consent;" and, riding forth with his Grandees a day's journey from Baghdad, he pitched his pavilions there awaiting his brother. Next morning appeared King Sharrkan amid the army of Syria, a horseman of might, a lion fierce in fight, a prow and doughty knight. As the squadrons drew nigh and the dust-clouds came hard by and the troops rode up with banners on high, Zau al-Makan and those with him pushed forward to meet Sharrkan and his men; and when Zau al-Makan saw his brother, he desired to dismount, but Sharrkan conjured him not to do on this wise, and himself footed it, and walked a few paces towards him.[381] As soon as he reached Zau al-Makan, the new Sultan threw himself upon him, and Sharrkan embraced him and wept with great weeping and the twain condoled with each other. Then they mounted and rode onward, they and their troops, till they reached Baghdad, where they alighted and went up to the royal palace and there they passed that night, and when next morning came, Zau al-Makan went forth and bade summon the troops from all parts, and proclaimed a Holy War and a Razzia.[382] They then awaited the coming of the levies from each quarter of the kingdom, and every one who came they entreated with honour and promised him all manner of good; till in so doing a full month had sped, and the fighting men flocked to them in a continuous body. Then Sharrkan said to Zau al-Makan, "O my brother,

tell me thy history." So he told him all that had befallen him from first to last, including the benevolent dealing of the Fireman with him. Asked Sharrkan, "Hast thou requited his kindness?"; and he answered, "O my brother! I have not rewarded him as yet, but Inshallah! I will recompense him whenas I return from this raid."—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eighty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sharrkan asked his brother Zau al-Makan, "Hast thou requited the Fireman for his kindness?"; and he answered, "O my brother, I have not rewarded him as yet, but Inshallah! I will recompense him whenas I return from this raid and find time so to do." Therewith Sharrkan was certified that his sister, Nuzhat al-Zaman, had told him the whole truth; but he concealed what had passed between them and offered his salutation to her by her husband the Chamberlain. She sent him back her greeting, calling down blessings on him and enquiring after her daughter Kuzia-Fakan, to which he replied that the maiden was well and in the best of health and safety. Whereupon she praised Almighty Allah and gave him thanks. Then Sharrkan went to his brother to take counsel with him for departure; and Zau al-Makan said, "O my brother, as soon as the army is complete and the Arabs have come in from all parts, we will march forth." So he bade make ready the commissariat and prepare munitions of war and went in to his wife, who was now five months gone with child; and he put under her astrologers and mathematicians, to whom he appointed stipends and allowances. Then he set out three months after the arrival of the army of Syria, and as soon as the Arabs were come in and the troops were assembled from all directions; and, as he fared forth, he was followed by the warriors and the united host. Now the name of the General of the Daylam army was Rustam and that of the General of the army of the Turks[383] Bahram. And Zau al-Makan marched in mid-host and on his right was his brother Sharrkan, and on his left the Chamberlain his brother-in-law. So the squadrons broke up and pushed forward and the battalions and companies filed past in battle-array, till the whole army was in motion. They ceased not to fare on for the space of a month, and each body dismounted at its own ground and there rested every week three days (for the host was great); and they advanced in this order till they came to the country of the Greeks. Then the people of the villages and hamlets and the poorer sort took fright at them and fled to Constantinople. But when King Afridun heard the tidings he arose and betook himself to Zat al-Dawahi, 219 the same who had contrived the stratagem, and had travelled to Baghdad and had slain King Omar bin al-Nu'uman; and who, after carrying off her slaves and Queen Sophia, had returned with them all to her native land. Now when she had been restored to her son, the King of Greece, and felt herself safe, she said to King Hardub, "Cool thine eyes; for I have avenged by blood the shame of thy daughter Abrizah, and have killed Omar bin al-Nu'uman and have

brought back Sophia. So now let us go to the King of Constantinople and carry to him his daughter and acquaint him with what hath happened, that all of us be on guard and prepare our forces; and I will fare with thee to King Afridun, Lord of Constantinople, for I opine that the Moslems will not await our attack." Said Hardub, "Tarry thou till they draw near our country, that we may make us ready meantime and assemble our power." Accordingly they took to levying their forces and preparing for war, and, when the news of the Moslems' advance reached them, they were prepared for defence; and Zat al-Dawahi had preceded them. Now when she and her son arrived at Constantinople, the King of Kings, Afridun, hearing of the approach of Hardub, King of the Greeks, came forth to meet him and asked how it was with him and the cause of his visit. So Hardub acquainted him with the cunning doings of his mother, Zat al-Dawahi, how she had slain the Moslem King and recovered from him Queen Sophia, and had said, "The Moslems have assembled their forces and are on their way to attack us, wherefore it behoveth that we two join hands in single band and meet them." Now King Afridun rejoiced in the return of his daughter and the killing of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman; and he sent to all countries seeking succour and acquainting the folk with the cause of slaying the Moslem King. So the Nazarene troops flocked to him and three months were not past ere the army of the Greeks was complete, besides which there joined themselves to him Franks from all their lands, French, Germans[384] and Ragusans,[385] with men of Zara,[386] Venetians, Genoese, and all the hosts 220 of the Yellow Faces[387]; and, when the gathering was at its full, earth was straitened on them by reason of their multitude. Then Afridun, the Great King, ordered a march; so they set out and ceased not to defile through the city for ten days. They fared on till they reached the Wady hight Al Nu'uman, a broad-sided vale hard by the Salt Sea, where they halted three days; and on the fourth they were about to set out again, when news came that the army of Al-Islam on them prest, and the defenders of the faith of Mohammed, of Men the Best. So they halted in it other three days, and on the eighth they espied a dust-cloud which towered till it walled the whole land; nor was an hour of the day past ere that dust began to drift and was torn to shreds in the lift, and pierced through its shades the starry radiance of lance and the white leven of blades. Presently there appeared beneath it the banners Islamitan and the ensigns Mahometan; the horsemen urged forward, like the letting loose of seas that surged, clad in mail, as they were mackerel-back clouds which the moon enveil; whereupon the two hosts clashed, like two torrents on each other dashed. Eyes fell upon eyes; and the first to seek combat singular was the Wazir Dandan, he and the army of Syria, numbering thirty thousand bridles, and with him were the General of the Turks, and the General of Daylam, Rustam and Bahram, amid twenty thousand horse, behind whom came the men from the shores of the Salt Sea, clad in iron mail, as they were full moons that past through a night o'ercast. Then the Nazarene host called out on Jesus and Mary, and the defiled[388] Cross and they heaped themselves upon the Wazir Dandan and those with him of the Syrian host. Now all this was in

pursuance of a stratagem [221] devised by that ancient woman Zat al-Dawahi; for, before his departure, King Afridun had gone in to her and asked her, "How shall I do and what plan shall I pursue?; it is thou hast caused this great distress to us;" and she had answered, "O great King and mighty Cohen![389] I will teach thee a trick would baffle Iblis himself, though he summon to his assistance all his grisly hosts."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eighty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, all this was a stratagem of the ancient woman, for that the King before his departure had gone to her and asked, "How shall I do and what plan shall I pursue? it is thou hast caused this great distress to us!" And she had answered, "O great King and mighty Cohen, I will teach thee a trick would baffle the Devil himself though he summon to his assistance all his grisly hosts. It is that thou send fifty thousand men going down in ships, and sailing over the sea to the Mountain of Smoke; and there let them land and stir not till the standards of Al-Islam come upon thee, when do thou up and at them. Then bid the troops from the seaward sally out upon the Moslems and take them in rear, whilst we confront them from the landward. So not one of them shall escape, and our sorrows shall cease and peace abide with us." Now the counsel of this ancient woman commended itself to King Afridun, and he replied, "Right is the recking thou reckest, O Princess of wits and recourse of Kings and Cohens warring for their blood-wit!" So when the army of Al-Islam came upon them in that valley, before they knew of it the flames began to burn up the tents and the swords in men's bodies to make rents. Then hurried up the army of Baghdad and Khorasan who numbered one hundred and twenty thousand horse, with Zau al-Makan in the front of war. When the host of the Infidels that lay by the sea saw them, they sallied out against them and followed in their tracks; and when Zau al-Makan espied this he cried out to his men, "Turn back to the Infidels, O People of the Chosen Apostle, and slay those who deny and hate the authority of the Compassionating, the Compassionate!" So they turned and [222] fought with the Christians. Then Sharrkan marched up with another corps of the Moslem host, some hundred thousand men, whilst the Infidels numbered nigh upon a thousand and six hundred thousand men. When the Moslems were united, their hearts were strengthened and they cried out, saying, "Verily Allah hath promised us victory, and to the Infidels hath assigned defeat." And they clashed together with sword and spear. Now Sharrkan tare through rank and row and raged among the masses of the foe, fighting so fierce a fight as to make children grey grow; nor did he cease tourneying among the infidel horde and working havoc among them with the keen-edged sword, shouting "Allaho Akbar!"—Allah is Most Great—till he drove back the host to the coast. Then failed the force of the foe and Allah gave victory to the faith of Al-Islam, and folk fought folk, drunken without strong drink, till they slew of the Infidels in this affair forty and five thousand, while of the Moslems but three thousand and five

hundred fell. Moreover, the Lion of the Faith, King Sharrkan, and his brother, Zau al-Makan, slept not that night, but occupied themselves with congratulating their braves and with looking to the wounded and with assuring the army of victory and salvation and promise of reward in the world to come. Thus far concerning the Moslem; but as regards King Afridun, Lord of Constantinople and Sovran of Roum, and Zat al-Dawahi, they assembled the Emirs of the host and said to them, "Verily, we had worked our will and solaced our hearts, but our over-confidence in our numbers, and that only, defeated us." Then quoth to them the ancient one, the Lady of Calamities, "In very sooth nought shall profit you, except ye draw you nigh unto the Messiah and put your trust in the True Belief; for, by the virtue of the Messiah, the whole strength of the Moslem host lieth in that Satan, King Sharrkan." "To-morrow," said King Afridun, "I have resolved to draw up in battle array and to send out against them that redoubtable cavalier, Luka bin Shámlút; for if King Sharrkan come forth as a champion to fight single-handed, our man will slay him and will slay the other Moslem Knights, till not one is left. And I purpose this night to sacre you all with the Holy Incense." When the Emirs heard these words they kissed the ground before him. Now the incense which he designated was the excrement of the Chief Patriarch, the denier, the defiler of the Truth, and they sought for it with such instance, and they so highly valued it that the high priests of the Greeks used to send it to all the countries of the Christians in silken wraps after mixing it with 223 musk and ambergris. Hearing of it Kings would pay a thousand gold pieces for every dram and they sent for and sought it to fumigate brides withal; and the Chief Priests and the great Kings were wont to use a little of it as collyrium for the eyes and as a remedy in sickness and colic; and the Patriarchs used to mix their own skite[390] with it, for that the skite of the Chief Patriarch could not suffice for ten countries.[391] So, as soon as dawn was seen and the morning shone with its shine and sheen, the horsemen ran to their spears full keen, and King Afridun——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Full Ninetieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, as soon as dawn was seen and the morning shone with its shine and sheen, the horsemen ran to their spears full keen and King Afridun summoned his chief Knights and Nobles and invested them with dresses of honour; and, drawing the sign of the cross on their brows, incensed them with the incense which as aforesaid was the skite of the Chief Patriarch, the Cohen, the Heresiarch. This incensing done, he called for Luka bin Shamlut, surnamed the Sword of the Messiah; and, after fumigating him and rubbing his palate with the Holy Merde, caused him to snuff it and smeared his cheeks and anointed his moustaches with the rest. Now there was no stouter champion in the land of Roum than this accursed Luka, nor any better at bending of bow or sway of sword or lunge with lance on the day of devoir; but he was foul of favour, for his face was as the face of an ass,

his shape that of an ape and his look 224as the look of a malignant snake: his presence was grievouser than parting from the beloved make; and blacker than night was his blackness and more fetid than the lion was his breath for foulness; more crooked than a bow was his crookedness and grimmer than the leopard was his ugliness, and he was branded with the mark of the Infidels on face.[392] After this he came up to King Afridun and kissed his feet and stood before him; and the King said to him, "I desire thou go out against Sharrkan, King of Damascus, son of Omar bin al-Nu'uman, and deliver us from this affliction." Quoth Luka, "Hearkening and obedience;" and the King made the sign of the cross on his forehead and felt assured of help from Heaven being near hand. Then Luka went out from the presence and the accursed one mounted a sorrel horse; he was clad in a red robe and a hauberk of gold set with jewels, and he bore a trident spear, as he were Iblis the damned on the day of drewing out his hosts war to darraign. Then he rode forward, he and his horde of Infidels, even as though they were driving to the Fire, preceded by a herald, crying aloud in the Arabic tongue and saying, "Ho, sect of Mohammed (upon whom be salutation and salvation!), let none of you come out but your champion Sharrkan, the Sword of Al-Islam, Lord of Damascus in Shám[393]!" Nor had he made an end of speaking, when arose a tumult in the plain; all the people heard the strain and the whole moving bodies of the armies twain called to mind the Day of Complain. Then the cowards trembled and all necks turned towards the sound, and lo! it was King Sharrkan, son of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman. For when his brother, Zau al-Makan, saw that accursed one push out on the plain, and heard the pursuivant, he turned to Sharrkan and said to him, "Of a surety they seek for thee." Said he, "Should it so be, 'twere most pleasing to me." So when they made sure of the matter and heard the herald crying in the plain, "Let none 225of you come out against me save Sharrkan," they knew this cursed Luka to be champion of the land of Roum who had sworn to sweep the earth clean of Moslems. Now he was one of the greatest of villains, a wretch who caused hearts to pain; and the Daylamites, Turks and Kurds dreaded his might and main. Presently Sharrkan drave at him like a lion angry-grim, mounted on a courser like a wild gazelle flying snell and slim; and coming nigh to him made the spear he hent to shake as it were a darting snake, and recited these couplets:—

I have a sorrel steed, whose pride is fain to bear the rein, ✿ Shall give thee what thou likest not and make thee feel his main:

I have a handy limber spear full bright and keen of point, ✿ Upon whose shaft the dam of Death her throny seat hath ta'en:

I have a trenchant glaive of Hind; and, when I bare its face ✿ Of scabbard-veil, from out its brow the rays of leven rain.

Luka understood not the sense of his speech nor did he apprehend the vehemence of the verse: but he smote his forehead with his hand, in honour of the Cross drawn thereon and kissed it; then he couched his throw-spear and ran at Sharrkan. But first he tossed the javelin with one hand in air to such height that it was lost to the

spectators' sight; and, catching it with the other hand as do the jugglers, hurled it at Sharrkan. It flew from his grasp like a shooting star and folk clamoured and feared for Sharrkan; but, as the spear flew near him, he put out his hand and caught it in full flight to the amazement of all who saw the sight. Then he shook it with the hand that took it till it was well-nigh broken, and hurled it so high into the welkin that it disappeared from view. As it descended, he caught it again with the other hand, in less than the twinkling of an eye, and cried out from his heart-core, saying, "By the truth of Him who created the seven-fold skies, I will assuredly make this cursed wight a byword for mankind to despise!" Then threw he the throw-spear at Luka, who thought to do as Sharrkan had done and put forth his hand to bend it in mid-flight; but Sharrkan prevented him, and sped at him a second throw-spear which smote him and the point fell on his forehead, in the very centre of the sign of the Cross, and Allah hurried his soul to the Fire and Dwelling-place dire.[394] But when the Infidels saw 226 Luka bin Shamlut fall slain, they buffeted their faces and they cried, "Alas!" and "Woe worth the day!" and called for aid upon the Abbots of the monasteries—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Infidels saw Luka bin Shamlut fall slain, they buffeted their faces and cried, "Alas!" and "Woe worth the day!" and called upon the Abbots of the monasteries and cried, "Where be the crosses?" So the Religious offered up prayers and the Christians all drew together against Sharrkan; and, brandishing their scymitars and lances, rushed forward to the attack. Then army met army and breasts fell under hoof, whilst spear and sword ruled the day and fore-arms and wrists grew weak and the coursers seemed created without legs;[395] nor did the herald of war cease calling to fight, till arms were aweary and day took flight and night came on with darkness dight. So the two hosts drew apart, whilst every brave staggered like a drunken knave, for that with so much cut and thrust they strave; and the place was choked with the slain; fell were the wounds and the hurt knew not by whom they fell. Then Sharrkan joined his brother, Zau al-Makan, and the Chamberlain and the Wazir Dandan, and said to them, "Verily Allah hath opened a door for the Infidels to fall, praised be the Lord of the Worlds one and all!" Replied Zau al-Makan, "Let us never cease to praise Allah, for that He hath dispelled trouble from the Arab and the Ajam. Indeed the folk, generation after generation, shall tell of thy derring-do against the accursed Luka, the falsifier of the Evangel;[396] of thy catching the throw spear 227 in mid-flight, and how the enemy of Allah among men thou didst smite; and thy fame shall endure until the end of time." Then said Sharrkan, "Harkye, O grand Chamberlain and doughty Capitayne!" and he answered, "Adsum!"[397] Quoth Sharrkan, "Take with thee the Wazir Dandan and twenty thousand horse, and lead them seven parasangs towards the sea, and force the march till ye shall have come near the shore, and there remain only two parasangs between thee and the

foe. Then ambush ye in the hollows of the ground till ye hear the tumult of the Infidels disembarking from their ships; and the war-cry from every side strike your ear and ye know that the sabres have begun labour between us and them; and, whenso ye see our troops falling back, as if defeated, and all the Infidels following them, as well those in front as those from the seaward and the tents, do ye still lie in wait for them: but as soon as ye see the standard with the words, There is no god but *the* God, and Mohammed is God's Apostle (on whom be salutation and salvation!), then up with the green banner, and do your endeavour and fall on their rear and shout, Allaho Akbar! Allah is most Great! and circle round that they may not interpose between the retreating army and the sea." He replied, "To hear is to obey!"; and forthright they agreed upon this matter and they went forth. Now the Chamberlain took with himself the Wazir Dandan and twenty thousand men even as Sharrkan had commanded. As soon as dawned the morn, the 228troops sprung to horse when they had donned their armour-gear and drawn the scymitar and slung the spear. Then the Christians dispread themselves over hill and dale and the Ecclesiasts[398] cried out and all heads were bared, and those in the ships hoisted the Cross at their mast-heads and began making for shore from every side, and landed their horses and gat them ready for fight and fray, whilst the sword-blades glittered bright and the javelins glanced like leven-light on mail-shirt white; and all joined fight and the grind-mill of Death whirled round and ground those who fought from horse and aground: heads from bodies flew and tongues mute grew and eyes no vision knew. Scymitars strave with utmost strain and heads flew over the battle plain; gall-bladders clave and wrists were shorn in twain; steeds plashed in pools of gore and beards were gripped right sore; the host of Al-Islam called out, saying, "On the Prince of Mankind be blessings and peace, and to the Compassionate glory and praise, which ne'er shall cease, for His boons which aye increase;" and the host of the Infidels shouted, "Glory to the Cross and the Belt and the vine-prest juice, and the wine-presser and the Priests and the Monks and the Festival of Palms and the Metropolitan!" Now Zau al-Makan and Sharrkan held back and their troops gave way and feigned flight from before the enemy, while the Infidel array pressed hard upon them deeming them in rout, and made ready to foin and hew. Then the meiny of the Moslems raised their voices, reciting the first verses of the Chapter of the Cow,[399] whilst the dead were trampled under hoofs of steeds, and the heralds of the Greeks cried out, "Ho, servants of the Messiah! Ho, people of the True Faith! Ho, followers of the Primate![400] Verily Divine grace upon you opes; for see, the hosts of Al-Islam like birds with broken wings incline to elope! So turn ye not to them your backs, but let your swords cleave deep in their necks and hold not your hands from them, else are ye outcasts from the Messiah, Mary's son, who spoke even when a cradled one!"[401] Now Afridun, King of Constantinople, 229deemed that the Infidels were victorious, knowing not that this was but a clever stratagem of the Moslems, and sent to King Hardub of Roum congratulations on success, adding, "Availed us naught

but the Holy Merde of the Arch-Patriarch, whose fragrance exhaled from the beards and mustachios of the slaves of the Cross near and far; and I swear, by the Miracles of the Messiah; and by thy daughter Abrizah, the Nazarene, the Mariolater; and by the Waters of Baptism, that I will not leave upon the earth a single defender of Al-Islam! And to the bitter end will I carry out this plan." So the messenger betook himself with the address to King Hardub, whilst the Infidels called to one another saying, "Take we vengeance-wreak for Luka!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Infidels called to one another, saying, "Take we vengeance-wreak for Luka!" while Hardub King of Greece cried aloud, "Ho, to our revenge for Abrizah!" Thereupon King Zau al-Makan shouted "Ho, servants of the Requiting King!: smite the children of denial and disobedience with the blanch of sword and the brown of spear!" So the Moslems returned to the Infidels and plied them with the keen-edged scymitar, whilst their herald cried aloud, "Up, and at the foes of the Faith, all ye who love the Prophet Elect, with hope of salvation on the Day of Fear, to win favour of the Bountiful, the Forgiving One; for verily the Garden of Paradise is under the shadow of swords!" And behold, Sharrkan and his men charged down upon the Infidels and cut off their retreat and wheeled and tourneyed among the ranks; when lo! a knight of goodly presence opened a passage through the army of Unbelievers and circled hither and thither amongst the Deniers, cutting and thrusting and covering the ground with heads and trunks, so that the Faithless feared him and their necks bent under his lunge and hew. He was girt with two swords, his glances and his brand, and he was armed with two lances, one of bamboo-cane and the other his straight wandlike shape; and his flowing hair stood him in stead of many warriors, even as saith the poet:—

Laud not long hair,[402] except it be dispread ✿ In two-fold locks, on day of fight and fray,
O'er youth who bears his lance 'twixt flank and thigh, ✿ From many a whiskered knight to win the day.

And as singeth another:—

I say to him, what while he slings his sword, ✿ "For sword shall serve those looks that sword-like show!"
Says he, "My sabre-looks for those I love, ✿ My sword for those who sweets of love unknow!"

When Sharrkan saw him, he said to him, "I conjure thee by the Koran and the attributes of the Compassionate One, O Champion of the Champions! tell me who thou art: for verily by thy deeds this day thou hast pleased the Requiting King, whom one thing distracteth not from other thing; in that thou hast been discomfiting the children of impiety and in rebellion revelling." Then cried the Cavalier to him saying, "Thou art he who madest brother-covenant with me but yesterday: how quickly thou hast forgotten me!" Thereupon he withdrew his mouth-veil,[403] so that what was hidden of his beauty was disclosed, and lo! it was none other than Zau al-Makan. Then

Sharrkan rejoiced in his brother, save that he feared for him the rush of fighting and the crush of braves a-smiting; and this for two reasons, the first, his tender age and exposure to the evil eye, and the second, that his safety was to the kingdom the greater of the two overshadowing wings. So he said to him, "O King! thou riskest thy life, so join thy steed to mine; in very sooth I fear for thee from the foe; and better thou stint hazarding thyself forth of these squadrons, that we may shoot at the enemy thine unerring shaft." Quoth Zau al-Makan, "I desire to even thee in fray and I will not be niggard 231 of myself before thee in the mellay." Then the host of Al-Islam, heaping itself upon the Infidels, girt them on all sides, warred on them a right Holy War, and brake the power of the children of impiety and pride and stowre. But King Afridun sighed when he saw the evil wreak that had fallen on the Greek, and they turned their backs from fight and addressed themselves to flight, making for the ships, when lo! there came out upon them from the sea-coast another host, led by the Minister Dandan, the champion who was wont to make champions bite the dust, and to lay load on them with cut and thrust. Nor less came forth the Emir Bahram, Lord of the Provinces of Sham, amid twenty thousand horse doughty of arm; and the host of Al-Islam pressed them in front and on flank and wrought them grievous harm. Then a body of the Moslems turned against those who in the ships remained, and perdition on them rained, till they threw themselves into the main, and they slew of them many slain, more than a hundred thousand noblemen, nor was one of their champions, great or small, saved from bale and bane. Moreover, they took their ships, with all the money and treasure and cargo, save a score of keel, and the Moslems got that loot whose like was never gotten in bygone years; nor was such cut and thrust ever heard of by men's ears.[404] Now amongst the booty were fifty thousand horses, besides treasure and spoil past reckoning and arithmetic, whereat the Moslems rejoiced with an exceeding joy for that Allah had given them victory and protection. Such was the case with them; but as regards the fugitive Infidels they soon reached Constantinople, whither the tidings preceded them that King Afridun had prevailed over the Moslems; so quoth the ancient dame, Zat al-Dawahi, "I know that my son Hardub, King of Roum, is no runagate and that he feareth not the Islamitic hosts, but will restore the whole world to the Nazarene faith." Then she bade the Great King, Afridun, give command that the city be decorated, and the people held festival high and drank their wines drunkenly and knew not the decrees of Destiny. Now whilst they were in the midst of their rejoicings, behold, the raven of dule and downfall croaked over them, and up came the twenty fugitive ships wherein was the King of Cæsarea. So King Afridun, Lord of Constantinople, met them on the sea-shore, and they told him all that had befallen them from the Moslem, and they wept 232 sore and groaned and moaned; and rejoicing at weal was turned into dismay for unheal; and they informed him concerning Luka son of Shamlut, how calamity had betided him and how Death had shot him with his shaft. Thereat the horrors of Doomday rose upon King

Afridun,[405] and he knew that there was no making straight their crook. Then came up from them the sound of weeping and wailing; the city was full of men mourning and the keeners were keening, and sighs and cries were heard from all sides. And when King Hardub of Greece met King Afridun he told him the truth of the case and how the flight of the Moslems was by way of stratagem and deceit, and said to him, "Look not to see any of the army, save those who have already reached thee." When King Afridun heard these words he fell down in a fainting fit, with his nose under his feet; and, as soon as he revived, he exclaimed, "Surely the Messiah was wroth with them that he caused the Moslems to prevail over them!" Then came the Arch-Patriarch sadly to the King who said to him, "O our father, annihilation hath overtaken our army and the Messiah hath punished us!" Replied the Patriarch, "Grieve not nor feel concerned, for it cannot be but that one of you have sinned against the Messiah, and all have been punished for his offence; but now we will read prayers for you in the churches, that the Mohammedan hosts may be repelled from you." After which the old woman, Zat al-Dawahi, came to Afridun and said to him, "O King, verily the Moslem hosts are many, and we shall never overcome them save by wile: wherefor I purpose to work upon them by guile and repair to this army of Al-Islam, haply I may win my wish of their leader and slay their champion, even as I slew his father. If my stratagem succeed in his case, not one of the host he leads shall return to his native land, for all are strong only because of him; but I desire to have some Christian dwellers of Syria, such as go out every month and year to sell their goods, that they may help me (for this they can do) in carrying out my plan." Replied the King, "Be it so whenever thou wilt." So she bade fetch an hundred men, natives of Najrán,[406] in Sham, and the King asked 233 them, "Have ye not heard what hath befallen the Christians with the Moslems?" "Yes," answered they; and he rejoined, "Know ye that this woman hath devoted her life to the Messiah and purposeth to go forth with you, disguised as Monotheists and Mohammedans, to work out a device which shall profit us and hinder the Moslem from us: say, then, are ye also willing to devote yourselves to the Anointed and I will give you a quintal of gold?[407] He of you who escapeth shall have the money, and him of you who dieth will the Messiah reward." "O King," replied they, "we will devote our lives to the Messiah, and we will be thy sacrifice." Thereupon the old woman took all she required of aromatic roots and placed them in water which she boiled over the fire till the black essence of them was extracted. She waited till the decoction was cold, then dipped the corner of a long kerchief therein and stained her face therewith. Moreover, she donned over her clothes a long gaberdine with an embroidered border and took in her hand a rosary, and afterwards went in to King Afridun, who knew her not, nor did any of his companions know her, till she discovered herself to them: and there was none in the assembly but who thanked and praised her for her cunning; and her son rejoiced and said, "May the Messiah never fail thee!" Thereupon she took with her the Syrian Christians, and set

out for the army of Baghdad.—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Afridun heard these words, he fell into a fainting-fit with his nose under his feet; and, as soon as he revived, fear fluttered the scrotum[408] below his belly and he complained to the ancient dame, Zat al-Dawahi. Now this accursed old woman was a witch of the witches, past mistress in sorcery and deception; wanton and wily, deboshed and deceptious; with foul breath, red eyelids, yellow cheeks, dull-brown face, eyes bleared, mangy body, hair grizzled, back humped, skin withered and wan and nostrils which ever ran. 234 But she had studied the scriptures of Al-Islam and had made the Pilgrimage to the Holy House of Meccah and all this that she might come to the knowledge of the Mohammedan ordinances and the miraculous versets of the Koran; and she had professed Judaism in the Holy City of Jerusalem[409] for two years' space, that she might master the magic of men and demons; so that she was a plague of plagues and a pest of pests, wrong-headed as to belief and to no religion lief. Now the chief reason of her sojourn with her son, King Hardub of Greece, was on account of the slave virgins at his court: for she was given to tribadism[410] and could not exist without sapphism or she went mad: so if any damsel pleased her, she was wont to teach her the art of rubbing clitoris against clitoris and would anoint her with saffron[411] till she fainted away for excess of volupty. Whoso obeyed her she was wont to favour and make her son incline towards her; but whoso repelled her she would contrive to destroy; and so she abode for a length of time. This was known to Marjanah and Rayhánah and Utrijah, the handmaids of Abrizah, and their Princess loathed the old woman and abhorred to lie with her, because of the rank smell from her armpits, the stench of her fizzles more fetid than carrion, and the roughness of her hide coarser than palm fibre. She was wont to bribe those who rubbed parts with her by means of jewels and instructions; but Abrizah held aloof from her and sought refuge with the Omnipotent, the Omniscient; for, by Allah, right well quoth the poet:—



235 Ho thou who grovellest low before the great ✿ Nor over-lording lesser men dost blench,

Who gildest dross by dirham-gathering, ✿ No ottar-scent disguises carrion-stench!

And now to return to the story of her stratagem and the woes of her working. Presently she departed, taking the chief Nazarenes with their hosts, and turned towards the army of the Moslems. Whereupon King Hardub went in to King Afridun and said to him, "O King, we have no need of the Chief Patriarch nor of his prayers,

but will consult my mother's counsel and observe what she will do with her craft unending against the Moslem hosts; for these are marching with all their power, they will soon be upon us and they will encircle us on all sides." When King Afridun heard this, terror took hold upon his heart and he wrote letters, without stay or delay, to all the nations of the Nazarenes, saying, "It behoveth none of the Messiahites or Cross-knights to hold back, especially the folk of the strongholds and forts: but let them all come to us, foot and horse, women and children, for the Moslem hosts already tread our soil. So haste! haste ye! ere what we fear to us here appear." Thus much concerning them; but regarding the work of the old woman, Zat al-Dawahi; when she went forth from the city with her suite, she clad them in the clothing of Moslem merchants, having provided herself with an hundred mules carrying stuffs of Antioch, such as goldwoven satins and royal brocades and so forth. And she had taken a letter from King Afridun to the following effect:—"These be merchantmen from the land of Sham who have been with us: so it befitteth none to do them harm or hindrance, nor take tax and tithe of them, till they reach their homes and safe places, for by merchants a country flourisheth, and these are no men of war nor of ill-faith." Then quoth the accursed Zat al-Dawahi to those with her, "Verily I wish to work out a plot for the destruction of the Moslem." Replied they, "O Queen, command us whatso thou wilt; we are at thy disposal and may the Messiah never disappoint thy dealings!" Then she donned a gown of fine white wool and rubbed 236 her forehead, till she made a great mark as of a scar and anointed it with an ointment of her own fashion, so that it shone with prodigious sheen. Now the old hag was lean-bodied and hollow-eyed, and she bound her legs tightly round with cords[412] just above her feet, till she drew near the Moslem camp, when she unwound them, leaving their marks deeply embedded in her ankles. Then she anointed the wheals with dragon's blood and bade her companions beat her with a severe beating, and set her in a chest and, quoth she, "Cry abroad the Refrain of Unity,[413] nor fear from it aught of damage!" Replied they, "How can we beat thee, who be our sovereign lady, Zat al-Dawahi, mother of the King we glory in?" Then said she, "We blame not nor deal reproach to him who goeth to the jakes, and in need evil becometh good deed. When ye have set me in the chest, take it and make it one of the bales and place it on mule-back and fare forth with it and the other goods through the Moslem camp, and fear ye no blame. And if any of the Moslems hinder you, give up the mules and their lading and betake yourselves to their King, Zau al-Makan, and implore his protection saying:—We were in the land of the Infidels and they took nothing from us, but wrote us a passport, that none shall do us hindrance or work our mischance. If he ask you, What profit had ye of your property in the land of Roum? answer him:—We profited in the deliverance of a pious man, who had been bound down in an underground cell nigh fifteen years, crying out for help yet none helped him. Nay, the Infidels tortured him night and day. We knew not this; but, after we had tarried in Constantinople for some time, having sold our goods and bought others in their stead, we determined on and made ready for a return to our

native land. We spent that night conversing about our journey, and when day broke, we saw figured upon the wall a human form; and as we drew nigh it, behold, it moved and said:—O Moslems, is there amongst you one who is minded to woo the favour of the Lord of the three Worlds?[414] How so? asked we; and the figure answered:—Know that Allah hath made me speak to you, to the 237intent that your faith be fortified, and that your belief embolden you and that you may go forth of the country of the Infidels and repair to the Moslem host; for with them wones the Sword of the Compassionate One, of our Age the Champion, King Sharrkan, by whom He shall conquer Constantinople town and destroy the sect of the Nazarene. And when ye shall have journeyed three days, you will find an hermitage known as the Hermitage of the ascetic Matruhina[415] and containing a cell; visit it with pure intent and contrive to arrive there by force of will, for therein is a Religious from the Holy City, Jerusalem, by name Abdullah, and he is one of the devoutest of mankind, endowed with the power of working saintly miracles[416] such as dispel doubts and obscurity. Certain of the monks seized him by fraud and shut him up in a souterrain where he hath lain a long time. By his deliverance you will please the Lord of Faithful Men, for such release is better than fighting for the Faith." Now when the ancient dame and those with her had agreed upon such words, she said, "As soon as that which I impart shall reach the ears of King Sharrkan, say him further:—Hearing this from that image we knew that the holy man"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman, Zat al-Dawahi, and those with her had agreed upon such words, she said, "Now as soon as that which I impart shall reach the ears of King Sharrkan say him further:—Hearing these words from that image we knew that the holy man was indeed of the chiefest devotees and Allah's servants of purest qualities; so we made three days' march till we came in sight of that hermitage, and then we went up to it and passed the day in buying and selling, as is the wont of merchants. As soon as day had departed our sight and night was come to darken light, we repaired to the cell wherein 238was the dungeon, and we heard the holy man, after chanting some verses of the Koran, repeat the following couplets:—

My heart disheartened is, my breast is strait, ✿ And sinks my soul in sea of bale and bate:
Unless escape be near I soon shall die; ✿ And Death were better than this doleful strait:
O Lightning an thou light my home and folk, ✿ An their still brighter charms thy shine abate,
Say, what my path to meet them, being barred ✿ By wars; and barricado'd succour's gate?"

"When once ye have brought me into the Moslem camp, and I mix with them you shall see," the old woman continued, "how I will make shift to beguile them and slay them all, even to the last man." The Nazarenes hearing what she said, kissed her

hands and set her in the chest, after they had beaten her with a grievous beating in obedience to her commands, for they saw it was incumbent on them to do her bidding in this; then they all made for the Moslem host as hath erst been said. Such was the case with the damned hag, Zat al-Dawahi and her companions; but as regards the Mohammedan army, they indeed, after Allah had given them victory over their enemies and they had plundered everything in the ships of money and hoards, all sat down to converse with one another and Zau al-Makan said to his brother Sharrkan, "Verily, Allah hath granted us to prevail because of our just dealing and discipline and concord amongst ourselves; wherefore continue, O Sharrkan, to obey my commandment, in submission to Allah (be He exalted and extolled!), for I mean to slay ten Kings in blood-revenge for my sire, to cut the throat of fifty thousand Greeks and to enter Constantinople." Replied Sharrkan, "My life be thy ransom against death! Needs must I follow out the Holy War, though I wone many a year in their country. But I have, O my brother, in Damascus a daughter, named Kuzia Fakan, whom I love heartily, for she is one of the marvels of the time and she will soon be of age." Said Zau al-Makan, "And I also have left my wife with child and near her time, nor do I know what Allah will vouchsafe me by her. But promise me, O my brother, that if Allah bless me with a son, thou wilt grant me thy daughter for wife to him, and make covenant with me and pledge me thy faith thereon." "With love and good will," replied Sharrkan; and, stretching out his hand to his brother, he said, "If she bring thee a son, I will give him my daughter Kuzia Fakan, to wife." At this Zau al-Makan rejoiced, and they fell to 239 congratulating each other on the victory over the enemy. And the Wazir Dandan also congratulated the two brothers and said to them, "Know, O ye Kings, that Allah hath given us the victory, for that we have devoted our lives to Him (be He exalted and extolled!); and we have left our homes and households; and it is my counsel that we follow up the foe and press upon him and harass him; so haply Allah shall enable us to win our wishes, and we shall destroy our enemies, branch and root. If it please you, do ye go down in these ships and sail over the sea, whilst we fare forward by land and bear the brunt of battle and the thrust of fight." And the Minister Dandan ceased not to urge them to combat and repeated his words who said:—

To slay my foes is chiefest bliss I wist, ✿ And on the courser's back be borne a-list;

Comes promising tryst a messenger from friend ✿ Full oft, when comes the friend withouten tryst.

And these words of another:—

War for my mother (an I live) I'll take; ✿ Spear for my brother; scymitar for sire,

With every shag-haired brave who meets his death ✿ Smiling, till won from Doom his dear desire!

And when the Wazir ended his verses, he said, "Praise be to Him who aided us dear victory to uphold and who hath given us spoil of silver and fine gold!" Then Zau al-Makan commanded the army to depart; and they fared on forcing their marches for Constantinople, till they came to a wide and spacious champaign, full of all things fair

and fain, with wild cattle frisking and gazelles pacing to and fro across the plain. Now they had traversed great deserts and drink had been six days cut off from them, when they drew near this meadow and saw therein waters founting and ripe fruits flaunting and that land as it were Paradise; for it had donned its adornments and decked itself.[417] Gently waved the branches of its trees drunken with the new wine of the dew, and combined with the nectar of Tasnim the soft breathings of the morning breeze. Mind and gazer were confounded by its beauty, even as saith the poet:—

240 Behold this lovely garden! 'tis as though ✿ Spring o'er its frame her greeny cloak had spread.

Looking with fleshly eyne, thou shalt but sight ✿ A lake whose waters balance in their bed;

But look with spirit-eyes and lo! shalt see ✿ Glory in every leaf o'erwaves thy head.

And as another saith:—

The stream's a cheek by sunlight rosy dyed, ✿ Whose down[418] is creeping shade of tamarisk-stems;

Round legs of tree-trunks wavelets roll in rings ✿ Silvern, and blossoms are the diadems.

When Zau al-Makan saw this champaign, with its trees bowing and its flowers blooming and its birds warbling, he called to his brother Sharrkan and said, "O my brother, verily in Damascus is naught the like of this place. We will not march from it save after three days, that we may take rest ourselves and that the army of Al-Islam may regain strength and their souls be fortified to encounter the blamed Infidels." So they halted therein and while camping behold, they heard a noise of voices from afar, and Zau al-Makan asked the cause thereof, and was answered that a caravan of merchants from the Land of Syria had halted there to rest and that the Moslem troops had come on them and had haply seized something of the goods which they had brought from the country of the Infidels. After a while up came the merchants, crying out and appealing to the King for aidance. When Zau al-Makan saw this, he bade them be brought before him and, when in presence, they said to him, "O King, we have been in the country of the Infidels and they plundered us of nothing: why then do our brothers the Moslems despoil our goods, and we in their own land? Of a truth when we saw your troops, we went up to them, and they robbed us of what we had with us and we have now reported to thee all that hath befallen us." Thereupon they brought out to him the letter of the King of Constantinople, and Sharrkan read it and said, "We will presently restore to you what hath been taken from you; but yet it behoveth you not to carry merchandise to the country of the Infidels." Replied they, "O our Lord, in very sooth Allah despatched us thither that we might win what Gházi[419] never won the like of, not even thou in all thy 241 razzias." Asked Sharrkan, "What was it ye won?" "O King," answered they, "we will not tell thee save in private; for if this matter be noised among the folk, haply it may come to the ears of some,[420] and this will be the cause of our ruin and of the ruin of all Moslems who resort to the land of the Greeks." Now they had hidden the chest wherein was the damned Zat al-Dawahi. So Zau al-Makan and his brother brought them to a private place, where they laid bare to both of them the story of the devotee, and wept till they

made the two Kings weep——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Nazarenes who wore merchants' weed, when brought to a private place by Zau al-Makan and his brother Sharrkan, laid bare to both of them the story of the devotee and wept till they made the two Kings weep and repeated to them all which had been taught by the old witch Zat al-Dawahi. Thereupon Sharrkan's heart yearned to the devotee and he was moved to ruth for him and was fired with zeal for the service of Almighty Allah. So quoth he to them, "Did ye rescue this holy man or is he still in the hermitage?" Quoth they, "We delivered him and slew the hermit, fearing for our lives; after which we made haste to fly for dread of death; but a trusty man told us that in this hermitage are quintals of gold and silver and stones of price." Then they fetched the chest and brought out the accursed old woman, as she were a cassia-pod[421] for excess of blackness and leanness, and she was laden with the same fetters and shackles. When Zau al-Makan and the bystanders saw her, they took her for a man of the best of Allah's devotees and surpassing in pious qualities, more especially because of the shining of her forehead for the ointment wherewith she had anointed her face. So Zau al-Makan and Sharrkan wept sore; then they rose up in honour and kissed her hands and feet, sobbing aloud: but she signed to them and said, "Cease this weeping and hear my words." Hereat they dried their tears in obedience to her bidding, and she said, "Know ye both that I was content to accept what my Lord 242 did unto me, for I kenned that the affliction which befel me was a trial from Him (be He exalted and extolled!); and whoso hath not patience under calamity and tribulation, for him there is no coming to the delights of Paradise. I had indeed supplicated Him that I might return to my native land, not as a compensation for the sufferings decreed to me, but that I might die under the horse-hoofs of warriors fighting for the Faith who, being slain in fray, live again without suffering death."[422] Then she repeated the following couplets:—

Our Fort is Tor,[423] and flames the fire of fight: ✿ Moses art thou and this is time for aid:

Cast down thy rod, 'twill swallow all they wrought, ✿ Nor dread for men their ropes be vipers made:[424]

For Chapters read on fight-day lines of foes, ✿ And on their necks 'grave versets[425] wi' thy blade!

243 When the old woman had ended her verse, her eyes overflowed with tears and her forehead under the unguent shone like gleaming light, and Sharrkan rose and kissed her hand and caused food be brought before her: but she refused it, saying, "I have not broken my fast by day for fifteen years; and how should I break it at such a time when my Lord hath been bountiful to me in delivering me from the captivity of the Infidels and removing from me that which was more grievous to me than torment of fire? I will wait till sundown." So when it was nightfall, Sharrkan and Zau al-Makan came

and served her with food and said, "Eat O ascetic!" But she said, "This is no time for eating; it is the time for worshipping the Requiting King." Then she stood up in the prayer-niche and remained praying till the night was spent; and she ceased not to do after this fashion for three days and nights, sitting not but at the time of the Salám or salutation[426] ending the several prayers. When Zau al-Makan saw her on this wise, firm belief in her gat hold of his heart and he said to Sharrkan, "Cause a tent of perfumed leather to be pitched for this Religious, and appoint a body servant to wait upon him." On the fourth day she called for food; so they brought her all kinds of meats that could seduce the sense or delight the sight; but of all this she would eat only a scone with salt. Then she again turned to her fast and, as the night came, she rose anew to pray; when Sharrkan said to Zau al-Makan, "Verily, this man carrieth renunciation of the world to the extreme of renouncing, and, were it not for this Holy War, I would join myself to him and worship Allah in his service, till I came before His presence. And now I desire to enter his tent and talk with him for an hour." Quoth Zau al-Makan, "And I also: to-morrow we sally forth to fight against Constantinople, and we shall find no time like the present." Said the Wazir Dandan, "And I no less desire to see this ascetic; haply he will pray for me that I find death in this Holy War and come to the presence of my Lord, for I am aweary of the world." So as soon as night had darkened, they repaired to the tent of that witch, Zat al-Dawahi; and, seeing her standing to pray, they drew near her and fell a-weeping for pity of her; but she paid no heed to them till midnight was past, when she ended her orisons by pronouncing 244 the salutation. Then she turned to them and after wishing them long life, asked them "Wherefore come ye?"; whereto they answered, "O thou holy man! diddest thou not hear us weep around thee?" She rejoined, "To him who standeth in the presence of Allah, remaineth no existence in time, either for hearing any or for seeing aught about him." Quoth they, "We would have thee recount to us the cause of thy captivity and pray for us this night, for that will profit us more than the possession of Constantinople." Now when she heard their words she said, "By Allah, were ye not the Emirs of the Moslems, I would not relate to you aught of this at any time; for I complain not but to Allah alone. However, to you I will relate the circumstances of my captivity. Know, then, that I was in the saintly City of Jerusalem with certain ecstatics and inspired men, and did not magnify myself among them, for that Allah (be He exalted and extolled!) had endowed me with humility and abnegation, till I chanced to go down to the sea one night and walked upon the water. Then entered into me pride; whence I know not, and I said to myself:—Who like me can walk the water? And my heart from that time hardened and Allah afflicted me with the love of travel. So I journeyed to Roum-land and visited every part for a whole year, and left no place but therein I worshiped Allah. When I came to this spot,[427] I clomb the mountain and saw there an hermitage, inhabited by a monk called Matruhina, who, when he sighted me, came out and kissed my hands and feet and said:—Verily, I have seen thee since thou enteredst the land of the Greeks, and thou hast filled me with

longing for the land of Al-Islam. Then he took my hand and carried me into that hermitage, and brought me to a dark room; and, when I entered it unawares, he locked the door on me and left me there forty days, without meat or drink; for it was his intent to kill me by delay. It chanced one day, that a Knight called Dakianús[428] came to the hermitage, accompanied by ten squires and his daughter Tamasil, a girl whose beauty was incomparable. When they entered that hermitage, the monk Matruhina told them of me, and the Knight said:—Bring him out, for surely there is not on him a bird's meal of meat. So they opened the door of the dark room and found me standing in the niche, 245 praying and reciting the Koran and glorifying Allah and humbling myself before the Almighty. When they saw me in this state Matruhina exclaimed:—This man is indeed a sorcerer of the sorcerers!; and hearing his words, they all came in on me, Dakianus and his company withal, and they beat me with a grievous beating, till I desired death and reproached myself, saying, This is his reward who exalteth himself and who prideth himself on that which Allah hath vouchsafed to him, beyond his own competence! And thou, O my soul, verily self-esteem and arrogance have crept into thee. Dost thou not know that pride angereth the Lord and hardeneth the heart and bringeth men to the Fire? Then they laid me in fetters and returned me to my place which was the dungeon under ground. Every three days, they threw me down a scone of barley bread and a draught of water; and every month or two the Knight came to the hermitage. Now his daughter Tamasil had grown up, for she was nine years old when I first saw her, and fifteen years passed over me in captivity, so that she had reached her four-and-twentieth year. There is not in our land nor in the land of the Greeks a fairer than she, and her father feared lest the King take her from him; for she had vowed herself to the Messiah and rode with Dakianus in the habit of a cavalier, so that albeit none might compare with her in loveliness, no one who saw her knew her for a woman. And her father had laid up his monies in this hermitage, every one who had aught of price or treasured hoard being wont to deposit it therein; and I saw there all manner of gold and silver and jewels and precious vessels and rarities, none may keep count of them save Almighty Allah. Now ye are worthier of these riches than those Infidels; so lay hands on that which is in the hermitage and divide it among the Moslems and especially on fighters in the Holy War. When these merchants came to Constantinople and sold their merchandise, that image which is on the wall spoke to them, by grace of a marvel which Allah granted to me; so they made for that hermitage and slew Matruhina, after torturing him with most grievous torments, and dragging him by the beard, till he showed them the place where I was; when they took me and found no path but flight for dread of death. Now to-morrow night Tamasil will visit that hermitage as is her habit, and her father and his squires will come after her, as he feareth for her so, if ye would witness these things, take me with you and I will deliver to you the 246 monies and the riches of the Knight Dakianus which be in that mountain; for I saw them bring out vessels of gold and

silver to drink therefrom, and I heard a damsel of their company sing to them in Arabic and well-away! that so sweet a voice should not be busied in chaunting the Koran. If, then, ye will; enter into that hermitage and hide there against the coming of Dakianus and his daughter; and take her, for she is fit only for the King of the Age, Sharrkan, or King Zau al-Makan." Thereat they all rejoiced with the exception of the Wazir Dandan, who put scant faith in her story, for her words took no hold on his reason, and signs of doubt in her and disbelief showed in his face.[429] Yet he was confounded at her discourse, but he feared to speak with her for awe of the King. Then quoth the ancient dame, Zat al-Dawahi, "Verily, I fear lest the Knight come and, seeing these troops encamped in the meadow, be afraid to enter the hermitage." So Zau al-Makan ordered the army to march upon Constantinople and said, "I have resolved to take with me an hundred horse and many mules and make for that mountain, where we will load the beasts with the monies which be in the hermitage." Then he sent at once for the Chief Chamberlain whom they brought into the presence; and he summoned likewise the leaders of the Turks and Daylamites and said, "As soon as it is dawn, do ye set forth for Constantinople; and thou, O Chamberlain, shalt take my place in council and contrivance, while thou, O Rustam, shalt be my brother's deputy in battle. But let none know that we are not with you and after three days we will rejoin you." Then he chose out an hundred of the doughtiest riders, and he and Sharrkan and the Minister Dandan set out for the hermitage, and the hundred horsemen led the mules with chests for transporting the treasure.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sharrkan and his brother, Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan set off with an hundred horse for the hermitage described to them by that 247 accursed Zat al-Dawahi; and they took with them mules and chests for transporting the treasure. Now as soon as dawned the morn, the Chamberlain signalled to the host an order for departure, and they set out thinking that the two Kings and the Wazir were with them; knowing not that the three had made for the monastery. Such was the case with the host; but as regards the two Kings and the Minister, they tarried in their place till the end of that day. Now the Infidels who were with Zat al-Dawahi took their departure privily, after they had gone in to her and kissed her hands and feet and obtained her leave to march. So she not only gave them permission but also taught them all she minded of wile and guile. And when it was dark night, she arose and went in to Zau al-Makan and his companions and said to them, "Come, let us set out for the mountain, and take with you a few men-at-arms." They obeyed her and left five horsemen at the foot of the mountain, whilst the rest rode on before Zat al-Dawahi, who gained new strength for excess of joy, so that Zau al-Makan said, "Glory be to Him who sustaineth this holy man, whose like we never saw!" Now the witch had written a letter to the King of Constantinople and

despatched it on the wings of a bird,[430] acquainting him with what had passed and ending, "I wish thee to send me ten thousand horsemen of the bravest of the Greeks and let them steal along the foot of the mountains with caution, lest the host of Al-Islam get sight of them; and, when they reach the hermitage, let them ambush themselves there, till I come to them with the Moslem King and his brother, for I shall inveigle them and will bring them thither, together with the Wazir and an hundred horse and no more, that I may presently deliver to them the crosses which be in the hermitage. I am resolved to slay the Monk Matruhina, since my scheme cannot be carried out but by taking his life. If my plot work well, not one of the Moslems shall return to his own country; no, not a living wight nor one who blows the fire alight; and Matruhina shall be a sacrifice for the followers of the Nazarene faith and the servants of the Cross, and praise be to the Messiah, first and last." When this letter reached Constantinople, the 248 keeper of the carrier-pigeons carried it to King Afridun, who read it and forthwith inspected his host and equipped ten thousand cavaliers with horses and dromedaries and mules and provaunt and bade them repair to that hermitage and, after reaching the tower, to hide therein. Thus far concerning them; but as regards King Zau al-Makan and his brother Sharrkan and the Wazir Dandan and the escort, when they reached the hermitage they entered and met the Monk Matruhina, who came out to see who and what they were; whereupon quoth that pious man Zat al-Dawahi, "Slay this damned fellow."[431] So they smote him with their swords and made him drink the cup of death. Then the accursed old woman carried them to the place of offerings and ex votos, and brought out to them treasures and precious things more than she had described to them; and after gathering the whole together, they set the booty in chests and loaded the mules therewith. As for Tamasil, she came not, she or her father, for fear of the Moslems; so Zau al-Makan tarried there, awaiting her all that day and the next and a third, till Sharrkan said to him, "By Allah, I am troubled anent the army of Al-Islam, for I know not what is become of them." His brother replied, "And I also am concerned for them: we have come by this great treasure and I do not believe that Tamasil or any one else will approach the hermitage, after that befel which hath befallen the host of the Christians. It behoveth us, then, to content ourselves with what Allah hath given us and depart; so haply He will help us conquer Constantinople." Accordingly they came down from the mountain, while Zat al-Dawahi was impotent to oppose their march for fear of betraying her deceit; and they fared forwards till they reached the head of a defile, where the old woman had laid an ambush for them with the ten thousand horse. As soon as these saw the Moslems they encircled them from all sides, couching lance and baring the white sabre blade; and the Infidels shouted the watchword of their faithless Faith and set the shafts of their mischief astring. When Zau al-Makan and his brother Sharrkan and the Minister Dandan looked upon this host, they saw that it was a numerous army and said, "Who can have given these troops 249 information of us?"

Replied Sharrkan, "O my brother, this be no time for talk; this is the time for smiting with swords and shooting with shafts; so gird up your courage and hearten your hearts, for this strait is like a street with two gates; though, by the virtue of the Lord of Arabs and Ajams, were not the place so narrow I would bring them to naught, even though they were an hundred thousand men!" Said Zau al-Makan, "Had we wotted this we would have brought with us five thousand horse;" and the Wazir Dandan continued, "If we had ten thousand horse they had availed us naught in these narrows; but Allah will succour us against them. I know this defile and its straitness, and I know there be many places of refuge in it; for I have been here on razzia with King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, what while we besieged Constantinople. We abode in this place, and here is water colder than snow. So come, let us push out of this defile ere the Infidel host increase on us and get the start of us to the mountain-top, whence they will hurl down rocks upon us, and we powerless to come at them." So they began hurrying on to get out of those narrows; but the pious man, Zat al-Dawahi, looked at them and said, "What is it ye fear, ye who have vowed yourselves to the Lord, and to working His will? By Allah, I abode imprisoned underground for fifteen years, yet never gainsaid the Almighty in aught he did with me! Fight ye in Allah's way; so whoever of you is slain Paradise shall be his abode, and whoso slayeth, his striving shall be to his honour." When they heard from the ascetic these words, their care and anxiety ceased from them and they stood firm till the Infidels charged down from all sides, whilst the swords played upon their necks and the cup of death went round amongst them. The Moslems fought for the service of Allah a right good fight, and wrought upon His foes with sway of sword and lunge of lance; whilst Zau al-Makan smote upon the men and garred the knights bite the dust and their heads from their bodies take flight, five by five and ten by ten, till he had done to death a number of them past numbering and an accompt beyond counting. Now while so doing, he looked at the accursed old woman who was waving her sword and heartening them, and all who feared fled to her for shelter; but she was also signing the Infidels to slay Sharrkan. So troop after troop rushed on him with design to do him die; but each troop that charged, he charged and drove back; and when another troop attacked him he repelled the assault with the sword in their backs; 250 for he thought it was the devotee's blessing that gave him the victory, and he said in himself, "Verily on this holy man Allah looketh with eyes of His favour and strengtheneth my prowess against the Infidels with the purity of his pious intent: for I see that they fear me and cannot prevail against me, but every one who assaileth me turneth tail and taketh flight." So they battled the rest of the day and, when night fell, the Moslems took refuge in a cave of that defile being weary with stress of war and cast of stone: and that day were slain of them five-and-forty. And when they were gathered together, they sought the devotee, but could find no trace of him; and this was grievous to them and they said, "Belike, he hath died a martyr." Quoth Sharrkan, "I saw him heartening the horsemen with divine instances and using as talisman verses of Holy Writ." Now while they

were talking, behold, the accursed old woman, Zat al-Dawahi, stood before them, hending in hand the head of the Chief Captain of the ten thousand horse, a noble knight, a champion fierce in fight and a Satan for blight. One of the Turks had slain him with an arrow, and Allah hurried his soul to the fire; and when the Infidels saw what that Moslem had done with their leader, they all fell on him and wrought his bane and hewed him in pieces with their swords, and Allah hurried his soul to Heaven. Then the accursed old woman cut off that Knight's head and brought it and threw it at the feet of Sharrkan and Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan. Now when Sharrkan saw her, he sprang up hastily before her and exclaimed, "Praised be Allah for thy safety and for our sighting thee, O holy man and devout champion of the Religion!" Replied she, "O my son, I have sought martyrdom this day, and have thrown my life away amid the Infidel array, but they feared me with dismay. When ye dispersed, I waxed jealous for your honour; so I rushed on the Chief Knight their leader, albeit he was a match for a thousand horse, and I smote him till I severed head from trunk. Not one of the Infidels could near me; so I brought his head to you,"—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-seventh Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damned witch, Zat al-Dawahi, took the head of the Knight, the leader of the twenty thousand Infidels, she brought it and threw 251 it down before Zau al-Makan and his brother Sharrkan and the Wazir Dandan, saying, "When I saw your condition, I waxed jealous for your honour; so I rushed on the Chief Knight and smote him with the sword till I severed head from trunk. And none could near me, so I brought his head to you, that you may be strengthened in Holy War and work out with your swords the will of the Lord of the Faithful. And now I purpose leaving you to strive against the Infidels, whilst I go to your army, though they be at the gates of Constantinople, and return with twenty thousand horse to destroy these Unfaithfuls." Quoth Sharrkan, "How wilt thou pass to them, O thou holy man, seeing that the valley is blocked up on all sides by the Miscreants?" Quoth the accursed hag, "Allah will veil me from their eyes and they shall not sight me;[432] nor, if any saw me, would he dare to attack me at that time, for I shall be as one non-existing, absorbed in Allah, and He will fend off from me His foes." "Thou sayest sooth, O holy man," rejoined Sharrkan, "for indeed I have been witness of that; so, if thou can pass out at the first of the night, 'twill be best for us." Replied she, "I will set out at this very hour and, if thou desire, thou shalt go with me and none shall see thee. Furthermore if thy brother also have a mind to go with us we will take him, but none else; for the shadow of a saint can cover only twain." Sharrkan said, "As for me I will not leave my comrades; but, if my brother will, there is no harm in his going with thee and setting us free of this strait; for he is the stronghold of the Moslems and the sword of the Lord of the three Worlds; and if it be his pleasure, let him take with him the Wazir Dandan, or whom else he may elect and send us ten

thousand horse to succour us against these caitiffs." So after debate they agreed on this and the old woman said, "Give me leisure to go before you and consider the condition of the Infidels, if they be asleep or awake." Quoth they, "We will not go forth save with thee and trust our affair to Allah." "If I do your bidding," replied she, "blame me not but blame yourselves; for it is my rede that you await me till I bring you tidings of the case." Then said Sharrkan, "Go to them and delay not from us, for we shall be awaiting thee." Thereupon she fared forth and Sharrkan turned to his brother addressing him and said, "Were not this holy man a miracle-worker, he had never slain yonder furious knight. This is proof sufficient of the ascetic's 252 power; and of a truth the pride of the Infidels is laid low by the slaying of this cavalier, for he was violent, evil devil and a stubborn." Now whilst they were thus devising of the mighty works of the devotee, behold, the accursed Zat al-Dawahi came upon them and promised them victory over the Unbelievers; wherefor they thanked her (not knowing that all this was wile and guile) and the damned hag asked, "Where be the King of the Age, Zau al-Makan, and the Minister Dandan?" Answered he, "Here am I!" "Take with thee thy Wazir," said she, "and follow after me, that we may fare forth to Constantinople." Now she had acquainted the Infidels with the cheat she had put upon the Moslems, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and said, "Our hearts will not be contented till we shall have slain their King in return for the Knight's death; because we had no stouter rider than he;" and they added (bespeaking the ill-omened hag as she told them her plan of faring to the land of the Moslems), "When thou bringest him to us, we will bear him to King Afridun." Then she went out and went out with her Zau al-Makan and the Minister Dandan, and she walked on before the two saying, "Fare forth with the blessing of Almighty Allah!" So they did her bidding, for the shaft of Fate and Fortune of man's lot had shot them, and she ceased not leading them both through the midst of the Grecian camp, till they came to the defile, the narrow pass aforesaid, whilst the Infidel enemy watched them, but did them no hindrance; for the infernal old woman had enjoined this. Now when Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan saw that the Infidel host offered them no let and stay and yet had them in sight, the Wazir exclaimed, "By Allah, this is one of the holy man's saintly miracles! and doubtless he be of the elect." Rejoined Zau al-Makan, "By Allah, I think the Infidels be naught but blind, for we see them and they see us not." And while they were thus praising the holy man and recounting his mighty works and his piety and his prayers, behold, the Infidels charged down on them from all sides and surrounded them and seized them, saying, "Is there anyone else with you twain, that we may seize upon him too?" And the Wazir Dandan replied, "See you not yon other man that is before us?" Replied the Unbelievers, "By the truth of the Messiah and the Monks, and the Primate and the Metropolitan, we see none save you two!" Then Zau al-Makan said, "By Allah, this is a chastisement decreed to us by Almighty Allah!"—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Ninety-eighth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Unfaithful had seized upon King Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan, they said to the two, "Is there anyone else with you twain, that we may seize upon him also?" And the Wazir Dandan replied, "See you not yon other man who be with us?" They rejoined, "By the truth of the Messiah and the Monks and the Primate and the Metropolitan, we see none save you two!" Then the Infidels laid shackles on their feet and set men to guard them during the night, whilst Zat al-Dawahi fared on and disappeared from their sight. So they fell to lamenting and saying to each other, "Verily, the opposing of pious men leadeth to greater distress than this, and we are punished by the strait which hath befallen us." So far concerning Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan; but as regards King Sharrkan, he passed that night in the cavern with his comrades, and when dawned the day and he had prayed the morn-prayer, he and his men made ready to do battle with the Infidel and he heartened them and promised them all good. Then they sallied out till they were hard upon the Unbelievers and, when these saw them from afar, they cried out to them, saying, "O Moslems, we have taken captives your Sultan and your Wazir who hath the ordering of your affairs; and except ye leave off fighting us, we will slay you to the last man; but an you yield yourselves we will take you to our King, who will make peace with you on condition that you quit our country and return home and harm us in naught, and we will do you no harm in aught. If ye accept, it will be well for you; but if ye refuse there remaineth nothing for you but death. So we have told you sooth, and this is our last word to you." Now when Sharrkan heard this and was certified of the captivity of his brother and the Wazir Dandan, he was weighed down with woe and wept; his force failed him and, making sure of death, he said to himself, "Would I knew the cause of their capture! Did they fail of respect to the holy man or disobey him, or what was the matter?" Then they sprang up to battle with the Unbelievers and slew great numbers of them. The brave was known that day from craven men, and sword and spear were dyed with bloody stain; for the Infidels flocked upon them, as flies flock to drink, from hill and from plain; but Sharrkan and his men ceased not to wage the fight of 254 those who fear not to die, nor let death hinder them from the pursuit of victory, till the valley ran gore and earth was full of the slain she bore. And when night fell the armies separated, each making for his own place; and the Moslems returned to the cavern where gain and loss were manifest to them: few remained of them and there was no dependence for them but on Allah and the scymitar. Now there had been slain of them that day five-and-thirty men of the chiefest Emirs, and they had killed thousands of the Infidels, footmen and fighters on horse. When Sharrkan saw this, the case was grievous to him and he asked his comrades, "What shall we do?"; whereto all answered, "That which Almighty Allah willeth shall befal us." On the morning of the

second day, Sharrkan said to the remnant of his troop, "If ye go forth to fight, not one of you will remain alive and we have but little left of food and water; so I deem ye would do better to bare your brands and go forth and stand at the mouth of this cavern, to hinder any from entering. Haply the holy man may have reached the Moslem host, and may return with ten thousand horse to succour us in fight with the Infidels, for belike the Unfaithful may have failed to see him and those with him." They said, "This were the better course to take, and of its expediency no doubt we make." So the troop went out and held the cavern mouth standing by its walls; and every one of the Infidels who sought to enter in, they slew. Thus did they fend off the foe from the gape of the cave and they patiently supported all such assaults, till day was done and night came on dusky and dun;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the army of the Moslems held the cavern-mouth and stood by its walls and they fended off the foe, and every one of the Infidels attempted to charge them, him they slew; and they patiently supported all such assaults till day was done and night came on dusky and dun; by which time King Sharrkan had only five-and-twenty men and no more left. Then quoth the Infidels to one another, "When shall these battle days have an end? We are weary of warring the 255 Moslems." And quoth one of them, "Up and at them, for there remain of them but five-and-twenty men! If we cannot prevail on them to fight, let us light a fire upon them;[4331] and if they submit themselves and yield to us, we will take them prisoners; but if they refuse we will leave them for fuel to the fire, so shall they become to men of foreseeing mind a warning dire. May the Messiah on their fathers have no grace, and may the sojourn of the Nazarenes be for them no abiding-place!" So they carried fuel to the jaws of the cavern and set fire to it. Thereupon Sharrkan and his companions made sure of perdition and yielded themselves prisoners. And while they were in this condition, lo! the knight their captain said to those who counselled their slaughter, "It is not for any save for King Afridun to kill them, that he may gratify his wrath; therefore it behoveth us to keep them in durance by us till the morrow, when we will journey with them to Constantinople and deliver them to our King, who shall deal with them as he please." Said they, "This is the right course;" and he commanded to pinion them and set guards over them. Then, as soon as it was black night, the Infidels busied themselves with feasting and making festival; and they called for wine and drank it till all fell upon their backs. Now Sharrkan and his brother, Zau al-Makan, were in confinement and so also were his companion knights; whereupon the elder turned to the younger brother and said to him, "O my brother, how win free?" "By Allah," replied Zau al-Makan, "I know not; for here we be like birds in cage." Then Sharrkan waxed wroth and sighed for excess of rage and stretched himself, till his pinion-bonds brast asunder; whereupon being free he arose and went up to the

Captain of the guard, and taking from his pocket the keys of the fetters, freed Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan and the rest of his men. Then he turned to the two and said, "I desire to slay three of these Infidels and take and don their dress, we three; so that we shall be guised as Greeks and we will pass through them, without their knowing us, and fare forth to our own force." Replied Zau al-Makan, "This is no safe counsel for if we kill them, I fear some of their comrades may hear their shrieks and the foe be 256aroused upon us and kill us. 'Twere the surer way to pass out of the defile." So they agreed upon this and set out; and, when they had left the head of the strait a little distance behind, they saw horses picketed and the riders sleeping: and Sharrkan said to his brother, "Better we take each one of us a steed." There were five-and-twenty horsemen, so they took five-and-twenty horses, whilst Allah sent sleep upon the Infidels for a purpose He knew; and the Faithful mounted and fared on till they were out of reach. Meanwhile Sharrkan set to gathering from the Infidels as many weapons, swords, and spears, as were wanted. And while they took saddle and struck forwards none of the Infidels supposed that anyone could release Zau al-Makan and his brother and their men; or that their prisoners had power to escape. Now when all the captives were safe from the Unfaithful, Sharrkan came up with his comrades, and found them awaiting his arrival, on coals of flame, expecting him in anxious grame, so he turned to them and said, "Feel no fear since Allah protecteth us. I have that to propose which haply shall effect our purpose." "What is it?" asked they, and he answered, "I desire that ye all climb to the mountain top and cry out with one voice, Allaho Akbar! and ye add, The army of Al-Islam is upon you! Allaho Akbar! This wise their company will surely be dissolved nor will they find out the trick for they are drunk, but they will think that the Moslem troops have encompassed them about on all sides and have mingled with them; so they will fall on one another brand in hand during the confusion of drunkenness and sleep, and we will cleave them asunder with their own swords and the scymitar will go round amongst them till dawn." Replied Zau al-Makan, "This plan is not good; we should do better to make our way to our army and speak not a word; for if we cry out Allaho Akbar, they will wake and fall on us and not one of us will escape." Rejoined Sharrkan, "By Allah, though they should awake 'tis no matter, and I long that ye fall in with my plan, for naught save good can come of it!" So they agreed thereon and clomb the mountain and shouted, "Allaho Akbar!" And hills and trees and rocks re-worded their Allaho Akbar for fear of the Almighty. But when the Kafirs heard this slogan they cried out to one another——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundredth Night,

She said, It hath reached me O auspicious King, that Sharrkan spake thus, "I long that ye fall in with this my plan, for naught save good can come of it." So they agreed

thereon and clomb the mountain head and shouted, "Allaho Akbar!"; and hills and trees and rocks re-worded their Allaho Akbar for fear of the Almighty. The Infidels heard it and cried out one to other and donned their armour and said, "The foe is upon us, by the truth of the Messiah!" Then they fell on one another and slew of their own men more than any knoweth save Almighty Allah. As soon as it was dawn, they sought for the captives, but found no trace of them, and their captains said, "They who did this were the prisoners in our possession; up, then, and after them in all haste till ye overtake them, when we will make them quaff the cup of requital; and let not fright nor the panic of sudden awaking possess you." So they took horse and rode after the fugitives and it wanted but an eye-twinkling before they overtook them and surrounded them. Now when Zau al-Makan saw this, he was seized with increase of terror and said to his brother, "What I feared would come, is come upon us, and now it remaineth only for us to fight for the Faith." But Sharrkan preferred to hold his peace. Then Zau al-Makan and his companions rushed down from the hill-crest, shouting, "Allaho Akbar!" and his men repeated the war cry and addressed themselves to fight and to sell their lives in the service of the Lord of Faithful Men; and while they were in this case, behold, they heard many voices voicing, "There is no god but *the* God! God is most great! Salutation and salvation upon the Apostle, the Bringer of glad Tidings, the Bearer of bad Tidings!"[434] So they turned towards the direction of the sound and saw a company of Moslems who believed in one God, pushing towards them, whereat their hearts were heartened and Sharrkan charged upon the Infidels crying out, "There is no god but *the* God! God is most great!" he and those with him, so that earth quaked as with an earthquake and the Unbeliever host brake asunder and fled into the mountains and the Moslems followed them with lunge and blow; and Zau al-Makan and his comrades of the Moslems ceased not to smite the hosts of the Infidel foe, and parted heads from bodies till day 258 darkened and night coming on starkened sight. Thereupon the Moslems drew together and passed the night in congratulations; and, when morning dawned and daybreak shone with its shine and sheen, they saw Bahram, the captain of the Daylamites, and Rustam, the captain of the Turks, advancing to join them, with twenty thousand cavaliers like lions grim. As soon as they saw Zau al-Makan, the riders dismounted and saluted him, and kissed ground between his hands when he said to them, "Rejoice ye in the glad tidings of the victory of the Moslem and the discomfiture of the tribe of Unbelievers!" Then they gave one another joy of their deliverance and of the greatness of their reward after Resurrection Day. Now the cause of the coming of the succours to that place was this. When the Emir Bahram and the Emir Rustam and the Chief Chamberlain, with the Moslem host and flags flaunting high ahead, came in sight of Constantinople they saw that the Nazarenes had mounted the walls and manned the towers and the forts, and had set all their defenders in order of defence, as soon as they learned of the approach of the host of Al-Islam and the banners Mohammedan, and they heard the clash of arms and the noise of war-voices and tramp of horse-hoofs; and from their

look-outs they beheld the Moslems, with their standards and ensigns of the Faith of Unity under the dust-clouds and lo! they were like a flight of locusts or rain clouds raining rain; and the voices of the Moslems chanting the Koran and glorifying the Compassionate One, struck their ears. Now the Infidels knew of the approach of this host through Zat al-Dawahi with her craft and whoredom,[435] calumny and contrivance. And the armies of Al-Islam drew near, as it were the swollen sea, for the multitude of footmen and horsemen and women and children. Then quoth the General of the Turks to the General of the Daylamites, "O Emir, of a truth, we are in jeopardy from the multitude of the foe who is on the walls. Look at yonder bulwarks and at this world of folk like the seas that clash with dashing billows. Indeed yon Infidel outnumbereth us an hundredfold and we cannot be safe from spies who may inform them that we are without a Sultan. In very sooth, we run danger from these enemies, whose numbers may not be told and whose resources none can withhold, especially in the absence of King Zau al-Makan and 259 his brother Sharrkan and the illustrious Wazir Dandan. If they know of this, they will be emboldened to attack us in their absence and with the sword they will annihilate us to the last man; not one of us safety shall see. So it is my counsel that thou take ten thousand riders of the allies and the Turks, and march them to the hermitage of Matruhina and the meadow of Malúkhiná in quest of our brothers and comrades. If thou act by my advice, it may be we shall approve ourselves the cause of their deliverance, in case they be hard pressed by the Infidels; and if thou act not, blame will not attach to me. But, an ye go, it behoveth that ye return quickly, for ill-suspicion is part of prudence." The Emir aforesaid fell in with his counsel; so they chose twenty thousand horse and they set out covering the roads and making for the monastery above mentioned. So much for the cause of their coming; but as regards the ancient dame, Zat al-Dawahi, as soon as she had delivered Sultan Zau al-Makan and his brother Sharrkan and the Wazir Dandan into the hands of the Infidels, the foul whore mounted a swift steed, saying to the Faithless, "I design to rejoin the Moslem army which is at Constantinople and contrive for their destruction; for I will inform them that their chiefs are dead, and when they hear that from me, their joining will be disjointed and the cord of their confederation cut and their host scattered. Then will I go to King Afridun, Lord of Constantinople, and to my son Hardub, King of Roum, and relate to them their tidings and they will sally forth on the Moslems with their troops and will destroy them and will not leave one of them alive." So she mounted and struck across country on her good steed all the livelong night; and, when day dawned, appeared the armies of Bahram and Rustam advancing towards her. So she turned into a wayside brake and hid her horse among the trees and she walked a while saying to herself, "Haply the Moslem hosts be returning, routed, from the assault of Constantinople." However, as she drew near them she looked narrowly and made sure that their standards were not reversed,[436] and she knew that they were coming not as conquered men, but fearing for their King and comrades. When she was assured of this, she hastened towards them, running at speed, like a devil of ill rede, till reaching

them she cried out, "Haste ye! haste ye! O soldiers of the Compassionate One, hasten to the Holy War against 260 the hosts of Satan!" When Bahram saw her he dismounted and kissed the ground before her and asked her, "O friend of Allah, what is behind thee?" Answered she, "Question not of sad case and sore condition; for when our comrades had taken the treasure from the hermitage of Matruhina, and designed to win their way Constantinople-wards, thereupon came out on them a driving host and a dreadful of the Infidels." And the damned witch repeated to them the story to fill them with trouble and terror, adding, "The most of them are dead, and there are but five-and-twenty men left." Said Bahram, "O holy man! when didst thou leave them?" "But this night,"[437] replied she. He cried, "Glory be to Allah! to Him who hath rolled up the far distance for thee like a rug, so that thou hast sped thus walking upon thy feet and propt upon a mid-rib of palm-tree! But thou art one of the saints which fly like birds when inspired and possessed by His directions."[438] Then he mounted his horse, and he was perplexed and confounded by what he had heard from the beldam so strong in lies and ill calumnies, and he said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily our labour is lost and our hearts are heavy within us, for our Sultan is a prisoner and those who are with him." Then they cut across the country, wide and side, night and day, and when morning dawned they reached the head of the defile and saw Zau al-Makan and Sharrkan shouting. "There is no god but *the* God! Allaho Akbar! and Salutation and Salvation upon the Congratulator, the Comminator."[439] Whereupon he and his drove at the Unbelievers and whelmed them, as the rain-torrent whelms the waste; and cried out their war-cries, till fear gat hold of the prowest Knights and the mountains were cloven in affright. And when shone the day and showed its shine and sheen, the breeze of morning blew upon them sweet and fragrant, and each recognised other as hath been said before. Then they kissed the ground before the King and before his brother Sharrkan, who told them all that had befallen the party in the cave. Now thereat they marvelled and 261 said to one another, "Hasten we back to Constantinople, for we left our companions there, and our hearts are with them." So they hurried departure, commending themselves to the Subtle, the All-wise, and Zau al-Makan exhorted the Moslems to steadfastness and versified in the following couplets:[440]—

Be praises mine to all-praiseworthy Thee, ✿ O Lord, who stinted not mine aid to be!
Though was I lost abroad, Thou wast to me ✿ Strongest support which vouchsafed victory:
Thou gav'st me wealth and reign and goodly gifts, ✿ And slungest conquering sword of valiancy:
Thou mad'st me blest beneath Thy kingly shade, ✿ Engraced with generous boons dealt fain and free:
Thou savedst from every fear I feared, by aid ✿ Of my Wazir, the Age's noblest he!
Garred us Thy grace in fight to throw the Greek, ✿ Who yet came back dight in War's cramoisie:
Then made I feint to fly from out the fight; ✿ But like grim lion turning made them flee,
And left on valley-sole my foemen, drunk ✿ Not with old wine[441] but Death-cup's revelry:
Then came the Saintly Hermit, and he showed ✿ His marvels wrought for town and wold to see;

When slew they hero-wights who woke to dwell ✿ In Eden bowers wherein sweet rill-lets well.

But, when Zau al-Makan had made an end of versifying, his brother Sharrkan congratulated him on his safety and thanked him for the deeds he had done; after which both set out forcing their marches to rejoin their army.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it as the Hundred-and-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sharrkan congratulated his brother, Zau al-Makan, on his safety and thanked him for the deeds he had done; after which both set 262 out forcing their marches to rejoin their army. Such was their case; but as regards the old woman, Zat al-Dawahi, after she had foregathered with the hosts of Rustam and Bahram, she returned to the coppice, where she took her steed and mounted and sped on at speed, till she drew near the Moslem army that beleaguered Constantinople, when she lighted down from her destrier and led it to the pavilion-tent of the Chief Chamberlain. And when he saw her, he stood up to her in honour and signed to her with his right hand and said, "Welcome O pious recluse!" Then he questioned her of what had befallen, and she repeated to him her disquieting lies and deluding calumnies, saying, "In sooth I fear for the Emir Rustam, and the Emir Bahram, for that I met them and theirs on the way and sent them and their following to relieve the King and his companions. Now there are but twenty thousand horse and the Unbelievers outnumber them; so I would have thee at this moment send off the rest of thy troops at full speed to their succour, lest they be slain to the last man." And she cried to them, "Haste! Haste!" When the Chamberlain and the Moslems heard these words, their spirits fell and they wept; but Zat al-Dawahi said to them, "Ask aidance of Allah and bear patiently this tribulation; for ye have the example of those who have been before you of the people of Mohammed; and Paradise with its palaces is laid out by Allah for those who die martyrs; and needs must all die, but most praiseworthy is dying while fighting for the Faith." The Chamberlain, hearing this speech of the accursed old woman, called for the Emir Bahram's brother, a knight by name Tarkash; and, choosing out for him ten thousand horse, riders famed for force, bade him set out at once. So he fared forth and marched all that day and the whole of the next night, till he neared the Moslems. When daylight dawned, Sharrkan saw the dust cloud about them and feared for the men of Al-Islam and said, "If these troops which are coming upon us be Moslem men our victory is assured by them; but, if these be Nazarenes, there is no gainsaying Destiny's decrees." Then he turned to his brother, Zau al-Makan, and said, "Never fear, for with my life I will ransom thee from death. If these be Mohammedan troops, then were it an increase of heavenly favours; but, if they be our foes, there is no help save that we fight them. Yet do I long to meet the Holy Man ere I die, so I may beg him to pray that I die not save by death of martyrdom." Whilst the twain were thus speaking, behold, there appeared the banners inscribed with the words, "There is no God

but *the* God 263 and Mohammed is the Apostle of God;" and Sharrkan cried out, "How is it with the Moslems?" "All are sound and safe," replied they, "and we came not but out of concern for you." Then the Chief of the army dismounted and, kissing ground before Sharrkan, asked, "O my lord, how be the Sultan and the Wazir Dandan and Rustam and my brother Bahram; are they all in safety?" He answered, "All well; but who brought thee tidings of us?" Quoth Tarkash; "It was the Holy Man who told us that he had met my brother Bahram and Rustam and had sent them both to you and he also assured us that the Infidels had encompassed you and outnumbered you; but I see not the case save the contrary thereof and that you are victorious." They questioned him, "And how did the Holy Man reach you?"; and he replied, "Walking on his feet and he had compassed in a day and a night, ten days' journey for a well girt horseman." "There is no doubt but that he is a Saint of Allah," said Sharrkan, "but where is he now?" They rejoined, "We left him with our troops, the folk of the Faith, moving them to do battle with the rebels and the Faithless." Thereat Sharrkan rejoiced and all thanked Allah for their own deliverance and the safety of the Holy Man; and commended the dead to His mercy saying, "This was writ in the Book." Then they set out making for Constantinople by forced marches, and whilst they were on this enterprise, behold, a dust-cloud arose to such height that it walled the two horizons, the eastern and the western, from man's sight and the day was darkened by it to night. But Sharrkan looked at it and said, "Verily, I fear lest this be the Infidels who have routed the army of Al-Islam for that this dust walleth the world, east and west, and hideth the two horizons, north and south." Presently appeared under the dust a pillar of darkness, blacker than the blackness of dismal days; nor ceased to come upon them that column more dreadful than the dread of the Day of Doom. Horse and foot hastened up to look at it and know the terrors of the case, when behold, they saw it to be the recluse aforesaid; so they thronged round him to kiss his hands and he cried out, "O people of the Best of Mankind,[442] the lamp which shineth in darkness blind, verily the Infidels have outwitted the Moslems by guile, for they fell upon the host of the One God whilst they deemed themselves safe from the Faithless, and attacked them in their tents and made a sore slaughter of them what while they looked for no wile; so 264 hasten to the aid of the Believers in the unity of God, and deliver them from those who deny Him!" Now when Sharrkan heard these words, his heart flew from his breast with sore trouble; and, alighting from his steed in amazement, he kissed the Recluse's hands and feet. On like wise did his brother, Zau al-Makan, and the rest of the foot and horse-troops; except the Wazir Dandan, who dismounted not but said, "By Allah, my heart flieth from this devotee, for I never knew show of devotion to religion that bred not bane. So leave him and rejoin your comrades the Moslems, for this man is of the outcasts from the gate of the mercy of the Lord of the Three Worlds! How often have I here made razzias with King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and trodden the earth of these lands!" Said Sharrkan, "Put away from thee such evil

thought, hast thou not seen this Holy Man exciting the Faithful to fight, and holding spears and swords light? So slander him not, for backbiting is blameable and poisoned is the flesh of the pious.[443] Look how he inciteth us to fight the foe; and, did not Almighty Allah love him, He had cast him aforetime into fearful torment." Then Sharrkan bade bring a Nubian mule for the ascetic to ride and said, "Mount, O pious man, devout and virtuous!" But the devotee refused to ride and feigned self-denial, that he might attain his end; and they knew not that this holy personage was like him of whom the poet saith:—

He prayeth and he fasteth for an end he doth espy; ✿ When once his end is safely won then fast and prayer good-bye.[444]

So the devotee ceased not to walk among the horsemen and the footmen, like a wily fox meditating guile, and began to uplift her voice, chanting the Koran and praising the Compassionate One. And they continued pressing forward till they approached the camp of Al-Islam, where Sharrkan found the Moslem in conquered plight and the Chamberlain upon the brink of falling back in flight, whilst the sword of Greece havoc dight among the Faithful, the righteous and those who work unright,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred-and-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sharrkan saw the Moslems in conquered plight and the Chamberlain upon the brink of retreat and flight and the sword havoc dight among the righteous and the workers of unright, the cause of this weakness among the Moslems was that the accursed old woman, Zat al-Dawahi, the foe of the Faith, after seeing that Bahram and Rustam had set forward with their troops to join Sharrkan and his brother Zau al-Makan, repaired to the camp of the Mahometans before Constantinople and caused the mission of the Emir Tarkash, as hath been before said. In this her purpose was to divide the Moslem forces the better to weaken them. Then she left them and entered Constantinople, and called with a loud voice on the knights of the Greeks, saying, "Let me down a cord that I may tie thereto this letter, and do ye bear it to your King Afridun, that he may read it and to my son King Hardub that they both do what is written therein of bidding and forbidding." So they let down for her a string and she tied thereto a letter whose purport was the following: "From the terriblest of tribulations[445] and the chiefest of all calamities, Zat al-Dawahi, to King Afridun greeting. But afterwards. Of a truth I have contrived a device for destroying the Moslems; so bide ye quiet and content. I have cozened and captured their Sultan and the Wazir Dandan; and then I returned to their camp and acquainted them therewith, whereby their pride had a fall and their withers were wrung. And I have so wrought upon the host 'leaguering Constantinople that they have sent ten thousand men under the Emir Tarkash to succour the captives, of whom there be now left but few; it is therefore my object that ye sally forth against

them with all your power while this day endureth; and that ye fall on them in their tents and that ye leave them not till ye shall have slain them to the last man; for, verily the Messiah looketh down upon you and the Blessed Virgin favoureth you; and I hope of the Messiah that he forget not what deed I have done." When her letter came to King Afridun, he rejoiced with great joyance; and, sending at once for King Hardub of Greece, son of Zat al-Dawahi, read the letter to him as soon as he came, whereat he was exceeding [266]glad and said, "See my mother's craft; verily it dispenseth with swords, and her aspect standeth in stead of the terrors of the Day of Dread." Rejoined Afridun, "May the Messiah not bereave us of thy venerable parent nor deprive her of her wile and guile!" Then he bade the Knights give orders for sallying outside the city, and the news was noised abroad in Constantinople. So the Nazarenes and the cohorts of the Cross burst forth and unsheathed their keen sabres in their numbers, shouting out their professions of impiety and heresies, and blaspheming the Lord of all Creatures. When the Chamberlain saw the sally, he said, "Behold, the Greek is upon us and they surely have learned that our Sultan is far away; and haply they have attacked us, for that the most part of our troops have marched to the succour of King Zau al-Makan!" Therewith he waxed wroth and cried out, "Ho, soldiers of Al-Islam and favourers of the True Faith, an you flee you are lost, but if ye stand fast, ye win! Know ye that valiancy lieth in endurance of outrance and that no case is so strait but that the Almighty is able to make it straight; Allah assain you and look upon you with eyes of compassion fain!" Thereupon the Moslems cried out, "Allaho Akbar!" and the believer in the One God shouted his slogan, and whirled the mill-wheels of fight with cutting and thrusting in main and might; scymitars and spears played sore and the plains and valleys were swamped with gore. The priests and monks priested it, tight-girding their girdles and uplifting the Crucifixes, while the Moslem shouted out the professions of the Requiting King and verses of the Koran began to sing. The hosts of the Compassionate One fought against the legions of Satan; and head flew from body of man, while the good Angels hovered above the people of the Chosen Prophet, nor did the sword cease to smite till the day darkened and night came on and starkened. Now the miscreants had encompassed the Moslems and made sure of escaping the pains that awaited them; and the Faithless greeded for victory over the Faithful until day dawned and dazzled. Thereupon the Chamberlain mounted, he and his men, trusting that Allah would help them to victory; and host was mingled with host and battle rose a-foot and took post. And heads flew from trunks whilst the brave stood fast in stead; the craven turned tail and fled; and the Judge of death judged and sentence sped, so that the champions fell from their saddles slain and corpses cumbered meadow and plain. Then the Moslem began to give ground and rearwards bent; and the Greek took possession of some of their [267]tents; whereupon the Moslems were about to break and retreat and take flight, when meanwhile behold, up came Sharrkan with the rest of the host of Al-Islam and the standards of the Believers

in Unity. And having come up with them, he charged the Infidels; and followed him Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan and the Emirs Bahram and Rustam with his brother Tarkash. When the foe saw this, they lost head and their reason fled, and the dust clouds towered till they covered the country, whilst the righteous Believers joined their pious comrades. Then Sharrkan accosted the Chamberlain and praised him for his steadfastness; and he in turn gave the Prince joy of his timely succour and his gaining the day. Thereat the Moslems were glad and their hearts were heartened; so they rushed upon their enemies and devoted themselves to Allah in their Fight for the Faith. But when the Idolaters beheld the standards Mohammedan and thereon the profession of Faith Islamitan, proclaiming the Unity, they shrieked "Woe!" and "Ruin!" and besought succour of the Patriarchs of the Monasteries. Then fell they to calling upon John and Mary and the Cross abhorrent and stayed their hands from slaughter, whilst King Afridun went up to consult King Hardub of Greece, for the two Kings stood one at the head of each wing, right and left. Now there was with them also a famous cavalier, Lawiyá hight, who commanded the centre; and they drew out in battle array, but indeed they were full of alarm and affray. Meanwhile, the Moslems aligned their forces and thereupon Sharrkan came to his brother, Zau al-Makan, and said, "O King of the Age, doubtless they mean to champion it, and that is also the object of our desire; but it is my wish to push forward the stoutest-hearted of our fighters, for by forethought is one half of life wrought." Replied the Sultan, "As thou wilt, O companion of good counsel!" "It is my wish," added Sharrkan, "to stand in mid-line opposite the Infidel, with the Wazir Dandan on my left and thee on my right, whilst the Emir Bahram leads the dexter-wing and the Emir Rustam leads the wing sinistral; and thou, O mighty King, shalt be under the standards and the ensigns, for that thou art the pillar of our defence; upon thee, after Allah, is our dependence and we will all be thy ransom from aught that can harm thee." Zau al-Makan thanked him therefor, and the slogan arose and the sabre was drawn; but, as things stood thus, behold, there came forth a cavalier from the ranks of Roum; and, as he drew near, they saw that he was mounted on a slow-paced she-mule, [268] fleeing with her master from the shock of swords. Her housings were of white silk covered by a prayer-carpet of Cashmere stuff, and on her back sat a Shaykh, an old man of comely presence and reverend aspect, garbed in a gown of white wool. He stinted not pushing her and hurrying her on till he came near the Moslem and said, "I am an ambassador to you all, and an ambassador hath naught to do save to deliver; so give me safe conduct and permit of speech, that I communicate to you my message." Replied Sharrkan, "Thou art in safety: fear neither sway of sword nor lunge of lance." Thereupon the old man dismounted and, taking the Cross from his neck, placed it before the Sultan and humbled himself with much humility. Then quoth to him the Moslems, "What is with thee of news?"; and quoth he, "I am an ambassador from King Afridun, for I counselled him to avert the destruction of all these frames of men and temples of the Compassionate One; and to him it seemed righteous to stay the shedding of blood and

limit it to the encounter of two knights in shock of fight singular; so he agreed to that and he saith to you:—Verily, I will ransom my army with my life; so let the Moslem King do as I do and with his life ransom his host. And if he kill me, there will be no stay left in the army of Roum, and if I kill him, there will be no stability with the Moslems." When Sharrkan heard this he said, "O monk, I agree to that, for it is just nor may it be gainsaid; and behold, I will meet him in duello and do with him derring-do, for I am Champion of the Faithful even as he is Champion of the Faithless; and if he slay me, he will have won the day and naught will remain for the Moslems' forces save flight. So return to him, O thou monk, and say that the single combat shall take place to-morrow, for this day we have come off our journey and are aweary; but after rest neither reproach nor blame fear ye." So the monk returned (and he rejoicing) to King Afridun and King Hardub, and told them both what Sharrkan had said, whereat King Afridun was glad with exceeding gladness and fell from him anxiety and sadness, and he said to himself, "No doubt but this Sharrkan is their doughtiest swayer of the sword and the dourest at lunge of lance; and when I shall have slain him, their hearts will be disheartened and their strength will be shattered." Now Zat al-Dawahi had written to King Afridun of that and had told him how Sharrkan was a Knight of the Braves and the bravest of knights and had warned him against him; but Afridun was a stalwart cavalier who 269 fought in many a fashion; he could hurl rocks and throw spears and smite with the iron mace and he feared not the prowest of the prow. So when he heard the report of the monk that Sharrkan agreed to the duello, he was like to fly for exceeding joy, because he had self-confidence and he knew that none could withstand him. The Infidels passed that night in joy and jubilee and wine-bibbing; and, as soon as it was dawn, the two armies drew out with the swart of spear and the blanch of blade. And behold, a cavalier rode single-handed into the plain, mounted on a steed of purest strain, and for foray and fray full ready and fain. And that Knight had limbs of might and he was clad in an iron cuirass made for stress of fight. On his breast he wore a jewelled mirror and in his hand he bore a keen scymitar and his lance of Khalanj-wood,[446] the curious work of the Frank, weighing a quintal. Then the rider uncovered his face and cried out, saying, "Whoso knoweth me verily hath enough of me, and whoso knoweth me not right soon[447] shall ken who I be. I am Afridun the overwhelmed by the well-omened Shawáhi,[448] Zat al-Dawahi." But he had not ended speaking ere Sharrkan, the Champion of the Moslems, fared forth to meet him, mounted on a sorrel horse worth a thousand pieces of red gold with accoutrements purfled in pearls and precious stone; and he bore in baldrick a blade of watered Indian steel that through necks shore and made easy the hard and sore. He drave his charger between the two hosts in line whilst the horsemen all fixed on him their eyne, and he cried out to Afridun, "Woe to thee, O accursed! dost thou deem me one of the horsemen thou hast overta'en who cannot stand against thee on battle-plain?" Then each rushed upon other and they bashed together like two mountains crashing or two billows dashing and clashing: they advanced and retreated; and drew

together and withdrew; and stinted not of fray and fight and weapon-play, and strife and stay, with stroke of sword and lunge of lance. Of the two armies looking on, some said, "Sharrkan is victor!" and others, "Afridun will conquer!"; and the two riders stayed not their hands from the hustle until ceased the clamour and the 270 bustle; and the dust-columns rose and the day waned and the sun waxed yellow and wan. Then cried out King Afridun to Sharrkan, saying, "By the truth of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, thou art nought save a doughty rider and a stalwart fighter; but thou art fraudful and thy nature is not that of the noble. I ken thy work is other than praiseworthy nor is thy prowess that of a Prince; for thy people behave to thee as though thou wert a slave;[449] and see! they bring thee out a charger which is not thine, that thou mayst mount and return to the fight. But by the truth of my Faith, thy fighting irketh and fatigueth me and I am weary of cutting and thrusting with thee; and if thou purpose to lay on load with me to-night, thou wouldst not change aught of thy harness nor thy horse, till thou approve to the cavaliers thy generous blood and skill in brunt." When Sharrkan heard him say these words concerning his own folk behaving to him though he were a slave, he waxt wroth and turned towards his men, meaning to sign to them and bid them not prepare him change of harness or horse, when lo! Afridun shook his throw-spear high in air and cast it at Sharrkan. Now when the Moslem turned his back, he found none of the men near him, and he knew this to be a trick of the accursed Infidel; so he wheeled round in haste and behold, the javelin came at him, so he swerved from it, till his head was bent low as his saddle-bow. The weapon grazed his breast, and pierced the skin of his chest, for Sharrkan was high-bosomed: whereupon he gave one cry and swooned away. Thereat the accursed Afridun was joyful, thinking he had slain him; and shouted to the Infidels bidding them rejoice, whereat the Faithless were encouraged and the Faithful wept. When Zau al-Makan saw his brother reeling in selle so that he well-nigh fell, he despatched cavaliers towards him and the braves hurried to his aid and came up with him. Thereupon the Infidels drove at the Moslems; the two hosts joined battle and the two lines were mingled, whilst the keen scymitar of Al-Yaman did good work. Now the first to reach Sharrkan was the Wazir Dandan——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred-and-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Zau al-Makan saw that the accursed Infidel had struck with javelin his brother Sharrkan, he deemed him dead, and despatched cavaliers towards him; and the first to reach him were the Wazir Dandan and the Emir of the Turks, Bahram, and the Emir of the Daylamites, Rustam. They found him falling from his horse; so they stayed him in his saddle and returned with him to his brother, Zau al-Makan; then they gave him in charge to his pages, and went again to do the work of cut and thrust. So the strife redoubled and the weapons

together clashed and ceased not bate and debate and naught was to be seen but blood flowing and necks bowing; nor did the swords cease on the napes of men to make play nor the strife to rage with more and more affray, till the most part of the night was past away and the two hosts were aweary of the mellay. So they called a truce and each army returned to its tents, whilst all the Infidels repaired to King Afridun and kissed the ground before him, and the priests and monks wished him joy of his victory over Sharrkan. Then the King fared for Constantinople and sat upon the throne of his realm, when King Hardub came to him and said, "May the Messiah strengthen thy fore-arm and never cease to be thy helper and hearken to what prayers my pious mother, Zat al-Dawahi, shall pray for thee! Know that the Moslems can make no stay without Sharrkan." Replied Afridun, "To-morrow shall end the affair when to fight I fare: I will seek Zau al-Makan and slay him, and their army shall turn tail and of flight shall avail." Such was the case with the Kafirs; but as regards the host of Al-Islam, when Zau al-Makan returned to his tent, he thought of naught but his brother and, going into the pavilion, found him in evil case and sore condition; whereupon he summoned for counsel the Wazir Dandan and Rustam and Bahram. When they entered, they opined to assemble the physicians that they might medicine Sharrkan, and they wept and said, "The world will not readily afford his like!" and they watched by him all that night, and about the later hours came to them the Recluse in tears. When Zau al-Makan saw him, he rose in honour; and the Religious stroked Sharrkan's wound with his hand, chanting somewhat of the Koran and repeating by way of talisman some of the verses of the 272 Compassionate One. And the pretender ceased not to watch over him till dawn, when he came to himself and, opening his eyes, moved his tongue in his mouth and spoke. At this Zau al-Makan rejoiced, saying, "Of a truth the blessing of the Holy Man hath taken effect on him!" And Sharrkan said, "Praised be Allah for recovery; indeed, I am well at this hour. That accursed one played me false; and, but that I swerved aside lighter than lightning, the throw-spear had pierced through my breast. So praised be Allah for saving me! And how is it with the Moslems?" Answered Zau al-Makan, "All are weeping for thee." Quoth Sharrkan, "I am well and in good case; but where is the Holy Man?" Now he was sitting by him and said, "At thy head." So the Prince turned to him and kissed his hand when he said, "O my son! be of good patience and Allah shall increase thy reward; for the wage is measured by the work." Sharrkan rejoined, "Pray for me," and he prayed for him. As soon as morning dawned and day brake in shine and sheen, the Moslems sallied out to the plain and the Kafirs made ready to thrust and cut. Then the Islamite host advanced and offered fight with weapons ready dight, and King Zau al-Makan and Afridun made to charge one at other. But when Zau al-Makan fared forth into the field, there came with him the Wazir Dandan and the Chamberlain and Bahram, saying, "We will be thy sacrifice." He replied, "By the Holy House and Zemzem and the Place![450] I will not be stayed from going forth against these wild asses." And when he rode out into the field he played with sword and spear till riders

marvelled and both armies wondered; then he rushed upon the foe's right wing and of it he slew two knights and in like manner he dealt with the left wing. Presently he stayed his steed in the midst of the field and cried out, "Where is Afridun, that I may make him taste the cup of disgrace?" But when King Hardub saw the case he conjured Afridun not to attack him, saying, "O King, yesterday it was thy turn to fight: it is mine to-day. I care naught for his prowess." So he rushed out towards Zau al-Makan brand in hand 273 and under him a stallion like Abjar, which was Antar's charger, and its coat was jet black even as saith the poet:—

On the glancing racer outracing glance ✿ He speeds, as though he would collar Doom:
His steed's black coat is of darkest jet, ✿ And likest Night in her nightliest gloom:
Whose neigh sounds glad to the hearer's ears ✿ Like thunders rolling in thund'rous boom:
If he race the wind he will lead the way, ✿ And the lightning-flash will behind him loom.[451]

Then each rushed upon the opponent, parrying blows and proving the marvellous qualities were stored in him; and they fell to drawing on and withdrawing till the breasts of the bystanders were straitened and they were weary of waiting for the event. At last Zau al-Makan cried out his war-cry and rushed upon Hardub, King of Cæsarea,[452] and struck him a stroke that shore head from trunk and slew him on the spot. When the Infidels saw this, they charged in a body, compact and united, upon Zau al-Makan, who met them amidfield, and they engaged in hewing and foining, till blood ran in rills. Then the Moslems cried out, "Allaho Akbar!"—God is most great—and "There is no god but *the* God!"; and invoked salvation for the Prophet, the Bringer of Glad Tidings, the Bearer of Bad Tidings. And there befel a great fight, but Allah assigned victory to the Faithful and defeat to the Faithless. The Wazir Dandan shouted, "Take your blood-revenge for King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and his son Sharrkan!"; and bared his head and cried out to the Turks. Now there were by his side more than twenty thousand horse, and all charged with him as one man, when the Faithless found naught to save their lives but flight. So they turned tail to fly while the biting sabre wrought its havoc and the Moslems slew of them that day some fifty thousand horse and took more than that number: much folk also were slain while going in 274 at the gates, for the flock was great. Then the Greeks hove to the doors and swarmed up the walls to await the assault; and in fine the Moslem hosts returned to their tents aided to glory and victory, and King Zau al-Makan went in to his brother whom he found in most joyous case. So he made a prostration of thanks to the Bountiful and the Exalted; and then he came forward and gave Sharrkan joy of his recovery. Answered he, "Verily we are all under the benediction of this Religious, holy and righteous, nor would you have been victorious, but for his accepted orisons; indeed all day he remained at prayer to invoke victory on the Moslems."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zau al-Makan went in to his brother Sharrkan, he found him sitting with the Holy Man by his side; so he rejoiced and drew near him and gave him joy of his recovery. Answered he, "Verily we are all under the benediction of this Recluse nor would you have been victorious but for his prayers, indeed he felt no fear this day and he ceased not supplication for the Moslems. I found strength return to me, when I heard your 'Allaho Akbar,' for then I knew you to be victorious over your enemies. But now recount to me, O my brother, what befel thee." So he told him all that had passed between him and the accursed Hardub and related how he had slain him and sent him to the malediction of Allah; and Sharrkan praised him and thanked him for his prowess. When Zat al-Dawahi heard tell of her son's death (and she still drest as a devotee), her face waxed yellow and her eyes ran over with railing tears: she kept her counsel, however, and feigned to the Moslems that she was glad and wept for excess of joy. But she said to herself, "By the truth of the Messiah, there remaineth no profit of my life, if I burn not his heart for his brother, Sharrkan, even as he hath burnt my heart for King Hardub, the mainstay of Christendom and the hosts of Crossdom!" Still she kept her secret. And the Wazir Dandan and King Zau al-Makan and the Chamberlain remained sitting with Sharrkan till they had dressed and salved his wound; after which they gave him medicines and he began to recover strength; whereat they joyed with exceeding joy and told the troops who congratulated themselves, saying, "To-morrow he 275 will ride with us and do manly devoir in the siege." Then said Sharrkan to them, "Ye have fought through all this day and are aweary of fight; so it behoveth that you return to your places and sleep and not sit up." They accepted his counsel and then each went away to his own pavilion, and none remained with Sharrkan but a few servants and the old woman Zat al-Dawahi. He talked with her through part of the night, then he stretched himself to rest: and his servants did likewise and presently sleep overcame them all and they lay like the dead. Such was the case with Sharrkan and his men; but as regards the old woman she alone abode awake while they slumbered in the tent and, looking at Sharrkan she presently saw that he was drowned in sleep. Thereupon she sprang to her feet, as she were a scald she-bear or a speckled snake, and drew from her waist-cloth a dagger so poisoned that if laid thereon it would have melted a rock. Then she unsheathed the poniard and went up to Sharrkan's head and she drew the knife across his throat and severed his weasand and hewed off his head from his body. And once more she sprang to her feet; and, going the round of the sleeping servants, she cut off their heads also, lest they should awake. Then she left the tent and made for the Sultan's pavilion, but finding the guards on the alert, turned to that of the Wazir Dandan. Now she found him reading the Koran and when his sight fell upon her he said, "Welcome to the Holy Man!" Hearing this from the Wazir, her heart trembled and she said, "The reason of my coming hither at this time is that I heard the voice of a saint amongst Allah's Saints and am going to him." Then she turned her back, but the Wazir said to himself, "By Allah, I will follow our Devotee this night!"

So he rose and walked after her; but when the accursed old woman sensed his footsteps, she knew that he was following her: wherefore she feared the disgrace of discovery and said in herself, "Unless I serve some trick upon him he will disgrace me." So she turned and said to him from afar, "Ho, thou Wazir, I am going in search of this Saint that I may learn who he is; and, after learning this much, I will ask his leave for thee to visit him. Then I will come back and tell thee; for I fear thine accompanying me, without having his permission, lest he take umbrage at me seeing thee in my society." Now when the Wazir heard these words, he was ashamed to answer her; so he left her and returned to his tent, and would have slept; but sleep was not favourable to him and the world seemed heaped upon him. Presently 276 he rose and went forth from the tent saying in himself, "I will go to Sharrkan and chat with him till morning." But when he entered into Sharrkan's pavilion, he found the blood running like an aqueduct and saw the servants lying with their throats cut like beasts for food. At this he cried a cry which aroused all who were asleep; the folk hastened to him and, seeing the blood streaming, set up a clamour of weeping and wailing. Then the noise awoke the Sultan, who enquired what was the matter, and it was said to him, "Sharrkan thy brother and his servants are murthered." So he rose in haste and entered the tent, and found the Wazir Dandan shrieking aloud and he saw his brother's body without a head. Thereat he swooned away and all the troops crowded around him, weeping and crying out, and so remained for a while, till he came to himself, when he looked at Sharrkan and wept with sore weeping, while the Wazir and Rustam and Bahram did the like. But the Chamberlain cried and lamented more than the rest and asked leave to absent himself, such was his alarm. Then said Zau al-Makan, "Know ye who did this deed and how is it I see not the Devotee, him who the things of this world hath put away?" Quoth the Wazir, "And who should have been the cause of this affliction, save that Devotee, that Satan? By Allah, my heart abhorred him from the first, because I know that all who pretend to be absorbed in practices religious are vile and treacherous!" And he repeated to the King the tale of how he would have followed the Religious, but he forbade him, whereupon the folk broke out into a tumult of weeping and lamentation and humbled themselves before Him who is ever near, Him who ever answereth prayer, supplicating that He would cause the false Devotee who denied Allah's testimony to fall into their hands. Then they laid Sharrkan out and buried him in the mountain aforesaid and mourned over his far-famed virtues.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that they laid Sharrkan out and buried him in the mountain aforesaid and mourned over his far-famed virtues. Then they looked for the opening of the city-gate; but it opened not and no sign of men appeared to them on the walls; whereat they wondered with 277 exceeding wonder.

But King Zau al-Makan said, "By Allah, I will not turn back from them, though I sit here for years and years, till I take blood-revenge for my brother Sharrkan and waste Constantinople and kill the King of the Nazarenes, even if death overcome me and I be at rest from this woeful world!" Then he bade be brought out the treasure taken from the Monastery of Matruhina; and mustered the troops and divided the monies among them, and he left not one of them but he gave him gifts which contented him. Moreover, he assembled in the presence three hundred horse of every division and said to them, "Do ye send supplies to your households, for I am resolved to abide by this city, year after year, till I have taken man-bote for my brother Sharrkan, even if I die in this stead." And when the army heard these words and had received his gifts of money they replied, "To hear is to obey!" Thereupon he summoned couriers and gave them letters and charged them to deliver the same, together with the monies, to the soldiers' families and inform them that all were safe and satisfied, and acquaint them saying, "We are encamped before Constantinople and we will either destroy it or die; and, albeit we be obliged to abide here months and years, we will not depart hence till we take it." Moreover, he bade the Wazir Dandan write to his sister, Nuzhat al-Zaman, and said to him, "Acquaint her with what hath befallen us, and what be our situation and commend my child to her care since that, when I went out to war, my wife was near her delivery and by this time she must needs have been brought to bed; and if she hath given birth to a boy, as I have heard say, hasten your return and bring me the acceptable news." Then he gave them somewhat of money, which they pouched and set out at once; and all the people flocked forth to take leave of them and entrust them with the monies and the messages. After they had departed, Zau al-Makan turned to the Wazir Dandan and commanded him to advance with the army against the city-walls. So the troops pushed forward, but found none on the ramparts, whereat they marvelled, while Zau al-Makan was troubled at the case, for he deeply mourned the severance from his brother Sharrkan and he was sore perturbed about that traitor the Ascetic. In this condition they abode three days without seeing anyone. So far concerning the Moslems; but as regards the Greeks and the cause of their refusing fight during these three days the case was this. As soon as Zat al-Dawahi had slain Sharrkan, she hastened her march and reached the walls of Constantinople, 278where she called out in the Greek tongue to the guards to throw her down a rope. Quoth they, "Who art thou?"; and quoth she, "I am Zat al-Dawahi." They knew her and let down a cord to which she tied herself and they drew her up; and, when inside the city, she went in to the King Afridun and said to him, "What is this I hear from the Moslems? They say that my son King Hardub is slain." He answered, "Yes;" and she shrieked out and wept right grievously and ceased not weeping thus till she made Afridun and all who were present weep with her. Then she told the King how she had slain Sharrkan and thirty of his servants, whereat he rejoiced and thanked her; and, kissing her hands, exhorted her to resignation for the loss of her son. Said she, "By the truth of the Messiah, I will not rest content with

killing that dog of the Moslem dogs in blood-revenge for my son, a King of the Kings of the age! Now there is no help for it but that I work some guile and I contrive a wile whereby to slay the Sultan Zau al-Makan and the Wazir Dandan and the Chamberlain and Rustam and Bahram and ten thousand cavaliers of the army of Al-Islam; for it shall never be said that my son's head be paid with the blood-wit of Sharrkan's head; no, never!" Then said she to King Afridun, "Know, O King of the Age, that it is my wish to set forth mourning for my son and to cut my Girdle and to break the Crosses." Replied Afridun, "Do what thou desire; I will not gainsay thee in aught. And if thou prolong thy mourning for many days it were a little thing; for though the Moslems resolve to beleaguer us years and years, they will never win their will of us nor gain aught of us save trouble and weariness." Then the Accursed One (when she had ended with the calamity she had wrought and the ignominies which in herself she had thought) took ink-case and paper and wrote thereon:—"From Shawáhi, Zat al-Dawahi, to the host of the Moslems. Know ye that I entered your country and duped by my cunning your nobles and at first hand I slew your King Omar bin al-Nu'uman in the midst of his palace. Moreover, I slew, in the affair of the mountain-pass and of the cave, many of your men; and the last I killed were Sharrkan and his servants. And if fortune do not stay me and Satan obey me, I needs must slay me your Sultan and the Wazir Dandan, for I am she who came to you in disguise of a Recluse and who heaped upon you my devices and deceits. Wherefore, an you would be in safety after this, fare ye forth at once; and if you seek your own destruction cease not abiding for the nonce; and though ye [279] tarry here years and years, ye shall not do your desire on us. And so peace be yours!" After writing her writ she devoted three days to mourning for King Hardub; and, on the fourth, she called a Knight and bade him take the letter and make it fast to a shaft and shoot it into the Moslem camp. When this was done, she entered the church and gave herself up to weeping and wailing for the loss of her son, saying to him who took the kingship after him, "Nothing will serve me but I must kill Zau al-Makan and all the nobles of Al-Islam." Such was the case with her; but as regards what occurred to the Moslems, all passed three days in trouble and anxiety, and on the fourth when gazing at the walls behold, they saw a knight holding a bow and about to shoot an arrow along whose side a letter was bound. So they waited till he had shot it among them and the Sultan bade the Wazir Dandan take the missive and read it. He perused it accordingly; and, when Zau al-Makan heard it to end and understood its purport, his eyes filled with tears and he shrieked for agony at her perfidy; and the Minister Dandan said, "By Allah, my heart shrank from her!" Quoth the Sultan, "How could this whore play her tricks upon us twice? But by the Almighty I will not depart hence till I fill her cleft with molten lead and jail her with the jailing of a bird encaged, then bind her with her own hair and crucify her over the gate of Constantinople." And he called to mind his brother and wept with excessive weeping. But when Zat al-Dawahi arrived amongst the Infidels and related to them her adventures at length, they rejoiced at her safety and at the slaying of Sharrkan.

Thereupon the Moslems addressed themselves again to the siege of the city and the Sultan promised his men that, if it should be taken, he would divide its treasures among them in equal parts. But he dried not his tears grieving for his brother till his body was wasted and sick, growing thin as a toothpick. Presently the Wazir Dandan came in to him and said, "Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; in very sooth thy brother died not but because his hour was come, and there is no profit in this mourning. How well saith the poet:—

Whatso is not to be no sleight shall bring to pass; ✿ What is to be without a failure shall become;

Soon the becoming fortune shall be found to be, ✿ And Folly's brother[453] shall abide forlorn and glum."

280 "Wherefore do thou leave this weeping and wailing and hearten thy heart to bear arms." He replied, "O Wazir, my heart is heavy for the death of my father and my brother and for our absence from hearth and home; and my mind is concerned for my subjects." Thereupon the Wazir and the bystanders wept; but they ceased not from pushing forward the siege of Constantinople for a length of days. And they being thus, behold, news arrived from Baghdad, by one of the Emirs to the effect that the King's wife had been blessed with a boy, and that his sister, Nuzhat al-Zaman, had named him Kanmakan.[454] Moreover, that the boy bid fair to be famous, already showing wondrous signs and marvellous tokens; and that she had commanded the Olema and the preachers to pray for mother and child from the pulpits and bless them in all wise; furthermore that the twain were well, that the land had enjoyed abundant rains, and that his comrade the Fireman was established in all prosperity, with eunuchs and slaves to wait upon him; but that he was still ignorant of what had befallen him. And she ended with the greeting of peace. Then quoth Zau al-Makan to the Wazir Dandan, "Now is my back strengthened for that I have been blest with a son whose name is Kanmakan."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when they brought him the news of his wife having borne him a boy child, Zau al-Makan rejoiced with great joy and cried, "Now is my back strengthened, for that I have been blessed with a son[455] whose name is Kanmakan." And he spake to the Wazir Dandan, saying, "I am minded to leave this mourning and order perlections of the Koran for my brother and command almsdeeds on his account." Quoth the Wazir, "Thy design is good." Thereupon he caused tents to be pitched over his brother's tomb; so they raised them and gathered together such of the men-at-arms as could repeat the Koran; and some began reciting the Holy volume; whilst others chanted litanies containing the names of Allah, and thus they 281 did till the morning. Then Zau al-Makan went up to the grave of his brother Sharrkan and poured forth copious tears, and improvised these couplets:—

They bore him bier'd, and all who followed wept ✿ With Moses' shrieks what day o'erhead shook Tor;[456]

Till reached the grave which Fate had made his home, ✿ Dug in men's souls who one sole God adore:
Ne'er had I thought before to see my joy ✿ Borne on the bier which heads of bearers bore:
Ah no! nor ere they homed thee in the dust ✿ That stars of heaven earth ever covered o'er.
Is the tomb-dweller hostage of a stead, ✿ Where light and splendour o'er thy face shall pour?
Praise to restore his life her word hath pledged: ✿ Cribbed and confined he shall dispread the more!

When Zau al-Makan had made an end of his versifying he wept and wept with him all the troops; then he came to the grave and threw himself upon it wild with woe, and the Wazir repeated the words of the poet:—

Fain leaving life that fleets thou hast th' eternal won; ✿ Thou didst as whilom many a doer like thee hath done;
Leftest this worldly house without reproach or blame; ✿ Ah, may th' exchange secure thee every benison!
Thou wast from hostile onset shield and firm defence, ✿ For us to baffle shafts and whistling spears to shun.
I see this world is only cheat and vanity, ✿ Where man naught else must seek but please the Truthful One:
Th' Empyrean's Lord allow thee bower of heavenly bliss, ✿ And wi' thy faithful friends The Guide show goodly wone:
I bid thee last good e'en with sigh of bitter grief, ✿ Seeing the West in woe for lack of Easting Sun.

When the Wazir Dandan had finished his reciting, he wept with sore weeping and the tears rained from his eyes like cushioned 282 pearls. Then came forward one who had been of Sharrkan's boon-companions in his cups and he wept till ran in rills the drops, and he enumerated the dead man's generous qualities, reciting the following pentastichs:—

Where gone is Bounty since thy hand is turned to clay? ✿ And I in misery lie since thou wast ta'en away.
See'st not, O litter-guide[457] (Heaven keep thee glad and gay!), ✿ How tears adorn my cheeks, these furrowed wrinkles fray?
A sight to joy thine eyes and fill thee with dismay.[458]
By Allah ne'er this heart within I spoke of thee; ✿ Ah no! nor dared my sight to see thy brilliancy:
Save that my tear-drops sorest wound have garred me dree ✿ Yea! and if e'er on other rest these eyne of me,
May yearning draw their reins nor suffer sleep to see.

And when the man stinted reciting, Zau al-Makan and the Minister Dandan wept and the whole army was moved to tears; after which all retired to their tents, and the King turning to the Wazir took counsel with him concerning the conduct of the campaign. On this wise the two passed days and nights, while Zau al-Makan was weighed down with grief and mourning till at last he said, "I long to hear stories and adventures of Kings and tales of lover-folk enslaved by love; haply Allah may make this to solace that which is on my heart of heavy anxiety, and stint and stay my weeping and wailing." Quoth the Wazir, "If naught can dispel thy trouble but hearing curious tales of Kings and people long gone before and stories of folk enslaved by love of yore, and so forth, this thing were easy, for I had no other business, in the lifetime of thy father (who hath found mercy) than to relate stories and to repeat verses to him. This very night I will tell thee a tale of a lover and his beloved, so shall thy breast be

broadened." When Zau al-Makan heard these words from the Minister, his heart was set upon that which had been promised to him and he did nothing but watch for the coming of the night, that he might hear what the Wazir Dandan had to tell of the Kings of yore and distracted lovers long gone before. And hardly would he believe that night had fallen ere he bade light the wax-candles and the lamps and bring all that was needful of meat and drink and perfume-gear, and what not; 283 and when all was in presence, he summoned the Wazir Dandan, and the Emirs Rustam and Bahram and Tarkash and the Grand Chamberlain; then waited till the whole party was seated before him; whereupon he turned to the Minister and said, "Know, O Wazir, that night is come and hath let down over us its veil of gloom, and we desire that thou tell us those tales which thou promisedst us." Replied the Wazir, "With joy and good will."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Zau al-Makan summoned the Wazir and the Chamberlain and Rustam and Bahram, he turned towards the Minister Dandan and said, "Know, O Wazir, that night is come and hath let down over us its veil of gloom, and we desire that thou tell us those tales which thou promisedst us." Replied the Wazir:—With love and gladness! Know, O auspicious King, that there reached my ears a relation of a lover and a loved one and of the discourse between them and what befel them of things rare and fair, a story such as repelleth care from the heart and dispelleth sorrow like unto that of the patriarch Jacob[459]; and it is as follows:—

TALE OF TAJ AL-MULUK AND THE PRINCESS DUNYA: THE LOVER AND THE LOVED.

There stood in times long gone by behind the Mountains of Ispahan, a city hight the Green City, wherein dwelt a King named Sulaymán Sháh. Now he was a man of liberality and beneficence, of justice and integrity, of generosity and sincerity, to whom travellers repaired from every country, and his name was noised abroad in all regions and cities and he reigned many a year in high worship and prosperity, save that he owned neither wives nor 284 children. He had a Minister who rivalled him in goodness and generosity and it so happened that one day, he sent for him and when he came into the presence said to him, "O my Wazir, my heart is heavy and my patience is past and my force faileth me, for that I have neither wife nor child. This is not the way of Kings who rule over all men, princes and paupers; for they rejoice in leaving

behind them children and successors whereby are doubled their number and their strength. Quoth the Prophet (whom Allah bless and keep!):—Marry ye, increase ye, and multiply ye, that I may boast me of your superiority over the nations on the Day of Resurrection. So what is thy rede, O Wazir? Advise me of what course and contrivance be advisable!" When the Minister heard these words, the tears sprang from his eyes in streams, and he replied, "Far be it from me, O King of the Age, that I debate on that which appertaineth to the Compassionate One! Wilt thou have me cast into the fire by the All-powerful King's wrath and ire? Buy thee a concubine." Rejoined the King, "Know, O Wazir, that when a sovereign buyeth a female slave, he knoweth neither her rank nor her lineage and thus he cannot tell if she be of simple origin that he may abstain from her, or of gentle strain that he may be intimate in her companionship. So, if he have commerce with her, haply she will conceive by him and her son be a hypocrite, a man of wrath and a shedder of blood. Indeed the like of such woman may be instanced by a salt and marshy soil, which if one till for ever it yieldeth only worthless growth and no endurance showeth; for it may be that her son will be obnoxious to his Lord's anger, doing not what He biddeth him or abstaining from what He forbiddeth him. Wherefore will I never become the cause of this through the purchase of a concubine; and it is my desire that thou demand for me in marriage the daughter of some one of the Kings, whose lineage is known and whose loveliness hath renown. If thou can direct me to some maiden of birth and piety of the daughters of Moslem Sovranty, I will ask her in marriage and wed her in presence of witnesses, so may accrue to me the favour of the Lord of all Creatures." Said the Wazir, "O King, verily Allah hath fulfilled thy wish and hath brought thee to thy desire;" presently adding, "Know, O King, it hath come to my knowledge that King Zahr Shah,[460] Lord of the White Land, hath a daughter of surpassing 285 loveliness whose charms talk and tale fail to express: she hath not her equal in this age, for she is perfect in proportion and symmetry, black eyed as if Kohl-dyed and long locked, wee of waist and heavy of hip. When she draweth nigh she seduceth and when she turneth her back[461] she slayeth; she ravisheth heart and view and she looketh even as saith of her the poet:—

A thin-waist maid who shames the willow-wand; ✿ Nor sun nor moon can like her rising shine:
'Tis as her honey-dew of lips were blent ✿ With wine, and pearls of teeth were bathed in wine;
Her form, like heavenly Houri's, graceful slim; ✿ Fair face; and ruin dealt by glancing eyne:
How many a dead-done man her eyes have slain ✿ Upon her way of love in ruin li'en:
An live I she's my death! I'll say no more ✿ But dying without her vain were life of mine."

Now when the Wazir had made an end of describing that maiden, he said to King Zahr Shah, "It is my counsel, O King, that thou despatch to her father an ambassador, sagacious, experienced and trained in the ways of the world, who shall courteously demand her in marriage for thee of her sire; for in good sooth she hath not her equal in the far parts of the world nor in the near." So shalt thou enjoy her lovely face in the

way of grace, and the Lord of Glory be content with thy case; for it is reported of the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!) that he said, "There be no monkery in Al-Islam." At this the King was transported to perfect joy; his breast was broadened and lightened; care and cark ceased from him and he turned to the Wazir and said, "Know thou, O Minister, that none shall fare about this affair save thou, by reason of thy consummate intelligence and good breeding; wherefore hie thee home and do all thou hast to do and get thee ready by the morrow and depart and demand me in marriage this maiden, with whom thou hast occupied my heart and thought; and return not to me but with her." Replied the Wazir, "I hear and I obey." Then he hied to his own house and bade make ready presents befitting Kings, of precious stones and things of price and other matters light of load but weighty of worth, besides Rabite steeds and coats of mail, such 286 as David made[462] and chests of treasure for which speech hath no measure. And the Wazir loaded the whole on camels and mules, and set out attended by an hundred slave-girls with flags and banners flaunting over his head. The King charged him to return to him after a few days; and, when he was gone, Sulayman Shah lay on coals of fire, engrossed night and day with desire; while the envoy fared on without ceasing through gloom and light, spanning fertile field and desert site, till but a day's march remained between him and the city whereto he was bound. Here he sat him down on the banks of a river and, summoning one of his confidants, bade him wend his way to King Zahr Shah and announce his approach without delay. Quoth the messenger, "I hear and I obey!" And he rode on in haste to that city and, as he was about to enter therein, it so chanced that the King, who was sitting in one of his pleasaunces before the city-gate, espied him as he was passing the doors, and knowing him for a stranger, bade bring him before the presence. So the messenger coming forward informed him of the approach of the Wazir of the mighty King Sulayman Shah, Lord of the Green Land and of the Mountains of Ispahan: whereat King Zahr Shah rejoiced and welcomed him. Then he carried him to his palace and asked him, "Where leavedst thou the Wazir?"; and he answered, "I left him in early day on the banks of such a river and to-morrow he will reach thee, Allah continue his favours to thee and have mercy upon thy parents!" Thereupon King Zahr Shah commanded one of his Wazirs to take the better part of his Grandees and Chamberlains and Lieutenants and Lords of the land, and go out to meet the ambassador in honour of King Sulayman Shah; for that his dominion extended over the country. Such was the case with Zahr Shah; but as regards the Wazir he abode in his stead till night was half spent[463] and then set out for the city; but when morning shone 287 and the sun rose upon hill and down, of a sudden he saw King Zahr Shah's Wazir approaching him, with his Chamberlains and high Lords and Chief Officers of the kingdom; and the two parties joined company at some parasangs' distance from the city.[464] Thereat the Wazir made sure of the success of his errand and saluted the escort, which ceased not preceding him till they reached the King's palace and passed

in before him through the gate to the seventh vestibule, a place where none might enter on horseback, for it was near to where the King sat. So the Minister alighted and fared on a-foot till he came to a lofty saloon, at whose upper end stood a marble couch, set with pearls and stones of price, and having for legs four elephant's tusks. Upon it was a coverlet of green satin purfled with red gold, and above it hung a canopy adorned with pearls and gems, whereon sat King Zahr Shah, whilst his officers of state stood in attendance before him. When the Wazir went in to him, he composed his mind and, unbinding his tongue, displayed the oratory of Wazirs and saluted the King in the language of eloquence——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir of King Sulayman Shah entered the presence of King Zahr Shah he composed his mind and, unbinding his tongue, displayed the oratory of Wazirs and saluted the King in the language of eloquence and improvised these couplets:—

288 He cometh robed and bending gracefully: ✿ O'er crop and cropper dews of grace sheds he:
He charms; nor characts, spells nor gramarye ✿ May fend the glances of those eyne from thee:
Say to the blamer, "Blame me not, for I ✿ From love of him will never turn to flee":
My heart hath played me false while true to him, ✿ And Sleep, in love with him, abhorreth me:
O heart! th'art not the sole who loveth him, ✿ So bide with him while I desertion dree:
There's nought to joy mine ears with joyous sound ✿ Save praise of King Zahr Shah in jubilee:
A King albeit thou leave thy life to win ✿ One look, that look were all-sufficiency:
And if a pious prayer thou breathe for him, ✿ Shall join all Faithfuls in such pious gree:
Folk of his realm! If any shirk his right ✿ For other hoping, gross Unfaith I see.

When the Wazir had ended his poetry, King Zahr Shah bade him draw near and honoured him with the highmost honours; then, seating him by his own side, smiled in his face and favoured him with a gracious reply. They ceased not on this wise till the time of the under-meal when the attendants brought forward the tables of food in that saloon and all ate till they were sated; after which the tables were removed and those who were in the assembly withdrew, leaving only the chief officers. Now when the Minister saw this, he rose to his feet and, after complimenting the King a second time and kissing the ground before him, spake as follows, "O mighty King and dread Lord! I have travelled hither and have visited thee upon a matter which shall bring thee peace, profit and prosperity: and it is this, that I come as ambassador to thee, seeking in marriage thy daughter, the noble and illustrious maid, from Sulayman Shah, a Prince famed for justice and integrity, sincerity and generosity, Lord of the Green Land and of the Mountains of Ispahan, who sendeth thee of presents a store, and gifts of price galore, ardently desiring to become thy son-in-law. But art thou inclined to him as he to thee?" He then kept silence, awaiting a reply. When King

Zahr Shah heard these words, he sprang to his feet and kissed the ground respectfully before the Wazir, while the bystanders were confounded at his condescension to the ambassador and their minds were amazed. Then he praised Him who is the Lord of Honour and Glory and replied (and he still standing), "O mighty Wazir and illustrious Chief; hear thou what I say! Of a truth we are to King Sulayman Shah of the number of his subjects, and we shall be ennobled by his alliance and we covet it ardently; for my daughter is a handmaid of his handmaidens, and it is my dearest desire that he may become my stay and my reliable support." Then he summoned the Kazis and the witnesses, who should bear testimony [289] that King Sulayman Shah had despatched his Wazir as proxy to conclude the marriage, and that King Zahr Shah joyfully acted and officiated for his daughter. So the Kazis concluded the wedding-contract and offered up prayers for the happiness and prosperity of the wedded feres; after which the Wazir arose and, fetching the gifts and rarities and precious things, laid them all before the King. Then Zahr Shah occupied himself anent the fitting out of his daughter and honourably entertained the Wazir and feasted his subjects all, great and small; and for two months they held high festival, omitting naught that could rejoice heart and eye. Now when all things needful for the bride were ready, the King caused the tents to be carried out and they pitched the camp within sight of the city, where they packed the bride's stuffs in chests and gat ready the Greek handmaids and Turkish slave-girls, and provided the Princess with great store of precious treasures and costly jewels. Then he had made for her a litter of red gold, inlaid with pearls and stones of price, and set apart two mules to carry it; a litter which was like one of the chambers of a palace, and within which she seemed as she were of the loveliest Houris and it became as one of the pavilions of Paradise. And after they had made bales of the treasures and monies, and had loaded them upon the mules and camels, King Zahr Shah went forth with her for a distance of three parasangs; after which he bade farewell to her and the Wazir and those with him, and returned to his home in gladness and safety. Thereupon the Wazir, faring with the King's daughter, pushed on and ceased not his stages over desert ways——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir fared on with the King's daughter and ceased not forcing his stages over desert ways and hastened his best through nights and days, till there remained between him and his city but three marches. Thereupon he sent forward to King Sulayman Shah one who should announce the coming of the bride. The King rejoiced thereat and bestowed on the messenger a dress of honour; and bade his troops march forth in grand procession to meet the Princess [290] and her company for due worship and honour, and don their richest apparel with banners flying over their heads. And his orders were obeyed. He also commanded to cry throughout the city that neither curtained damsel nor

honoured lady nor time-ruptured crone should fail to fare forth and meet the bride. So they all went out to greet her and the grandest of them vied in doing her service and they agreed to bring her to the King's palace by night. Moreover, the chief officers decided to decorate the road and to stand in espalier of double line, whilst the bride should pass by preceded by her eunuchs and serving-women and clad in the gear her father had given her. So when she made her appearance, the troops surrounded her, these of the right wing and those of the left, and the litter ceased not advancing with her till she approached the palace; nor remained any but came forth to gaze upon the Princess. Drums were beaten and spears were brandished and horns blared and flags fluttered and steeds pranced for precedence and scents shed fragrance till they reached the Palace gate and the pages entered with the litter through the Harim-wicket. The place shone with its splendours and the walls glittered for the glamour of its gear. Now when night came, the eunuchs threw open the doors of the bridal-chamber and stood surrounding the chief entrance; whereupon the bride came forward and amid her damsels she was like the moon among stars or an union shining on a string of lesser pearls, and she passed into the bridal closet where they had set for her a couch of alabaster inlaid with unions and jewels. As soon as she had taken seat there, the King came in to her and Allah filled his heart with her love so he abated her maidenhead and ceased from him his trouble and disquiet. He abode with her well-nigh a month but she had conceived by him the first night; and, when the month was ended, he went forth and sat on his sofa of state, and dispensed justice to his subjects, till the months of her pregnancy were accomplished. On the last day of the ninth month, towards daybreak, the Queen was seized with the pangs of labour; so she sat down on the stool of delivery and Allah made the travail easy to her and she gave birth to a boy child, on whom appeared auspicious signs. When the King heard of this, he joyed with exceeding joy and rewarded the bearer of the good tidings with much treasure; and of his gladness he went in to the child and kissed him between the eyes and wondered at his brilliant loveliness; for in him was approved the saying of the poet:—

291 In the towering forts Allah throned him King, ✿ A lion, a star in the skies of reign:

At his rising the spear and the throne rejoiced, ✿ The gazelle, the ostrich, the men of main:[465]

Mount him not on the paps, for right soon he'll show ✿ That to throne on the war-steed's loins he's fain:

And wean him from sucking of milk, for soon ✿ A sweeter drink, the foe's blood, he'll drain.

Then the midwives took the newborn child and cut the navel-cord and darkened his eyelids with Kohl-powder[466] and named him Táj al-Mulúk Khárán.[467] He was suckled at the breast of fond indulgence and was reared in the lap of happy fortune; and thus his days ceased not running and the years passing by till he reached the age of seven. Thereupon Sulayman Shah summoned the doctors and learned men and bade them teach his son writing and science and belle-lettres. This they continued to do for some years, till he had learnt what was needful; and, when the King saw that he was well grounded in whatso he desired, he took him out of the teachers' and professors' hands

and engaged for him a skilful master, who taught him cavalarice and knightly exercises till the boy attained the age of fourteen; and when he fared abroad on any occasion, all who saw him were ravished by his beauty and made him the subject of verse; and even pious men were seduced by his brilliant loveliness.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-tenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, That when Taj al-Muluk Kharan, son of Sulayman Shah, became perfect in riding-craft and excelled all those of his time, his excessive beauty, when he fared abroad on any occasion, caused all who saw him to be ravished and to make him the subject of verse; and even pious men were seduced by his brilliant loveliness. Quoth the poet of him:—

292 I clipt his form and wax'd drunk with his scent, ✿ Fair branch to whom Zephyr gave nutriment:
Nor drunken as one who drinks wine, but drunk ✿ With night-draught his lips of the honey-dew lent:
All beauty is shown in the all of him, ✿ Hence all human hearts he in hand hath hent:
My mind, by Allah! shall ne'er unmind ✿ His love, while I wear life's chains till spent:
If I live, in his love I'll live; if I die ✿ For pine and longing, "O blest!" I'll cry.

When he reached the eighteenth year of his age, tender down[468] sprouted, on his side-face fresh with youth, from a mole upon one rosy cheek and a second beauty-spot, like a grain of ambergris, adorned the other; and he won the wits and eyes of every wight who looked on him, even as saith the poet:—

He is Caliph of Beauty in Yúsufs lieu, ✿ And all lovers fear when they sight his grace:
Pause and gaze with me; on his cheek thou'lt sight ✿ The Caliphate's banner of sable hue.[469]

And as saith another:—

Thy sight hath never seen a fairer sight, ✿ Of all things men can in the world espy,
Than yon brown mole, that studs his bonny cheek ✿ Of rosy red beneath that jet black eye.

And as saith another:—

I marvel seeing yon mole that serves his cheeks' bright flame ✿ Yet burneth not in fire albeit Infidel[470];
I wonder eke to see that apostolic glance, ✿ Miracle-working, though it work by magic spell:
How fresh and bright the down that decks his cheek, and yet ✿ Bursten gall-bladders feed which e'en as waters well.

293 And as saith another:—

I marvel hearing people questioning of ✿ The Fount of Life and in what land 'tis found:
I see it sprung from lips of dainty fawn, ✿ Sweet rosy mouth with green mustachio down'd:
And wondrous wonder 'tis when Moses viewed ✿ That Fount, he rested not from weary round.[471]

Now having developed such beauty, when he came to man's estate his loveliness increased, and it won for him many comrades and intimates; while every one who drew near to him wished that Taj al-Muluk Kharan might become Sultan after his father's death, and that he himself might be one of his Emirs. Then took he

passionately to chasing and hunting which he would hardly leave for a single hour. His father, King Sulayman Shah, would have forbidden him the pursuit fearing for him the perils of the waste and the wild beasts; but he paid no heed to his warning voice. And it so chanced that once upon a time he said to his attendants "Take ye ten days food and forage;" and, when they obeyed his bidding, he set out with his suite for sport and disport. They rode on into the desert and ceased not riding four days, till they came to a place where the ground was green, and they saw in it wild beasts grazing and trees with ripe fruit growing and springs flowing. Quoth Taj al-Muluk to his followers, "Set up the nets here and peg them in a wide ring and let our trysting place be at the mouth of the fence, in such a spot." So they obeyed his words and staked out a wide circle with toils; and there gathered together a mighty matter of all kinds of wild beasts and gazelles, which cried out for fear of the men and threw themselves for fright in the face of the horses. Then they loosed on to them the hounds and lynxes[472] and hawks;[473] and they shot the quarry down with shafts which pierced their vitals; and, by the 294 time they came to the further end of the net-ring, they had taken a great number of the wild beasts, and the rest fled. Then Taj al-Muluk dismounted by the water-side and bade the game be brought before himself, and divided it, after he had set apart the best of the beasts for his father, King Sulayman Shah, and despatched the game to him; and some he distributed among the officers of his court. He passed the night in that place, and when morning dawned there came up a caravan of merchants conveying negro slaves and white servants, and halted by the water and the green ground. When Taj al-Muluk saw them, he said to one of his companions, "Bring me news of yonder men and question them why they have halted in this place.[474]" So the messenger went up to them and addressed them, "Tell me who ye be, and answer me an answer without delay." Replied they, "We are merchants and have halted to rest, for that the next station is distant and we abide here because we have confidence in King Sulayman Shah and his son, Taj al-Muluk, and we know that all who alight in his dominions are in peace and safety; moreover we have with us precious stuffs which we have brought for the Prince." So the messenger returned and told these news to the King's son who, hearing the state of the case and what the merchants had replied, said, "If they have brought stuff on my account I will not enter the city nor depart hence till I see it shown to me." Then he mounted horse and rode to the caravan and his Mamelukes followed him till he reached it. Thereupon the merchants rose to receive him and invoked on him Divine aid and favour with continuance of glory and virtues; after which they pitched him a pavilion of red satin, embroidered with pearls and jewels, wherein they spread him a kingly divan upon a silken carpet worked at the upper end with emeralds set in gold. There Taj al-Muluk seated himself whilst his white servants stood in attendance upon him, and sent to bid the merchants bring out all that they had with them. Accordingly, they produced their merchandise, and displayed the whole and he viewed it and took of it what liked him, paying them the price. Then he looked about him at the caravan, and remounted and

was about to ride onwards, when his glance fell on a handsome youth in fair attire, and of comely and shapely make, with flower-white brow and moon-like face, save that his beauty was wasted 295and that yellow hues had overspread his cheeks by reason of parting from those he loved;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Taj al-Muluk, when he looked about him at the caravan, saw a handsome youth in neat attire and of shapely make, with flower-like forehead and moon-like face, save that his beauty was wasted and yellow hues had overspread his cheeks by reason of parting from those he loved; and great was his groaning and moaning, and the tears streamed from his eyelids as he repeated these couplets:—

Longsome is Absence; Care and Fear are sore, ✿ And ceaseless tears, O friend, mine eyes outpour:

Yea, I farewelled my heart on parting-day ✿ And heartless, hopeless, now I bide forlore:

Pause, O my friend, with me farewelling one ✿ Whose words my cure can work, my health restore!

Now when the youth ended his poetry he wept awhile and fell down in a fainting-fit, whilst Taj al-Muluk looked at him and wondered at his case. Then, coming to himself, he stared with distracted air, and versified in these couplets:—

Beware her glance I rede thee, 'tis like wizard-wight, ✿ None can escape unscathed those eye-shafts' glancing flight:

In very sooth black eyes, with languorous sleepy look, ✿ Pierce deeper than white swords however these may bite.

Be not thy senses by her sweets of speech beguiled, ✿ Whose brooding fever shall ferment in thought and sprite:

Soft-sided Fair,[475] did silk but press upon her skin, ✿ 'Twould draw red blood from it, as thou thyself canst sight.

Chary is she of charms twixt neck and anklets dwell; ✿ And ah! what other scent shall cause me such delight?[476]

Then he sobbed a loud sob and swooned away. But when Taj al-Muluk saw him in this case, he was perplexed about his state and went up to him; and, as the youth came to his senses and saw the King's son standing at his head, he sprang to his feet and kissed the ground between his hands. Taj al-Muluk asked him, 296"Why didst thou not show us thy merchandise?" and he answered, "O my lord, there is naught among my stock worthy of thine august highness." Quoth the Prince, "Needs must thou show me what thou hast and acquaint me with thy circumstance; for I see thee weeping-eyed and heavy-hearted. If thou have been oppressed, we will end thine oppression, and if thou be in debt, we will pay thy debt; for of a truth my heart burneth to see thee, since I first set eyes on thee."[477] Then Taj al-Muluk bade the seats be set, and they brought him a chair of ivory and ebony with a net-work of gold and silk, and spread him a silken rug for his feet. So he sat down on the chair and bidding the youth seat himself on the rug said to him, "Show me thy stock in trade!" The young merchant replied, "O my Lord, do not name this to me, for my goods be unworthy of

thee." Rejoined Taj al-Muluk, "It needs must be thus!"; and bade some of the pages fetch the goods. So they brought them in despite of him; and, when he saw them, the tears streamed from his eyes and he wept and sighed and lamented; sobs rose in his throat and he repeated these couplets:—

By what thine eyelids show of Kohl and coquetry! ✿ By what thy shape displays of lissome symmetry!

By what thy liplets store of honey-dew and wine! ✿ By what thy mind adorns of gracious kindly gree!

To me thy sight dream-visioned, O my hope! exceeds ✿ The happiest escape from horriblest injury.

Then the youth opened his bales and displayed his merchandise to Taj al-Muluk in detail, piece by piece, and amongst them he brought out a gown of satin brocaded with gold, worth two thousand dinars. When he opened the gown there fell a piece of linen from its folds. As soon as the young merchant saw this, he caught up the piece of linen in haste and hid it under his thigh; and his reason wandered, and he began versifying:—

297 When shall be healed of thee this heart that ever bides in woe? ✿ Than thee the Pleiad-stars more chance of happy meeting show.

Parting and banishment and longing pain and lowe of love, ✿ Procrastinating[478] and delay—these ills my life lay low:

Nor union bids me live in joy, nor parting kills by grief, ✿ Nor travel draws me nearer thee nor nearer comest thou:

Of thee no justice may be had, in thee dwells naught of ruth; ✿ Nor gain of grace by side of thee, nor flight from thee I know:

For love of thee all goings forth and comings back are strait ✿ On me; and I am puzzled sore to know where I shall go.

Taj al-Muluk wondered with great wonder at his verse, and could not comprehend the cause. But when the youth snatched up the bit of linen and placed it under thigh, he asked him, "What is that piece of linen?" "O my Lord," answered the merchant, "thou hast no concern with this piece." Quoth the King's son, "Show it me;" and quoth the merchant, "O my Lord, I refused to show thee my goods on account of this piece of linen; for I cannot let thee look upon it."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-twelfth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant said to Taj al-Muluk, "I did not refuse to show thee my goods save on this account, for I cannot let thee look upon it." Whereupon Taj al-Muluk retorted, "Perforce I must and will see it;" and insisted and became angry. So the youth drew it out from under his thigh, and wept and moaned and redoubled his sighs and groans, and repeated these verses:—

298 Now blame him not; for blame brings only irk and pain! ✿ Indeed, I spake him sooth but ne'er his ear could gain:

May Allah guard my moon which riseth in the vale ✿ Beside our camp, from loosed robe like skyey plain:[479]

I left him but had Love vouchsafed to leave for me ✿ Some peace in life such leave of him I ne'er had ta'en:

How long he pleaded for my sake on parting morn, ✿ While down his cheeks and mine tears ran in railing rain:
Allah belie me not: the garb of mine excuse ✿ This parting rent, but I will mend that garb again!
No couch is easy to my side, nor on such wise ✿ Aught easeth him, when all alone without me lain:
Time with ill-omened hand hath wrought between us two, ✿ And made my waxing joys to wane and his to wane,
And poured mere grief and woe, what time Time fain had crowned ✿ The bowl he made me drink and gave for him to drain.

When he ended his recitation, quoth Taj al-Muluk, "I see thy conduct without consequence; tell me then why weepest thou at the sight of this rag!" When the young merchant heard speak of the piece of linen, he sighed and answered, "O my lord, my story is a strange and my case out of range, with regard to this piece of linen and to her from whom I brought it and to her who wrought on it these figures and emblems." Hereupon, he spread out the piece of linen, and behold, thereon was the figure of a gazelle wrought in silk and worked with red gold, and facing it was another gazelle traced in silver with a neck-ring of red gold and three bugles[480] of chrysolite upon the ring. When Taj al-Muluk saw the beauty of these figures, he exclaimed, "Glory be to Allah who teacheth man that which he knoweth not!"[481] And his heart yearned to hear the youth's story; so he said to him, "Tell me thy story with her who owned these gazelles." Replied the young man:—Hear, O my Lord, the

TALE OF AZIZ AND AZIZAH.[482]

My father was a wealthy merchant and Allah had vouchsafed him no other child than myself; but I had a cousin, Azízah hight, daughter of my paternal uncle and we twain were brought up in one house; for her father was dead and before his death, he had 299 agreed with my father that I should marry her. So when I reached man's estate and she reached womanhood, they did not separate her from me or me from her, till at last my father spoke to my mother and said, "This very year we will draw up the contract of marriage between Aziz and Azizah." So having agreed upon this he betook himself to preparing provision for the wedding-feast. Still we ceased not to sleep on the same carpet knowing naught of the case, albeit she was more thoughtful, more intelligent and quicker-witted than I. Now when my father had made an end of his preparations, and naught remained for him but to write out the contract and for me but to consummate the marriage with my cousin, he appointed the wedding for a certain Friday, after public prayers; and, going round to his intimates among the merchants and others, he acquainted them with that, whilst my mother went forth and invited her women friends and summoned her kith and kin. When the Friday came, they cleaned the saloon and prepared for the guests and washed the marble floor; then they spread tapestry about our house and set out thereon what was needful, after they had hung its walls with cloth of gold. Now the folk had agreed to come to us after the Friday prayers; so my father went out and bade them make sweetmeats and sugared dishes,

and there remained nothing to do but to draw up the contract. Then my mother sent me to the bath and sent after me a suit of new clothes of the richest; and, when I came out of the Hammam, I donned those habits which were so perfumed that as I went along, there exhaled from them a delicious fragrance scenting the wayside. I had designed to repair to the Cathedral-mosque, when I bethought me of one of my friends and returned in quest of him that he might be present at the writing of the contract; and quoth I to myself, "This matter will occupy me till near the time of congregational prayer." So I went on and entered a by-street which I had never before entered, perspiring profusely from the effects of the bath and the new clothes on my body; and the sweat streamed down whilst the scents of my dress were wafted abroad: I therefore sat me at the upper end of the street resting on a stone bench, after spreading under me an embroidered kerchief I had with me. The heat oppressed me more and more, making my forehead perspire and the drops trickled along my cheeks; but I could not wipe my face with my kerchief because it was dispread under me. I was about to take the skirt of my robe and wipe my cheeks with it, when unexpectedly there fell on 300 me from above a white kerchief, softer to the touch than the morning breeze and pleasanter to the sight than healing to the diseased. I hent it in hand and raised my head to see whence it had fallen, when my eyes met the eyes of the lady who owned these gazelles.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-thirteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth continued to Taj al-Muluk:—So I raised my head to see whence this kerchief had fallen, when my eyes met those of the lady who owned these gazelles. And lo! she was looking out of a wicket in a lattice of brass and never saw my eyes a fairer than she; and in fine my tongue faileth to describe her beauty. When she caught sight of me looking at her, she put her forefinger into her mouth, then joined her middle finger and her witness-finger[483] and laid them on her bosom, between her breasts; after which she drew in her head and closed the wicket-shutter and went her ways. Thereupon fire broke out in and was heaped upon my heart, and greater grew my smart; the one sight cost me a thousand sighs and I abode perplexed, for that I heard no word by her spoken, nor understood the meaning of her token. I looked at the window a second time, but found it shut and waited patiently till sundown, but sensed no sound and saw no one in view. So when I despaired of seeing her again, I rose from my place and taking up the handkerchief, opened it, when there breathed from it a scent of musk which caused me so great delight I became as one in Paradise.[484] Then I spread it before me and out dropped from it a delicate little scroll; whereupon I opened the paper which was perfumed with a delicious perfume, and therein were writ these couplets:—

I sent to him a scroll that bore my plaint of love, ✿ Writ in fine delicate hand; for writing proves man's skill:
Then quoth to me my friend, "Why is thy writing thus; ✿ So fine, so thin-drawn 'tis to read unsuitable?"

Quoth I, "For that I'm fine-drawn, wasted, waxed thin; ✿ Thus lovers' writ should be, for so Love wills his will."

301 And after casting my eyes on the beauty of the kerchief,[485] I saw upon one of its two borders the following couplets worked in with the needle:—

His cheek-down writeth (O fair fall the goodly scribe!) ✿ Two lines on table of his face in Rayhán-hand:[486]

O the wild marvel of the Moon when comes he forth! ✿ And when he bends, O shame to every Willow-wand!

And on the opposite border these two couplets were traced:—

His cheek-down writeth on his cheek with ambergris on pearl ✿ Two lines, like jet on apple li'en, the goodliest design:

Slaughter is in those languid eyne whene'er a glance they deal, ✿ And drunkenness in either cheek and not in any wine.

When I read the poetry on the handkerchief the flames of love darted into my heart, and yearning and pining redoubled their smart. So I took the kerchief and the scroll and went home, knowing no means to win my wish, for that I was incapable of conducting love-affairs and inexperienced in interpreting hints and tokens. Nor did I reach my home ere the night was far spent and I found the daughter of my uncle sitting in tears. But as soon as she saw me she wiped away the drops and came up to me, and took off my walking dress and asked me the reason of my absence, saying, "All the folk, Emirs and notables and merchants and others, assembled in our house; and the Kazi and the witnesses were also present at the appointed time. They ate and tarried awhile sitting to await thine appearance for the writing of the contract; and, when they despaired of thy presence, they dispersed and went their ways. And indeed," she added, "thy father raged with exceeding wrath by reason of this, and swore that he would not celebrate our marriage save during the coming year, for that he hath spent on these festivities great store of money." And she ended by asking, "What hath befallen thee this day to make thee delay till now?; and why hast thou allowed that to happen which happened because of thine absence?" Answered I, "O daughter of mine uncle, question me not concerning what hath befallen me."[487] Then I told her all that 302 had passed from beginning to end, and showed her the handkerchief. She took the scroll and read what was written therein; and tears ran down her cheeks and she repeated these cinquains:—

Who saith that Love at first of free will came, ✿ Say him:—Thou liest! Love be grief and grame:

Yet shall such grame and grief entail no shame; ✿ All annals teach us one thing and the same—

Good current coin clipt coin we may not clepe!

An please thou, say there's pleasure in thy pain, ✿ Find Fortune's playful gambols glad and fain:

Or happy blessings in th' unhappy's bane, ✿ That joy or grieve with equal might and main:—

'Twixt phrase and antiphrase I'm all a-heap!

But he, withal, whose days are summer-bright, ✿ Whom maids e'er greet with smiling lips' delight;

Whom spicey breezes fan in every site ✿ And wins whate'er he wills, that happy wight

White-blooded coward heart should never keep!

Then she asked me, "What said she, and what signs made she to thee?" I answered, "She uttered not a word, but put her forefinger in her mouth, then joining it to her middle finger, laid both fingers on her bosom and pointed to the ground. Thereupon she withdrew her head and shut the wicket; and after that I saw her no more. However, she took my heart with her, so I sat till sundown, expecting her again to look out of the window; but she did it not; and, when I despaired of her, I rose from my seat and came home. This is my history and I beg thee to help me in this my sore calamity." Upon this she raised her face to me and said, "O son of mine uncle, if thou soughtest my eye, I would tear it for thee from its eyelids, and perforce I cannot but aid thee to thy desire and aid her also to her desire; for she is whelmed in passion for thee even as thou for her." Asked I, "And what is the interpretation of her signs?"; and Azizah answered, "As for the putting her finger in her mouth,[488] it showed that thou art to her as her soul to her body and that she would bite into union with thee with her wisdom teeth. As for the kerchief, it betokeneth that her breath 303 of life is bound up in thee. As for the placing her two fingers on her bosom between her breasts, its explanation is that she saith:—The sight of thee may dispel my grief. For know, O my cousin, that she loveth thee and she trusteth in thee. This is my interpretation of her signs and, could I come and go at will, I would bring thee and her together in shortest time, and curtain you both with my skirt." Hearing these words I thanked her (continued the young merchant) for speaking thus, and said to myself, "I will wait two days." So I abode two days in the house, neither going out nor coming in; neither eating nor drinking but I laid my head on my cousin's lap, whilst she comforted me and said to me, "Be resolute and of good heart and hope for the best!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-fourteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth pursued to Taj al-Muluk:—And when the two days were past she said to me, "Be of good cheer and clear thine eyes of tears and take courage to dress thyself and go to her, according to thy tryst." Then she rose and changed my clothes and perfumed me with incense-smoke. So I braced myself up and heartened my heart and went out and walked on till I came to the by-street, where I sat down on the bench awhile. And behold, the wicket suddenly opened and I looked up and seeing her, fell down in a swoon. When I revived, I called up resolution and took courage and gazed again at her and again became insensible to the world around me. Then I came to myself and looking at her, saw that she held in hand a mirror and a red kerchief. Now when she caught my glance, she bared her fore-arms and opened her five fingers and smote her breast with palm and digits; and after this she raised her hands and, holding the mirror outside the wicket, she took the red kerchief and retired into the room with it, but presently returned and putting out her hand with the kerchief, let it down towards the lane three several times, dipping it and raising it as often. Then she wrung it out and folded it in

her hands, bending down her head the while; after which she drew it in from the lattice and, shutting the wicket-shutter, went away without a single word; nay, she left me confounded and 304 knowing not what signified her signs.[489] I tarried sitting there till supper-time and did not return home till near midnight; and there I found the daughter of my uncle with her cheek propt in her hand and her eyelids pouring forth tears; and she was repeating these couplets:—

Woe's me! why should the blamer gar thee blaming trow? ✿ How be consoled for thee that art so tender bough?

Bright being! on my vitals dost thou prey, and drive ✿ My heart before platonic passion's[490] force to bow.

Thy Turk-like[491] glances havoc deal in core of me, ✿ As furbished sword thin-ground at curve could never show:

Thou weigh'st me down with weight of care, while I have not ✿ Strength e'en to bear my shift, so weakness lays me low:

Indeed I weep blood-tears to hear the blamer say:—✿ "The lashes of thy lover's eyne shall pierce thee through!"

Thou hast, my prince of loveliness! an Overseer,[492] ✿ Who wrongs me, and a Groom[493] who beats me down with brow.

He foully lies who says all loveliness belonged ✿ To Joseph, in thy loveliness is many a Joe:

I force myself to turn from thee, in deadly fright ✿ Of spies; and what the force that turns away my sight!

When I heard her verse, cark increased and care redoubled on me and I fell down in a corner of our house; whereupon she arose in haste and, coming to me, lifted me up and took off my outer clothes 305 and wiped my face with her sleeve. Then she asked me what had befallen me, and I described all that had happened from her. Quoth she, "O my cousin, as for her sign to thee with her palm and five fingers its interpretation is, Return after five days; and the putting forth of her head out of the window, and her gestures with the mirror and the letting down and raising up and wringing out of the red kerchief,[494] signify, Sit in the dyer's shop till my messenger come to thee." When I heard her words fire flamed up in my heart and I exclaimed, "O daughter of my uncle, thou sayest sooth in this thine interpretation; for I saw in the street the shop of a Jew dyer." Then I wept, and she said, "Be of good cheer and strong heart: of a truth others are occupied with love for years and endure with constancy the ardour of passion, whilst thou hast but a week to wait; why then this impatience?" Thereupon she went on cheering me with comfortable talk and brought me food: so I took a mouthful and tried to eat but could not; and I abstained from meat and drink and estranged myself from the solace of sleep, till my colour waxed yellow and I lost my good looks; for I had never been in love before nor had I ever savoured the ardour of passion save this time. So I fell sick and my cousin also sickened on my account; but she would relate to me, by way of consolation, stories of love and lovers every night till I fell asleep; and whenever I awoke, I found her wakeful for my sake with tears running down her cheeks. This ceased not till the five days were past, when my cousin rose and warmed some water and bathed me with it. Then she dressed me in my best and said to me, "Repair to her and Allah fulfil thy wish and bring thee to thy desire of thy beloved!" So I went out and ceased not walking on till I came to the upper end of the by-street.

As it was the Sabbath[495] I found 306the dyer's shop locked and sat before it, till I heard the call to mid afternoon prayer. Then the sun yellowed and the Mu'ezzins[496] chanted the call to sundown-prayer and the night came; but I saw no sign nor heard one word, nor knew any news of her. So I feared for my life sitting there alone; and at last I arose and walked home reeling like a drunken man. When I reached the house, I found my cousin Azizah standing, with one hand grasping a peg driven into the wall and the other on her breast; and she was sighing and groaning and repeating these couplets:—

The longing of an Arab lass forlorn of kith and kin ✿ (Who to Hijázian willow-wand and myrtle[497] doth incline,
And who, when meeting caravan, shall with love-lowe set light ✿ To bivouac-fire, and bring for drink her tears of pain and pine)
Exceeds not mine for him nor more devotion shows, but he ✿ Seeing my heart is wholly his spurns love as sin indign.

Now when she had finished her verse she turned to me and, seeing me, wiped away her tears and my tears with her sleeve. Then she smiled in my face and said, "O my cousin, Allah grant thee enjoyment of that which He hath given thee! Why didst thou not pass the night by the side of thy beloved and why hast thou not fulfilled thy desire of her?" When I heard her words, I gave her a kick in the breast and she fell down in the saloon and her brow struck upon the edge of the raised pavement and hit against a wooden peg therein. I looked at her and saw that her forehead 307was cut open and the blood running——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-fifteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued to Taj al-Muluk:—Now when I kicked the daughter of my uncle in the breast she fell on the edge of the raised pavement in the saloon and her brow struck upon a wooden peg. Thereby her forehead was cut open and the blood ran down, but she was silent and did not utter a single sound.[498] Presently she rose up, and made some tinder of rags, then staunching with it the bleeding wound, bound her forehead with a bandage; after which she wiped up the blood that had fallen on the carpet, and it was as if nothing had been. Presently she came up to me and smiling in my face, said with gentle voice, "By Allah, O son of my uncle, I spake not these words to mock at thee or at her! But I was troubled with an ache in my head and was minded to be blooded, but now thou hast eased my head and lightened my brow; so tell me what hath befallen thee to-day." Thereupon I told her all that had passed between me and her that day; and she wept as she heard my words and said, "O son of my uncle, rejoice at the good tidings of thy desire being fulfilled and thine aim being attained. Of a truth this is a sign of acceptance; for that she stayed away only because she wisheth to try thee and know if thou be patient or not, and sincere in thy love for her or otherwise. To-morrow, repair to her at the old place and see what sign she maketh to thee; for

indeed thy gladness is near and the end of thy sadness is at hand." And she went on to comfort me; but my cark and care ceased not to increase on me. Presently she brought me food which I kicked away with my foot so that the contents of every saucer were scattered in all directions, and I said, "Every lover is a madman; he inclineth not to food neither enjoyeth he sleep." And my cousin Azizah rejoined, "By Allah, O son of my uncle, these be in very deed the signs of love!" And the tears streamed down her cheeks whenas she gathered the fragments of the saucers and wiped up the food; then she took seat and talked to me, whilst I prayed Allah to hasten the dawn. [308] At last, when morning arose with its sheen and shine, I went out to seek her and hastening to her by-street sat down on that bench, when lo! the wicket opened and she put out her head laughing. Then she disappeared within and returned with a mirror, a bag, and a pot full of green plants and she held in hand a lamp. The first thing she did was to take the mirror and, putting it into the bag, tie it up and throw it back into the room; then she let down her hair over her face and set the lamp on the pot of flowers during the twinkling of an eye; then she took up all the things and went away shutting the window without saying a word. My heart was riven by this state of the case, and by her secret signals, her mysterious secrets and her utter silence; and thereby my longing waxed more violent and my passion and distraction redoubled on me. So I retraced my steps, tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted, and returned home, where I found the daughter of my uncle sitting with her face to the wall; for her heart was burning with grief and galling jealousy; albeit her affection forbade her to acquaint me with what she suffered of passion and pining when she saw the excess of my longing and distraction. Then I looked at her and saw on her head two bandages, one on account of the accident to her forehead and the other over her eye in consequence of the pain she endured for stress of weeping; and she was in miserable plight shedding tears and repeating these couplets:—

I number rights; indeed I count night after night; ✿ Yet lived I long ere learnt so sore accompt to see, ah!
Dear friend, I compass not what Allah pleased to doom ✿ For Laylá, nor what Allah destinèd for me, ah!
To other giving her and unto me her love, ✿ What loss but Layla's loss would He I ever dree, ah!

And when she had finished her reciting, she looked towards me and seeing me through her tears, wiped them away and came up to me hastily, but could not speak for excess of love. So she remained silent for some while and then said, "O my cousin, tell me what befel thee with her this time." I told her all that had passed and she said, "Be patient, for the time of thy union is come and thou hast attained the object of thy hopes. As for her signal to thee with the mirror which she put in the bag, it said to thee, When the sun is set; and the letting down of her hair over her face signified, When night is near and letteth fall the blackness of [309] the dark and hath starkened the daylight, come hither. As for her gesture with the pot of green plants it meant, When thou comest, enter the flower-garden which is behind the street; and as for her sign with the lamp it denoted, When thou enterest the flower-garden walk

down it and make for the place where thou seest the lamp shining; and seat thyself beneath it and await me; for the love of thee is killing me." When I heard these words from my cousin, I cried out from excess of passion and said, "How long wilt thou promise me and I go to her, but get not my will nor find any true sense in thine interpreting." Upon this she laughed and replied, "It remaineth for thee but to have patience during the rest of this day till the light darken and the night starken and thou shalt enjoy union and accomplish thy hopes; and indeed all my words be without leasing. Then she repeated these two couplets:—

Let days their folds and plies deploy, ✿ And shun the house that deals annoy!

Full oft when joy seems farthest far ✿ Thou nighmost art to hour of joy."

Then she drew near to me and began to comfort me with soothing speech, but dared not bring me aught of food, fearing lest I be angry with her and hoping I might incline to her; so when coming to me she only took off my upper garment and said to me, "Sit O my cousin, that I may divert thee with talk till the end of the day and, Almighty Allah willing, as soon as it is night thou shalt be with thy beloved." But I paid no heed to her and ceased not looking for the approach of darkness, saying, "O Lord, hasten the coming of the night!" And when night set in, the daughter of my uncle wept with sore weeping and gave me a crumb of pure musk, and said to me, "O my cousin, put this crumb in thy mouth, and when thou hast won union with thy beloved and hast taken thy will of her and she hath granted thee thy desire, repeat to her this couplet:—

Ho, lovers all! by Allah say me sooth ✿ What shall he do when love sore vexeth youth?[499]"

And she kissed me and swore me not to repeat this couplet till I should be about to leave my lover and I said, "Hearing is obeying!" 310 And when it was supper-tide I went out and ceased not walking on till I came to the flower-garden whose door I found open. So I entered and, seeing a light in the distance, made towards it and reaching it, came to a great pavilion vaulted over with a dome of ivory and ebony, and the lamp hung from the midst of the dome. The floor was spread with silken carpets embroidered in gold and silver, and under the lamp stood a great candle, burning in a candelabrum of gold. In mid-pavilion was a fountain adorned with all manner of figures;[500] and by its side stood a table covered with a silken napkin, and on its edge a great porcelain bottle full of wine, with a cup of crystal inlaid with gold. Near all these was a large tray of silver covered over, and when I uncovered it I found therein fruits of every kind, figs and pomegranates, grapes and oranges, citrons and shaddocks[501] disposed amongst an infinite variety of sweet-scented flowers, such as rose, jasmine, myrtle, eglantine, narcissus and all sorts of sweet-smelling herbs. I was charmed with the place and I joyed with exceeding joy, albeit I found not there a living soul and my grief and anxiety ceased from me.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-sixteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued to Taj al-Muluk:—I was charmed with the place and joyed with great joy albeit there I found not a living soul of Almighty Allah's creatures, and saw nor slave nor handmaid to oversee these things or to watch and ward these properties. So I sat down in the pavilion to await the coming of the beloved of my heart; but the first hour of the night passed by, and the second hour, and the third hour, and still she came not. Then hunger grew sore upon me, for that it was long since I had tasted food by reason of the violence of my love: but when I found the 311 place even as my cousin had told me, and saw the truth of her interpretation of my beloved's signs, my mind was set at rest and I felt the pangs of hunger; moreover, the odour of the viands on the table excited me to eat. So making sure of attaining my desire, and being famished for food I went up to the table and raised the cover and found in the middle a china dish containing four chickens reddened with roasting and seasoned with spices, round the which were four saucers, one containing sweetmeats, another conserve of pomegranate-seeds, a third almond-pastry[502] and a fourth honey fritters; and the contents of these saucers were part sweet and part sour. So I ate of the fritters and a piece of meat, then went on to the almond-cakes and ate what I could; after which I fell upon the sweetmeats, whereof I swallowed a spoonful or two or three or four, ending with part of a chicken and a mouthful of something beside. Upon this my stomach became full and my joints loose and I waxed too drowsy to keep awake; so I laid my head on a cushion, after having washed my hands, and sleep overcame me; I knew not what happened to me after this, and I awoke not till the sun's heat scorched me, for that I had never once tasted sleep for days past. When I awoke I found on my stomach a piece of salt and a bit of charcoal; so I stood up and shook my clothes and turned to look right and left, but could see no one; and discovered that I had been sleeping on the marble pavement without bedding beneath me. I was perplexed thereat and afflicted with great affliction; the tears ran down my cheeks and I mourned for myself. Then I returned home, and when I entered, I found my cousin beating her hand on her bosom and weeping tears like rain-shedding clouds; and she versified with these couplets:—

Blows from my lover's land a Zephyr cooly sweet, ✿ And with its every breath makes olden love new glow:
O Zephyr of the morning hour, come show to us ✿ Each lover hath his lot, his share of joy and woe:
Could I but win one dearest wish, we had embraced ✿ With what embrace and clip of breast fond lovers know.
Allah forbids, while bides unseen my cousin's face, ✿ All joys the World can give or hand of Time bestow.
Would Heaven I knew his heart were like this heart of me, ✿ Melted by passion-flame and charged with longing lowe.

312 When she saw me, she rose in haste and wiped away her tears and addressed me with her soft speech, saying, "O son of my uncle, verily Allah hath been gracious to thee in thy love, for that she whom thou lovest loveth thee, whilst I pass my time in weeping and bewailing my severance from thee who blamest me and chidest me; but

may Allah not punish thee for my sake!" Thereupon she smiled in my face a smile of reproach and caressed me; then taking off my walking clothes, she spread them out and said, "By Allah, this is not the scent of one who hath enjoyed his lover! So tell me what hath befallen thee, O my cousin." I told her all that had passed, and she smiled again a smile of reproach and said, "Verily, my heart is full of pain; but may he not live who would hurt thy heart! Indeed, this woman maketh herself inordinately dear and difficult to thee, and by Allah, O son of my uncle, I fear for thee from her.[503] Know, O my cousin, that the meaning of the salt is thou wast drowned in sleep like insipid food, disgustful to the taste; and it is as though she said to thee:—It behoveth thou be salted lest the stomach eject thee; for thou professest to be of the lovers noble and true; but sleep is unlawful and to a lover undue; therefore is thy love but a lie. However, it is her love for thee that lieth; for she saw thee asleep yet aroused thee not and were her love for thee true, she had indeed awoken thee. As for the charcoal, it means Allah blacken thy face[504] for thou makest a lying pretence of love, whereas thou art naught but a child and hast no object in life other than eating and drinking and sleeping! such is the interpretation of her signs, and may Allah Almighty deliver thee from her!" When I heard my cousin's words, I beat my hand upon my breast and cried out, "By Allah, this is the very truth, for I slept and lovers sleep not! Indeed I have sinned against myself, for what could have wrought me more hurt than eating and 313 sleeping? Now what shall I do?" Then I wept sore and said to the daughter of my uncle, "Tell me how to act and have pity on me, so may Allah have pity on thee: else I shall die." As my cousin loved me with very great love,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-seventeenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued his tale to Taj al-Muluk:—Thereupon quoth I to the daughter of my uncle, "Tell me what to do and have pity on me, so may Allah have pity on thee!" As the daughter of my uncle loved me with great love, she replied, "On my head and eyes! But, O my cousin, I repeat what I have told thee oftentimes, if I could go in and out at will, I would at once bring you two together and cover you both with my skirt: nor would I do this but hoping to win thy favour. Inshallah, I will do my utmost endeavour to unite you; but hear my words and do my bidding. Go thou to the very same place and sit down where thou sattest before and at supper-tide look thou eat not, for eating induceth sleep; and have a care thou slumber not, for she will not come to thee till a fourth part of the night be passed. And the Almighty avert her mischief from thee!" Now when I heard these words I rejoiced and besought Allah to hasten the night; and, as soon as it was dark, I was minded to go, and my cousin said to me, "When thou shalt have met her, repeat to her the couplet I taught thee before, at the time of thy leave-taking." Replied I, "On my head and eyes!" and went out and repaired to the garden, where I found all made ready in the same state as on the previous night, with

every requisite of meat and drink, dried fruits, sweet-scented flowers and so forth. I went up into the pavilion and smelt the odour of the viands and my spirit lusted after them; but I possessed my soul in patience for a while, till at last I could no longer withstand temptation. So I arose from my seat and went up to the table and, raising its cover, found a dish of fowls, surrounded by four saucers containing four several meats. I ate a mouthful of each kind and as much as I would of the sweetmeats and a piece of meat: then I drank from the saucer a sauce yellowed with saffron[505] 314 and as it pleased me, I supped it up by the spoonful till I was satisfied and my stomach was full. Upon this, my eyelids drooped; so I took a cushion and set it under my head, saying, "Haply I can recline upon it without going to sleep." Then I closed my eyes and slept, nor did I wake till the sun had risen, when I found on my stomach a cube of bone,[506] a single tip-cat stick,[507] the stone of a green date[508] and a carob pod. There was no furniture nor aught else in the place, and it was as if there had been nothing there yesterday. So I rose and shaking all these things off me, fared forth in fury; and, going home, found my cousin groaning and versifying with these couplets:—

A wasted body, heart enpierced to core, ✿ And tears that down my poor cheeks pour and pour:

And lover dure of access; but, but still ✿ Naught save what's fair can come from fairest flow'r;

O cousin mine thou fill'st my soul with pain, ✿ And from these tears mine eyelids ache full sore!

I chid the daughter of my uncle and abused her, whereat she wept; then, wiping away her tears, she came up to me and kissed me and began pressing me to her bosom, whilst I held back from her blaming myself. Then said she to me, "O my cousin, it seemeth thou sleptest again this night?" Replied I, "Yes; and when I awoke, I found on my stomach a cube of bone, a single tip-cat stick, a stone of a green date and a carob-pod, and I know not why she did this." Then I wept and went up to her and said, "Expound to me her meaning in so doing and tell me how shall I act and aid me in my sore strait." She answered, "On my head and eyes! By the single tip-cat stick and the cube of bone which she placed upon thy stomach she saith to thee, Thy body is present but thy heart is absent; and she meaneth, Love is not thus: so do not reckon thyself among lovers. As for the date-stone, it is as if she said to thee, An thou wert in love thy heart would be burning with passion and thou wouldst not taste 315 the delight of sleep; for the sweet of love is like a green date[509] which kindleth a coal of fire in the vitals. As for the carob-pod[510] it signifieth to thee, The lover's heart is wearied; and thereby she saith, Be patient under our separation with the patience of Job." When I heard this interpretation, fires darted into my vitals like a dart and grief redoubled upon my heart and I cried out, saying, "Allah decreed sleep to me for my ill-fortune." Then I said to her, "O my cousin, by my life, devise me some device whereby I may win my will of her!" She wept and answered, "O Aziz, O son of my uncle, verily my heart is full of sad thought which I cannot speak: but go thou again to-night to the same place and beware thou sleep not, and thou shalt surely attain thy desire. This is my counsel and peace be with thee!" Quoth I, "If Allah please I will not

sleep, but will do as thou biddest me." Then my cousin rose, and brought me food, saying, "Eat now what may suffice thee, that nothing may divert thy heart." So I ate my fill and, when night came, my cousin rose and bringing me a sumptuous suit of clothes clad me therein. Then she made me swear I would repeat to my lover the verse aforesaid and bade me beware of sleeping. So I left her and repaired to the garden and went up into that same pavilion where I occupied myself in holding my eyelids open with my fingers and nodding my head as the night darkened on me.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-eighteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued to Taj al-Muluk:—So I repaired to the garden and went up into that same pavilion and occupied myself in gazing upon the flower-beds and in holding my eyelids open with my fingers and nodding my head as the night darkened on me. And presently I grew hungry with watching and the smell of the meats 316 being wafted towards me, my appetite increased: so I went up to the table and took off the cover and ate a mouthful of every dish and a bit of meat; after which I turned to the flagon of wine, saying to myself, I will drink one cup. I drank it, and then I drank a second and a third, till I had drunk full ten, when the cool air smote me and I fell to the earth like a felled man. I ceased not to lie thus till day arose, when I awoke and found myself outside the garden, and on my stomach were a butcher's knife and a dram-weight of iron.[511] Thereat I trembled and, taking them with me, went home, where I found my cousin saying, "Verily, I am in this house wretched and sorrowful, having no helper but weeping." Now when I entered, I fell down at full length and throwing the knife and the dram-weight from my hand, I fainted clean away. As soon as I came to myself, I told her what had befallen me and said, "Indeed, I shall never enjoy my desire." But when she saw my tears and my passion, they redoubled her distress on my account, and she cried, "Verily, I am helpless! I warned thee against sleeping; but thou wouldst not hearken to my warning, nor did my words profit thee aught." I rejoined, "By Allah, I conjure thee to explain to me the meaning of the knife and the iron dram-weight." "By the dram-weight," replied my cousin, "she alludeth to her right eye,[512] and she sweareth by it and saith:—By the Lord of all creatures and by my right eye! if thou come here again and sleep, I will cut thy throat with this very knife. And indeed I fear for thee, O my cousin, from her malice; my heart is full of anguish for thee and I cannot speak. Nevertheless, if thou can be sure of thyself not to sleep when thou returnest to her, return to her and beware of sleeping and thou shalt attain thy desire; but if when returning to her thou wilt sleep, as is thy wont, she will surely slaughter thee." Asked I, "What shall I do, O daughter of my uncle: I beg thee, by Allah, to help me in this my calamity." Answered she, "On my head and eyes! if thou wilt hearken to my words and do my bidding, 317 thou shalt have thy will." Quoth I, "I will indeed hearken to thy words and do thy bidding;" and quoth she, "When it is time

for thee to go, I will tell thee." Then she pressed me to her bosom and laying me on the bed, shampoo'd my feet, till drowsiness overcame me and I was drowned in sleep; then she took a fan and seated herself at my head with the fan in her hand and she was weeping till her clothes were wet with tears. Now when she saw that I was awake, she wiped away the drops and fetched me some food and set it before me. I refused it, but she said to me, "Did I not tell thee that thou must do my bidding? Eat!" So I ate and thwarted her not and she proceeded to put the food into my mouth and I to masticate it, till I was full. Then she made me drink jujube-sherbet[513] and sugar and washed my hands and dried them with a kerchief; after which she sprinkled me with rose-water, and I sat with her awhile in the best of spirits. When the darkness had closed in, she dressed me and said to me, "O son of my uncle, watch through the whole night and sleep not; for she will not come to thee this tide till the last of the dark hours and, Allah willing, thou shalt be at one with her this night; but forget not my charge." Then she wept, and my heart was pained for her by reason of her over much weeping, and I asked, "What is the charge thou gavest me?" She answered, "When thou takest leave of her repeat to her the verse before mentioned." So, full of joy I left her and repairing to the garden, went up into the pavilion where, being satiated with food, I sat down and watched till a fourth part of the dark hours was past. That night seemed longsome to me as it were a year: but I remained awake till it was three quarters spent and the cocks crew and I was famished for long watching. Accordingly I went up to the table and ate my fill, whereupon my head grew heavy and 318 I wanted to sleep, when behold, a light appeared making towards me from afar. I sprang up and washed my hands and mouth and roused myself; and before long she came with ten damsels, in whose midst she was like the full moon among the stars. She was clad in a dress of green satin purfled with red gold, and she was as saith the poet:—

She lords it o'er our hearts in grass-green gown, ✿ With buttons[514] loose and locks long flowing down.

Quoth I, "What is thy name?" Quoth she, "I'm she, ✿ Who burns the loverheart live coals upon:"

I made my plaint to her of loving lowe; ✿ Laughed she, "To stone thou moanest useless moan!"

Quoth I, "An be of hardest stone thy heart, ✿ Allah drew sweetest spring from hardest stone."

When she saw me she laughed and said, "How is it that thou art awake and that sleep overcame thee not? Forasmuch as thou hast watched through the night, I know that thou art a lover; for night-watching is the mark of lovers displaying brave endurance of their desires." Then she turned to her women and signed to them and they went away from her, whereupon she came up to me and strained me to her breast and kissed me, whilst I kissed her, and she sucked my upper lip whilst I sucked her lower lip. I put my hand to her waist and pressed it and we came not to the ground save at the same moment. Then she undid her petticoat-trousers which slipped down to her anklets, and we fell to clasping and embracing and toying and speaking softly and biting and intertwining of legs and going round about the Holy House and the corners thereof,[515] till her joints became relaxed for love-delight and she swooned away. I

entered the sanctuary, and indeed that night was a joy to the sprite and a solace to the sight even as saith the poet:—

Sweetest of nights the world can show to me, that night ✿ When cups went round and round as fed by ceaseless spring:

There utter severance made I 'twixt mine eyes and sleep, ✿ And joined, rejoined mine ear-drop with the anklet-ring.[516]

319 We lay together in close embrace till the morning when I would have gone away, but she stopped me and said, "Stay till I tell thee something"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-nineteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued his recital to Taj al-Muluk:—When I would have gone away, she stopped me and said, "Stay, till I tell thee something and charge thee with a charge." So I stayed whilst she unfolded a kerchief and drew out this piece of linen and spread it open before me. I found worked on it these two figures of gazelles and admired it with great admiration. Then I took the piece of linen and went away, joyful, after we had agreed that I should visit her every night in the garden; but in my joy I forgot to repeat to her the verse my cousin had taught me. For when giving me the piece of linen with the gazelles she had said to me, "Keep this carefully, as it is my sister's handiwork." I asked her, "What is thy sister's name?"; and she answered, "Her name is Núr al-Hudà." When I went to my cousin, I found her lying down; but as soon as she saw me, she rose, with the tears running from her eyes, and came up to me, and kissed me on the breast and said, "Didst thou do as I enjoined thee? and repeat the verse to her?" "I forgot it," replied I; "and nothing drove it out of my mind but these two figured gazelles." And I threw the piece of linen on the floor before her. She rose and sat down again, but was unable to contain herself for impatience, and her eyes ran over with tears, whilst she repeated these two couplets:—

O thou who seekest parting, softly fare! ✿ Let not the Fair delude with cunning art:

Fare softly, Fortune's nature is to 'guile, ✿ And end of every meeting is to part.

And when she ended her recitation she said, "O my cousin, give me this piece of linen." So I gave it to her and she took it and unfolding it, saw what was therein. When the tryst-time came for my going to my lover, the daughter of my uncle said to me, "Go, and peace attend thee; and when thou art about to leave her, recite to her the verse I taught thee long ago and which thou didst forget." 320 Quoth I, "Tell it me again"; and she repeated it. Then I went to the garden and entered the pavilion, where I found the young lady awaiting me. When she saw me, she rose and kissed me and made me sit in her lap; and we ate and drank and did our desire as before. In the morning, I repeated to her my cousin's verse which was this:—

Ho, lovers all! by Allah say me sooth ✿ What shall he do when Love sore vexeth youth?

When she heard this, her eyes filled with tears and she answered and said:—

Strive he to cure his case, to hide the truth; ✿ Patiently humble self and sue for ruth!

I committed it to memory and returned home rejoicing at having done my cousin's bidding. When I entered the house I found her lying down and my mother at her head weeping over her case; but as soon as I went in to her my mother said to me, "A foul plague on such a cousin! How couldst thou leave the daughter of thy uncle ailing and not ask what ailed her?" But when my cousin saw me she raised her head and sat up and asked me, "O Aziz, didst thou repeat to her the couplet I taught thee?" I answered, "Yes, and when she heard it she wept and recited in answer another couplet which I committed to memory." Quoth my cousin, "Tell it me." I did so; and when she heard it she wept with much weeping and repeated the following verses:—

How shall youth cure the care his life undo'th, ✿ And every day his heart in pieces hew'th?

In sooth he would be patient, but he findeth ✿ Naught save a heart which love with pains imbu'th.

Then added my cousin, "When thou goest to her as of wont, repeat to her also these two couplets which thou hast heard." I replied, "Hearkening and obedience!" and I went at the wonted time, to the garden, where there passed between my mistress and myself what tongue faileth to describe. When I was about to leave her, I repeated to her those two couplets of my cousin's; whereupon the tears streamed from her eyes and she replied:—

If he of patience fail the truth to hide ✿ For him no cure save Death my vision view'th!

321 I committed them to memory and returned home, and when I went in to my cousin I found her fallen into a fit and my mother sitting at her head. When she heard my voice, she opened her eyes and asked, "O Aziz! didst thou repeat the two couplets to her?" whereto I answered, "Yes; but she wept on hearing them and she replied with this couplet beginning, If he of patience fail, to the end." And I repeated it; whereupon my cousin swooned again, and when she came to herself, she recited these two couplets:—

Hearkening, obeying, with my dying mouth ✿ I greet who joy of union ne'er allow'th:

Fair fall all happy loves, and fair befal ✿ The hapless lover dying in his drowth!

Again when it was night, I repaired to the garden as usual where I found the young lady awaiting me. We sat down and ate and drank, after which we did all we wanted and slept till the morning; and, as I was going away, I repeated to her the saying of my cousin. When she heard the couplet she cried out with a loud cry and was greatly moved and exclaimed, "Awáh! Awáh![517] By Allah, she who spake these lines is dead!" Then she wept and said to me, "Woe to thee! How is she who spoke thus related to thee?" Replied I, "She is the daughter of my father's brother." "Thou liest," rejoined she; "by Allah, were she thy cousin, thou hadst borne her the same love as she bore thee! It is thou who hast slain her and may the Almighty kill thee as thou killedst her! By Allah, hadst thou told me thou hadst a cousin, I would not have

admitted thee to my favours!" Quoth I, "Verily it was she who interpreted to me the signs thou madest and it was she who taught me how to come to thee and how I should deal with thee; and, but for her, I should never have been united to thee." She then asked me, "Did thy cousin then know of us?"; and I answered, "Yes;" whereupon she exclaimed, "Allah give thee sorrow of thy youth, even as thou hast sorrowed her youth!" Then she cried to me, "Go now and see after her." So I went 322away troubled at heart, and ceased not walking till I reached our street, when I heard sounds of wailing, and asking about it, was answered, "Azizah, we found her dead behind the door." I entered the house, and when my mother saw me, she said, "Her death lieth heavy on thy neck and may Allah not acquit thee of her blood!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred-and-twentieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued to Taj al-Muluk:—So I entered the house and when my mother saw me she said, "Her death lieth heavy on thy neck and may Allah not acquit thee of her blood! A plague on such a cousin!" Then came my father, and we laid her out and gat ready her bier and buried her; and we had recitations of the whole Koran over her tomb and we abode by her grave three days, after which we returned to our home, and I grieving for her grievously. Then my mother came to me and said, "I would fain know what thou didst to her, to break her heart[518] for, O my son, I questioned her at all times of the cause of her complaint, but she would tell me nothing nor let me know aught of it. So Allah upon thee, tell me what thou hast been doing to her that she died." Quoth I, "I did nothing." Quoth my mother, "Allah avenge her on thee! Verily she told me naught, but kept her secret till she died of her love-longings for thee; but when she died I was with her and she opened her eyes and said to me:—O wife of my uncle, may Allah hold thy son guiltless of my blood and punish him not for what he hath done by me! And now Allah transporteth me from the house of the world which is perishable to the house of the other world which is eternal. Said I, O my daughter, Allah preserve thee and preserve thy youth! And as I questioned her of the cause of her illness, she made me no answer; but she smiled and said, O wife of my uncle, bid thy son, whenever he would go whither he goeth every day, repeat these two saws at his going away:—Faith is fair! Unfaith is foul! For this is of my tender affection to him, that I am solicitous concerning him during my lifetime and after my death. Then she gave me somewhat for thee and sware me that I would not give it until I see thee weeping for 323her and lamenting her death. The thing is with me; and, when I have seen thy case as I have said, I will make it over to thee." "Show it me," cried I: but she would not. Then I gave myself up to love-delights and thought no more of my cousin's death: for my mind was unsettled and fain would I have been with my lover the livelong day and night.[519] So hardly had I perceived the darkness fall when I betook myself to the garden, where I found the young lady sitting on coals of fire for

much impatience. As soon as she was sure that she saw me, she ran to me and throwing her arms about my neck, enquired of the daughter of my uncle. I replied, "Sooth to say she is dead, and we have caused Zikr-litanies and recitations of the Koran to be performed for her; and it is now four nights and this be the fifth since she is gone." When she heard that, she shrieked aloud and wept and said, "Did I not tell thee that thou hast slain her? Hadst thou let me know of her before her death, I would have requited her the kindness she did me, in that she served me and united thee to me; for without her, we had never foregathered, we twain, and I fear lest some calamity befal thee because of thy sin against her." Quoth I, "She acquitted me of offence ere she died;" and I repeated to her what my mother had told me. Quoth she, "Allah upon thee! when thou returnest to thy mother, learn what thing she keepeth for thee." I rejoined, "My mother also said to me:—Before the daughter of thy uncle died, she laid a charge upon me, saying, Whenever thy son would go whither he is wont to go, teach him these two saws, Faith is fair; Unfaith is foul!" When my lady heard this she exclaimed, "The mercy of Almighty Allah be upon her! Indeed, she hath delivered thee from me, for I minded to do thee a mischief, but now I will not harm thee nor trouble thee." I wondered at this and asked her, "What then wast thou minded to do with me in time past and we two being in bond of love?" Answered she, "Thou art infatuated with me; for thou art young in life and a raw laddie; thy heart is void of guile and thou weetest not our malice and deceit. Were she yet alive, she would protect thee; for she is the cause of thy preservation and she hath delivered thee from destruction. And now I charge thee speak not with any woman, neither accost one of our sex, be she young or be she old; and again I say Beware! for thou art simple and raw and knowest not 324 the wiles of women and their malice, and she who interpreted the signs to thee is dead. And indeed I fear for thee, lest thou fall into some disgrace and find none to deliver thee from it, now that the daughter of thy uncle is no more."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued to Taj al-Muluk:—Then the young lady said to me, "I fear for thee lest thou fall into some disgrace and find none to deliver thee from it. Alas for thy cousin and ah, the pity of her! Would I had known her before her death, that I might have requited by waiting upon her the fair service she did me. The mercy of Allah Almighty be upon her, for she kept her secret and revealed not what she suffered, and but for her thou hadst never foregathered with me; no, never! But there is one thing I desire of thee." I asked, "What is it?"; and she answered, "It is that thou bring me to her grave, that I may visit her in the tomb wherein she is and write some couplets thereon." I rejoined, "To-morrow, if Allah please!"[520] I slept with her that night, and she ceased not saying after every hour, "Would thou hadst told me of thy cousin before her death!" And I

asked her, "What is the meaning of the two saws she taught me? Faith is fair! Unfaith is foul?" But she made no answer. As soon as it was day she rose and, taking a purse of gold pieces, said to me, "Come, show me her tomb, that I may visit it and grave some verses thereon and build a dome over it and commend her to Allah's mercy and bestow these dinars in alms for her soul." I replied, "To hear is to obey!"; and walked on before her, whilst she followed me, giving alms as she went and saying to all upon whom she lavisht bounty, "This is an alms for the soul of Azizah, who kept her counsel till she drank the cup of death and never told the secret of her love." And she stinted not thus to give alms and say, "For Azizah's soul," till the purse was empty and we came to the grave. And when she looked at the tomb, she wept and threw herself on it; then, pulling out a chisel of steel and a light hammer, she graved therewith upon the head-stone in fine small characters these couplets:—

325 I past by a broken tomb amid a garth right sheen, ✿ Whereon seven blooms of Nu'uman[521] glowed with cramoisie;

Quoth I, "Who sleepeth in this tomb?" Quoth answering Earth ✿ "Before a lover Hades-tombed[522] bend reverently!"

Quoth I, "May Allah help thee, O thou slain of Love, ✿ And grant thee home in Heaven and Paradise-height to see!"

Hapless are lovers all e'en tombèd in their tombs, ✿ Where amid living folk the dust weighs heavily!

Fain would I plant a garden blooming round thy grave, ✿ And water every flower with tear-drops flowing free!

Then she turned away in tears and I with her and returned to the garden where she said to me, "By Allah! I conjure thee never leave me!" "To hear is to obey," replied I. Then I gave myself wholly up to her and paid her frequent visits: she was good and generous to me; and as often as I passed the night with her, she would make much of me and would ask me of the two saws my cousin Azizah told my mother and I would repeat them to her. And matters ceased not to be on this wise and I continued for a whole year eating and drinking and enjoying dalliance and wearing change of rich raiment until I waxed gross and fat, so that I lost all thought of sorrowing and mourning, and I clean forgot my cousin Azizah. And on New Year's day I went to the bath, where I refreshed myself and put on a suit of sumptuous clothes; then coming out I drank a cup of wine and smelt the scent of my new gear which was perfumed with various essences; and my breast was broadened thereby, for I knew not the tricks of Fate nor the changing ways of Time. When the hour of night-prayer came, I was minded to repair to my lover; but, being the worse for wine, I knew not when going to her whither I went, so my drunkenness turned me into a by-street called Syndic Street;[523] and the while I walked up that street behold, I caught sight of an old woman faring with a lighted taper in one hand, and in the other 326 a folded letter.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant, whose name was Aziz, continued to Taj al-Muluk:—And when I entered the street called Syndic Street behold, I caught sight of an old woman walking with a lighted taper in one hand and in the other a folded letter and I drew near her and lo! she was weeping and repeating these couplets:—

O glad-news bearer well come! Welcome! Hail! ✿ How sweet thy speech to me, what treat thy tale:

O messenger from him whose weal I love, ✿ God bless thee long as breathes soft morning-gale!

Now when she saw me she asked, "O my son! canst thou read?"; and I answered, of my officiousness, "Yes, old naunty!" Rejoined she, "Then take this letter and read it to me." And when she handed it to me, I took it and unfolding it read it to her and behold it was from an absent man to his friends and lovers whom he greeted; and, when she heard its purport, she rejoiced at the good tidings and blessed me, saying, "Allah dispel thine anxiety, even as thou hast dispelled mine!" Then she took the letter and walked on. Meanwhile, I was urged by a call of nature and sat down on my heels to make water.[524] When I had ended I stood up and wiped the orifice with a pebble and then, letting down my clothes, I was about to wend my way, when suddenly the old woman came up to me again and, bending down over my hand, kissed it and said, "O my master! the Lord give thee joy of thy youth! I entreat thee to walk with me a few steps as far as yonder door, for I told them 327 what thou didst read to me of the letter, and they believe me not; so come with me two steps and read them the letter from behind the door and accept the prayers of a righteous woman." I enquired, "What is the history of this letter?", and she replied, "O my son, this letter is from my son, who hath been absent for a term of ten years. He set out with a stock of merchandise and tarried long in foreign parts, till we lost hope of him and supposed him to be dead. Now after all that delay cometh this letter from him, and he hath a sister who weepeth for him night and day; so I said to her, He is well and all right. But she will not believe me and declares, There is no help but thou bring me one who will read this letter in my presence, that my heart may be at rest and my mind at ease. Thou knowest, O my son, that all who love are wont to think evil: so be good enough to go with me and read to her this letter, standing behind the curtain, whilst I call his sister to listen within the door, so shalt thou dispel our heed and fulfil our need. Verily quoth the Apostle of Allah (whom Allah bless and preserve!):—Whoso easeth the troubled of one of the troubles of this troublous world, Allah will ease him of an hundred troubles; and according to another tradition:—Whoso easeth his brother of one of the troubles of this troublous world, Allah shall relieve him of seventy-and-two troubles on the Day of Resurrection. And I have betaken myself to thee; so disappoint me not." Replied I, "To hear is to obey; do thou go before me!" So she walked on devancing me and I followed her a little way, till she came to the gate of a large and handsome mansion whose door was plated with copper.[525] I stood behind the door, whilst the old woman cried out in Persian, and ere I knew it a damsel ran up with light

and nimble step. She had tucked up her trousers to her knees, so that I saw a pair of calves that confounded thinker and sighter, and the maid herself was as saith the poet describing her:—



O thou who barest leg-calf, better to suggest ✿ For passion-madded amourist better things above!
Towards its lover doth the bowl go round and run; ✿ Cup[526] and cup-bearer only drive us daft with love.[527]

328Now these legs were like two pillars of alabaster adorned with anklets of gold, wherein were set stones of price. And the damsel had tucked up the end of her gown under her arm-pit and had rolled up her sleeves to the elbow, so that I could see her white wrists whereon were two pairs of bracelets with clasps of great pearls; and round her neck was a collar of costly gems. Her ears were adorned with pendants of pearls and on her head she wore a kerchief[528] of brocade, brand-new and broidered with jewels of price. And she had thrust the skirt of her shift into her trousers-string being busy with some household business. So when I saw her in this undress, I was confounded at her beauty, for she was like a shining sun. Then she said, with soft, choice speech, never heard I sweeter, "O my mother! is this he who cometh to read the letter?" "It is," replied the old woman; and she put out her hand to me with the letter. Now between her and the door was a distance of about half a rod[529]; so I stretched forth my hand to take the letter from her and thrust head and shoulders within the door, thinking to draw near her and read the letter when, before I knew what her design was, the old woman butted her head against my back and pushed me forwards with the letter in my hand, so that ere I could take thought I found myself in the middle of the hall far beyond the vestibule. Then she entered, faster than a flash of blinding leven, and had naught to do but to shut the door.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth Aziz pursued to Taj al-Muluk:—When the old woman pushed me forwards I found myself, ere I could think, inside the vestibule; and the old woman entered faster than a flash of blinding leven and had naught to do but to shut the door. When the girl saw me in the vestibule, she came up to me and strained me to her bosom, and threw me to the floor; then she sat astraddle upon my breast and kneaded my belly with her fingers, till I well-nigh lost 329my senses. Thereupon she took me by the hand and led me, unable to resist for the violence of her pressure, through seven vestibules, whilst the old woman forewent us with the lighted candle, till we came to a great saloon with four estrades whereon a horseman might play Polo.[530] Here she released me, saying, "Open thine eyes." So I opened them still giddy for the excess of her embracing and pressing, and saw that the whole saloon was built of the finest marbles and alabasters, and all its furniture was of silk and brocade even to the cushions and mattrasses. Therein also were two benches of yellow brass and a couch of red gold, set with pearls and precious stones, befitting none save Kings like thyself. And off the saloon were smaller sitting rooms; and the whole place was redolent of wealth. Then she asked, "O Aziz, which is liefer to thee life or death?" "Life," answered I; and she said, "If life be liefer to thee, marry me." Quoth I, "Indeed I should hate to marry the like of thee." Quoth she, "If thou marry me thou wilt at least be safe from the daughter of Dalílah the Wily One."[531] I asked, "And who be that daughter of the Wily One?" Whereupon

she laughed and replied, "'Tis she who hath companied with thee this day for a year and four months (may the Almighty destroy and afflict her with one worse than herself!). By Allah, there liveth not a more perfidious than she. How many men hath she not slain before thee and what deeds hath she not done. Nor can I understand how thou hast been all the time in her company, yet she hath not killed thee nor done thee a mischief." When I heard her words, I marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, "O my lady, who made thee to know her?" 330 Said she, "I know her as the age knoweth its calamities; but now I would fain have thee tell me all that hath passed between you two, that I may ken the cause of thy deliverance from her." So I told her all that had happened between us, including the story of my cousin Azizah. She expressed her pity when she heard of the death, and her eyes ran over with tears and she clapt hand on hand and cried out, "Her youth was lost on Allah's way,[532] and may the Lord bless thee for her good works! By Allah, O Aziz, she who died for thee was the cause of thy preservation from the daughter of Dalilah the Wily; and, but for her, thou hadst been lost. And now she is dead I fear for thee from the Crafty One's perfidy and mischief; but my throat is choking and I cannot speak." Quoth I, "Ay, by Allah: all this happened even as thou sayest." And she shook her head and cried, "There liveth not this day the like of Azizah." I continued, "And on her death bed she bade me repeat to my lover these two saws:—Faith is fair! Unfaith is foul!" When she heard me say this, she exclaimed, "O Aziz, by Allah, those same words saved thee from dying by her hand; and now my heart is at ease for thee from her, for she will never kill thee; and the daughter of thy uncle preserved thee during her lifetime and after her death. By Allah, I have desired thee day after day, but could not get at thee till this time when I tricked thee and outwitted thee; for thou art a raw youth[533] and knowest not the wiles of young women nor the deadly guile of old women." Rejoined I, "No, by Allah!" Then said she to me, "Be of good cheer and eyes clear; the dead hath found Allah's grace, and the live shall be in good case. Thou art a handsome youth and I do not desire thee but according to the ordinance of Allah and His Apostle (on whom be salutation and salvation!). Whatever thou requirest of money and stuff, thou shalt have forthright without stint, and I will not impose any toil on thee, no, never!; for there is with me always bread baked hot and water in pot. All I need of thee is that thou do with me even as the cock doth." I asked, "And what doth the cock?" Upon this she laughed and clapped her hands and fell over on her back for excess of merriment: then she sat up and smiled and said, "O light of my eyes, really dost thou not know what cock's duty is?" "No, by Allah!" replied I, 331 and she, "The cock's duty is to eat and drink and tread." I was abashed at her words and asked, "Is that the cock's duty?" "Yes," answered she; "and all I ask of thee now is to gird thy loins and strengthen thy will and futter thy best." Then she clapped her hands and cried out, saying, "O my mother, bring forward those who are with thee." And behold, in came the old woman accompanied by four lawful witnesses, and carrying a veil of silk.

Then she lighted four candles, whilst the witnesses saluted me and sat down; and the girl veiled herself with the veil and deputed one of them to execute the contract on her behalf. So they wrote out the marriage-bond and she testified to have received the whole sum settled upon her, both the half in advance and the half in arrears; and that she was indebted to me in the sum of ten thousand dirhams.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant continued to Taj al-Muluk:—When they wrote out the marriage-contract, she testified to having received the whole sum settled upon her, the half in advance and the half in arrears and that she was indebted to me in the sum of ten thousand dirhams. She paid the witnesses their wage and they withdrew whence they came. Thereupon she arose and cast off her clothes and stood in a chemise of fine silk edged with gold-lace, after which she took off her trousers and seized my hand and led me up to the couch, saying, "There is no sin in a lawful put-in." She lay down on the couch outspread upon her back; and, drawing me on to her breast, heaved a sigh and followed it up with a wriggle by way of being coy. Then she pulled up the shift above her breasts, and when I saw her in this pose, I could not withhold myself from thrusting it into her, after I had sucked her lips, whilst she whimpered and shammed shame and wept when no tears came, and then said she, "O my beloved, do it, and do thy best!" Indeed the case reminded me of his saying, who said:—

When I drew up her shift from the roof of her coynte, ✿ I found it as strait as my mind and my money:

So I drove it half-way, and she sighed a loud sigh: ✿ Quoth I, "Why this sigh?": "For the rest of it, honey!"

332 And she repeated, "O my beloved, let the finish be made for I am thine handmaid. My life on thee, up with it! give it me, all of it! that I may take it in my hand and thrust it into my very vitals!" And she ceased not to excite me with sobs and sighs and amorous cries in the intervals of kissing and clasping until amid our murmurs of pleasure we attained the supreme delight and the term we had in sight. We slept together till the morning, when I would have gone out; but lo! she came up to me, laughing, and said, "So! So! thinkest thou that going into the Hammam is the same as going out?[534] Dost thou deem me to be the like of the daughter of Dalilah the Wily One? Beware of such a thought, for thou art my husband by contract and according to law. If thou be drunken return to thy right mind, and know that the house wherein thou art openeth but one day in every year. Go down and look at the great door." So I arose and went down and found the door locked and nailed up and returned and told her of the locking and nailing. "O Aziz," said she, "We have in this house flour, grain, fruits and pomegranates; sugar, meat, sheep, poultry and so forth enough for many years; and the door will not be opened till after the lapse of a whole twelvemonth and well I weet thou shalt not find thyself without this house till then." Quoth I, "There is no Majesty, and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" "And how

can this harm thee," rejoined she; "seeing thou knowest cock's duty, whereof I told thee?" Then she laughed and I laughed too, and I conformed to what she said and abode with her, doing cock's duty and eating and drinking and futtering for a year of full twelve months, during which time she conceived by me, and I was blessed with a babe by her. On the New Year's day I heard the door opened and behold, men came in with cates and flour and sugar. Upon this, I would have gone out but my wife said, "Wait till supper-tide and go out even as thou camest in." So I waited till the hour of night-prayer and was about to go forth in fear and trembling, when she stopped me, saying, "By Allah, I will not let thee go until thou swear to come back this night before the closing of the door." I agreed to this, and she swore me a solemn oath on Blade and Book,[535] and the oath of divorce to boot, that I would return to her. Then I left her and 333going straight to the garden, found the door open as usual; whereat I was angry and said to myself, "I have been absent this whole year and come here unawares and find the place open as of wont! I wonder is the damsel still here as before? I needs must enter and see before I go to my mother, more by reason that it is now nightfall." So I entered the flower-garden——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

Shahrazad continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Aziz pursued to Taj al-Muluk:—Then I entered the flower-garden and made for the pavilion, where I found the daughter of Dalilah, the Wily One, sitting with head on knee and hand to cheek. Her colour was changed and her eyes were sunken; but, when she saw me, she exclaimed, "Praised be Allah for thy safety!" And she was minded to rise but fell down for joy. I was abashed before her and hung my head; presently, however, I went up to her and kissed her and asked, "How knewest thou that I should come to thee this very night?" She answered, "I knew it not! By Allah, this whole year past I have not tasted the taste of sleep, but have watched through every night, expecting thee; and such hath been my case since the day thou wentest out from me and I gave thee the new suit of clothes, and thou promisedst me to go to the Hammam and to come back! So I sat awaiting thee that night and a second night and a third night; but thou camest not till after so great delay, and I ever expecting thy coming; for this is lovers' way. And now I would have thee tell me what hath been the cause of thine absence from me the past year long?" So I told her. And when she knew that I was married, her colour waxed yellow, and I added, "I have come to thee this night but I must leave thee before day." Quoth she, "Doth it not suffice her that she tricked thee into marrying her and kept thee prisoner with her a whole year, but she must also make thee swear by the oath of divorce, that thou wilt return to her on the same night before morning, and not allow thee to divert thyself with thy mother or me, nor suffer thee to pass one night with either of us, away from her? How then must it be with one from whom thou hast been absent a full year, and I knew thee before she did? But Allah have mercy on thy cousin Azizah, for there befel her what never befel any and she bore what none other ever bore and she died by thy ill-usage; yet 'twas she who protected thee against me. Indeed, I thought thou didst love me, so I let thee take thine own way; else had I not suffered thee to go safe in a sound skin, when I had it in my power to clap thee in jail and even to slay thee." Then she wept with sore weeping and waxed wroth and shuddered in 2 my face with skin bristling[1] and looked at me with furious eyes. When I saw her in this case I was terrified at her and my side-muscles trembled and quivered, for she was like a dreadful she-Ghul, an ogress in ire, and I like a bean over the fire. Then said she, "Thou art of no use to me, now thou art married and hast a child; nor art thou any longer fit for my company; I care only for bachelors and not for married men:[2] these profit us nothing. Thou hast sold me for yonder stinking armful; but, by Allah, I will make the whore's heart ache for thee, and thou shalt not live either for me or for her!" Then she cried a loud cry and, ere I could think, up came the slave-girls and threw me on the ground; and when I was helpless under their hands she rose and, taking a knife, said, "I will cut thy throat as they slaughter he-goats; and that will be less than thy desert, for thy doings to me and the daughter of thy uncle before me. When I looked to my life and found myself at the

mercy of her slave-women, with my cheeks dust-soiled, and saw her sharpen the knife, I made sure of death"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan thus continued his tale to Zau al-Makan:—Then quoth the youth Aziz to Taj al-Muluk, Now when I found my life at the mercy of her slave-women with my cheeks dust-soiled, and I saw her sharpen the knife, I made sure of death and cried out to her for mercy. But she only redoubled in ferocity and ordered the slave-girls to pinion my hands behind me, which they did; and, throwing me on my back, she seated herself on my middle and held down my head. Then two of them came up and squatted on my shin-bones, whilst other two grasped my hands and arms; and she summoned a third pair and bade them beat me. So they beat me till I fainted and my voice failed. When I revived, I said to myself, "'Twere easier and better for me to have my gullet slit than to be beaten on this wise!" And I remembered the words of my cousin, and how she used to say to me, "Allah, keep thee 3from her mischief!"; and I shrieked and wept till my voice failed and I remained without power to breathe or to move. Then she again whetted the knife and said to the slave-girls, "Uncover him." Upon this the Lord inspired me to repeat to her the two phrases my cousin had taught me, and had bequeathed to me, and I said, "O my lady, dost thou not know that Faith is fair, Unfaith is foul?" When she heard this, she cried out and said, "Allah pity thee, Azizah, and give thee Paradise in exchange for thy wasted youth! By Allah, of a truth she served thee in her lifetime and after her death, and now she hath saved thee alive out of my hands with these two saws. Nevertheless, I cannot by any means leave thee thus, but needs must I set my mark on thee, to spite yonder brazen-faced piece, who hath kept thee from me." Thereupon she called out to the slave-women and bade them bind my feet with cords and then said to them, "Take seat on him!" They did her bidding, upon which she arose and fetched a pan of copper and hung it over the brazier and poured into it oil of sesame, in which she fried cheese.[3] Then she came up to me (and I still insensible) and, unfastening my bag-trousers, tied a cord round my testicles and, giving it to two of her women, bade them hawl at it. They did so, and I swooned away and was for excess of pain in a world other than this. Then she came with a razor of steel and cut off my member masculine,[4] so that I remained like a woman: after which she seared the wound with the boiling oil and rubbed it with a powder, and I the while unconscious. Now when I came to myself, the blood had stopped; so she bade the slave-girls unbind me and made me drink a cup of wine. Then said she to me, "Go now to her whom thou hast married and who grudged me a single night, and the mercy of Allah be on thy cousin Azizah, who saved thy life and never told her secret love! Indeed, haddest thou not repeated those words to me, I had surely slit thy weasand. Go forth this instant to whom thou wilt, for I 4needed naught

of thee save what I have just cut off; and now I have no part in thee, nor have I any further want of thee or care for thee. So begone about thy business and rub thy head[5] and implore mercy for the daughter of thine uncle!" Thereupon she kicked me with her foot and I rose, hardly able to walk; and I went, little by little, till I came to the door of our house. I saw it was open, so I threw myself within it and fell down in a fainting-fit; whereupon my wife came out and lifting me up, carried me into the saloon and assured herself that I had become like a woman. Then I fell into a sleep and a deep sleep; and when I awoke, I found myself thrown down at the garden gate,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan pursued to King Zau al-Makan, The youth Aziz thus continued his story to Taj al-Muluk:—When I awoke and found myself thrown down at the garden-gate, I rose, groaning for pain and misery, and made my way to our home and entering, I came upon my mother weeping for me, and saying, "Would I knew, O my son, in what land art thou!" So I drew near and threw myself upon her, and when she looked at me and felt me, she knew that I was ill; for my face was coloured black and tan. Then I thought of my cousin and all the kind offices she had been wont to do me, and I learned when too late that she had truly loved me; so I wept for her and my mother wept also. Presently she said to me, "O my son, thy sire is dead." At this my fury against Fate redoubled, and I cried till I fell into a fit. When I came to myself, I looked at the place where my cousin Azizah had been used to sit and shed tears anew, till I all but fainted once more for excess of weeping; and I ceased not to cry and sob and wail till midnight, when my mother said to me, "Thy father hath been dead these ten days." "I shall never think of any one but my cousin Azizah," replied I; "and indeed I deserve all that hath befallen me, for that I neglected her who loved me with love so dear." Asked she, "What hath befallen thee?" So I told her all that had happened and she wept awhile, then she rose and set some matter of meat and drink before me. I ate a little and drank, after which I repeated my story to her, and told her the whole occurrence; whereupon she exclaimed, "Praised be Allah, that she did but this to thee and forbore to slaughter thee!" Then she nursed me and medicined me till I regained my health; and, when my recovery was complete, she said to me, "O my son, I will now bring out to thee that which thy cousin committed to me in trust for thee; for it is thine. She swore me not to give it thee, till I should see thee recalling her to mind and weeping over her and thy connection severed from other than herself; and now I know that these conditions are fulfilled in thee." So she arose, and opening a chest, took out this piece of linen, with the figures of gazelles worked thereon, which I had given to Azizah in time past; and taking it I found written therein these couplets:—

Lady of beauty, say, who taught thee hard and harsh design, ✿ To slay with longing Love's excess this hapless lover thine?

An thou fain disremember me beyond our parting day, ✿ Allah will know, that thee and thee my memory never shall tyne.

Thou blamest me with bitter speech yet sweetest 'tis to me; ✿ Wilt generous be and deign one day to show of love a sign?

I had not reckoned Love contained so much of pine and pain; ✿ And soul distress until I came for thee to pain and pine;

Never my heart knew weariness, until that eve I fell ✿ In love wi' thee, and prostrate fell before those glancing eyne!

My very foes have mercy on my case and moan therefor; ✿ But thou, O heart of Indian steel, all mercy dost decline.

No, never will I be consoled, by Allah, an I die, ✿ Nor yet forget the love of thee though life in ruins lie!

When I read these couplets, I wept with sore weeping and buffeted my face; then I unfolded the scroll, and there fell from it another paper. I opened it and behold, I found written therein, "Know, O son of my uncle, that I acquit thee of my blood and I beseech Allah to make accord between thee and her whom thou lovest; but if aught befal thee through the daughter of Dalilah the Wily, return thou not to her neither resort to any other woman and patiently bear thine affliction, for were not thy fated life-tide a long life, thou hadst perished long ago; but praised be Allah who hath appointed my death-day before thine! My peace be upon thee; preserve this cloth with the gazelles herein figured and let it not leave thee, for it was my companion when thou was absent 6 from me;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan pursued to King Zau al-Makan, And the youth Aziz continued to Taj al-Muluk:—So I read what my cousin had written and the charge to me which was, "Preserve this cloth with the gazelles and let it not leave thee, for it was my companion when thou wast absent from me and, Allah upon thee! if thou chance to fall in with her who worked these gazelles, hold aloof from her and do not let her approach thee nor marry her; and if thou happen not on her and find no way to her, look thou consort not with any of her sex. Know that she who wrought these gazelles worketh every year a gazelle-cloth and despatcheth it to far countries, that her report and the beauty of her broidery, which none in the world can match, may be bruited abroad. As for thy beloved, the daughter of Dalilah the Wily, this cloth came to her hand, and she used to ensnare folk with it, showing it to them and saying, I have a sister who wrought this. But she lied in so saying, Allah rend her veil! This is my parting counsel; and I have not charged thee with this charge, but because I know[6] that after my death the world will be straitened on thee and, haply, by reason of this, thou wilt leave thy native land and

wander in foreign parts, and hearing of her who wrought these figures, thou mayest be minded to foregather with her. Then wilt thou remember me, when the memory shall not avail thee; nor wilt thou know my worth till after my death. And, lastly, learn that she who wrought the gazelles is the daughter of the King of the Camphor Islands and a lady of the noblest." Now when I had read that scroll and understood what was written therein, I fell again to weeping, and my mother wept because I wept, and I ceased not to gaze upon it and to shed tears till nightfall. I abode in this condition a whole year, at the end of which the merchants, with whom I am in this cafilah, prepared to set out from my native town; and my mother counselled me to equip myself and journey with them, so haply I might be consoled and my sorrow be dispelled, saying, "Take comfort and put away from thee this mourning and travel for a year or two 7or three, till the caravan return, when perhaps thy breast may be broadened and thy heart heartened." And she ceased not to persuade me with endearing words, till I provided myself with merchandise and set out with the caravan. But all the time of my wayfaring, my tears have never dried; no, never! and at every halting place where we halt, I open this piece of linen and look on these gazelles and call to mind my cousin Azizah and weep for her as thou hast seen; for indeed she loved me with dearest love and died, oppressed by my unlove. I did her nought but ill and she did me nought but good. When these merchants return from their journey, I shall return with them, by which time I shall have been absent a whole year: yet hath my sorrow waxed greater and my grief and affliction were but increased by my visit to the Islands of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal. Now these islands are seven in number and are ruled by a King, by name Shahriman,[7] who hath a daughter called Dunyá;[8] and I was told that it was she who wrought these gazelles and that this piece in my possession was of her embroidery. When I knew this, my yearning redoubled and I burnt with the slow fire of pining and was drowned in the sea of sad thought; and I wept over myself for that I was become even as a woman, without manly tool like other men, and there was no help for it. From the day of my quitting the Camphor Islands, I have been tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted, and such hath been my case for a long while and I know not whether it will be given me to return to my native land and die beside my mother or not; for I am sick from eating too much of the world. Thereupon the young merchant wept and groaned and complained and gazed upon the gazelles; whilst the tears rolled down his cheeks in streams and he repeated these two couplets:—

"Joy needs shall come," a prattler 'gan to prattle: ✿ "Needs cease thy blame!" I was commoved to rattle:

"In time," quoth he: quoth I "'Tis marvellous! ✿ Who shall ensure my life, O cold of tattle!"[9]

8And he repeated also these:—

Well Allah weets that since our severance-day ✿ I've wept till forced to ask of tears a loan:

"Patience! (the blamer cries): thou'lt have her yet!" ✿ Quoth I, "O blamer where may patience wone?"

Then said he, "This, O King! is my tale: hast thou ever heard one stranger?" So Taj al-Muluk marvelled with great marvel at the young merchant's story, and fire darted into his entrails on hearing the name of the Lady Dunya and her loveliness. ——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan continued to Zau al-Makan:—Now when Taj al-Muluk heard the story of the young merchant, he marvelled with great marvel and fire darted into his entrails on hearing the name of the Lady Dunya who, as he knew, had embroidered the gazelles; and his love and longing hourly grew, so he said to the youth, "By Allah, that hath befallen thee whose like never befel any save thyself, but thou hast a life-term appointed, which thou must fulfil; and now I would fain ask of thee a question." Quoth Aziz, "And what is it?" Quoth he, "Wilt thou tell me how thou sawest the young lady who wrought these gazelles?" Then he, "O my lord, I got me access to her by a sleight and it was this. When I entered her city with the caravan, I went forth and wandered about the garths till I came to a flower-garden abounding in trees, whose keeper was a venerable old man, a Shaykh stricken in years. I addressed him, saying, O ancient sir, whose may be this garden? and he replied, It belongs to the King's daughter, the Lady Dunya. We are now beneath her palace and, when she is minded to amuse herself, she openeth the private wicket and walketh in the garden and smelleth the fragrance of the flowers. So I said to him, Favour me by allowing me to sit in this garden till she come; haply I may enjoy a sight of her as she passeth. The Shaykh answered, There can be no harm in that. Thereupon I gave him a dirham or so and said to him, Buy us something to eat. He took the money gladly and opened the door and, entering himself, admitted me into the garden, where we strolled and ceased not strolling till we reached a pleasant spot in which he bade me sit down and await his going and his returning. Then he brought me somewhat of fruit and, leaving me, disappeared for an hour; but after a while he returned to me bringing a roasted lamb, of which we ate till we had eaten enough, my heart yearning the while for a sight of the lady. Presently, as we sat, the postern opened and the keeper said to me, Rise and hide thee. I did so; and behold, a black eunuch put his head out through the garden-wicket and asked, O Shaykh, is there any one with thee? No, answered he; and the eunuch said, Shut the garden gate. So the keeper shut the gate, and lo! the Lady Dunya came in by the private door. When I saw her, methought the moon had risen above the horizon and was shining; so I looked at her a full hour and longed for her as one athirst longeth for water. After a while she withdrew and shut the door; whereupon I left the garden and sought my lodging, knowing that I could not get at her and that I was no man for her, more especially as I was become like a woman, having no manly tool: moreover she was a King's daughter and I but a merchant man; so how could I have access to the like of her or—to any other woman? Accordingly, when these my companions made ready

for the road, I also made preparation and set out with them, and we journeyed towards this city till we arrived at the place where we met with thee. Thou askest me and I have answered; and these are my adventures and peace be with thee!" Now when Taj al-Muluk heard that account, fires raged in his bosom and his heart and thought were occupied with love for the Lady Dunya; and passion and longing were sore upon him. Then he arose and mounted horse and, taking Aziz with him, returned to his father's capital, where he settled him in a separate house and supplied him with all he needed in the way of meat and drink and dress. Then he left him and returned to his palace, with the tears trickling down his cheeks, for hearing oftentimes standeth in stead of seeing and knowing.[10] And he ceased not to be in this state till his father came in to him and finding him wan-faced, lean of limb and tearful-eyed, knew that something had occurred to chagrin him and said, "O my son, acquaint me with thy case and tell me what hath befallen thee, that thy colour is changed and thy body 10 is wasted." So he told him all that had passed and what tale he had heard of Aziz and the account of the Princess Dunya; and how he had fallen in love of her on hearsay, without having set eyes on her. Quoth his sire, "O my son, she is the daughter of a King whose land is far from ours: so put away this thought and go in to thy mother's palace"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan continued to Zau al-Makan:—And the father of Taj al-Muluk spake to him on this wise, "O my son, her father is a King whose land is far from ours: so put away this thought and go into thy mother's palace where are five hundred maidens like moons, and whichsoever of them pleaseth thee, take her; or else we will seek for thee in marriage some one of the King's daughters, fairer than the Lady Dunya." Answered Taj al-Muluk, "O my father, I desire none other, for she it is who wrought the gazelles which I saw, and there is no help but that I have her; else I will flee into the wold and the waste and I will slay myself for her sake." Then said his father, "Have patience with me, till I send to her sire and demand her in marriage, and win thee thy wish as I did for myself with thy mother. Haply Allah will bring thee to thy desire; and, if her parent will not consent, I will make his kingdom quake under him with an army, whose rear shall be with me whilst its van shall be upon him." Then he sent for the youth Aziz and asked him, "O my son, tell me dost thou know the way to the Camphor Islands?" He answered "Yes"; and the King said, "I desire of thee that thou fare with my Wazir thither." Replied Aziz, "I hear and I obey, O King of the Age!"; whereupon the King summoned his Minister and said to him, "Devise me some device, whereby my son's affair may be rightly managed, and fare thou forth to the Camphor Islands and demand of their King his daughter in marriage for my son, Taj al-Muluk." The Wazir replied, "Hearkening and obedience." Then Taj al-Muluk returned to his dwelling-place and his love and longing redoubled and the delay seemed endless to him; and

when the night darkened around him, he wept and sighed and complained and repeated this poetry:—

11 Dark falls the night: my tears unaided rail ✿ And fiercest flames of love my heart assail:
Ask thou the nights of me, and they shall tell ✿ An I find aught to do but weep and wail:
Night-long awake, I watch the stars what while ✿ Pour down my cheeks the tears like dropping hail:
And lone and lorn I'm grown with none to aid; ✿ For kith and kin the love-lost lover fail.

And when he had ended his reciting he swooned away and did not recover his senses till the morning, at which time there came to him one of his father's eunuchs and, standing at his head, summoned him to the King's presence. So he went with him and his father, seeing that his pallor had increased, exhorted him to patience and promised him union with her he loved. Then he equipped Aziz and the Wazir and supplied them with presents; and they set out and fared on day and night till they drew near the Isles of Camphor, where they halted on the banks of a stream, and the Minister despatched a messenger to acquaint the King of his arrival. The messenger hurried forwards and had not been gone more than an hour, before they saw the King's Chamberlains and Emirs advancing towards them, to meet them at a parasang's distance from the city and escort them into the royal presence. They laid their gifts before the King and became his guests for three days. And on the fourth day the Wazir rose and going in to the King, stood between his hands and acquainted him with the object which induced his visit; whereat he was perplexed for an answer inasmuch as his daughter misliked men and disliked marriage. So he bowed his head groundwards awhile, then raised it and calling one of his eunuchs, said to him, "Go to thy mistress, the Lady Dunya, and repeat to her what thou hast heard and the purport of this Wazir's coming." So the eunuch went forth and returning after a time, said to the King, "O King of the Age, when I went in to the Lady Dunya and told her what I had heard, she was wroth with exceeding wrath and rose at me with a staff designing to break my head; so I fled from her, and she said to me:—If my Father force me to wed him, whomsoever I wed I will slay." Then said her sire to the Wazir and Aziz, "Ye have heard, and now ye know all! So let your King wot of it and give him my salutations and say that my daughter misliketh men and disliketh marriage."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

12

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Shahriman thus addressed the Wazir and Aziz, "Salute your King from me and inform him of what ye have heard, namely that my daughter misliketh marriage." So they turned away unsuccessful and ceased not faring on till they rejoined the King and told him what had passed; whereupon he commanded the chief officers to summon the troops and get them ready for marching and campaigning. But the Wazir said to him, "O my

liege Lord, do not thus: the King is not at fault because, when his daughter learnt our business, she sent a message saying, If my father force me to wed, whomsoever I wed I will slay and myself after him. So the refusal cometh from her." When the King heard his Minister's words he feared for Taj al-Muluk and said, "Verily if I make war on the King of the Camphor Islands and carry off his daughter, she will kill herself and it will avail me naught." Then he told his son how the case stood, who hearing it said, "O my father, I cannot live without her; so I will go to her and contrive to get at her, even though I die in the attempt, and this only will I do and nothing else." Asked his father, "How wilt thou go to her?" and he answered, "I will go in the guise of a merchant."[11] Then said the King, "If thou need must go and there is no help for it, take with thee the Wazir and Aziz." Then he brought out money from his treasuries and made ready for his son merchandise to the value of an hundred thousand dinars. The two had settled upon this action; and when the dark hours came Taj al-Muluk and Aziz went to Aziz's lodgings and there passed that night, and the Prince was heart-smitten, taking no pleasure in food or in sleep; for melancholy was heavy upon him and he was agitated with longing for his beloved. So he besought the Creator that he would vouchsafe to unite him with her and he wept and groaned and wailed and began versifying:—

Union, this severance ended, shall I see some day? ✿ Then shall my tears this love-lorn lot of me portray.

While night all care forgets I only minded thee, ✿ And thou didst gar me wake while all forgetful lay.

13 And when his improvising came to an end, he wept with sore weeping and Aziz wept with him, for that he remembered his cousin; and they both ceased not to shed tears till morning dawned, whereupon Taj al-Muluk rose and went to farewell his mother, in travelling dress. She asked him of his case and he repeated the story to her; so she gave him fifty thousand gold pieces and bade him adieu; and, as he fared forth, she put up prayers for his safety and for his union with his lover and his friends. Then he betook himself to his father and asked his leave to depart. The King granted him permission and, presenting him with other fifty thousand dinars, bade set up a tent for him without the city and they pitched a pavilion wherein the travellers abode two days. Then all set out on their journey. Now Taj al-Muluk delighted in the company of Aziz and said to him, "O my brother, henceforth I can never part from thee." Replied Aziz, "And I am of like mind and fain would I die under thy feet: but, O my brother, my heart is concerned for my mother." "When we shall have won our wish," said the Prince, "there will be naught save what is well!" Now the Wazir continued charging Taj al-Muluk to be patient, whilst Aziz entertained him every evening with talk and recited poetry to him and diverted him with histories and anecdotes. And so they fared on diligently night and day for two whole months, till the way became tedious to Taj al-Muluk and the fire of desire redoubled on him; and he broke out:—

The road is longsome; grow my grief and need, ✿ While on my breast love-fires for ever feed:

Goal of my hopes, sole object of my wish! ✿ By him who moulded man from drop o' seed,

I bear such loads of longing for thy love, ✿ Dearest, as weight of al-Shumm Mounts exceed:

O 'Lady of my World,'[12] Love does me die; ✿ No breath of life is left for life to plead;

But for the union-hope that lends me strength, ✿ My weary limbs were weak this way to speed.

When he had finished his verses, he wept (and Aziz wept with him) from a wounded heart, till the Minister was moved to pity by their tears and said, "O my lord, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes clear of tears; there will be naught save what is well!" Quoth Taj al-Muluk, "O Wazir, indeed I am weary of the length 14 of the way. Tell me how far we are yet distant from the city." Quoth Aziz, "But a little way remaineth to us." Then they continued their journey, cutting across river-vales and plains, wolds and stony wastes, till one night, as Taj al-Muluk was sleeping, he dreamt that his beloved was with him and that he embraced her and pressed her to his bosom; and he awoke quivering, shivering with pain, delirious with emotion, and improvised these verses:—

Dear friend, my tears aye flow these cheeks adown, ✿ With longsome pain and pine, my sorrow's crown:

I plain like keening woman child bereft, ✿ And as night falls like widow-dove I groan:

An blow the breeze from land where thou dost wone, ✿ I find o'er sunburnt earth sweet coolness blown.

Peace be wi' thee, my love, while zephyr breathes, ✿ And cushat flies and turtle makes her moan.

And when he had ended his versifying, the Wazir came to him and said, "Rejoice; this is a good sign: so be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for thou shalt surely compass thy desire." And Aziz also came to him and exhorted him to patience and applied himself to divert him, talking with him and telling him tales. So they pressed on, marching day and night, other two months, till there appeared to them one day at sunrise some white thing in the distance and Taj al-Muluk said to Aziz, "What is yonder whiteness?" He replied, "O my lord! yonder is the Castle of Crystal and that is the city thou seekest." At this the Prince rejoiced, and they ceased not faring forwards till they drew near the city and, as they approached it, Taj al-Muluk joyed with exceeding joy, and his care ceased from him. They entered in trader guise, the King's son being habited as a merchant of importance; and repaired to a great Khan, known as the Merchants' Lodging. Quoth Taj al-Muluk to Aziz, "Is this the resort of the merchants?"; and quoth he, "Yes; 'tis the Khan wherein I lodged before." So they alighted there and making their baggage-camels kneel, unloaded them and stored their goods in the warehouses.[13] They abode four days for rest; when the Wazir advised that they should hire a large house. To this they assented and they found them a spacious house, fitted up for festivities, where they took up 15 their abode, and the Wazir and Aziz studied to devise some device for Taj al-Muluk, who remained in a state of perplexity, knowing not what to do. Now the Minister could think of nothing but that he should set up as a merchant on 'Change and in the market of fine stuffs; so he turned to the Prince and his companion and said to them, "Know ye that if we tarry here on this wise, assuredly we shall not win our wish nor attain our aim; but a something occurred to me whereby (if Allah please!) we shall find our advantage."

Replied Taj al-Muluk and Aziz, "Do what seemeth good to thee, indeed there is a blessing on the grey-beard; more specially on those who, like thyself, are conversant with the conduct of affairs: so tell us what occurreth to thy mind." Rejoined the Wazir, "It is my counsel that we hire thee a shop in the stuff-bazar, where thou mayst sit to sell and buy. Every one, great and small, hath need of silken stuffs and other cloths; so if thou patiently abide in thy shop, thine affairs will prosper, Inshallah! more by token as thou art comely of aspect. Make, however, Aziz thy factor and set him within the shop, to hand thee the pieces of cloth and stuffs." When Taj al-Muluk heard these words, he said, "This rede is right and a right pleasant recking." So he took out a handsome suit of merchant's weed, and, putting it on, set out for the bazar, followed by his servants, to one of whom he had given a thousand dinars, wherewith to fit up the shop. They ceased not walking till they came to the stuff-market, and when the merchants saw Taj al-Muluk's beauty and grace, they were confounded and went about saying, "Of a truth Rizwán[14] hath opened the gates of Paradise and left them unguarded, so that this youth of passing comeliness hath come forth." And others, "Peradventure this is one of the angels." Now when they went in among the traders they asked for the shop of the Overseer of the market and the merchants directed them thereto. So they delayed not to repair thither and to salute him, and he and those who were with him rose to them and seated them and made much of them, because of the Wazir, whom they saw to be a man in years and of reverend aspect; and viewing the youths Aziz and Taj al-Muluk in his company, they said to one another, "Doubtless our Shaykh is the father of these two youths." Then quoth the Wazir, "Who among you is the Overseer 16 of the market?" "This is he," replied they; and behold, he came forward and the Wazir observed him narrowly and saw him to be an old man of grave and dignified carriage, with eunuchs and servants and black slaves. The Syndic greeted them with the greeting of friends and was lavish in his attentions to them: then he seated them by his side and asked them, "Have ye any business which we[15] may have the happiness of transacting?" The Minister answered, "Yes; I am an old man, stricken in years, and have with me these two youths, with whom I have travelled through every town and country, entering no great city without tarrying there a full year, that they might take their pleasure in viewing it and come to know its citizens. Now I have visited your town intending to sojourn here for a while; so I want of thee a handsome shop in the best situation, wherein I may establish them, that they may traffic and learn to buy and sell and give and take, whilst they divert themselves with the sight of the place, and become familiar with the usages of its people." Quoth the Overseer, "There is no harm in that;" and, looking at the two youths, he was delighted with them and affected them with a warm affection. Now he was a great connoisseur of bewitching glances, preferring the love of boys to that of girls and inclining to the sour rather than the sweet of love. So he said to himself, "This, indeed, is fine game. Glory be to Him who created and fashioned them out of vile water!"[16] and rising, stood before them like a servant to do them honour. Then he

went out and made ready for them a shop which was in the very midst of the Exchange; nor was there any larger or better in the bazar, for it was spacious and handsomely decorated and fitted with shelves of ivory and ebony wood. After this he delivered the keys to the Wazir, who was dressed as an old merchant, saying, "Take them, O my lord, and Allah make it a blessed abiding-place to thy two sons!" The Minister took the keys and the three returning to the Khan where they had alighted, bade the servants transport to the shop all their goods and stuffs.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

17

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir took the shop keys, he went accompanied by Taj al-Muluk and Aziz to the Khan, and they bade the servants transport to the shop all their goods and stuffs and valuables of which they had great store worth treasures of money. And when all this was duly done, they went to the shop and ordered their stock in trade and slept there that night. As soon as morning morrowed the Wazir took the two young men to the Hammam-bath where they washed them clean; and they donned rich dresses and scented themselves with essences and enjoyed themselves to the utmost. Now each of the youths was passing fair to look upon, and in the bath they were even as saith the poet:—

Luck to the Rubber, whose deft hand o'erflies ✿ A frame begotten twixt the lymph and light:[17]

He shows the thaumaturgy of his craft, ✿ And gathers musk in form of camphor dight.[18]

After bathing they left; and, when the Overseer heard that they had gone to the Hammam, he sat down to await the twain, and presently they came up to him like two gazelles; their cheeks were reddened by the bath and their eyes were darker than ever; their faces shone and they were as two lustrous moons or two branches fruit-laden. Now when he saw them he rose forthright and said to them, "O my sons, may your bath profit you alway!"[19] Whereupon Taj al-Muluk replied, with the sweetest of speech, "Allah be bountiful to thee, O my father; why didst thou not come with us and bathe in our company?" Then they both bent over his right hand and kissed it and walked before him to the shop, to entreat him honourably and show their respect for him, for that he was Chief of the Merchants and the market, and he had done them kindness in giving them the shop. When he saw their hips 18 quivering as they moved, desire and longing redoubled on him; and he puffed and snorted and he devoured them with his eyes, for he could not contain himself, repeating the while these two couplets:—

Here the heart reads a chapter of devotion pure; ✿ Nor reads dispute if Heaven in worship partner take:

No wonder 'tis he trembles walking 'neath such weight! ✿ How much of movement that revolving sphere must make.[20]

Furthermore he said:—

I saw two charmers treading humble earth. ✿ Two I must love an tread they on mine eyes.

When they heard this, they conjured him to enter the bath with them a second time. He could hardly believe his ears and hastening thither, went in with them. The Wazir had not yet left the bath; so when he heard of the Overseer's coming, he came out and meeting him in the middle of the bath-hall invited him to enter. He refused, whereupon Taj al-Muluk taking him by the hand walked on one side and Aziz by the other, and carried him into a cabinet; and that impure old man submitted to them, whilst his emotion increased on him. He would have refused, albeit this was what he desired; but the Minister said to him, "They are thy sons; let them wash thee and cleanse thee." "Allah preserve them to thee!" exclaimed the Overseer, "by Allah your coming and the coming of those with you bring down blessing and good luck upon our city!" And he repeated these two couplets:—

Thou camest and green grew the hills anew; ✿ And sweetest bloom to the bridegroom threw,

While aloud cried Earth and her earth-borns too ✿ 'Hail and welcome who comest with grace to endue.'

They thanked him for this, and Taj al-Muluk ceased not to wash him and Aziz to pour water over him and he thought his soul in Paradise. When they had made an end of his service, he blessed them and sat by the side of the Wazir, talking but gazing the while on the youths. Presently, the servants brought them towels, and they dried themselves and donned their dress. Then they went out, and the Minister turned to the Syndic and said to him, 19"O my lord! verily the bath is the Paradise[21] of this world." Replied the Overseer, "Allah vouchsafe to thee such Paradise, and health to thy sons and guard them from the evil eye! Do ye remember aught that the eloquent have said in praise of the bath?" Quoth Taj al-Muluk, "I will repeat for thee a pair of couplets;" and he recited:—

The life of the bath is the joy of man's life,[22] ✿ Save that time is short for us there to bide:

A Heaven, where irksome it were to stay; ✿ A Hell, delightful at entering-tide.

When he ended his recital, quoth Aziz, "And I also remember two couplets in praise of the bath." The Overseer said, "Let me hear them;" so he repeated the following:—

A house where flowers from stones of granite grow, ✿ Seen at its best when hot with living lowe:

Thou deem'st it Hell but here, forsooth, is Heaven, ✿ And some like suns and moons within it show.

And when he had ended his recital, his verses pleased the Overseer and he wondered at his words and savoured their grace and facundity and said to them, "By Allah, ye possess both beauty and eloquence. But now listen to me, you twain!" And he began chanting, and recited in song the following verses:—

O joy of Hell and Heaven! whose tormentry ✿ Enquickens frame and soul with lively gree:

I marvel so delightsome house to view, ✿ And most when 'neath it kindled fires I see:

Sojourn of bliss to visitors, withal ✿ Pools on them pour down tears unceasingly.

20Then his eye sight roamed and browsed on the gardens of their beauty and he repeated these two couplets:—

I went to the house of the keeper-man; ✿ He was out, but others to smile began:
I entered his Heaven[23] and then his Hell;[24] ✿ And I said "Bless Málik[25] and bless Rizwán."[26]

When they heard these verses they were charmed, and the Overseer invited them to his house; but they declined and returned to their own place, to rest from the great heat of the bath. So they took their ease there and ate and drank and passed that night in perfect solace and satisfaction, till morning dawned, when they arose from sleep and making their lesser ablution, prayed the dawn-prayer and drank the morning draught.[27] As soon as the sun had risen and the shops and markets opened, they arose and going forth from their place to the bazar opened their shop, which their servants had already furnished, after the handsomest fashion, and had spread with prayer-rugs and silken carpets and had placed on the divans a pair of mattresses, each worth an hundred dinars. On every mattress they had disposed a rug of skin fit for a King and edged with a fringe of gold; and a-middlemost the shop stood a third seat still richer, even as the place required. Then Taj al-Muluk sat down on one divan, and Aziz on another, whilst the Wazir seated himself on that in the centre, and the servants stood before them. The city people soon heard of them and crowded about them, so that they sold some of their goods and not a few of their stuffs; for Taj al-Muluk's beauty and loveliness had become the talk of the town. Thus they passed a trifle of time, and every day the people flocked to them and pressed upon them more and 21 more, till the Wazir, after exhorting Taj al-Muluk to keep his secret, commended him to the care of Aziz and went home, that he might commune with himself alone and cast about for some contrivance which might profit them. Meanwhile, the two young men sat talking and Taj al Muluk said to Aziz, "Haply some one will come from the Lady Dunya." So he ceased not expecting this chance days and nights, but his heart was troubled and he knew neither sleep nor rest; for desire had got the mastery of him, and love and longing were sore upon him, so that he renounced the solace of sleep and abstained from meat and drink; yet ceased he not to be like the moon on the night of fullness. Now one day as he sat in the shop, behold, there came up an ancient woman——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Dandan continued to Zau al-Makan:—Now one day as Taj al-Muluk sat in his shop, behold, there appeared an ancient woman, who came up to him followed by two slave girls. She ceased not advancing till she stood before the shop of Taj al-Muluk and, observing his symmetry and beauty and loveliness, marvelled at his charms and sweated in her petticoat trousers, exclaiming, "Glory to Him who created thee out of vile water, and made thee a temptation to all beholders!" And she fixed her eyes on him and said, "This is not a mortal, he is none other than an angel deserving the highest respect."[28] Then she drew near and saluted him, whereupon he returned her salute and rose to his feet to receive

her and smiled in her face (all this by a hint from Aziz); after which he made her sit down by his side and fanned her with a fan, till she was rested and refreshed. Then she turned to Taj al-Muluk and said, "O my son! O thou who art perfect in bodily gifts and spiritual graces; say me, art thou of this country?" He replied, in voice the sweetest and in tone the pleasantest, "By Allah, O my mistress, I was never in this land during my life till this time, nor do I abide here save by way of diversion." Rejoined 22 she, "May the Granter grant thee all honour and prosperity! And what stuffs hast thou brought with thee? Show me something passing fine; for the beauteous should bring nothing but what is beautiful." When he heard her words, his heart fluttered and he knew not their inner meaning; but Aziz made a sign to him and he replied, "I have everything thou canst desire and especially I have goods that besit none but Kings and King's daughters; so tell me what stuff thou wantest and for whom, that I may show thee what will be fitting for him." This he said, that he might learn the meaning of her words; and she rejoined, "I want a stuff fit for the Princess Dunya, daughter of King Shahriman." Now when the Prince heard the name of his beloved, he joyed with great joy and said to Aziz, "Give me such a parcel." So Aziz brought it and opened it before Taj al-Muluk who said to the old woman, "Select what will suit her; for these goods are to be found only with me." She chose stuffs worth a thousand dinars and asked, "How much is this?"; and she ceased not the while to talk with him and rub what was inside her thighs with the palm of her hand. Answered Taj al-Muluk, "Shall I haggle with the like of thee about this paltry price? Praised be Allah who hath acquainted me with thee!" The old woman rejoined, "Allah's name be upon thee! I commend thy beautiful face to the protection of the Lord of the Daybreak.[29] Beautiful face and eloquent speech! Happy she who lieth in thy bosom and claspeth thy waist in her arms and enjoyeth thy youth, especially if she be beautiful and lovely like thyself!" At this, Taj al-Muluk laughed till he fell on his back and said to himself, "O Thou who fulfillest desires human by means of pimping old women! They are the true fulfillers of desires!" Then she asked, "O my son, what is thy name?" and he answered, "My name is Taj al-Muluk, the Crown of Kings." Quoth she, "This is indeed a name of Kings and King's sons and thou art clad in merchant's clothes." Quoth Aziz, "For the love his parents and family bore him and for the value they set on him, they named him thus." Replied the old woman, "Thou sayest sooth, Allah guard you both from the evil eye and the envious, though hearts be broken by your charms!" Then she took the stuffs and went her way; but she was amazed 23 at his beauty and stature and symmetry, and she ceased not going till she found the Lady Dunya and said to her, "O my mistress! I have brought thee some handsome stuffs." Quoth the Princess, "Show me that same"; and the old woman, "O apple of my eye, here it is, turn it over and examine it." Now when the Princess looked at it she was amazed and said, "O my nurse, this is indeed handsome stuff: I have never seen its like in our city." "O my lady," replied the old nurse, "he who sold it me is handsomer

still. It would seem as if Rizwan had left the gates of Paradise open in his carelessness, and as if the youth who sold me this stuff had come bodily out of Heaven. I would he might sleep this night with thee and might lie between thy breasts.[30] He hath come to thy city with these precious stuffs for amusement's sake, and he is a temptation to all who set eyes on him." The Princess laughed at her words and said, "Allah afflict thee, O pernicious old hag! Thou dotest and there is no sense left in thee." Presently, she resumed, "Give me the stuff that I may look at it anew." So she gave it her and she took it again and saw that its size was small and its value great. It pleased her, for she had never in her life seen its like, and she exclaimed, "By Allah, this is a handsome stuff!" Answered the old woman, "O my lady, by Allah! if thou sawest its owner thou wouldst know him for the handsomest man on the face of the earth." Quoth the Lady Dunya, "Didst thou ask him if he had any need, that he might tell us and we might satisfy it?" But the nurse shook her head and said, "The Lord keep thy sagacity! By Allah, he hath a want, may thy skill not fail thee. What! is any man free from wants?" Rejoined the Princess, "Go back to him and salute him and say to him:—Our land and town are honoured by thy visit and, if thou have any need, we will fulfil it to thee, on our head and eyes." So the old woman at once returned to Taj al-Muluk, and when he saw her his heart jumped for joy and gladness and he rose to his feet before her and, taking her hand, seated her by his side. As soon as she was rested, she told him what Princess Dunya had said; and he on hearing it joyed with exceeding joy; his breast dilated to the full; gladness entered his heart and he said to himself, "Verily, I have my need." Then he asked the old woman, "Haply thou wilt take her a message from me and bring me her answer?"; and she 24answered, "I hear and I obey." So he said to Aziz, "Bring me ink-case and paper and a brazen pen." And when Aziz brought him what he sought, he hent the pen in hand and wrote these lines of poetry:—

I write to thee, O fondest hope! a writ ✿ Of grief that severance on my soul doth lay:

Saith its first line, "Within my heart is lowe!" ✿ Its second, "Love and longing on me prey!"

Its third, "My patience waste is, fades my life!" ✿ Its fourth, "Naught shall my pain and pine allay!"

Its fifth, "When shall mine eyes enjoy thy sight?" ✿ Its sixth, "Say, when shall dawn our meeting-day?"

And, lastly, by way of subscription he wrote these words. "This letter is from the captive of captivation ✿ prisoned in the hold of longing expectation ✿ wherefrom is no emancipation ✿ but in anticipation and intercourse and in unification ✿ after absence and separation. ✿ For from the severance of friends he loveth so fain ✿ he suffereth love-pangs and pining pain. ✿" Then his tears rushed out, and he indited these two couplets:—

I write thee, love, the while my tears pour down; ✿ Nor cease they ever pouring thick and fleet:

Yet I despair not of my God, whose grace ✿ Haply some day will grant us twain to meet.

Then he folded the letter[31] and sealed it with his signet-ring and gave it to the old woman, saying, "Carry it to the Lady Dunya." Quoth she, "To hear is to obey;" whereupon he gave her a thousand dinars and said to her, "O my mother! accept this gift from me as a token of my affection." She took both from him and blessed him and went her way and never stinted walking till she went in to the Lady Dunya. Now when the Princess saw her she said to her, "O my nurse, what is it he asketh of need that we may fulfil his wish to him?" Replied the old woman, "O my 25 lady, he sendeth thee this letter by me, and I know not what is in it;" and handed it to her. Then the Princess took the letter and read it; and when she understood it, she exclaimed, "Whence cometh and whither goeth this merchant man that he durst address such a letter to me?" And she slapt her face saying, "Whence are we that we should come to shopkeeping? Awah! Awah! By the lord, but that I fear Almighty Allah I had slain him;" and she added, "Yea, I had crucified[32] him over his shop-door!" Asked the old woman, "What is in this letter to vex thy heart and move thy wrath on this wise? Doth it contain a complaint of oppression or demand for the price of the stuff?" Answered the Princess, "Woe to thee! There is none of this in it, naught but words of love and endearment. This is all through thee: otherwise whence should this Satan[33] know me?" Rejoined the old woman, "O my lady, thou sittest in thy high palace and none may have access to thee; no, not even the birds of the air. Allah keep thee, and keep thy youth from blame and reproach! Thou needest not care for the barking of dogs, for thou art a Princess, the daughter of a King. Be not wroth with me that I brought thee this letter, knowing not what was in it; but I opine that thou send him an answer and threaten him with death and forbid him this foolish talk; surely he will abstain and not do the like again." Quoth the Lady Dunya, "I fear that, if I write to him, he will desire me the more." The old woman returned, "When he heareth thy threats and promise of punishment, he will desist from his persistence." She cried, "Here with the ink-case and paper and brazen pen;" and when they brought them she wrote these couplets:—

26 O thou who for thy wakeful nights wouldst claim my love to boon, ✿ For what of pining thou must feel and tribulation!

Dost thou, fond fool and proud of sprite, seek meeting with the Moon? ✿ Say, did man ever win his wish to take in arms the Moon?

I counsel thee, from soul cast out the wish that dwells therein, ✿ And cut that short which threatens thee with sore risk oversoon:

An to such talk thou dare return, I bid thee to expect ✿ Fro' me such awful penalty as suiteth froward loon:

I swear by Him who moulded man from gout of clotted blood,[34] ✿ Who lit the Sun to shine by day and lit for night the moon,

An thou return to mention that thou spakest in thy pride, ✿ Upon a cross of tree for boon I'll have thee crucified!

Then she folded the letter and handing it to the old woman said, "Give him this and say him:—Cease from this talk!" "Hearkening and obedience" replied she, and taking the letter with joy, returned to her own house, where she passed the night; and when

morning dawned she betook herself to the shop of Taj al-Muluk whom she found expecting her. When he saw her, he was ready to fly[35] for delight, and when she came up to him, he stood to her on his feet and seated her by his side. Then she brought out the letter and gave it to him, saying, "Read what is in this;" adding "When Princess Dunya read thy letter she was angry; but I coaxed her and jested with her till I made her laugh, and she had pity on thee and she hath returned thee an answer." He thanked her for her kindness and bade Aziz give her a thousand gold pieces: then he perused the letter and understanding it fell to weeping a weeping so sore that the old woman's heart was moved to ruth for him, and his tears and complaints were grievous to her. Presently she asked him, "O my son, what is there in this letter to make thee weep?" Answered he, "She hath threatened me with death and crucifixion and she forbiddeth me to write to her, but if I write not my death were better than my life. So take thou my answer to her letter and let her work her will." 27 Rejoined the old woman, "By the life of thy youth, needs must I risk my existence for thee, that I may bring thee to thy desire and help thee to win what thou hast at heart!" And Taj al-Muluk said, "Whatever thou dost, I will requite thee for it and do thou weigh it in the scales of thy judgement, for thou art experienced in managing matters, and skilled in reading the chapters of the book of intrigue: all hard matters to thee are easy doings; and Allah can bring about everything." Then he took a sheet of paper and wrote thereon these improvised couplets:—

Yestre'en my love with slaughter menaced me, ✿ But sweet were slaughter and Death's foreordainèd:

Yes, Death is sweet for lover doomed to bear ✿ Long life, rejected, injured and constrainèd:

By Allah! deign to visit friendless friend! ✿ Thy thrall am I and like a thrall I'm chainèd:

Mercy, O lady mine, for loving thee! ✿ Who loveth noble soul should be assainèd.

Then he sighed heavy sighs and wept till the old woman wept also; and presently taking the letter she said to him, "Be of good cheer and cool eyes and clear; for needs must I bring thee to thy wish."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Taj al-Muluk wept the old woman said to him, "Be of good cheer and cool eyes and clear; for needs must I bring thee to thy wish." Then she rose and left him on coals of fire; and returned to Princess Dunya, whom she found still showing on her changed face rage at Taj al-Muluk's letter. So she gave her his second letter, whereat her wrath redoubled and she said, "Did I not say he would desire us the more?" Replied the old woman, "What thing is this dog that he should aspire to thee?" Quoth the Princess, "Go back to him and tell him that, if he write me after this, I will cut off his head." Quoth the nurse, "Write these words in a letter and I will take it to him that his fear may be the greater." So she took a sheet of paper and wrote thereon these couplets:—

28 Ho thou, who past and bygone risks regardest with uncare! ✿ Thou who to win thy meeting-prize dost overslowly fare!

In pride of spirit thinkest thou to win the star Soha[36]? ✿ Albe thou may not reach the Moon which shines through upper air?

How darest thou expect to win my favours, hope to clip ✿ Upon a lover's burning breast my lance like shape and rare?

Leave this thy purpose lest my wrath come down on thee some day, ✿ A day of wrath shall hoary turn the partings of thy hair!

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the old woman, who took it and repaired to Taj al-Muluk. And when he saw her, he rose to his feet and exclaimed, "May Allah never bereave me of the blessing of thy coming!" Quoth she, "Take the answer to thy letter." He took it and reading it, wept with sore weeping and said, "I long for some one to slay me at this moment and send me to my rest, for indeed death were easier to me than this my state!" Then he took ink-case and pen and paper and wrote a letter containing these two couplets:—

O hope of me! pursue me not with rigour and disdain: ✿ Deign thou to visit lover-wight in love of thee is drowned;

Deem not a life so deeply wronged I longer will endure; ✿ My soul for severance from my friend divorced this frame unsound.

Lastly he folded the letter and handed it to the old woman, saying, "Be not angry with me, though I have wearied thee to no purpose." And he bade Aziz give her other thousand ducats, saying, "O my mother, needs must this letter result in perfect union or utter severance." Replied she, "O my son, by Allah, I desire nought but thy weal; and it is my object that she be thine, for indeed thou art the shining moon, and she the rising sun.[37] If I 29 do not bring you together, there is no profit in my existence; and I have lived my life till I have reached the age of ninety years in the practice of wile and intrigue; so how should I fail to unite two lovers, though in defiance of right and law?" Then she took leave of him having comforted his heart, and ceased not walking till she went in to the Lady Dunya. Now she had hidden the letter in her hair: so when she sat down by the Princess she rubbed her head and said, "O my lady, maybe thou wilt untwist my hair-knot, for it is a time since I went to the Hammam." The King's daughter bared her arms to the elbows and, letting down the old woman's locks, began to loose the knot of back hair; when out dropped the letter and the Lady Dunya seeing it, asked, "What is this paper?" Quoth the nurse, "As I sat in the merchant's shop, this paper must have stuck to me: give it to me that I may return it to him; possibly it containeth some account whereof he hath need." But the Princess opened it and read it and, when she understood it, she cried out, "This is one of thy manifold tricks, and hadst thou not reared me, I would lay violent hands on thee this moment! Verily Allah hath afflicted me with this merchant: but all that hath befallen me with him is on thy head. I know not from what country this one can have come: no man but he would venture to affront me thus, and I fear lest this my case get abroad, more by token as it

concerneth one who is neither of my kin nor of my peers." Rejoined the old woman, "None would dare speak of this for fear of thy wrath and for awe of thy sire; so there can be no harm in sending him an answer." Quoth the Princess, "O my nurse, verily this one is a perfect Satan! How durst he use such language to me and not dread the Sultan's rage. Indeed, I am perplexed about his case: if I order him to be put to death, it were unjust; and if I leave him alive his boldness will increase." Quoth the old woman, "Come, write him a letter; it may be he will desist in dread." So she called for paper and ink-case and pen and wrote these couplets:—

Thy folly drives thee on though long I chid, ✿ Writing in verse: how long shall I forbid?
For all forbiddal thou persistest more, ✿ And my sole grace it is to keep it hid;
Then hide thy love nor ever dare reveal; ✿ For an thou speak, of thee I'll soon be rid;
If to thy silly speech thou turn anew, ✿ Ravens shall croak for thee the wold amid:
30 And Death shall come and beat thee down ere long, ✿ Put out of sight and bury 'neath an earthen lid:
Thy folk, fond fool! thou'lt leave for thee to mourn, ✿ And through their lives to sorrow all forlorn.

Then she folded the letter and committed it to the old woman, who took it and returning to Taj al-Muluk, gave it to him. When he read it, he knew that the Princess was hard-hearted and that he should not win access to her; so he complained of his case to the Wazir and besought his counsel. Quoth the Minister, "Know thou that naught will profit thee save that thou write to her and invoke the retribution of Heaven upon her." And quoth the Prince, "O my brother, O Aziz, do thou write to her as if my tongue spake, according to thy knowledge." So Aziz took a paper and wrote these couplets:—

By the Five Shayks,[38] O Lord, I pray deliver me; ✿ Let her for whom I suffer bear like misery:
Thou knowest how I fry in flaming lowe of love, ✿ While she I love hath naught of ruth or clemency:
How long shall I, despite my pain, her feelings spare? ✿ How long shall she wreak tyranny o'er weakling me?
In pains of never-ceasing death I ever grieve: ✿ O Lord, deign aid; none other helping hand I see.
How fain would I forget her and forget her love! ✿ But how forget when Love garred Patience death to dree?
O thou who hinderest Love to 'joy fair meeting-tide ✿ Say! art thou safe from Time and Fortune's jealousy?
Art thou not glad and blest with happy life, while I ✿ From folk and country for thy love am doomèd flee?

Then Aziz folded the letter and gave it to Taj al-Muluk, who read it and was pleased with it. So he handed it to the old woman, who took it and went in with it to Princess Dunya. But when she read it and mastered the meaning thereof, she was enraged with great rage and said, "All that hath befallen me cometh by means of this ill-omened old woman!" Then she cried out to the damsels and eunuchs, saying, "Seize this old hag, this accursed trickstress and beat her with your slippers!" So they came down upon her till she swooned away; and, when she came to herself, the Princess said to her, "By the Lord! O wicked old woman, did I not fear Almighty Allah, I would slay thee." Then quoth she to them, 31 "Beat her again" and they did so till she fainted a second time, whereupon she bade them drag her forth and throw her outside the

palace-door. So they dragged her along on her face and threw her down before the gate; but as soon as she revived she got up from the ground and, walking and sitting by turns, made her way home. There she passed the night till morning, when she arose and went to Taj al-Muluk and told them all that had occurred. He was distressed at this grievous news and said, "O my mother, hard indeed to us is that which hath befallen thee, but all things are according to fate and man's lot." Replied she, "Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for I will not give over striving till I have brought thee and her together, and made thee enjoy this wanton who hath burnt my skin with beating." Asked the Prince, "Tell me what caused her to hate men;" and the old woman answered, "It arose from what she saw in a dream." "And what was this dream?" "'Twas this: one night, as she lay asleep, she saw a fowler spread his net upon the ground and scatter wheat grain round it. Then he sat down hard by, and not a bird in the neighbourhood but flocked to his toils. Amongst the rest she beheld a pair of pigeons, male and female; and, whilst she was watching the net, behold, the male bird's foot caught in the meshes and he began to struggle; whereupon all the other birds took fright and flew away. But presently his mate came back and hovered over him, then alighted on the toils unobserved by the fowler, and fell to pecking with her beak and pulling at the mesh in which the male bird's foot was tangled, till she released the toes and they flew away together. Then the fowler came up, mended his net and seated himself afar off. After an hour or so the birds flew back and the female pigeon was caught in the net; whereupon all the other birds took fright and scurried away; and the male pigeon fled with the rest and did not return to his mate, but the fowler came up and took the female pigeon and cut her throat. The Princess awoke, troubled by her dream, and said:—All males are like this pigeon, worthless creatures: and men in general lack grace and goodness to women." When the old woman had ended her story, the Prince said to her, "O my mother, I desire to have one look at her, though it be my death; so do thou contrive me some contrivance for seeing her." She replied, "Know then that she hath under her palace windows a garden wherein she taketh her pleasure; and thither she resorteth once in every month by the private door. After ten days, the time of her thus going forth to 32 divert herself will arrive; so when she is about to visit the garden, I will come and tell thee, that thou mayst go thither and meet her. And look thou leave not the garden, for haply, an she see thy beauty and loveliness, her heart will be taken with love of thee, and love is the most potent means of union." He said, "I hear and obey;" whereupon he and Aziz arose and left the shop and, taking the old woman with them, showed her the place where they lodged. Then said Taj al-Muluk to Aziz, "O my brother, I have no need of the shop now, having fulfilled my purpose of it; so I give it to thee with all that is in it; for that thou hast come abroad with me and hast left thy native land for my sake." Aziz accepted his gift and then they sat conversing, while the Prince questioned him of the strange adventures which had befallen him, and his companion acquainted him with the particulars thereof. Presently, they went to the Wazir and, reporting to him Taj al-

Muluk's purpose, asked him, "What is to be done?" "Let us go to the garden," answered he. So each and every donned richest clothes and went forth, followed by three white slaves to the garden, which they found thick with thickets and railing its rills. When they saw the keeper sitting at the gate, they saluted him with the Salam and he returned their salute. Then the Wazir gave him an hundred gold pieces, saying, "Prithee, take this small sum and fetch us somewhat to eat; for we are strangers and I have with me these two lads whom I wish to divert."[39] The Gardener took the sequins and said to them, "Enter and amuse yourselves in the garden, for it is all yours; and sit down till I bring you what food you require." So he went to the market while the Wazir and Taj al-Muluk and Aziz entered the garden. And shortly after leaving for the bazar the Gardener returned with a roasted lamb and cotton-white bread, which he placed before them, and they ate and drank; thereupon he served up sweetmeats, and they ate of them, and washed their hands and sat talking. Presently the Wazir said to the garth-keeper, "Tell me about this garden: is it thine or dost thou rent it?" The Shaykh replied, "It doth not belong to me, but to our King's daughter, the Princess Dunya." "What be thy monthly wages?" asked the Wazir and he answered, "One dinar and no more." Then the Minister looked round about the garden and, seeing in its midst 33 a pavilion tall and grand but old and disused, said to the keeper, "O elder, I am minded to do here a good work, by which thou shalt remember me." Replied the other, "O my lord, what is the good work thou wouldest do?" "Take these three hundred dinars," rejoined the Wazir. When the Keeper heard speak of the gold, he said, "O my lord, whatso thou wilt, do!" So the Wazir gave him the monies, saying, "Inshallah, we will make a good work in this place!" Then they left him and returned to their lodging, where they passed the night; and when it was the next day, the Minister sent for a plasterer and a painter and a skilful goldsmith and, furnishing them with all the tools they wanted, carried them to the garden, where he bade them whitewash the walls of the pavilion and decorate it with various kinds of paintings. Moreover he sent for gold and lapis lazuli[40] and said to the painter, "Figure me on the wall, at the upper end of this hall, a man-fowler with his nets spread and birds falling into them and a female pigeon entangled in the meshes by her bill." And when the painter had finished his picture on one side, the Wazir said, "Figure me on the other side a similar figure and represent the she-pigeon alone in the snare and the fowler seizing her and setting the knife to her neck; and draw on the third side-wall, a great raptor clutching the male pigeon, her mate, and digging talons into him." The artist did his bidding, and when he and the others had finished the designs, they received their hire and went away. Then the Wazir and his companions took leave of the Gardener and returned to their place, where they sat down to converse. And Taj al-Muluk said to Aziz, "O my brother, recite me some verses: perchance it may broaden my breast and dispel my dolours and quench the fire flaming in my heart." So Aziz chanted with sweet modulation these couplets:—

Whate'er they say of grief to lovers came, ✿ I, weakling I, can single-handed claim:
An seek thou watering-spot,[41] my streaming eyes ✿ Pour floods that thirst would quench howe'er it flame:
Or wouldest view what ruin Love has wrought ✿ With ruthless hands, then see this wasted frame.

34 And his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated these couplets also:-

Who loves not swan-neck and gazelle-like eyes, ✿ Yet claims to know Life's joys, I say he lies:
In Love is mystery, none avail to learn ✿ Save he who loveth in pure loving wise.
Allah my heart ne'er lighten of this love, ✿ Nor rob the wakefulness these eyelids prize.

Then he changed the mode of song and sang these couplets:—

Ibn Síná[42] in his Canon doth opine ✿ Lovers' best cure is found in merry song:
In meeting lover of a like degree, ✿ Dessert in garden, wine-draughts long and strong:
I chose another who of thee might cure ✿ While Force and Fortune aided well and long;
But ah! I learnt Love's mortal ill, wherein ✿ Ibn Sina's recipe is fond and wrong.

After hearing them to the end, Taj al-Muluk was pleased with his verses and wondered at his eloquence and the excellence of his recitation, saying, "Indeed, thou hast done away with somewhat of my sorrow." Then quoth the Wazir, "Of a truth, there occurred to those of old what astoundeth those who hear it told." Quoth the Prince, "If thou canst recall aught of this kind, prithee let us hear thy subtle lines and keep up the talk." So the Minister chanted in modulated song these couplets:—

Indeed I deemed thy favours might be bought ✿ By gifts of gold and things that joy the sprite;
And ignorantly thought thee light-o'-love, ✿ When can thy love lay low the highmost might;
Until I saw thee choosing one, that one ✿ Loved with all favour, crowned with all delight:
Then wot I thou by sleight canst ne'er be won ✿ And under wing my head I hid from sight;
And in this nest of passion made my wone, ✿ Wherein I nestle morning, noon and night.

So far concerning them; but as regards the old woman she remained 35 shut up from the world in her house, till it befel that the King's daughter was taken with a desire to divert herself in the garden. Now she had never been wont so to do save in company with her nurse; accordingly she sent for her and made friends with her and soothed her sorrow, saying, "I wish to go forth to the garden, that I may divert myself with the sight of its trees and fruits, and broaden my breast with the scent of its flowers." Replied the old woman, "I hear and obey; but first I would go to my house, and soon I will be with thee." The Princess rejoined, "Go home, but be not long absent from me." So the old woman left her and, repairing to Taj al-Muluk, said to him, "Get thee ready and don thy richest dress and go to the garden and find out the Gardener and salute him and then hide thyself therein." "To hear is to obey" answered he; and she agreed with him upon a signal, after which she returned to the Lady Dunya. As soon as she was gone, the Wazir and Aziz rose and robed Taj al-Muluk in a splendid suit of royal raiment worth five thousand dinars, and girt his middle with a girdle of gold set with gems and precious metals. Then they repaired to the garden and found seated at the gate the Keeper who, as soon as he saw the Prince, sprang to his feet and received him

with all respect and reverence, and opening the gate, said, "Enter and take thy pleasure in looking at the garden." Now the Gardener knew not that the King's daughter was to visit the place that day; but when Taj al-Muluk had been a little while there, he heard a hubbub and ere he could think, out issued the eunuchs and damsels by the private wicket. The Gardener seeing this came up to the Prince, informed him of her approach and said to him, "O my lord, what is to be done? The Princess Dunya, the King's daughter, is here." Replied the Prince, "Fear not, no harm shall befal thee; for I will hide me somewhere about the garden." So the Keeper exhorted him to the utmost prudence and went away. Presently the Princess entered the garden with her damsels and with the old woman, who said to herself, "If these eunuchs stay with us, we shall not attain our end." So quoth she to the King's daughter, "O my lady, I have somewhat to tell thee which shall ease thy heart." Quoth the Princess, "Say what thou hast to say." "O my lady," rejoined the old woman, "thou hast no need of these eunuchs at a time like the present; nor wilt thou be able to divert thyself at thine ease, whilst they are with us; so send them away;" and the Lady Dunya replied, "Thou speakest sooth." Accordingly she dismissed them and presently began to 36 walk about, whilst Taj al-Muluk looked upon her and fed his eyes on her beauty and loveliness (but she knew it not); and every time he gazed at her he fainted by reason of her passing charms.[43] The old woman drew her on by converse till they reached the pavilion which the Wazir had bidden be decorated, when the Princess entered and cast a glance round and perceived the picture of the birds, the fowler and the pigeon; whereupon she cried, "Exalted be Allah! This is the very counterfeit presentment of what I saw in my dream." She continued to gaze at the figures of the birds and the fowler with his net, admiring the work, and presently she said, "O my nurse, I have been wont to blame and hate men, but look now at the fowler how he hath slaughtered the she-bird and set free her mate; who was minded to return to her and aid her to escape when the bird of prey met him and tore him to pieces." Now the old woman feigned ignorance to her and ceased not to occupy her in converse, till they drew near the place where Taj al-Muluk lay hidden. Thereupon she signed to him to come out and walk under the windows of the pavilion; and, as the Lady Dunya stood looking from the casement, behold, her glance fell that way and she saw him and noting his beauty of face and form, said to the old woman, "O my nurse, whence cometh yonder handsome youth?" Replied the old woman, "I know nothing of him save that I think he must be some great King's son, for he attaineth comeliness in excess and extreme loveliness." And the Lady Dunya fell in love with him to distraction; the spells which bound her were loosed and her reason was overcome by his beauty and grace; and his fine stature and proportions strongly excited her desires sexual. So she said, "O my nurse! this is indeed a handsome youth;" and the old woman replied, "Thou sayest sooth, O my lady," and signed to Taj al-Muluk to go home. And though desire and longing flamed in him and he was distraught for love, yet he went away and took leave of the Gardener and returned to his place, obeying the old woman and not

daring to cross her. When he told the Wazir and Aziz that she had signed him to depart, they exhorted him to patience, saying, "Did not the ancient dame know that there was an object to be gained by thy departure, she 37 had not signalled thee to return home." Such was the case with Taj al-Muluk, the Wazir and Aziz; but as regards the King's daughter, the Lady Dunya, desire and passion redoubled upon her; she was overcome with love and longing and she said to her nurse, "I know not how I shall manage a meeting with this youth, but through thee." Exclaimed the old woman, "I take refuge with Allah from Satan the stoned! Thou who art averse from men! How cometh it then that thou art thus afflicted with hope and fear of this young man? Yet, by Allah, none is worthy of thy youth but he." Quoth the Lady Dunya, "O my nurse, further my cause and help me to foregather with him, and thou shalt have of me a thousand dinars and a dress of honour worth as much more: but if thou aid me not to come at him, I am a dead woman in very sooth." Replied the ancient dame, "Go to thy palace and leave me to devise means for bringing you twain together. I will throw away my life to content you both!" So the Lady Dunya returned to her palace, and the old woman betook herself to Taj al-Muluk who, when he saw her, rose to receive her and entreated her with respect and reverence making her sit by his side. Then she said, "The trick hath succeeded," and told him all that had passed between herself and the Princess. He asked her, "When is our meeting to be?"; and she answered, "To-morrow." So he gave her a thousand dinars and a dress of like value, and she took them and stinted not walking till she returned to her mistress, who said to her, "O my nurse! what news of the beloved?" Replied she, "I have learnt where he liveth and will bring him to thee to-morrow." At this the Princess was glad and gave her a thousand dinars and a dress worth as much more, and she took them and returned to her own place, where she passed the night till morning. Then she went to Taj al-Muluk and dressing him in woman's clothes, said to him, "Follow me and sway from side to side[44] as thou steppest, and hasten not thy pace nor take heed of any who speaketh to thee." And after thus charging him she went out, and the Prince followed her in woman's attire and she continued to charge and encourage him by the way, that he might not be afraid; nor ceased they walking till they came to the Palace-gate. She entered and the Prince after her, and she 38 led him on, passing through doors and vestibules, till they had passed seven doors.[45] As they approached the seventh, she said to him, "Hearten thy heart and when I call out to thee and say:—O damsel pass on! do not slacken thy pace, but advance as if about to run. When thou art in the vestibule, look to thy left and thou wilt see a saloon with doors: count five doors and enter the sixth, for therein is thy desire." Asked Taj al-Muluk, "And whither wilt thou go?"; and she answered, "Nowhere shall I go except that perhaps I may drop behind thee, and the Chief Eunuch may detain me to chat with him." She walked on (and he behind her) till she reached the door where the Chief Eunuch was stationed and he, seeing Taj al-Muluk with her dressed as a slave-girl, said to the old woman, "What

business hath this girl with thee?" Replied she, "This is a slave-girl of whom the Lady Dunya hath heard that she is skilled in different kinds of work and she hath a mind to buy her." Rejoined the Eunuch, "I know neither slave-girls nor anyone else; and none shall enter here without my searching according to the King's commands."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Chamberlain Eunuch cried to the old woman, "I know neither slave-girl nor anyone else; and none shall enter here without my searching him according to the King's commands." Then quoth she, feigning to be angry, "I thought thee a man of sense and good breeding; but, if thou be changed, I will let the Princess know of it and tell her how thou hinderest her slave-girl;" and she cried out to Taj al-Muluk, saying, "Pass on, O damsel!" So he passed on into the vestibule as she bade him, whilst the Eunuch was silent and said no more. The Prince counted five doors and entered the sixth where he found the Princess Dunya standing and awaiting him. As soon as she saw him, she knew him and clasped him to her breast, and he clasped her to his bosom. Presently the old woman came in to them, having made a pretext to dismiss the Princess's slave-girls for fear of disgrace; and the Lady Dunya said to her, "Be thou our door-keeper!" So she and Taj al-Muluk abode alone together and ceased not kissing and embracing and twining leg with leg till 39 dawn.[46] When day drew near, she left him and, shutting the door upon him, passed into another chamber, where she sat down as was her wont, whilst her slave-women came in to her, and she attended to their affairs and conversed with them. Then she said to them, "Go forth from me now, for I wish to amuse myself in privacy." So they withdrew and she betook herself to Taj al-Muluk, and the old woman brought them food, of which they ate and returned to amorous dalliance till dawn. Then the door was locked upon him as on the day before; and they ceased not to do thus for a whole month. This is how it fared with Taj al-Muluk and the Lady Dunya; but as regards the Wazir and Aziz when they found that the Prince had gone to the Palace of the King's daughter and there delayed all the while, they concluded that he would never return from it and that he was lost for ever; and Aziz said to the Wazir, "O my father, what shall we do?" He replied, "O my son, this is a difficult matter, and except we return to his sire and tell him, he will blame us therefor." So they made ready at once and forthright set out for the Green Land and the Country of the Two Columns, and sought Sulayman Shah's capital. And they traversed the valleys night and day till they went in to the King, and acquainted him with what had befallen his son and how from the time he entered the Princess's Palace they had heard no news of him. At this the King was as though the Day of Doom had dawned for him and regret was sore upon him, and he proclaimed a Holy War[47] throughout his realm. After which he sent forth his host without the town and pitched tents for them and took up his abode in his pavilion, whilst the levies came from all parts of the

kingdom; for his subjects loved him by reason of his great justice and beneficence. Then he marched with an army walling the horizon, and departed in quest of his son. Thus far concerning them; but as regards Taj al-Muluk and the Lady Dunya the two remained as they were half a year's time, whilst every day they redoubled in mutual affection; and love and longing and passion and desire so pressed upon Taj al-Muluk, that at last he opened his mind and said to her, "Know, O beloved of my heart and vitals, that the longer 40 I abide with thee, the more love and longing and passion and desire increase on me, for that I have not yet fulfilled the whole of my wish." Asked she, "What then wouldst thou have, O light of my eyes and fruit of my vitals? If thou desire aught beside kissing and embracing and entwining of legs with legs, do what pleaseth thee; for, by Allah, no partner hath any part in us."[48] But he answered: "It is not that I wish: I would fain acquaint thee with my true story. Know, then, that I am no merchant, nay, I am a King, the son of a King, and my father's name is the supreme King Sulayman Shah, who sent his Wazir ambassador to thy father, to demand thee in marriage for me, but when the news came to thee thou wouldst not consent." Then he told her his past from first to last, nor is there any avail in a twice-told tale, and he added, "And now I wish to return to my father, that he may send an ambassador to thy sire, to demand thee in wedlock for me, so we may be at ease." When she heard these words, she joyed with great joy because it suited with her own wishes, and they passed the night on this understanding. But it so befel by the decree of Destiny that sleep overcame them that night above all nights and they remained till the sun had risen. Now at this hour, King Shahriman was sitting on his cushion of estate, with his Emirs and Grandees before him, when the Syndic of the goldsmiths presented himself between his hands, carrying a large box. And he advanced and opening it in presence of the King, brought out therefrom a casket of fine work worth an hundred thousand dinars, for that which was therein of precious stones, rubies and emeralds beyond the competence of any sovereign on earth to procure. When the King saw this, he marvelled at its beauty; and, turning to the Chief Eunuch (him with whom the old woman had had to do), said to him, "O Kafur,[49] take this casket and wend with it to the Princess Dunya." The Castrato took the casket and repairing to the apartment of the King's daughter found the door shut and the old woman lying asleep on the threshold; whereupon said he, "What! sleeping at this hour?" When the old woman heard the Eunuch's voice she started from sleep and was terrified and said to him, "Wait till I fetch the key." 41 Then she went forth and fled for her life. Such was her case; but as regards the Epicene he, seeing her alarm, lifted the door off its hinge-pins,[50] and entering found the Lady Dunya with her arms round the neck of Taj al-Muluk and both fast asleep. At this sight he was confounded and was preparing to return to the King, when the Princess awoke, and seeing him, was terrified and changed colour and waxed pale, and said to him, "O Kafur, veil thou what Allah hath veiled!"[51] But he replied, "I cannot conceal aught from the King"; and, locking the

door on them, returned to Shahriman, who asked him, "Hast thou given the casket to the Princess?" Answered the Eunuch, "Take the casket, here it is for I cannot conceal aught from thee. Know that I found a handsome young man by the side of the Princess and they two asleep in one bed and in mutual embrace." The King commanded them to be brought into the presence and said to them, "What manner of thing is this?" and, being violently enraged, seized a dagger and was about to strike Taj al-Muluk with it, when the Lady Dunya threw herself upon him and said to her father, "Slay me before thou slayest him." The King reviled her and commanded her to be taken back to her chamber: then he turned to Taj al-Muluk and said to him, "Woe to thee! Whence art thou? Who is thy father and what hath emboldened thee to debauch my daughter?" Replied the Prince, "Know, O King, that if thou put me to death, thou art a lost man, and thou and all in thy dominions will repent the deed." Quoth the King, "How so?"; and quoth Taj al-Muluk, "Know that I am the son of King Sulayman Shah, and ere thou knowest it, he will be upon thee with his horse and foot." When King Shahriman heard these words he would have deferred killing Taj al-Muluk and would rather have put him in prison, till he should look into the truth of his words; but his Wazir said to him, "O King of the Age, it is my opinion that thou make haste to slay this gallows-bird who 42 dares debauch the daughters of Kings." So the King cried to the headsman, "Strike off his head; for he is a traitor." Accordingly, the headsman took him and bound him fast and raised his hand to the Emirs, signing to consult them, a first and a second signal, thinking thereby to gain time in this matter;[52] but the King cried in anger to him, "How long wilt thou consult others? If thou consult them again I will strike off thine own head." So the headsman raised his hand till the hair of his armpit showed, and was about to smite his neck——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the headsman raised his hand to smite off his head when behold, loud cries arose and the folk closed their shops; whereupon the King said to the headsman, "Wait awhile," and despatched one to learn the news. The messenger fared forth and presently returned and reported, "I saw an army like the dashing sea with its clashing surge: and their horses curvetting till earth trembleth with the tramp; and I know no more of them." When the King heard this, he was confounded and feared for his realm lest it should be torn from him; so he turned to his Minister and said, "Have not any of our army gone forth to meet this army?" But ere he had done speaking, his Chamberlains entered with messengers from the King who was approaching, and amongst them the Wazir who had accompanied Taj

al-Muluk. They began by saluting the King, who rose to receive them and bade them draw near, and asked the cause of their coming; whereupon the Minister came forward from amongst them and stood before him and said, "Know that he who hath come down upon thy realm is no King like unto the Kings of yore and the Sultans that went before." "And who is he?" asked Shahriman, and the Wazir answered, "He is the Lord of justice and loyalty, the bruit of whose magnanimity the caravans have blazed abroad, the Sultan Sulayman Shah, Lord of the Green Land and the Two Columns and the Mountains of Ispahan; he who loveth justice and equity, and hateth oppression and iniquity. And he saith to thee that his son 43 is with thee and in thy city; his son, his heart's very core and the fruit of his loins, and if he find him in safety, his aim is won and thou shalt have thanks and praise; but if he have been lost from thy realm or if aught of evil have befallen him, look thou for ruin and the wasting of thy reign! for this thy city shall become a wold wherein the raven shall croak. Thus have I done my errand to thee and peace be with thee!" Now when King Shahriman heard from the messenger these words, his heart was troubled and he feared for his kingdom: so he cried out for his Grandees and Ministers, Chamberlains and Lieutenants; and, when they appeared, he said to them, "Woe to you! Go down and search for the youth." Now the Prince was still under the headsman's hands, but he was changed by the fright he had undergone. Presently, the Wazir, chancing to glance around, saw the Prince on the rug of blood and recognised him; so he arose and threw himself upon him, and so did the other envoys. Then they proceeded to loose his bonds and they kissed his hands and feet, whereupon Taj al-Muluk opened his eyes and, recognising his father's Wazir and his friend Aziz, fell down a-fainting for excess of delight in them. When King Shahriman made sure that the coming of this army was indeed because of this youth, he was confounded and feared with great fear; so he went up to Taj al-Muluk and, kissing his head, said to him, "O my son, be not wroth with me, neither blame the sinner for his sin: but have compassion on my grey hairs, and waste not my realm." Whereupon Taj al-Muluk drew near unto him and kissing his hand, replied, "No harm shall come to thee, for indeed thou art to me as my father; but look that nought befal my beloved, the Lady Dunya!" Rejoined the King, "O my lord! fear not for her; naught but joy shall betide her;" and he went on to excuse himself and made his peace with Sulayman Shah's Wazir, to whom he promised much money, if he would conceal from the King what he had seen. Then he bade his chief Officers take the Prince with them and repair to the Hammam and clothe him in one of the best of his own suits and bring him back speedily. So they obeyed his bidding and bore him to the bath and clad him in the clothes which King Shahriman had set apart for him, and brought him back to the presence-chamber. When he entered the King rose to receive him and made all his Grandees stand in attendance on him. Then Taj al-Muluk sat down to converse with his father's Wazir and with Aziz, and he acquainted them with what had befallen him; after which 44 they said to him, "During that delay

we returned to thy father and gave him to know that thou didst enter the Palace of the Princess and didst not return therefrom; and thy case seemed doubtful to us. But when thy sire heard of this he mustered his forces; then we came to this land and indeed our coming hath brought to thee relief in extreme case and to us great joy." Quoth he, "Good fortune hath attended your every action, first and last." While this was doing King Shahriman went in to his daughter, Princess Dunya, and found her wailing and weeping for Taj al-Muluk. Moreover, she had taken a sword and fixed the hilt in the ground and had set the point to the middle of her heart between her breasts; and she bent over the blade saying, "Needs must I slay myself and not survive my beloved." When her father entered and saw her in this case, he cried out to her, saying, "O Princess of kings' daughters, hold thy hand and have ruth on thy sire and the folk of thy realm!" Then he came up to her and continued, "Let it not be that an ill thing befal thy father for thy sake!" And he told her the whole tale that her lover was the son of King Sulayman Shah and sought her to wife and he added, "The marriage waiteth only for thy consent," Thereat she smiled and said, "Did I not tell thee that he was the son of a Sultan? By Allah, there is no help for it but that I let him crucify thee on a bit of wood worth two pieces of silver!" Replied the King, "O my daughter, have mercy on me, so Allah have mercy on thee!" Rejoined she, "Up with you and make haste and go bring him to me without delay." Quoth the King, "On my head and eyes be it!"; and he left her and, going in hastily to Taj al-Muluk, repeated her words in his ear.[53] So he arose and accompanied the King to the Princess, and when she caught sight of her lover, she took hold of him and embraced him in her father's presence and hung upon him and kissed him, saying, "Thou hast desolated me by thine absence!" Then she turned to her father and said, "Sawest thou ever any that could do hurt to the like of this beautiful being, who is moreover a King, the son of a King, and of the free-born,[54] guarded against ignoble deeds?" Thereupon 45 King Shahriman went out shutting the door on them with his own hand; and he returned to the Wazir and to the other envoys of Sulayman Shah and bade them inform their King that his son was in health and gladness and enjoying all delight of life with his beloved. So they returned to King Sulayman and acquainted him with this; whereupon King Shahriman ordered largesse of money and vivers to the troops of King Sulayman Shah; and, when they had conveyed all he had commanded, he bade be brought out an hundred coursers and an hundred dromedaries and an hundred white slaves and an hundred concubines and an hundred black slaves and an hundred female slaves; all of which he forwarded to the King as a present. Then he took horse, with his Grandees and Chief Officers, and rode out of the city in the direction of the King's camp. As soon as Sultan Sulayman Shah knew of his approach, he rose and advanced many paces to meet him. Now the Wazir and Aziz had told him all the tidings, whereat he rejoiced and cried, "Praise be to Allah who hath granted the dearest wish of my son!" Then King Sulayman took King Shahriman in his arms and seated him beside himself on the royal couch, where they conversed awhile and had pleasure in each other's conversation. Presently food

was set before them, and they ate till they were satisfied; and sweetmeats and dried fruits were brought, and they enjoyed their dessert. And after a while came to them Taj al-Muluk, richly dressed and adorned, and when his father saw him, he stood up and embraced him and kissed him. Then all who were sitting rose to do him honour; and the two Kings seated him between them and they sat conversing a while, after which quoth King Sulayman Shah to King Shahriman, "I desire to have the marriage-contract between my son and thy daughter drawn up in the presence of witnesses, that the wedding may be made public, even as is the custom of Kings." "I hear and I obey," quoth King Shahriman and thereon summoned the Kazi and the witnesses, who came and wrote out the marriage-contract between Taj al-Muluk and the Lady Dunya. Then they gave bakhshish[55] of money and sweetmeats; and lavished incense and essences; and indeed it was a day of joy and gladness and all the grandees and soldiers rejoiced therein. Then King Shahriman proceeded to dower and equip his daughter; and Taj al-Muluk said to his sire, 46"Of a truth, this young man Aziz is of the generous and hath done me a notable service, having borne weariness with me; and he hath travelled with me and hath brought me to my desire. He ceased never to show sufferance with me and exhort me to patience till I accomplished my intent; and now he hath abided with us two whole years, and he cut off from his native land. So now I purpose to equip him with merchandise, that he may depart hence with a light heart; for his country is nearhand." Replied his father, "Right is thy rede;" so they made ready an hundred loads of the richest stuffs and the most costly, and Taj al-Muluk presented them with great store of money to Aziz, and farewelled him, saying, "O my brother and my true friend! take these loads and accept them from me by way of gift and token of affection, and go in peace to thine own country." Aziz accepted the presents and kissing the ground between the hands of the Prince and his father bade them adieu. Moreover, Taj al-Muluk mounted and accompanied him three miles on his homeward way as a proof of amity, after which Aziz conjured him to turn back, saying, "By Allah, O my master, were it not for my mother, I never would part from thee! But, good my lord! leave me not without news of thee." Replied Taj al-Muluk, "So be it!" Then the Prince returned to the city and Aziz journeyed on till he came to his native town; and he entered it and ceased not faring till he went in to his mother and found that she had built him a monument in the midst of the house and used to visit it continually. When he entered, he saw her with hair dishevelled and dispread over the tomb, weeping and repeating these lines:—

Indeed I'm strong to bear whate'er befal; ✿ But weak to bear such parting's dire mischance:

What heart estrangement of the friend can bear? ✿ What strength withstand assault of severance?

Then sobs burst from her breast, and she recited also these couplets:—

What's this? I pass by tombs, and fondly greet ✿ My friends' last homes, but send they no reply:

For saith each friend, "Reply how can I make ✿ When pledged to clay and pawned to stones I lie?

Earth has consumed my charms and I forget ✿ Thy love, from kith and kin poor banisht I."

While she was thus, behold, Aziz came in to her and when she 47 saw him, she fell down, fainting for very joy. He sprinkled water on her face till she revived and rising, took him in her arms and strained him to her breast, whilst he in like manner embraced her. Then he greeted her and she greeted him, and she asked the reason of his long absence, whereupon he told her all that had befallen him from first to last and informed her how Taj al-Muluk had given him an hundred loads of monies and stuffs. At this she rejoiced, and Aziz abode with his mother in his native town, weeping for what mishaps had happened to him with the daughter of Dalilah the Wily One, even her who had castrated[56] him. Such was the case with Aziz; but as regards Taj al-Muluk he went in unto his beloved, the Princess Dunya, and abated her maidenhead. Then King Shahriman proceeded to equip his daughter for her journey with her husband and father in-law, and bade bring them provaunt and presents and rarities. So they loaded their beasts and set forth, whilst King Shahriman escorted them, by way of farewell, three days' journey on their way, till King Shah Sulayman conjured him to return. So he took leave of them and turned back, and Taj al-Muluk and his wife and father fared forwards night and day, with their troops, till they drew near their capital. As soon as the news of their coming spread abroad, the folk decorated for them the city,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Shah Sulayman drew near his capital, the folk decorated the city for him and for his son. So they entered in state and the King, sitting on his throne with his son by his side, gave alms and largesse and loosed all who were in his jails. Then he held a second bridal for his son, and the sound of the singing-women and players upon instruments was never silent for a whole month, and the tirewomen stinted not to adorn the Lady Dunya and display her in various dresses; and she tired not of the displaying nor did the women weary of gazing on her. Then Taj al-Muluk, after having foregathered awhile with his father and mother, took up his sojourn with his wife, and they abode in all joyance of life and in fairest fortune, 48 till there came to them the Destroyer of all delights.[57] Now when the Wazir Dandan had ended the tale of Taj al-Muluk and the Lady Dunya, Zau al-Makan said to him, "Of a truth, it is the like of thee who lighten the mourner's heart and who deserve to be the boon-companions of Kings and to guide their policy in the right way." All this befel and they were still besieging Constantinople, where they lay four whole years, till they yearned after their native land; and the troops murmured, being weary of vigil and besieging and the endurance of fray and foray by night and by day. Then King Zau al-Makan summoned Rustam and Bahram and Tarkash, and when they were in presence bespoke them thus, "Know that we have lain here all these years and we have not won to our wish; nay, we have but gained increase of care and concern; for indeed we came, thinking to take our man-bote for King Omar

bin al-Nu'uman and in so doing my brother Sharrkan was slain; so is our sorrow grown to sorrows twain and our affliction to afflictions twain. All this came of the old woman Zat al-Dawahi, for it was she who slew the Sultan in his kingdom and carried off his wife, the Queen Sophia; nor did this suffice her, but she must put another cheat on us and cut the throat of my brother Sharrkan: and indeed I have bound myself and sworn by the solemnest oaths that there is no help but I take blood-wit from her. What say ye? Ponder my address and answer me." Then they bowed their heads and answered, "It is for the Wazir Dandan to opine." So the Minister came forward and said, "Know O King of the Age! it booteth us nought to tarry here; and 'tis my counsel that we strike camp and return to our own country, there to abide for a certain time and after that we should return for a razzia upon the worshippers of idols." Replied the King, "This rede is right, for indeed the folk weary for a sight of their families, and I am another who is also troubled with yearning after my son Kanmakan and my brother's daughter Kuzia Fakan, for she is in Damascus and I know not how is her case." When the troops heard this report, they rejoiced and blessed the Wazir Dandan. Then the King bade the crier call the retreat after three days. They fell to preparing for the march, and, on the fourth day, they beat the big drums and unfurled the banners and the army set forth, the Wazir Dandan in the van and the King riding in the mid-battle, with the Grand 49 Chamberlain by his side; and all journeyed without ceasing, night and day, till they reached Baghdad city. The folk rejoiced in their return, and care and fear ceased from them whilst the stay-at-homes met the absentees and each Emir betook him to his own house. As for Zau al-Makan he marched up to the Palace and went in to his son Kanmakan, who had now reached the age of seven; and who used to go down to the weapon-plain and ride. As soon as the King was rested of his journey, he entered the Hammam with his son, and returning, seated himself on his sofa of state, whilst the Wazir Dandan took up his station before him and the Emirs and Lords of the realm presented themselves and stood in attendance upon him. Then Zau al-Makan called for his comrade, the Fireman, who had befriended him in his wanderings; and, when he came into presence, the King rose to do him honour and seated him by his side. Now he had acquainted the Wazir with all the kindness and good turns which the Stoker had done him; and he found that the wight had waxed fat and burly with rest and good fare, so that his neck was like an elephant's throat and his face like a dolphin's belly. Moreover, he was grown dull of wit, for that he had never stirred from his place; so at first he knew not the King by his aspect. But Zau al-Makan came up to him smiling in his face, and greeted him after the friendliest fashion, saying, "How soon hast thou forgotten me?" With this the Fireman roused himself and, looking steadfastly at Zau al-Makan, made sure that he knew him; whereupon he sprang hastily to his feet and exclaimed, "O my friend, who hath made thee Sultan?" Then Zau al-Makan laughed at him and the Wazir, coming up to him expounded the whole story to him and said, "In good sooth he was thy brother and thy friend; and now he is King of the land and needs must thou get great good of him. So

I charge thee, if he say:—Ask a boon of me, ask not but for some great thing; for thou art very dear to him." Quoth the Fireman, "I fear lest, if I ask of him aught, he may not choose to give it or may not be able to grant it." Quoth the Wazir, "Have no care; whatsoever thou askest he will give thee." Rejoined the Stoker, "By Allah, I must at once ask of him a thing that is in my thought: every night I dream of it and implore Almighty Allah to vouchsafe it to me." Said the Wazir, "Take heart; by Allah, if thou ask of him the government of Damascus, in place of his brother, he would surely give it thee and make thee Governor." With this the Stoker rose to his feet and Zau al-Makan signed to 50 him to sit; but he refused, saying, "Allah forfend! The days are gone by of my sitting in thy presence." Answered the Sultan, "Not so, they endure even now. Thou wast in very deed the cause that I am at present alive and, by Allah, whatever thing most desired thou requirest of me, I will give that same to thee. But ask thou first of Allah, and then of me!" He said, "O my lord, I fear—" "Fear not," quoth the Sultan. He continued, "I fear to ask aught and that thou shouldst refuse it to me and it is only—" At this the King laughed and replied, "If thou require of me the half of my kingdom I would share it with thee: so ask what thou wilt and leave talking." Repeated the Fireman "I fear—" "Don't fear," quoth the King. He went on, "I fear lest I ask a thing and thou be not able to grant it." Upon this the Sultan waxed wroth and cried, "Ask what thou wilt." Then said he, "I ask, first of Allah and then of thee, that thou write me a patent of Syndicate over all the Firemen of the baths in the Holy City, Jerusalem." The Sultan and all present laughed and Zau al-Makan said, "Ask something more than this." He replied, "O my lord, said I not I feared that thou wouldst not choose to give me what I should ask or that thou be not able to grant it?" Therewith the Wazir signed him with his foot once and twice and thrice, and every time he began, "I ask of thee—" Quoth the Sultan, "Ask and be speedy." So he said, "I ask thee to make me Chief of the Scavengers in the Holy City of Jerusalem, or in Damascus town." Then all those who were present fell on their backs with laughter and the Wazir beat him; whereupon he turned to the Minister and said to him, "What art thou that thou shouldest beat me? 'Tis no fault of mine: didst thou not thyself bid me ask some important thing?" And he added, "Let me go to my own land." With this, the Sultan knew that he was jesting and took patience with him awhile; then turned to him and said, "O my brother, ask of me some important thing, befitting our dignity." So the Stoker said, "O King of the Age, I ask first of Allah and then of thee, that thou make me Viceroy of Damascus in the place of thy brother;" and the King replied, "Allah granteth thee this." Thereupon the Fireman kissed ground before him and he bade set him a chair in his rank and vested him with a viceroy's habit. Then he wrote him a patent and sealed it with his own seal, and said to the Wazir Dandan, "None shall go with him but thou; and when thou makest the return journey, do thou bring with thee my brother's daughter, Kuzia Fakan." "Hearkening 51 and obedience," answered the Minister; and, taking the Fireman, went down with him and made ready

for the march. Then the King appointed for the Stoker servants and suite, and gave him a new litter and a princely equipage and said to the Emirs, "Whoso loveth me, let him honour this man and offer him a handsome present." So each and every of the Emirs brought him his gift according to his competence; and the King named him Zibl Khán,[58] and conferred on him the honourable surname of al-Mujáhid.[59] As soon as the gear was ready, he went up with the Wazir Dandan to the King, that he might take leave of him and ask his permission to depart. The King rose to him and embraced him, and charged him to do justice between his subjects and bade him make ready for fight against the Infidels after two years. Then they took leave of each other and the King,[60] the Fighter for the Faith hight Zibl Khan, having been again exhorted by Zau al-Makan to deal fairly with his subjects, set out on his journey, after the Emirs had brought him Mamelukes and eunuchs, even to five thousand in number, who rode after him. The Grand Chamberlain also took horse, as did Bahram, captain of the Daylamites, and Rustam, captain of the Persians, and Tarkash, captain of the Arabs, who attended to do him service; and they ceased not riding with him three days' journey by way of honour. Then, taking their leave of him, they returned to Baghdad and the Sultan Zibl Khan and the Wazir Dandan fared on, with their suite and troops, till they drew near Damascus. Now news was come, upon the wings of birds, to the notables of Damascus, that King Zau al-Makan had made Sultan over Damascus a King named Zibl Khan and surnamed Al-Mujahid; so when he reached the city he found it dressed in his honour and everyone in the place came out to gaze on him. The new Sultan entered Damascus in a splendid progress and went up to the citadel, where he sat down upon his chair of state, whilst the Wazir Dandan stood in attendance on him, to acquaint him with the ranks of the Emirs 52 and their stations. Then the Grandees came in to him and kissed hands and called down blessings on him. The new King, Zibl Khan, received them graciously and bestowed on them dresses of honour and various presents and bounties; after which he opened the treasuries and gave largesse to the troops, great and small. Then he governed and did justice and proceeded to equip the Lady Kuzia Fakan, daughter of King Sharrkan, appointing her a litter of silken stuff. Moreover he furnished the Wazir Dandan equally well for the return journey and offered him a gift of coin; but he refused, saying, "Thou art near the time appointed by the King, and haply thou wilt have need of money, or after this we may send to seek of thee funds for the Holy War or what not." Now when the Wazir was ready to march, Sultan al-Mujahid mounted to bid the Minister farewell and brought Kuzia Fakan to him, and made her enter the litter and sent with her ten damsels to do her service. Thereupon they set forward, whilst King "Fighter for the Faith" returned to his government that he might order affairs and get ready his munitions of war, awaiting such time as King Zau al-Makan should send a requisition to him. Such was the case with Sultan Zibl Khan, but as regards the Wazir Dandan, he ceased not faring forward and finishing off the stages, in company with Kuzia Fakan till they came to Ruhbah[61] after a month's travel and thence pushed on,

till he drew near Baghdad. Then he sent to announce his arrival to King Zau al-Makan who, when he heard this, took horse and rode out to meet him. The Wazir Dandan would have dismounted, but the King conjured him not to do so and urged his steed till he came up to his side. Then he questioned him of Zibl Khan hight Al-Mujahid, whereto the Wazir replied that he was well and that he had brought with him Kuzia Fakan the daughter of his brother. At this the King rejoiced and said to Dandan, "Down with thee and rest thee from the fatigue of the journey for three days, after which come to me again." Replied the Wazir, "With joy and gratitude," and betook himself to his own house, whilst the King rode up to his Palace and went in to his brother's daughter, Kuzia Fakan, a girl of eight years old. When he saw her, he rejoiced in her and sorrowed for her sire; then he bade make for her clothes and gave her splendid jewelry and ornaments, and ordered she be lodged with his son Kanmakan in one place. So they both grew up the brightest of 53 the people of their time and the bravest; but Kuzia Fakan became a maiden of good sense and understanding and knowledge of the issues of events, whilst Kanmakan approved him a generous youth and freehanded, taking no care in the issue of aught. And so they continued till each of them attained the age of twelve. Now Kuzia Fakan used to ride a-horseback and fare forth with her cousin into the open plain and push forward and range at large with him in the wold; and they both learnt to smite with swords and spike with spears. But when they had reached the age of twelve, King Zau al-Makan, having completed his preparations and provisions and munitions for Holy War, summoned the Wazir Dandan and said to him, "Know that I have set mind on a thing, which I will discover to thee, and I want thine opinion thereon; so do thou with speed return me a reply." Asked the Wazir, "What is that, O King of the Age?"; and the other answered, "I am resolved to make my son Kanmakan Sultan and rejoice in him in my lifetime and do battle before him till death overtake me. What reckest thou of this?" The Wazir kissed the ground before the King and replied, "Know, O King and Sultan mine, Lord of the Age and the time! that which is in thy mind is indeed good, save that it is now no tide to carry it out, for two reasons; the first, that thy son Kanmakan is yet of tender years; and the second, that it often befalleth him who maketh his son King in his lifetime, to live but a little while there afterward.[62] And this is my reply." Rejoined the King, "Know, O Wazir, that we will make the Grand Chamberlain guardian over him, for he is now one of the family and he married my sister, so that he is to me as a brother." Quoth the Wazir, "Do what seemeth good to thee: we have only to obey thine orders." Then the King sent for the Grand Chamberlain whom they brought into the presence together with the Lords of the realm and he said to them, "Ye know that this my son Kanmakan is the first cavalier of the age, and that he hath no peer in striking with the sword and lunging with the lance; and now I appoint him to be Sultan over you and I make the Grand Chamberlain, his uncle, guardian over him." Replied the Chamberlain, "I am but a tree which thy bounty hath planted"; and Zau al-Makan said, "O Chamberlain, verily

this my son Kanmakan and my niece Kuzia Fakan are brothers' children; so I hereby marry her [54]to him and I call those present to witness thereof." Then he made over to his son such treasures as no tongue can describe; and, going in to his sister, Nuzhat al-Zaman, told her what he had done, whereat she was a glad woman and said, "Verily the twain are my children: Allah preserve thee to them and keep thy life for them many a year!" Replied he, "O my sister, I have accomplished in this world all my heart desired and I have no fear for my son! yet it were well thou have an eye on him, and an eye on his mother." And he charged the Chamberlain and Nuzhat al-Zaman with the care of his son and niece and wife, and this he continued to do nights and days till he fell sick and deemed surely that he was about to drink the cup of death; so he took to his bed, whilst the Chamberlain busied himself with ordering the folk and realm. At the end of the year, the King summoned his son Kanmakan and the Wazir Dandan and said, "O my son, after my death this Wazir is thy sire; for know that I am about to leave this house of life transitory for the house of eternity. And indeed I have fulfilled my will of this world; yet there remaineth in my heart one regret which may Allah dispel through and by thy hands." Asked his son, "What regret is that, O my father?" Answered Zau al-Makan, "O my son, the sole regret of me is that I die without having avenged thy grandfather, Omar bin al-Nu'uman, and thine uncle, Sharrkan, on an old woman whom they call Zat al-Dawahi; but, if Allah grant thee aid, sleep not till thou take thy wreak on her, and so wipe out the shame we have suffered at the Infidel's hands; and beware of the old hag's wile and do what the Wazir Dandan shall advise thee; because he from old time hath been the pillar of our realm." And his son assented to what he said. Then the King's eyes ran over with tears and his sickness redoubled on him; whereupon his brother-in-law, the Chamberlain, took charge over the country and, being a capable man, he judged and bade and forbade for the whole of that year; while Zau al-Makan was occupied with his malady. And his sickness was sore upon him for four years, during which the Chief Chamberlain sat in his stead and gave full satisfaction to the commons and the nobles; and all the country blessed his rule. Such was the case with Zau al-Makan and the Chamberlain; but as regards the King's son, he busied himself only with riding and lunging with lance and shooting with shaft, and thus also did the daughter of his uncle, Kuzia Fakan; for he and she were wont to fare forth at the first of the day and return at nightfall, when she would go [55]in to her mother, and he would go in to his mother whom he ever found sitting in tears by the head of his father's couch. Then he would tend his father all night long till daybreak, when he would go forth again with his cousin according to their wont. Now Zau al-Makan's pains and sufferings were longsome upon him and he wept and began versifying with these couplets:—

Gone is my strength, told is my tale of days ✿ And, lookye! I am left as thou dost see:
In honour's day most honoured wont to be, ✿ And win the race from all my company,
Would Heaven before my death I might behold ✿ My son in seat of empire sit for me;

And rush upon his foes, to take his wreak ✿ With sway of sword and lance lunged gallantly:

In this world and the next I am undone, ✿ Except the Lord vouchsafe me clemency.

When he had ended repeating these verses, he laid his head on his pillow and closed his eyes and slept. Then saw he in his sleep one who said to him, "Rejoice, for thy son shall fill the lands with justest sway; and he shall rule them and him shall the lieges obey." Then he awoke from his dream gladdened by the good tidings he had seen, and after a few days, Death smote him, and because of his dying great grief fell on the people of Baghdad, and simple and gentle mourned for him. But Time passed over him, as though he had never been[63] and Kanmakan's estate was changed; for the people of Baghdad set him aside and put him and his family in a place apart. Now when his mother saw this, she fell into the sorriest of plights and said, "There is no help but that I go to the Grand Chamberlain, and I must hope for the aidance of the Subtle, the All-Wise!" Then she rose from her place and betook herself to the house of the Chamberlain who was now become Sultan, and she found him sitting upon his carpet. So she went in to his wife, Nuzhat al-Zaman, and wept with sore weeping and said unto her, "Verily the dead hath no friend! May Allah never bring you to want as long as your age and the years endure, and may you cease not to rule justly over rich and poor. Thine ears have heard and thine eyes have seen all that was ours of kingship and honour and dignity and wealth and fair fortune of life and condition; and now Time hath turned upon us, and fate and 56 the world have betrayed us and wrought in hostile way with us; wherefore I come to thee craving thy favours, I from whom favours were craved: for when a man dieth, women and maidens are brought to despisal." And she repeated these couplets:—

Suffice thee Death such marvels can enhance, ✿ And severed lives make lasting severance:

Man's days are marvels, and their stations are ✿ But water-pits[64] of misery and mischance.

Naught wrings my heart save loss of noble friends, ✿ Girt round by rings of hard, harsh circumstance.

When Nuzhat al-Zaman heard these words, she remembered her brother, Zau al-Makan, and his son Kanmakan, and, making her draw near to her and showing her honour, she said, "Verily at this moment, by Allah, I am grown rich and thou art poor; now by the Lord! we did not cease to seek thee out, but we feared to wound thy heart lest thou shouldest fancy our gifts to thee an alms-gift. Withal, whatso weal we now enjoy is from thee and thy husband; so our house is thy house and our place thy place, and thine is all our wealth and what goods we have belong to thee." Then she robed her in sumptuous robes and set apart for her a place in the Palace adjoining her own; and they abode therein, she and her son, in all delight of life. And Nuzhat al-Zaman clothed him also in Kings' raiment and gave to them both especial handmaids for their service. After a little, she related to her husband the sad case of the widow of her brother, Zau al-Makan, whereat his eyes filled with tears and he said, "Wouldest thou see the world after thee, look thou upon the world after other than thyself. Then

entreat her honourably and enrich her poverty."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nuzhat al-Zaman related to her husband the sad case of the widow of her brother, Zau al-Makan, the Chamberlain said, "Entreat her honourably 57and enrich her poverty." Thus far concerning Nuzhat al-Zaman and her consort and the relict of Zau al-Makan; but as regards Kanmakan and his cousin Kuzia Fakan, they grew up and flourished till they waxed like unto two fruit-laden boughs or two shining moons; and they reached the age of fifteen. And she was indeed the fairest of maids who are modestly veiled, lovely-faced with smooth cheeks graced, and slender waist on heavy hips based; and her shape was the shaft's thin line and her lips were sweeter than old wine and the nectar of her mouth as it were the fountain Salsabíl[65]; even as saith the poet in these two couplets describing one like her:—

As though ptisane of wine on her lips honey-dew ✿ Dropt from the ripened grapes her mouth in clusters grew:

And, when her frame thou doublest, and low bends her vine, ✿ Praise her Creator's might no creature ever knew.

Of a truth Allah had united in her every charm: her shape would shame the branch of waving tree and the rose before her cheeks craved lenity; and the honey-dew of her lips of wine made jeer, however old and clear, and she gladdened heart and beholder with joyous cheer, even as saith of her the poet:—

Goodly of gifts is she, and charm those perfect eyes, ✿ With lashes shaming Kohl and all the fair ones Kohl'd[66]

And from those eyne the glances pierce the lover's heart, ✿ Like sword in Mír al-Muminína Ali's hold.

And (the relator continueth) as for Kanmakan, he became unique in loveliness and excelling in perfection no less; none could even him in qualities as in seemliness and the sheen of valour between his eyes was espied, testifying for him while against him it never testified. The hardest hearts inclined to his side; his eyelids bore lashes black as by Kohl; and he was of surpassing worth in body and soul. And when the down of lips and cheeks began to sprout bards and poets sang for him far and near:—

Appeared not my excuse till hair had clothed his cheek, ✿ And gloom o'ercrept that side-face (sight to stagger!)

A fawn, when eyes would batten on his charms, ✿ Each glance deals thrust like point of Khanjar-dagger.

58And saith another:—

His lovers' souls have drawn upon his cheek ✿ An ant that perfected its rosy light:

I marvel at such martyrs Lazá-pent ✿ Who yet with greeny robes of Heaven are dight.[67]

Now it chanced one holiday, that Kuzia Fakan fared forth to make festival with certain kindred of the court, and she went surrounded by her handmaids. And indeed beauty encompassed her; the roses of her cheeks dealt envy to their mole; from out her smiling lips leven flashed white, gleaming like the chamomile[68]; and Kanmakan began to turn about her and devour her with his sight, for she was the moon of

resplendent light. Then he took heart and giving his tongue a start began to improvise:—

When shall the disappointed heart be healed of severance, ✿ And lips of Union smile at ceasing of our hard mischance?

Would Heaven I knew shall come some night, and with it surely bring ✿ Meeting with friend who like myself endureth sufferance.[69]

When Kuzia Fakan heard these couplets, she showed vexation and disapproval and, putting on a haughty and angry air, said to him, "Dost thou name me in thy verse, to shame me amongst folk? By Allah, if thou turn not from this talk, I will assuredly complain of thee to the Grand Chamberlain, Sultan of Khorasan and Baghdad and lord of justice and equity; that disgrace and punishment may befal thee!" Kanmakan made no reply for anger but he returned to Baghdad; and Kuzia Fakan also returned to her palace and complained of her cousin to her mother, who said to her, "O my daughter, haply he meant thee no harm, and is he aught but an orphan? Withal, he said nought of reproach to 59thee; so beware thou tell none of this, lest perchance it come to the Sultan's ears and he cut short his life and blot out his name and make it even as yesterday, whose memory hath passed away." However, Kanmakan's love for Kuzia Fakan spread abroad in Baghdad, so that the women talked of it. Moreover, his breast became straitened and his patience waned and he knew not what to do, yet he could not hide his condition from the world. Then longed he to give vent to the pangs he endured, by reason of the lowe of separation; but he feared her rebuke and her wrath; so he began improvising:—

Now is my dread to incur reproaches, which ✿ Disturb her temper and her mind obscure,

Patient I'll bear them; e'en as generous youth ✿ Beareth the burn of brand his case to cure.[70]

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Grand Chamberlain became Sultan they named him King Sásán; and after he had assumed the throne he governed the people in righteous way. Now as he was giving audience one day, Kanmakan's verses came to his knowledge. Thereupon he repented him of the past and going in to his wife Nuzhat al-Zaman, said to her, "Verily, to join Halfah-grass and fire,[71] is the greatest of risks; and man may not be trusted with woman, so long as eye glanceth and eyelid quivereth. Now thy brother's son, Kanmakan, is come to man's estate and it behoveth us to forbid him access to the rooms where anklets tinkle, and it is yet more needful to forbid thy daughter the company of men, for the like of her should be kept in the Harim." Replied she, "Thou sayest sooth, O wise King!" Next day came Kanmakan according 60to his wont; and, going in to his aunt saluted her. She returned his salutation and said to him, "O my son! I have somewhat to say to thee which I would fain leave unsaid; yet I must tell it thee despite my inclination." Quoth he, "Speak;" and quoth she, "Know then that thy sire the Chamberlain, the

father of Kuzia Fakan, hath heard of the verses thou madest anent her, and hath ordered that she be kept in the Harim and out of thy reach; if therefore, O my son, thou want anything from us, I will send it to thee from behind the door; and thou shalt not look upon Kuzia Fakan nor shalt thou return hither from this day forth." When he heard this he arose and withdrew without speaking a single word; and, betaking himself to his mother, related what his aunt had said. She observed, "This all cometh of thine overtalking. Thou knowest that the news of thy passion for Kuzia Fakan is noised abroad and the tattle hath spread everywhere how thou eatest their food and thereafter thou courtest their daughter." Rejoined he, "And who should have her but I? She is the daughter of my father's brother and I have the best of rights to her." Retorted his mother, "These are idle words. Be silent, lest haply thy talk come to King Sasan's ears and it prove the cause of thy losing her and the reason of thy ruin and increase of thine affliction. They have not sent us any supper to-night and we shall die an-hungered; and were we in any land but this, we were already dead of famine or of shame for begging our bread." When Kanmakan heard these words from his mother, his regrets redoubled; his eyes ran over with tears and he complained and began improvising:—

Minish this blame I ever bear from you: ✿ My heart loves her to whom all love is due:

Ask not from me of patience jot or tittle, ✿ Divorce of Patience by God's House! I rue:

What blamers preach of patience I unheed; ✿ Here am I, love-path firmly to pursue!

Indeed they bar me access to my love; ✿ Here am I, by God's ruth no ill I sue!

Good sooth my bones, whenas they hear thy name, ✿ Quail as birds quailed when Nisus o'er them flew:[22]

Ah! say to them who blame my love that I ✿ Will love that face, fair cousin, till I die.

61 And when he had ended his verses he said to his mother, "I have no longer a place in my aunt's house nor among these people, but I will go forth from the palace and abide in the corners of the city." So he and his mother left the court; and, having sought an abode in the neighbourhood of the poorer sort, there settled; but she used to go from time to time to King Sasan's palace and thence take daily bread for herself and her son. As this went on Kuzia Fakan took her aside one day and said to her, "Alas, O my naunty, how is it with thy son?" Replied she, "O my daughter, sooth to say, he is tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted, being fallen into the net of thy love." And she repeated to her the couplets he had made; whereupon Kuzia Fakan wept and said, "By Allah! I rebuked him not for his words, nor for ill-will to him, but because I feared for him the malice of foes. Indeed my passion for him is double that he feeleth for me; my tongue may not describe my yearning for him; and were it not for the extravagant wilfulness of his words and the wanderings of his wit, my father had not cut off from him favours that besit, nor had decreed unto him exclusion and prohibition as fit. However, man's days bring nought but change, and patience in all case is most becoming; peradventure He who ordained our severance will vouchsafe us reunion!" And she began versifying in these two couplets:—

O son of mine uncle! same sorrow I bear, ✿ And suffer the like of thy cark and thy care;

Yet hide I from man what I suffer for pine; ✿ Hide it too, and such secret to man never bare!

When his mother heard this from her, she thanked her and blessed her: then she left her and acquainted her son with what she had said; whereupon his desire for her increased and he took heart, being eased of his despair and the turmoil of his love and care. And he said, "By Allah, I desire none but her!"; and he began improvising:—

Leave this blame, I will list to no flout of my foe! ✿ I divulged a secret was told me to keep:

He is lost to my sight for whose union I yearn, ✿ And I watch all the while he can slumber and sleep.

So the days and nights went by whilst Kanmakan lay tossing upon coals of fire,[73] till he reached the age of seventeen; and his beauty 62 had waxt perfect and his wits were at their brightest. One night, as he lay awake, he communed with himself and said, "Why should I keep silence till I waste away and see not my lover? Fault have I none save poverty; so, by Allah, I am resolved to remove me from this region and wander over the wild and the wold; for my position in this city is a torture and I have no friend nor lover therein to comfort me; wherefore I am determined to distract myself by absence from my native land till I die and take my rest after this shame and tribulation." And he began to improvise and recited these couplets:—

Albeit my vitals quiver 'neath this ban; ✿ Before the foe myself I'll ne'er unman!

So pardon me, my vitals are a writ ✿ Whose superscription are my tears that ran:

Heigh-ho! my cousin seemeth Houri-may ✿ Come down to earth by reason of Rizwán:

'Scapes not the dreadful sword-lunge of her look ✿ Who dares the glancing of those eyne to scan:

O'er Allah's wide-spread world I'll roam and roam, ✿ And from such exile win what bread I can:

Yes, o'er broad earth I'll roam and save my soul, ✿ All but her absence bearing like a man:

With gladsome heart I'll haunt the field of fight, ✿ And meet the bravest Brave in battle-van!

So Kanmakan fared forth from the palace barefoot and he walked in a short-sleeved gown, wearing on his head a skull cap of felt[74] seven years old and carrying a scone three days stale, and in the deep glooms of night betook himself to the portal al-Arij of Baghdad. Here he waited for the gate being opened and when it was opened, he was the first to pass through it; and he went out at random and wandered about the wastes night and day. When the dark hours came, his mother sought him but found him not; whereupon the world waxt strait upon her for all that it was great and wide, and she took no delight in aught of weal it supplied. She looked for him a first day and a second day and a third day till ten days were past, but no news of him reached her. Then her breast became contracted and she shrieked and shrilled, saying, "O my son! O my darling! thou hast revived my regrets. Sufficed 63 not what I endured, but thou must depart from my home? After thee I care not for food nor joy in sleep, and naught but tears and mourning are left me. O my son, from what land shall I call thee? And what town hath given thee refuge?" Then her sobs burst out, and she began repeating these couplets:—

Well learnt we, since you left, our grief and sorrow to sustain, ✿ While bows of severance shot their shafts in many a railing rain:

They left me, after girthing on their selles of corduwayne ✿ To fight the very pangs of death while spanned they sandy plain:

Mysterious through the nightly gloom there came the moan of dove; ✿ A ringdove, and replied I, 'Cease thy plaint, how durst complain?'

If, by my life, her heart, like mine, were full of pain and pine ✿ She had not deckt her neck with ring nor sole with ruddy stain.[751]

Fled is mine own familiar friend, bequeathing me a store ✿ Of parting-pang and absence-ache to suffer evermore.

Then she abstained from food and drink and gave herself up to excessive tear-shedding and lamentation. Her grief became public property far and wide and all the people of the town and country side wept with her and cried, "Where is thine eye, O Zau al-Makan?" And they bewailed the rigours of Time, saying, "Would Heaven we knew what hath befallen Kanmakan that he fled his native town, and chased himself from the place where his father used to fill all in hungry case and do justice and grace?" And his mother redoubled her weeping and wailing till the news of Kanmakan's departure came to King Sasan.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that came to King Sasan the tidings of the departure of Kanmakan, through the Chief Emirs who said to him, "Verily he is the son of our Sovran and the seed of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and it hath reached us that he hath exiled himself from the land." When King Sasan heard these words, he was wroth with them and ordered one of them to be hanged by way of silencing him, whereat the fear of him fell upon the hearts of all the other Grandees and they dared 64 not speak one word. Then he called to mind all the kindness that Zau al-Makan had done him, and how he had charged him with the care of his son; wherefore he grieved for Kanmakan and said, "Needs must I have search made for him in all countries." So he summoned Tarkash and bade him choose an hundred horse and wend with them in quest of the Prince. Accordingly he went out and was absent ten days, after which he returned and said, "I can learn no tidings of him and have hit on no trace of him, nor can any tell me aught of him." Upon this King Sasan repented him of that which he had done by the Prince; whilst his mother abode in unrest continual nor would patience come at her call: and thus passed over her twenty days in heaviness all. This is how it fared with these; but as regards Kanmakan, when he left Baghdad, he went forth perplexed about his case and knowing not whither he should go: so he fared on alone through the desert for three days and saw neither footman nor horseman; withal, his sleep fled and his wakefulness redoubled, for he pined after his people and his homestead. He ate of the herbs of the earth and drank of its flowing waters and siesta'd under its trees at hours of noontide heats, till he turned

from that road to another way and, following it other three days, came on the fourth to a land of green leas, dyed with the hues of plants and trees and with sloping valley-sides made to please, abounding with the fruits of the earth. It had drunken of the cups of the cloud, to the sound of thunders rolling loud and the song of the turtle-dove gently sough'd, till its hill-slopes were brightly verdant and its fields were sweetly fragrant. Then Kanmakan recalled his father's city Baghdad, and for excess of emotion he broke out into verse:—

I roam, and roaming hope I to return; ✿ Yet of returning see not how or when:

I went for love of one I could not win, ✿ Nor way of 'scaping ills that pressed could ken.

When he ended his recital he wept, but presently he wiped away his tears and ate of the fruits of the earth enough for his present need. Then he made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed the ordained prayers which he had neglected all this time; and he sat resting in that place through the livelong day. When night came he slept and ceased not sleeping till midnight, when he awoke and heard a human voice declaiming these couplets:—

65 What's life to me, unless I see the pearly sheen ✿ Of teeth I love, and sight that glorious mien?

Pray for her Bishops who in convents reign, ✿ Vying to bow before that heavenly queen.

And Death is lighter than the loved one's wrath, ✿ Whose phantom haunts me, seen in every scene:

O joy of cup-companions, when they meet, ✿ And loved and lover o'er each other lean!

E'en more in time of spring, the lord of flowers, ✿ When fragrant is the world with bloom and green:

Drainer of vine-juice! up wi' thee, for now ✿ Earth is a Heaven where sweet waters flow.[76]

When Kanmakan heard these distichs his sorrows surged up; his tears ran down his cheeks like freshets and flames of fire darted into his heart. So he rose to see who it was that spake these words, but saw none for the thickness of the gloom; whereupon passion increased on him and he was frightened and restlessness possessed him. He descended from his place to the sole of the valley and walked along the banks of the stream, till he heard the same voice sighing heavy sighs and reciting these couplets:—

Tho' 'tis thy wont to hide thy love perforce, ✿ Yet weep on day of parting and divorce!

Twixt me and my dear love were plighted vows; ✿ Pledge of reunion, fonder intercourse:

With joy inspires my heart and deals it rest ✿ Zephyr, whose coolness doth desire enforce.

O Sa'adá,[77] thinks of me that anklet-wearer? ✿ Or parting broke she troth without remorse?

And say! shall nights foregather us, and we ✿ Of suffered hardships tell in soft discourse?

Quoth she, "Thou'rt daft for us and fey"; quoth I, ✿ "'Sain thee! how many a friend hast turned to corse!"

If taste mine eyes sweet sleep while she's away, ✿ Allah with loss of her these eyne accurse.

O wounds in vitals mine! for cure they lack ✿ Union and dewy lips' sweet theriack.[78]

66 When Kanmakan heard this verse again spoken by the same voice yet saw no one, he knew that the speaker was a lover like unto himself, debarred from union with her who loved him; and he said to himself, "'Twere fitting that this man should lay his

head to my head and become my comrade in this my strangerhood."[79] Then he hailed the speaker and cried out to him, saying, "O thou who farest in sombrest night, draw near to me and tell me thy tale; haply thou shalt find me one who will succour thee in thy sufferings." And when the owner of the voice heard these words, he cried out, "O thou that respondest to my complaint and wouldest hear my history, who art thou amongst the knights? Art thou human or Jinni? Answer me speedily ere thy death draw near, for I have wandered in this desert some twenty days and have seen no one nor heard any voice but thy voice." At these words Kanmakan said to himself, "This one's case is like my case, for I, even I, have wandered twenty days, nor during my wayfare have I seen man or heard voice:" and he added, "I will make him no answer till day arise." So he was silent, and the voice again called out to him, saying, "O thou that callest, if thou be of the Jinn fare in peace and, if thou be man, stay awhile till the day break stark and the night flee with the dark." The speaker abode in his place and Kanmakan did likewise and the twain in reciting verses never failed, and wept tears that railed till the light of day began loom and the night departed with its gloom. Then Kanmakan looked at the other and found him to be of the Badawi Arabs, a youth in the flower of his age; clad in worn clothes and bearing in baldrick a rusty sword which he kept sheathed, and the signs of love-longing were apparent on him. He went up to him and accosted him and saluted him, and the Badawi returned the salute and greeted him with courteous wishes for his long life, but somewhat despised him, seeing his tender years and his condition, which was that of a pauper. So he said to him, "O youth, of what tribe art thou and to whom art thou kin among the Arabs; and what is thy history that thou goest by night, after the fashion of knights? Indeed thou spakest to me in the dark words such as are spoken of none 67 but doughty cavaliers and lion-like warriors; and now I hold thy life in hand. But I have compassion on thee by reason of thy green years; so I will make thee my companion and thou shalt go with me, to do me service." When Kanmakan heard him speak these unseemly words, after showing him such skill in verse, he knew that he despised him and would presume with him; therefore he answered him with soft and well-chosen speech, saying, "O Chief of the Arabs, leave my tenderness of age and tell me why thou wanderest by night in the desert reciting verses. Thou talkest, I see, of my serving thee; who then art thou and what moved thee to talk this wise?" Answered he, "Hark ye, boy! I am Sabbáh, son of Rammáh bin Humám.[80] My people are of the Arabs of Syria and I have a cousin, Najmah hight, who to all that look on her brings delight. And when my father died I was brought up in the house of his brother, the father of Najmah; but as soon I grew up and my uncle's daughter became a woman, they secluded her from me and me from her, seeing that I was poor and without money in pouch. Then the Chiefs of the Arabs and the heads of the tribes rebuked her sire, and he was abashed before them and consented to give me my cousin, but upon condition that I should bring him as her dower fifty head of horses and fifty dromedaries which travel ten days[81] without a halt and fifty camels laden with wheat and a like number

laden with barley, together with ten black slaves and ten handmaids. Thus the weight he set upon me was beyond my power to bear; for he exacted more than 68 the marriage-settlement as by law established. So here am I, travelling from Syria to Irak, and I have passed twenty days without seeing other than thyself; yet I mean to go to Baghdad that I may ascertain what merchant men of wealth and importance start thence. Then will I fare forth in their track and loot their goods, and I will slay their escort and drive off their camels with their loads. But what manner of man art thou?" Replied Kanmakan, "Thy case is like unto my case, save that my evil is more grievous than thine ill; for my cousin is a King's daughter and the dowry of which thou hast spoken would not content her people, nor would they be satisfied with the like of that from me." Quoth Sabbah, "Surely thou art a fool or thy wits for excess of passion are gathering wool! How can thy cousin be a King's daughter? Thou hast no sign of royal rank on thee, for thou art but a mendicant." Rejoined Kanmakan, "O Chief of the Arabs, let not this my case seem strange to thee; for what happened, happened;[82] and if thou desire proof of me, I am Kanmakan, son of King Zau al-Makan, son of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman Lord of Baghdad and the realm Khorasan; and Fortune banned me with her tyrant ban, for my father died and my Sultanate was taken by King Sasan. So I fled forth from Baghdad secretly, lest I be seen of any man, and have wandered twenty days without any but thyself to scan. So now I have discovered to thee my case, and my story is as thy story and my need as thy need." When Sabbah heard this, he cried out, "O my joy, I have attained my desire! I will have no loot this day but thyself; for since thou art of the seed of Kings and hast come out in beggar's garb, there is no help but thy people will seek thee; and, if they find thee in any one's power, they will ransom thee with monies galore. So show me thy back, O my lad, and walk before me." Answered Kanmakan, "O brother of the Arabs, act not on this wise, for my people will not buy me with silver nor with gold, not even with a copper dirham; and I am a poor man, having with me neither much nor little; so cease then to be upon this track and take me to thy comrade. Fare we forth for the land of Irak and wander over the world, so haply we may win dower and marriage-portion, and we may seek and enjoy our cousins' kisses and embraces when we come back." Hearing this, Sabbah waxed angry; his arrogance and fury redoubled and he said, "Woe to thee! Dost thou bandy words with me, O vilest of dogs that be? Turn 69 thee thy back, or I will come down on thee with clack!" Kanmakan smiled and answered, "Why should I turn my back for thee? Is there no justice in thee? Dost thou not fear to bring blame upon the Arab men by driving a man like myself captive, in shame and disdain, before thou hast proved him on the plain, to know if he be a warrior or of cowardly strain?" Upon this Sabbah laughed and replied, "By Allah, a wonder! Thou art a boy in years told, but in talk thou art old. These words should come from none but a champion doughty and bold: what wantest thou of justice?" Quoth Kanmakan, "If thou wilt have me thy captive, to wend with thee and serve thee, throw down thine

arms and put off thine outer gear and come on and wrestle with me; and whichever of us throw his opponent shall have his will of him and make him his boy." Then Sabbah laughed and said, "I think this waste of breath denoteth the nearness of thy death." Then he arose and threw down his weapon and, tucking up his skirt, drew near unto Kanmakan who also drew near and they gripped each other. But the Badawi found that the other had the better of him and weighed him down, as the quintal downweighs the dinar; and he looked at his legs firmly planted on the ground, and saw that they were as two minarets[83] strongly based, or two tent-poles in earth encased, or two mountains which may not be displaced. So he acknowledged himself to be a failure and repented of having come to wrestle with him, saying in himself, "Would I had slain him with my weapon!" Then Kanmakan took hold of him and mastering him, shook him till the Badawi thought his bowels would burst in his belly, and he broke out, "Hold thy hand, O boy!" He heeded not his words, but shook him again and, lifting him from the ground, made with him towards the stream, that he might throw him therein: whereupon the Badawi roared out, saying, "O thou valiant man, what wilt thou do with me?"[84] Quoth he, "I mean to throw thee into this stream: it will bear to the Tigris. The Tigris will bring thee to the river Isa and the Isa will carry thee to the Euphrates, and the Euphrates will land thee in thine own country; so thy tribe shall see thee and know thy manly cheer and how thy passion be sincere." Then Sabbah cried aloud and said, "O Champion of the 70 desert-lair, do not with me what deed the wicked dare but let me go, by the life of thy cousin, the jewel of the fair!" Hearing this, Kanmakan set him on the ground; but when he found himself at liberty, he ran to his sword and targe and taking them up, stood plotting in himself treachery and sudden assault on his adversary.[85] The Prince kenned his intent in his eye and said to him, "I con what is in thy heart, now thou hast hold of thy sword and thy targe. Thou hast neither length of hand nor trick of wrestling, but thou thinkest that, wert thou on thy mare and couldst wheel about the plain, and ply me with thy skene, I had long ago been slain. But I will give thee thy requite, so there may be left in thy heart no despite; now give me the targe and fall on me with thy whinger; either thou shalt kill me or I shall kill thee." "Here it is," answered Sabbah and, throwing him the targe, bared his brand and rushed at him sword in hand; Kanmakan hent the buckler in his right and began to fend himself with it, whilst Sabbah struck at him, saying at each stroke, "This is the finishing blow!" But it fell harmless enow, for Kanmakan took all on his buckler and it was waste work, though he did not reply lacking the wherewithal to strike and Sabbah ceased not to smite at him with his sabre, till his arm was weary. When his opponent saw this, he rushed upon him and, hugging him in his arms, shook him and threw him to the ground. Then he turned him over on his face and pinioned his elbows behind him with the baldrick of his sword, and began to drag him by the feet and to make for the river. Thereupon cried Sabbah, "What wilt thou do with me, O youth, and cavalier of the age and brave of the plain where battles rage?" Answered he, "Did I not tell thee that it was my intent to send

thee by the river to thy kin and to thy tribe, that thy heart be not troubled for them nor their hearts be troubled for thee, and lest thou miss thy cousin's bride-feast!" At this Sabbah shrieked aloud and wept and screaming said, "Do not thus, O champion of the [71]time's braves! Let me go and make me one of thy slaves!" And he wept and wailed and began reciting these verses:—

I'm estranged fro' my folk and estrangement's long: ✿ Shall I die amid strangers? Ah, would that I kenned!

I die, nor my kinsmen shall know where I'm slain, ✿ Die in exile nor see the dear face of my friend!

Thereupon Kanmakan had compassion on him and said, "Make with me a covenant true and swear me an oath to be a comrade as due and to bear me company wheresoever I may go." "'Tis well," replied Sabbah and swore accordingly. Then Kanmakan loosed him and he rose and would have kissed the Prince's hand; but he forbade him that. Then the Badawi opened his scrip and, taking out three barley scones, laid them before Kanmakan and they both sat down on the bank of the stream to eat.[86] When they had done eating together, they made the lesser ablution and prayed; after which they sat talking of what had befallen each of them from his people and from the shifts of Time. Presently said Kanmakan, "Whither dost thou now intend?" Replied Sabbah, "I purpose to repair to Baghdad, thy native town, and abide there, until Allah vouchsafe me the marriage portion." Rejoined the other, "Up then and to the road! I tarry here." So the Badawi farewelled him and took the way for Baghdad, whilst Kanmakan remained behind, saying to himself, "O my soul, with what face shall I return pauper-poor? Now by Allah, I will not go back empty-handed and, if the Almighty please, I will assuredly work my deliverance." Then he went to the stream and made the Wuzu-washing and when prostrating he laid his brow in the dust and prayed to the Lord, saying, "O Allah! Thou who sendest down the dew, and feedest the worm that homes in the stone, I beseech Thee vouchsafe me my livelihood of Thine Omnipotence and the Grace of Thy benevolence!" Then he pronounced the salutation which closes prayer; yet every road appeared closed to him. And while he sat turning right and left, behold, he espied a horseman making towards him with bent back and reins slack. He sat upright and after a time reached the Prince; and the stranger was at the last gasp and made sure of death, for he was grievously wounded when he came up; the tears streamed down his cheeks like water from the mouths of skins, and he said to Kanmakan, [72]"O chief of the Arabs, take me to thy friendship as long as I live, for thou wilt not find my like; and give me a little water though the drinking of water be harmful to one wounded, especially whilst the blood is flowing and the life with it. And if I live, I will give thee what shall heal thy penury and thy poverty: and if I die, mayst thou be blessed for thy good intent." Now under that horseman was a stallion, so noble a Rabite[87] the tongue fails to describe him; and as Kanmakan looked at his legs like marble shafts, he was seized with a longing and said to himself, "Verily the like of this stallion[88] is not to be found in our time." Then he helped the rider to alight and entreated him in friendly guise and gave him a little

water to swallow; after which he waited till he had taken rest and addressed him, saying, "Who hath dealt thus with thee?" Quoth the rider, "I will tell thee the truth of the case. I am a horse-thief and I have busied myself with lifting and snatching horses all my life, night and day, and my name is Ghassán, the plague of every stable and stallion. I heard tell of this horse, that he was in the land of Roum, with King Afridun, where they had named him Al-Katúl and surnamed him Al-Majnún.[89] So I journeyed to Constantinople for his sake and watched my opportunity and whilst I was thus waiting, there came out an old woman, one highly honoured among the Greeks, and whose word with them is law, by name Zat al-Dawahi, a past mistress in all manner of trickery. She had with her this steed and ten slaves, no more, to attend on her and the horse; and she was bound for Baghdad and Khorasan, there to seek King Sasan and to sue for peace and pardon from ban. So I went out in their track, longing to get at the horse,[90] and ceased not to follow them, but was unable to come by the stallion, because of the strict guard kept by the slaves, till they reached this country and I feared lest they enter the city of Baghdad. As I was casting about to steal the stallion lo! a great cloud of dust arose on them and walled the horizon. Presently it 73 opened and disclosed fifty horsemen, gathered together to waylay merchants on the highway, and their captain, by name Kahrdásh, was a lion in daring and dash; a furious lion who layeth knights flat as carpets in battle-crash."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the wounded rider spake thus to Kanmakan, "Then came out the same Kahrdash, and fell on the old woman and her men and bore down upon them bashing them, nor was it long before they bound her and the ten slaves and bore off their captives and the horse, rejoicing. When I saw this, I said to myself:—My pains were in vain nor did I attain my gain. However, I waited to see how the affair would fare, and when the old woman found herself in bonds, she wept and said to the captain, Kahrdash:—O thou doughty Champion and furious Knight, what wilt thou do with an old woman and slaves, now that thou hast thy will of the horse? And she beguiled him with soft words and she sware that she would send him horses and cattle, till he released her and her slaves. Then he went his way, he and his comrades, and I followed them till they reached this country; and I watched them, till at last I found an opportunity of stealing the horse, whereupon I mounted him and, drawing a whip from my wallet, struck him with it. When the robbers heard this, they came out on me and surrounded me on all sides and shot arrows and cast spears at me, whilst I stuck fast on his back and he fended me with hoofs and forehand,[91] till at last he bolted out with me from amongst them like unerring shaft or shooting star. But in the stress and stowre I got sundry grievous wounds and sore; and, since that time, I have passed on his back three days without tasting food or sleeping aught, so that my strength is down brought and the world is

become to me as naught. But thou hast dealt kindly with me and hast shown ruth on me; and I see thee naked stark and sorrow hath set on thee its mark, yet are signs of wealth and gentle breeding manifest on 74 thee. So tell me, what and whence art thou and whither art thou bound?" Answered the Prince, "My name is Kanmakan, son of Zau al-Makan, son of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman. When my father died and an orphan lot was my fate, a base man seized the throne and became King over small and great." Then he told him all his past from first to last; and the horse-thief said to him, for he pitied him, "By Allah, thou art one of high degree and exceeding nobility, and thou shalt surely attain estate sublime and become the first cavalier of thy time. If thou can lift me on horseback and mount thee behind me and bring me to my own land, thou shalt have honour in this world and a reward on the day of band calling to band,[92] for I have no strength left to steady myself; and if this be my last day, the steed is thine alway; for thou art worthier of him than any other." Quoth Kanmakan, "By Allah, if I could carry thee on my shoulders or share my days with thee, I would do this deed without the steed! For I am of a breed that loveth to do good and to succour those in need; and one kindly action in Almighty Allah's honour averteth seventy calamities from its doer. So make ready to set out and put thy trust in the Subtle, the All-Wise." And he would have lifted him on to the horse and fared forward trusting in Allah, Aider of those who seek aid, but the horse-thief said, "Wait for me awhile." Then he closed his eyes and opening his hands, said, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God, and I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!" And he added, "O glorious One, pardon me my mortal sin, for none can pardon mortal sins save the Immortal!" And he made ready for death and recited these couplets:—

I have wronged mankind, and have ranged like wind ✿ O'er the world, and in wine-cups my life has past:
I've swum torrent-course to bear off the horse; ✿ And my guiles high places on plain have cast.
Much I've tried to win and o'er much my sin; ✿ And Katul of my winnings is most and last:
I had hoped of this steed to gain wish and need, ✿ But vain was the end of this journey vast.
I have stolen through life, and my death in strife ✿ Was doomed by the Lord who doth all forecast;
And I've toiled these toils to their fatal end ✿ For an orphan, a pauper sans kith or friend!

75 And when he had finished his verses he closed his eyes and opened his mouth; then with a single death-rattling he left this world. Thereupon Kanmakan rose and dug a grave and laid him in the dust; after which he went up to the steed and kissed him and wiped his face and joyed with exceeding joy, saying, "None hath the fellow of this stallion; no, not even King Sasan." Such was the case with Kanmakan; but as regards King Sasan, presently news came to him that the Wazir Dandan had thrown off his allegiance, and with him half the army who swore that they would have no King but Kanmakan: and the Minister had bound the troops by a solemn covenant and had gone with them to the Islands of India and to Berber-land and to Black-land;[93] where he had levied armies from far and near, like unto the swollen sea for fear and none could tell the host's van from its rear. And the Minister was resolved to make for

Baghdad and take the kingdom in ward and slay every soul who dare retard, having sworn not to return the sword of war to its sheath, till he had made Kanmakan King. When this news came to Sasan, he was drowned in the sea of appal, knowing that the whole state had turned against him, great and small; and his trouble redoubled and his care became despair. So he opened his treasuries and distributed his monies among his officers; and he prayed for Kanmakan's return, that he might draw his heart to him with fair usage and bounty; and make him commander of those troops which ceased not being faithful to him, so might he quench the sparks ere they became a flame. Now when the news of this reached Kanmakan by the merchants, he returned in haste to Baghdad on the back of the aforesaid stallion, and as King Sasan sat perplexed upon his throne he heard of the coming of Kanmakan; whereupon he despatched all the troops and head-men of the city to meet him. So all who were in Baghdad fared forth and met the Prince and escorted him to the palace and kissed the thresholds, whilst the damsels and the eunuchs went in to his mother and gave her the fair tidings of his 76return. She came to him and kissed him between the eyes, but he said to her, "O mother mine, let me go to my uncle King Sasan who hath overwhelmed me with weal and boon." And while he so did, all the palace-people and head-men marvelled at the beauty of the stallion and said, "No King is like unto this man." So Kanmakan went in to King Sasan and saluted him as he rose to receive him; and, kissing his hands and feet, offered him the horse as a present. The King greeted him, saying, "Well come and welcome to my son Kanmakan! By Allah, the world hath been straitened on me by reason of thine absence, but praised be Allah for thy safety!" And Kanmakan called down blessings on him. Then the King looked at the stallion, Al-Katul hight, and knew him for the very horse he had seen in such and such a year whilst beleaguering the Cross-worshippers of Constantinople with Kanmakan's sire, Zau al-Makan, that time they slew his uncle Sharrkan. So he said to the Prince, "If thy father could have come by this courser, he would have bought it with a thousand blood horses: but now let the honour return to the honourable. We accept the steed and we give him back to thee as a gift, for to him thou hast more right than any wight, being knightliest of knights." Then King Sasan bade bring forth for him dresses of honour and led horses and appointed to him the chief lodging in the palace, and showed him the utmost affection and honour, because he feared the issue of the Wazir Dandan's doings. At this Kanmakan rejoiced and shame and humiliation ceased from him. Then he went to his house and, going to his mother, asked, "O my mother, how is it with the daughter of my uncle?" Answered she, "By Allah, O my son, my concern for thine absence hath distracted me from any other, even from thy beloved; especially as she was the cause of thy strangerhood and thy separation from me." Then he complained to her of his case, saying, "O my mother, go to her and speak with her; haply she will vouchsafe me her sight to see and dispel from me this despondency." Replied his mother, "Idle desires abase men's necks; so put away from thee this thought that can only vex; for I will not wend to her nor go in to her with

such message." Now when he heard his mother's words he told her what said the horse-thief concerning Zat al-Dawahi, how the old woman was then in their land purposing to make Baghdad, and added, "It was she who slew my uncle and my grandfather, and needs must I avenge them with man-bote, that our reproach 77 be wiped out." Then he left her and repaired to an old woman, a wicked, whorish, pernicious beldam by name Sa'adánah and complained to her of his case and of what he suffered for love of his cousin Kuzia Fakan and begged her to go to her and win her favour for him. "I hear and I obey," answered the old hag and leaving him betook herself to Kuzia Fakan's palace, that she might intercede with her in his behalf. Then she returned to him and said, "Of a truth Kuzia Fakan saluteth thee and promiseth to visit thee this night about midnight."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman came to Kanmakan and said, "Of a truth the daughter of thine uncle saluteth thee and she will visit thee this night about midnight;" he rejoiced and sat down to await the fulfilment of his cousin's promise. But before the hour of night she came to him, wrapped in a veil of black silk, and she went in to him and aroused him from sleep, saying, "How canst thou pretend to love me, when thou art sleeping heart-free and in complete content?" So he awoke and said, "By Allah, O desire of my heart, I slept not but in the hope that thine image might visit my dreams!" Then she chid him with soft words and began versifying in these couplets:—

Hadst thou been leal in love's loyalty, ✿ Ne'er haddest suffered sleep to seal those eyne:

O thou who claimest lover-loyalty, ✿ Treading the lover's path of pain and pine!

By Allah, O my cousin, never yet ✿ Did eyes of lover sleep such sleep indign.

Now when he heard his cousin's words, he was abashed before her and rose and excused himself. Then they embraced and complained to each other of the anguish of separation; and they ceased not thus till dawn broke and day dispersed itself over the horizon; when she rose preparing to depart. Upon this Kanmakan wept and sighed and began improvising these couplets:—

78 O thou who deignest come at sorest syne, ✿ Whose lips those teeth like necklaced pearls enshrine!

I kissed him[94] thousand times and clipt his waist, ✿ And spent the night with cheek to cheek close li'en,

Till to depart us twain came dawning day, ✿ Like sword-edge drawn from sheath in radiant line.

And when he ended his poetry, Kuzia Fakan took leave of him and returned to her palace. Now certain of her damsels became aware of her secret, and one of these slave girls disclosed it to King Sasan, who went into Kuzia Fakan and, drawing his sabre upon her, would have slain her: but her mother Nuzhat al-Zaman entered and said to him, "By Allah, do her no harm, for if thou hurt her, the report will be noised among the folk and thou shalt become a reproach amongst the Kings of the age! Know thou

that Kanmakan is no son of adultery, but a man of honour and nobility, who would not do aught that could shame him, and she was reared with him. So be not hasty; for verily the report is spread abroad, among all the palace-people and all the folk of Baghdad, how the Wazir Dandan hath levied armies from all countries and is on his way hither to make Kanmakan King." Quoth Sasan, "By Allah, needs must I cast him into such calamity that neither earth shall support him nor sky shall shadow him! I did but speak him fair and show him favour because of my lieges and my lords, lest they incline to him; but right soon shalt thou see what shall betide." Then he left her and went out to order the affairs of the realm. Such, then, was the case with King Sasan; but as regards Kanmakan, on the next day he came in to his mother and said, "O my mother! I am resolved to ride forth a-raiding and a-looting: and I will cut the road of caravans and lift horses and flocks, negroes and white slaves and, as soon as I have collected great store and my case is bettered galore, I will demand my cousin Kuzia Fakan in marriage of my uncle Sasan." Replied she, "O my son, of a truth the goods of men are not ready to hand like a scape-camel;[95] for on this side of them are sword-strokes and lance-lungings and men that eat the wild beast and lay countries waste and chase lynxes and hunt lions." Quoth he, "Heaven forefend that I turn back from my resolve, till I have won to my will!" Then he despatched the old woman to Kuzia Fakan, 79 to tell her that he was about to set out in quest of a marriage-settlement befitting her, saying to the beldam, "Thou needs must pray her to send me an answer." "I hear and I obey," replied the old woman and going forth, presently returned with Kuzia Fakan's reply, which was, "She will come to thee at midnight." So he abode awake till one half of the night was passed, when restlessness gat hold on him, and before he was aware she came in to him, saying, "My life be thy ransom from wakefulness!" and he sprang up to receive her, exclaiming, "O desire of my heart, my life be thy redemption from all ills and evils!" Then he acquainted her, with his intent, and she wept: but he said, "Weep not, O daughter of my uncle; for I beseech Him who decreed our separation to vouchsafe us reunion and fair understanding." Then Kanmakan, having fixed a day for departure, went in to his mother and took leave of her, after which came he down from his palace and threw the baldrick of his sword over his shoulder and donned turband and face-veil; and mounting his horse, Al-Katul, and looking like the moon at its full, he threaded the streets of Baghdad, till he reached the city gate. And behold, here he found Sabbah bin Rammah coming out of town; and his comrade seeing him, ran to his stirrup and saluted him. He returned his salutation, and Sabbah asked him, "O my brother, how camest thou by this good steed and this sword and clothes, whilst I up to present time have gotten nothing but my sword and target?" Answered Kanmakan, "The hunter returneth not but with quarry after the measure of his intention. A little after thy departure, fortune came to me: so now say, wilt thou go with me and work thine intent in my company and journey with me in this desert?" Replied Sabbah, "By the Lord of the Ka'abah, from this time forth I will call thee naught but 'my lord'!" Then he ran on before the horse, with his sword

hanging from his neck and his budget between his shoulder-blades, and Kanmakan rode a little behind him; and they plunged into the desert, for a space of four days, eating of the gazelles and drinking water of the springs. On the fifth day they drew near a high hill, at whose foot was a spring-encampment[96] and a deep 80 running stream; and the knolls and hollows were filled with camels and cattle and sheep and horses, and little children played about the pens and folds. When Kanmakan saw this, he rejoiced at the sight and his breast was filled with delight; so he addressed himself to fight, that he might take the camels and the cattle, and said to Sabbah, "Come, fall with us upon this loot, whose owners have left it unguarded here, and do we battle for it with near and far, so haply may fall to our lot of goods some share." Replied Sabbah, "O my lord, verily they to whom these herds belong be many in number; and among them are doughty horsemen and fighting footmen; and if we venture lives in this derring-do we shall fall into danger great and neither of us will return safe from this bate; but we shall both be cut off by fate and leave our cousins desolate." Then Kanmakan laughed and knew that he was a coward; so he left him and rode down the rise, intent on rapine, with loud cries and chanting these couplets:—

Oh a valiant race are the sons of Nu'umán, ✿ Braves whose blades shred heads of the foeman-clan![97]

A tribe who, when tried in the tussle of war, ✿ Taketh prowest stand in the battle-van:

In their tents safe close gaberlunzie's eyne, ✿ Nor his poverty's ugly features scan:

And I for their aidance sue of Him ✿ Who is King of Kings and made soul of man.

Then he rushed upon the she-camels like a he-camel in rut and drove all before him, sheep and cattle, horses and dromedaries. Therewith the slaves ran at him with their blades so bright and their lances so long; and at their head rode a Turkish horseman who was indeed a stout champion, doughty in fray and in battle chance and skilled to wield the nut-brown lance and the blade with bright glance. He drove at Kanmakan, saying, "Woe to thee! Knewest thou to whom these herds belong thou hadst not 81 done this deed. Know that they are the goods of the band Grecian, the champions of the ocean and the troop Circassian; and this troop containeth none but valiant wights numbering an hundred knights, who have cast off the allegiance of every Sultan. But there hath been stolen from them a noble stallion, and they have vowed not to return hence without him." Now when Kanmakan heard these words, he cried out, saying, "O villain, this I bestride is the steed whereof ye speak and after which ye seek, and ye would do battle with me for his sake! So come out against me, all of you at once, and do you dourest for the nonce!" Then he shouted between the ears of Al-Katul who ran at them like a Ghul; whereupon Kanmakan let drive at the Turk[98] and ran him through the body and threw him from his horse and let out his life; after which he turned upon a second and a third and a fourth, and also of life bereft them. When the slaves saw this, they were afraid of him, and he cried out and said to them, "Ho, sons of whores, drive out the cattle and the stud or I will dye my spear in your blood." So they untethered the beasts and began to drive them out; and Sabbah

came down to Kanmakan with loud voicing and hugely rejoicing; when lo! there arose a cloud of dust and grew till it walled the view, and there appeared under of it riders an hundred, like lions an-hungered. Upon this Sabbah took flight, and fled to the hill's topmost height, leaving the assailable site, and enjoyed sight of the fight, saying, "I am no warrior; but in sport and jest I delight."[99] Then the hundred cavaliers made towards Kanmakan and surrounded him on all sides, and one of them accosted him, saying, "Whither goest thou with this loot?" Quoth he, "I have made it my prize and am carrying it away; 82 and I forbid you from it, or come on to the combat, for know ye that he who is before you is a terrible lion and an honourable champion, and a sword that cutteth wherever it turneth!" When the horseman heard these words, he looked at Kanmakan and saw that he was a knight like a mane-clad lion in might, whilst his face was as the full moon rising on its fourteenth night, and valour shone from between his eyes. Now that horseman was the captain of the hundred horse, and his name was Kahrdash; and when he saw in Kanmakan the perfection of cavalarice with surpassing gifts of comeliness, his beauty reminded him of a beautiful mistress of his whose name was Fátin.[100] Now she was one of the fairest of women in face, for Allah had given her charms and grace and noble qualities of all kinds, such as tongue faileth to explain and which ravish the hearts of men. Moreover, the cavaliers of the tribe feared her prowess and all the champions of that land stood in awe of her high spirit; and she had sworn that she would not marry nor let any possess her, except he should conquer her in combat (Kahrdash being one of her suitors); and she said to her father, "None shall approach me, save he be able to deal me overthrow in the field and stead of war-thrust and blow. Now when this news reached Kahrdash, he scorned to fight with a girl, fearing reproach; and one of his intimates said to him, "Thou art complete in all conditions of beauty and goodliness; so if thou contend with her, even though she be stronger than thou, thou must needs overcome her; for when she seeth thy beauty and grace, she will be discomfited before thee and yield thee the victory; for verily women have a need of men e'en as thou heedest full plain. Nevertheless Kahrdash refused and would not contend with her, and he ceased not to abstain from her thus, till he met from Kanmakan that which hath been set down. Now he took the Prince for his beloved Fatin and was afraid; albeit indeed she loved him for what she had heard of his beauty and valour; so he went up to him and said, "Woe to thee,[101] O Fatin! Thou comest here to show me thy prowess; but now alight from thy steed, that I may talk with thee, for I have lifted these cattle and have foiled my friends and waylaid many a brave and man of knightly race, all for the sake of thy beauty of form and face, which are without 83 peer. So marry me now, that Kings' daughters may serve thee and thou shalt become Queen of these countries." When Kanmakan heard these words, the fires of wrath flamed up in him and he cried out, "Woe to thee, O Persian dog! Leave Fatin and thy trust and mistrust, and come to cut and thrust, for eftsoon thou shalt lie in the dust;" and so saying, he began to wheel about him and

assail him and feel the way to prevail. But when Kahrdash observed him closely he knew him for a doughty knight and a stalwart in fight; and the error of his thought became manifest to him, whenas he saw the green down on his cheeks dispread like myrtles springing from the heart of a rose bright-red. And he feared his onslaught and quoth he to those with him, "Woe to you! Let one of you charge down upon him and show him the keen sword and the quivering spear; for know that when many do battle with one man it is foul shame, even though he be a kemperly wight and an invincible knight." Upon this, there ran at Kanmakan a horseman like a lion in fight, mounted on a black horse with hoofs snow-white and a star on his forehead, the bigness of a dirham, astounding wit and sight, as he were Abjar, which was Antar's destrier, even as saith of him the poet:—

The courser chargeth on battling foe, ✿ Mixing heaven on high with the earth down low:[1021]

As though the Morning had blazed his brow, ✿ And he rends her vitals as quid pro quo.

He rushed upon Kanmakan, and they wheeled about awhile, giving blows and taking blows such as confound the sprite and dim the sight; but Kanmakan was the first to smite the foe a swashing blow, that rove through turband and iron skull-cap and reached his head, and he fell from his steed with the fall of a camel when he rolleth over. Then a second came out to him and offered battle, and in like guise a third, a fourth and a fifth, and he did with them all as he had done with the first. Thereupon the rest at once rushed upon him, for indeed they were roused by rage and wild with wrath; but it was not long before he had pierced them all with the point of his spear. When Kahrdash saw these feats of 84 arms, he feared death; for he knew that the youth was stoutest of heart and concluded that he was unique among knights and braves; and he said to Kanmakan, "I waive my claim to thy blood and I pardon thee the blood of my comrades: so take what thou wilt of the cattle and wend thy ways, for thy firmness in fight moveth my ruth and life is better for thee than death." Replied Kanmakan, "Thou lackest not of the generosity of the noble! but leave this talk and run for thy life and reck not of blame nor think to get back the booty; but take the straight path for thine own safety." Thereupon Kahrdash waxed exceeding wroth, and rage moved him to the cause of his death; so he said to Kanmakan, "Woe to thee, an thou knew who I be, thou wouldst not wield these words in the open field. I am the lion to bash known as Kahrdash, he who spoileth great Kings and waylayeth all travellings and seizeth the merchants' preciousest things. And the steed under thee is that I am seeking; and I call upon thee to tell me how thou camest by him and hast him in thy keeping." Replied Kanmakan, "Know thou that this steed was being carried to my uncle King Sasan, under the escort of an ancient dame high in rank attended by ten slaves, when thou fellest upon her and tookest the horse from her; and I have a debt of blood against this old woman for the sake of my grandfather King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and my uncle King Sharrkan." "Woe to thee!" quoth Kahrdash, "who is thy father, O thou that hast no lawful mother?" Quoth he, "Know that I am

Kanmakan, bin Zau al-Makan, son of Omar bin al-Nu'uman." But when Kahrdash heard this address he said, "Thy perfection cannot be denied, nor yet the union in thee of knightly virtue and seemlihead," and he added, "Fare in peace, for thy father showed us favour." Rejoined Kanmakan, "By Allah, I will not deign to honour thee, O wretch I disdain, so far as to overcome thee in battle-plain!" Upon this the Badawi waxed wroth and they drove at each other, shouting aloud, whilst their horses pricked their ears and raised their tails.[103] And they ceased not clashing together with such a crash that it seemed to each as if the firmament were split in sunder, and they continued to strive like two rams which butt, smiting and exchanging with their spears thrust and cut. Presently Kahrdash foined at Kanmakan; but he evaded it and rejoined upon him and so 85 pierced him through the breast that the spearhead issued from his back. Then he collected the horses and the plunder, and he cried out to the slaves, saying, "Up and be driving as hard as ye may!" Hearing this, down came Sabbah and, accosting Kanmakan, said to him, "Right well hast thou dight, O Knight of the age! Verily I prayed Allah for thee and the Lord heard my prayer." Then he cut off Kahrdash's head and Kanmakan laughed and said, "Woe to thee, O Sabbah! I thought thee a rider fain of fight." Quoth the Badawi, "Forget not thy slave in the division of the spoil, so haply therewith I may marry my cousin Najmah." Answered Kanmakan, "Thou shalt assuredly share in it, but now keep watch over the booty and the slaves." Then he set out for his home and he ceased not journeying night and day till he drew near Baghdad city, and all the troops heard of Kanmakan, and saw what was his of loot and cattle and the horse-thief's head on the point of Sabbah's spear. Also (for he was a noted highwayman) the merchants knew Kahrdash's head and rejoiced, saying, "Allah hath rid mankind of him!"; and they marvelled at his being slain and blessed his slayer. Thereupon all the people of Baghdad came to Kanmakan, seeking to know what adventures had befallen him, and he told them what had passed, whereupon all men were taken with awe of him and the Knights and champions feared him. Then he drove his spoil under the palace walls; and, planting the spear-heel, on whose point was Kahrdash's head, over against the royal gate, gave largesse to the people of Baghdad, distributing horses and camels, so that all loved him and their hearts inclined to him. Presently he took Sabbah and lodged him in a spacious dwelling and gave him a share of the loot; after which he went in to his mother and told her all that had befallen him in his last journey. Meanwhile the news of him reached the King, who rose from his levee and, shutting himself up with his chief officers, said to them, "Know ye that I desire to reveal to you my secret and acquaint you with the hidden facts of my case. And further know that Kanmakan will be the cause of our being uprooted from this kingdom, our birth-place; for he hath slain Kahrdash, albeit he had with him the tribes of the Kurds and the Turks, and our affair with him will end in our destruction, seeing that the most part of our troops are his kinsmen and ye weet what the Wazir Dandan hath done; how he disowneth me, after all I have shown him of favours; and after being faithful he hath turned traitor. Indeed it hath reached me that

he hath levied an army in the provinces and 86hath planned to make Kanmakan Sultan, for that the Sultanate was his father's and his grandfather's; and assuredly he will slay me without mercy." Now when the Lords of the Realm heard from him these words, they replied, "O King, verily his man[104] is unequal to this, and did we not know him to have been reared by thee, not one of us would approve of him. And know thou that we are at thy commandment; if thou desire his death, we will do him die; and if thou wilt remove him, we will remove him." Now when King Sasan heard this, he said, "Verily, to slay him were wise; but needs must ye swear an oath to it." So all sware to slay Kanmakan without giving him a chance; to the end that, when the Wazir Dandan should come and hear of his death, his force might be weakened and he fail of his design. When they had made this compact and covenant with him, the King honoured them with the highest honours and presently retired to his own apartments. But the officers deserted him and the troops refused their service and would neither mount nor dismount until they should espy what might befal, for they saw that most of the army was with the Wazir Dandan. Presently, the news of these things came to Kuzia Fakan and caused her much concern; so that she sent for the old woman who was wont to carry messages between her and her cousin, and when she came, bade her go to him and warn him of the plot. Whereto he replied, "Bear my salutation to the daughter of my uncle and say to her:—Verily the earth is of Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!), and He giveth it as heritage to whomsoever of His servants he willeth. How excellent is the saying of the sayer:—

Allah holds Kingship! Whoso seeks without Him victory ✿ Shall be cast out, with soul condemned to Hell of low degree:

Had I or any other man a finger-breadth of land, ✿ The rule were changed and men a twain of partner-gods would see."

Then the old woman returned to Kuzia Fakan and told her his reply and acquainted her that he abode in the city. Meanwhile, King Sasan awaited his faring forth from Baghdad, that he might send after him some who would slay him; till it befel one morning that Kanmakan went out to course and chase, accompanied by Sabbah, who would not leave him night or day. He caught ten gazelles and among them one that had tender black eyes and 87turned right and left: so he let her go and Sabbah said to him, "Why didst thou free this gazelle?" Kanmakan laughed and set the others free also, saying, "It is only humane to release gazelles that have young, and this one turned not from side to side, save to look for her fawns: so I let her go and released the others in her honour." Quoth Sabbah, "Do thou release me, that I may go to my people." At this Kanmakan laughed and smote him with the spear-butt on the breast, and he fell to the ground squirming like a snake. Whilst they were thus doing, behold, they saw a dust-cloud spireing high and heard the tramp of horses; and presently there appeared under it a plump of knights and braves. Now the cause of their coming was this. Some of his followers had acquainted King Sasan with Kanmakan's going out to

the chase; so he sent for an Emir of the Daylamites, called Jámi' and twenty of his horsemen; and gave them money and bade them slay Kanmakan. So when they drew near the Prince, they charged down upon him and he met them in mid-charge and killed them all, to the last man. And behold, King Sasan took horse and riding out to meet his people, found them all slain, whereat he wondered and turned back; when lo! the people of the city laid hands on him and bound him straitly. As for Kanmakan after that adventure, he left the place behind him and rode onward with Sabbah the Badawi. And the while he went, lo! he saw a youth sitting at the door of a house on his road and saluted him. The youth returned his greeting and, going into the house, brought out two platters, one full of soured milk and the other of brewis swimming in clarified butter; and he set the platter before Kanmakan, saying, "Favour us by eating of our victual." But he refused and quoth the young man to him, "What aileth thee, O man, that thou wilt not eat?" Quoth Kanmakan, "I have a vow upon me." The youth asked, "What is the cause of thy vow?", and Kanmakan answered, "Know that King Sasan seized upon my kingdom like a tyrant and an enemy, although it was my father's and my grandfather's before me; yet he became master of it by force after my father's death and took no count of me, by reason of my tender years. So I have bound myself by a vow to eat no man's victual till I have eased my heart of my foe." Rejoined the youth, "Rejoice, for Allah hath fulfilled thy vow. Know that he hath been prisoned in a certain place and methinks he will soon die." Asked Kanmakan, "In what house is he confined?" "Under yon high dome," answered the other. The Prince looked and saw the folk 88 entering and buffeting Sasan, who was suffering the agonies of the dying. So he arose and went up to the pavilion and noted what was therein; after which he returned to his place and, sitting down to the proferred victual, ate what sufficed him and put the rest in his wallet. Then he took seat in his own place and ceased not sitting till it was dark night and the youth, whose guest he was slept; when he rose and repaired to the pavilion wherein Sasan was confined. Now about it were dogs guarding it, and one of them sprang at him; so he took out of his budget a bit of meat and threw it to him. He ceased not casting flesh to the dogs till he came to the pavilion and, making his way to where King Sasan was, laid his hand upon his head; whereupon he said in a loud voice, "Who art thou?" He replied, "I am Kanmakan whom thou strivest to kill; but Allah made thee fall into thine evil device. Did it not suffice thee to take my kingdom and the kingdom of my father, but thou must purpose to slay me?"[105] And Sasan swore a false oath that he had not plotted his death and that the bruit was untrue. So Kanmakan forgave him and said to him, "Follow me." Quoth he, "I cannot walk a single step for weakness." Quoth Kanmakan, "If the case be thus we will get us two horses and ride forth, I and thou, and seek the open." So he did as he said, and he took horse with Sasan and rode till daybreak, when they prayed the dawn-prayer and fared on, and ceased not faring till they came to a garden, where they sat down and talked. Then Kanmakan rose to Sasan and said, "Is aught left to set thy heart against me?" "No, by Allah!" replied Sasan. So they

agreed to return to Baghdad and Sabbah the Badawi said, "I will go before you, to give folk the fair tidings of your coming." Then he rode on in advance, acquainting women and men with the good news; so all the people came out to meet Kanmakan with tabrets and pipes; and Kuzia Fakan also came out, like the full moon shining in all her splendour of light through the thick darkness of the night. So Kanmakan met her, and soul yearned to soul and body longed for body. There was no talk among the people of the time but of Kanmakan; for the Knights bore witness of him that he was the most valiant of the folk of the age and said, "It is not right that other than Kanmakan [89] should be our Sultan; but the throne of his grandfather shall revert to him as it began." Meanwhile Sasan went in to his wife, Nuzhat al-Zaman, who said to him, "I hear that the folk talk of nothing but Kanmakan and attribute to him such qualities as tongue never can." He replied, "Hearing of a man is not like seeing a man. I have seen him, but have noted in him none of the attributes of perfection. Not all that is heard is said; but folk ape one another in extolling and cherishing him, and Allah maketh his praises to run on the lips of men, so that there incline to him the hearts of the people of Baghdad and of the Wazir Dandan, that perfidious and treacherous man; who hath levied troops from all lands and taketh to himself the right of naming a King of the country; and who chooseth that it shall be under the hand of an orphan ruler whose worth is naught." Asked Nuzhat al-Zaman, "What then is it that thou purposest to do?"; and the King answered, "I mean to kill him, that the Wazir may be baulked of his intent and return to his allegiance, seeing nothing for it but my service." Quoth she, "In good sooth perfidy with strangers is a foul thing and how much more with kith and kin! The righteous deed to do would be to marry him to thy daughter Kuzia Fakan and give heed to what was said of old time:—

An Fate some person 'stablish o'er thy head, ✿ And thou being worthier her choice upbraid,

Yet do him honour due to his estate; ✿ He'll bring thee weal though far or near thou vade:

Nor speak thy thought of him, else shalt thou be ✿ Of those who self degrade from honour's grade:

Many Haríms are lovelier than the Bride; ✿ But Time and Fortune lent the Bride their aid."

When Sasan heard these her words and comprehended what her verse intended, he rose from her in anger and said, "Were it not that thy death would bring on me dishonour and disgrace, I would take off thy head with my blade and make an end of thy breath." Quoth she, "Why art thou wroth with me? I did but jest with thee." Then she rose to him and bussed his head and hands, saying, "Right is thy foresight, and I and thou will cast about for some means to kill him forthright." When he heard this, he was glad and said, "Make haste and contrive some deceit to relieve me of my grieving: for in my sooth the door of device is straitened upon me!" Replied she, "At once I will devise for thee to do [90] away his life." "How so?" asked he; and she answered, "By means of our female slave the so-called Bákún." Now this Bakun was past mistress in all kinds of knavery and was one of the most pestilent of old women, in whose religion to abstain from wickedness was not lawful; she had brought up

Kuzia Fakan and Kanmakan who had her in so great affection that he used to sleep at her feet. So when King Sasan heard his wife name her, he said, "Right is this recking"; and, sending for the old woman, told her what had passed and bade her cast about to kill Kanmakan, promising her all good. Replied she, "Thy bidding shall be obeyed; but I would have thee, O my lord, give me a dagger[106] which hath been tempered in water of death, that I may despatch him the speedilier for thee." Quoth Sasan, "And welcome to thee!"; and gave her a hanger that would devance man's destiny. Now this slave-woman had heard stories and verses and had learned by rote great store of strange sayings and anecdotes: so she took the dagger and went out of the room, considering how she could compass his doom. Then she repaired to Kanmakan, who was sitting and awaiting news of tryst with the daughter of his uncle, Kuzia Fakan; so that night his thought was taken up with her and the fires of love for her raged in his heart. And while he was thus, behold, the slave-woman, Bakun, went in to him and said, "Union time is at hand and the days of disunion are over and gone." Now when he heard this he asked, "How is it with Kuzia Fakan?"; and Bakun answered, "Know that her time is wholly taken up with love of thee." At this he rose and doffing his outer clothes put them on her and promised her all good. Then said she, "Know that I mean to pass this night with thee, that I may tell thee what talk I have heard and console thee with stories of many passion-distraughts whom love hath made sick." "Nay," quoth he, "rather tell me a tale that will gladden my heart and gar my cares depart." "With joy and good will," answered she; then she took seat by his side (and that poniard under her dress) and began to say:—Know thou that the pleasantest thing my ears ever heard was

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THE TALE OF THE HASHISH EATER.

A certain man loved fair women, and spent his substance on them, till he became so poor that nothing remained to him; the world was straitened upon him and he used to go about the market-streets begging his daily bread. Once upon a time as he went along, behold, a bit of iron nail pierced his finger and drew blood; so he sat down and wiping away the blood, bound up his finger. Then he arose crying out, and fared forwards till he came to a Hammam and entering took off his clothes, and when he looked about him he found it clean and empty. So he sat him down by the fountain-basin, and ceased not pouring water on his head, till he was tired.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the man sat down by the fountain-basin and ceased not pouring water on his head till he was tired. Then he

went out to the room in which was the cistern of cold water; and seeing no one there, he found a quiet corner and taking out a piece of Hashísh,[107] swallowed it. Presently the fumes mounted to his brain and he rolled over on to the marble floor. Then the Hashish made him fancy that a great lord was shampooing him and that two slaves stood at his head, one bearing a bowl and the other washing gear and all the requisites of the Hammam. When he saw this, he said in himself, "Meseemeth these here be mistaken in me; or else they are of the company of us Hashish-eaters."[108] Then he stretched out his legs and he imagined that the bathman said to him, "O my master, the time of thy going up to the Palace draweth near and it is to-day thy 92 turn of service." At this he laughed and said to himself, "As Allah willeth,[109] O Hashish!" Then he sat and said nothing, whilst the bathman arose and took him by the hand and girt his middle with a waist-cloth of black silk, after which the two slaves followed him with the bowls and gear; and they ceased not escorting him till they brought him into a cabinet, wherein they set incense and perfumes a-burning. He found the place full of various kinds of fruits and sweet-scented flowers, and they sliced him a water-melon and seated him on a stool of ebony, whilst the bathman stood to wash him and the slaves poured water on him; after which they rubbed him down well and said, "O our lord, Sir Wazir, health to thee for ever!" Then they went out and shut the door on him; and in the vanity of phantasy he arose and removed the waist-cloth from his middle, and laughed till he well nigh fainted. He gave not over laughing for some time and at last quoth he to himself, "What aileth them to address me as if I were a Minister and style me Master, and Sir? Haply they are now blundering; but after an hour they will know me and say, This fellow is a beggar; and take their fill of cuffing me on the neck." Presently, feeling hot he opened the door, whereupon it seemed to him that a little white slave and an eunuch came in to him carrying a parcel. Then the slave opened it and brought out three kerchiefs of silk, one of which he threw over his head, a second over his shoulders and a third he tied round his waist. Moreover, the eunuch gave him a pair of bath-clogs,[110] and he put them on; after which in came white slaves and eunuchs and supported him (and he laughing the while) to the outer hall, which he found hung and spread with magnificent furniture, such as beseemeth none but kings; and the pages hastened up to him and seated him on the divan. Then they fell to kneading him till sleep overcame him; and he dreamt that he had a girl in his arms. So he kissed her and set her between his thighs; then, sitting to her as a man sitteth to a woman,[111] he took yard in hand and drew her 93 towards him and weighed down upon her, when lo! he heard one saying to him, "Awake, thou ne'er-do-well! The noon-hour is come and thou art still asleep." He opened his eyes and found himself lying on the marge of the cold-water tank, amongst a crowd of people all laughing at him; for his prickle was at point and the napkin had slipped from his middle. So he knew that all this was but a confusion of dreams and an illusion of Hashish and he was vexed and said to him who had aroused him, "Would thou hadst

waited till I had put it in!" Then said the folk, "Art thou not ashamed, O Hashish-eater, to be sleeping stark naked with stiff-standing tool?" And they cuffed him till his neck was red. Now he was starving, yet forsooth had he savoured the flavour of pleasure in his dream. When Kanmakan heard the bondwoman's tale, he laughed till he fell backward and said to Bakun, "O my nurse, this is indeed a rare story and a delectable; I never heard the like of this anecdote. Say me! hast more?" "Yes," replied she, and she ceased not to tell him merry adventures and laughable absurdities, till sleep overcame him. Then she sat by his head till the most part of the night was past, when she said to herself, "It is time to profit by the occasion." So she sprang to her feet and unsheathed the hanger and rushing up to Kanmakan, was about to cut his throat when behold, his mother came in upon the twain. As soon as Bakun saw her, she rose in respect and advanced to meet her, and fear gat hold of her and she fell a-trembling, as if 94 she had the ague. When his mother looked at her she marvelled to see her thus and aroused her son, who awoke and found her sitting at his head. Now the cause of her coming was that Kuzia Fakan overheard the conversation and the concert to kill Kanmakan, and she said to his mother, "O wife of my uncle, go to thy son, ere that wicked whore Bakun murther him;" and she told her what had passed from first to last. So she fared forth at once, and she thought of naught and stayed not for aught till she went in to her son at the very moment when Bakun was about to slay him in his sleep. When he awoke, he said to his mother, "O my mother, indeed thou comest at a good time, for nurse Bakun hath been with me this night." Then he turned to Bakun and asked her, "By my life! knowest thou any story better than those thou hast told me?" She answered, "And where is what I have told thee compared with what I will tell thee?; but however better it be, it must be told at another time." Then she rose to depart, hardly believing, in her escape albeit he said, "Go in peace!" for she perceived by her cunning that his mother knew what had occurred. So she went her way; whereupon his mother said to him, "O my son, blessed be this night, for that Almighty Allah hath delivered thee from this accursed woman." "And how so?" enquired he, and she told him the story from beginning to end. Quoth he, "O my mother, of a truth the live man findeth no slayer, and though slain he shall not die; but now it were wiser that we depart from amongst these enemies and let Allah work what He will." So, when day dawned he left the city and joined the Wazir Dandan, and after his departure, certain things befel between King Sasan and Nuzhat al-Zaman, which compelled her also to quit the city and join herself to them; and presently they were met by all the high officers of King Sasan who inclined to their party. Then they sat in counsel together devising what they should do, and at last all agreed upon a razzia into the land of Roum there to take their revenge for the death of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and his son Sharrkan. So they set out with this intent and, after sundry adventures (which it were tedious to tell as will appear from what follows), they fell into the hands of Rúmzán, King of the Greeks. Next morning, King Rumzan caused Kanmakan and the Wazir Dandan and their company to be brought

before him and, when they came, he seated them at his side, and bade spread the tables of food. So they ate and drank and took heart of grace, after having made sure of death, when they were 95summoned to the King's presence; and they had said to one another, "He hath not sent for us but to slay us." And when they were comforted the King said, "In truth I have had a dream, which I related to the monks, and they said, 'None can expound it to thee save the Wazir Dandan.'" Quoth the Minister, "Weal it was thou didst see in thy dream, O King of the age!" Quoth the King, "O Wazir, I dreamt that I was in a pit which seemed a black well where multitudes were tormenting me; and I would have risen, but when springing up I fell on my feet and could not get out of that same pit. Then I turned and saw therein a girdle of gold and I stretched out my hand to take it; but when I raised it from the ground, I saw it was two girdles. So I girt my middle with them both and behold, the girdles became one girdle; and this, O Wazir, is my dream and what I saw when my sleep was deepest." Said Dandan, "O our Lord the Sultan! know that this thy dream denoteth thou hast a brother or a brother's son or an uncle's son or other near kinsman of thy flesh and blood whom thou knowest not; withal he is of the noblest of you all." Now when the King heard these words he looked at Kanmakan and Nuzhat al-Zaman and Kuzia Fakan and the Wazir Dandan and the rest of the captives and said to himself, "If I smite these people's necks, their troops will lose heart for the destruction of their chiefs and I shall be able to return speedily to my realm, lest the Kingship pass out of my hands." So having determined upon this he called the Sworder and bade him strike off Kanmakan's head upon the spot and forthright, when lo! up came Rumzan's nurse and said to him, "O auspicious King, what purposest thou?" Quoth he, "I purpose slaughtering these prisoners who are in my power; and after that I will throw their heads among their men: then will I fall upon them, I and all my army in one body, and kill all we can kill and rout the rest: so will this be the decisive action of the war and I shall return speedily to my kingdom ere aught of accident befal among my subjects." When the nurse heard these words, she came up to him and said in the Frankish tongue, "How canst thou prevail upon thyself to slay thine own brother's son, and thy sister, and thy sister's daughter?" When he heard this language, he was wroth with exceeding wrath and said to her, "O accursed woman, didst thou not tell me that my mother was murthered and that my father died by poison? Didst thou not give me a jewel and say to me:—Of a truth this jewel was thy father's? Why didst thou 96not tell me the truth?" Replied she, "All that I told thee is true, but my case and thy case are wonderful and my history and thy history are marvellous. My name is Marjanah and thy mother's name was Abrizah: and she was gifted with such beauty and loveliness and valour that proverbs were made of her, and her prowess was renowned among men of war. And thy father was King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, Lord of Baghdad and Khorasan, without doubt or double dealing or denial. He sent his son Sharrkan on a razzia in company with this very Wazir Dandan; and they did all that men can. But

Sharrkan, thy brother, who had preceded the force, separated himself from the troops and fell in with thy mother Queen Abrizah in her palace; and we happened to have sought a place apart in order to wrestle, she and I and her other damsels. He came upon us by chance while we were in such case, and wrestled with thy mother, who overcame him by the power of her splendid beauty and by her prowess. Then she entertained him five days in her palace, till the news of this came to her father, by the old woman Shawahi, surnamed Zat al-Dawahi, whereupon she embraced Al-Islam at the hands of Sharrkan, and he took her and carried her by stealth to Baghdad, and with her myself and Rayhánah and twenty other damsels, all of us having, like her, followed the True Faith. When we came into the presence of thy Father, the King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, and he saw thy mother, Queen Abrizah, he fell in love with her and going in unto her one night, had connection with her, and she conceived by him and became with child of thee. Now thy mother had three jewels which she presented to thy father; and he gave one of them to his daughter, Nuzhat al-Zaman, another to thy brother, Zau al-Makan, and the third to thy brother Sharrkan. This last thy mother took from Sharrkan and kept it for thee. But as the time of her delivery drew near she yearned after her own people and disclosed to me her secret; so I went to a black slave called Al-Ghazban; and, privily telling him our case, bribed him to go with us. Accordingly the negro took us and fled the city with us, thy mother being near her time. But as we approached a desert place on the borders of our own country, the pangs of labour came upon thy mother. Then the slave proved himself a lustful villain and approaching her sought of her a shameful thing; whereupon she cried out at him with a loud cry, and was sore affrighted at him. In the excess of her fright she gave birth to thee at once, and at that moment there arose, in the direction of our country, a dust-cloud which [97] towered and flew till it walled the view. Thereupon the slave feared for his life; so he smote Queen Abrizah with his sword and slew her in his fury; then mounting his horse he went his way. Soon after his going, the dust lifted and discovered thy grandfather, King Hardub, Lord of Græcia-land, who, seeing thy mother (and his daughter) lying slain on the plain, was sorely troubled with a distress that redoubled, and questioned me of the manner of her death and the cause of her secretly quitting her father's realm. So I told him all that had passed, first and last; and this is the cause of the feud between the people of the land of the Greeks and the people of the city of Baghdad. Then we bore off thy murthered mother and buried her; and I took thee and reared thee, and hung about thy neck the jewel which was with Queen Abrizah. But, when being grown up thou camest to man's estate, I dared not acquaint thee with the truth of the matter, lest such information stir up a war of blood-revenge between you. Moreover, thy grandfather had enjoined me to secrecy, and I could not gainsay the commandment of thy mother's father, Hardub, King of the Greeks. This, then, is the cause of my concealment and the reason why I forbore to inform thee that thy father was King Omar bin al-Nu'uman; but when thou camest to the throne, I told thee what thou knowest; and I durst not reveal to thee the rest till this

moment, O King of the Age! So now I have discovered to thee my secret and my proof, and I have acquainted thee with all I know; and thou reckest best what is in thy mind." Now all the captives had heard the slave-woman Marjanah, nurse to King Rumzan, speaking as she spake; when Nuzhat al-Zaman, without stay or delay, cried out, saying, "This King Rumzan is my brother by my father, King Omar bin al-Nu'uman, and his mother was Queen Abrizah, daughter of King Hardub, Lord of the Greeks; and I know this slave-woman Marjanah right well." With this, trouble and perplexity got hold upon Rumzan and he caused Nuzhat al-Zaman to be brought up to him forthright. When he looked upon her, blood yearned to blood and he questioned her of his history. She told him the tale and her story tallied with that of Marjanah, his nurse; whereupon the King was assured that he was, indeed and without a doubt, of the people of Irak; and that King Omar bin al-Nu'uman was his father. So without losing time he caused his sister to be unpinioned, and Nuzhat al-Zaman came up to him and kissed his hands, whilst her eyes ran over with tears. The King wept also to see 98 her weeping, and brotherly love possessed him and his heart yearned to his brother's son Sultan Kanmakan. So he sprang to his feet and, taking the sword from the Sworder's hands (whereat the captives made sure of death), he caused them to be set close to him and he cut their bonds with the blade and said to his nurse Marjanah, "Explain the matter to this company, even as thou hast explained it to me." Replied she, "O King, know that this Shaykh is the Wazir Dandan and he is the best of witnesses to my story, seeing that he knoweth the facts of the case." Then she turned to the captives and repeated the whole story to them on the spot and forthright, and in presence of the Kings of the Greeks and the Kings of the Franks; whereupon Queen Nuzhat al-Zaman and the Wazir Dandan and all who were prisoners with them confirmed her words. When Marjanah, the bond-woman, had finished, chancing to look at Sultan Kanmakan she saw on his neck the third jewel, fellow to the two which were with Queen Abrizah; and, recognising it, she cried so loud a cry, that the palace re-echoed it and said to the King, "O my son, Know that now my certainty is still more assured, for this jewel that is about the neck of yonder captive is the fellow to that I hung to thy neck; and, these being the two, this captive is indeed thy brother's son, Kanmakan." Then the slave-woman Marjanah turned to Kanmakan and said to him, "Let me see that jewel, O King of the Age!"; so he took it from his neck and handed it to her. Then she asked Nuzhat al-Zaman of the third jewel and she gave it to her; and when the two were in her hand she delivered them to King Rumzan, and the truth and proof were made manifest to him; and he was assured that he was indeed Sultan Kanmakan's uncle and that his father was King Omar bin al-Nu'uman. So he rose at once and on the spot and, going up to the Wazir Dandan, threw his arms round his neck; then he embraced King Kanmakan and the twain cried a loud cry for excess of joy. The glad news was blazed abroad without delay; and they beat the tabrets and cymbals, whilst the shawms sounded and the people held high festival. The armies of Irak and Syria heard the clamour of rejoicing among the Greeks; so they mounted to

the last man, and King Zibl Khan also took, horse saying to himself, "Would I knew what can be the cause of this clamour and rejoicing in the army of the Franks and the Greeks!" Then the army of Irak dight itself for fight and advanced into the plain and place of cut and foin. Presently, 99 King Rumzan turned him round and saw the army deployed and in preparing for battle employed, so he asked the cause thereof and was told the state of the case. Thereupon he bade his niece and brother's daughter, Kuzia Fakan, return at once and forthright to the troops of Syria and Irak and acquaint them with the plight that had betided and how it was come to light that King Rumzan was uncle to Sultan Kanmakan. She set out, putting away from her sorrows and troubles and, coming to King Zibl Khan,[112] saluted him and told him all that had passed of the good accord, and how King Rumzan had proved to be her uncle and uncle of Kanmakan. And when she went in to him she found him tearful-eyed, in fear for the captive Emirs and Princes; but when he heard what had passed, from first to last, the Moslem's sadness was abated and they joyed with the more gladness. Then King Zibl Khan and all his officers and his retinue took horse and followed Princess Kuzia Fakan till they reached the pavilion of King Rumzan; and when entering they found him sitting with his nephew, Sultan Kanmakan. Now he had taken counsel with the Wazir Dandan concerning King Zibl Khan and had agreed to commit to his charge the city of Damascus of Sham and leave him King over it as he before had been while they themselves entered Irak. Accordingly, they confirmed him in the vice-royalty of Damascus of Syria, and bade him set out at once for his government; so he fared forth with his troops and they rode with him a part of the way to bid him farewell. Then they returned to their own places whereupon, the two armies foregathered and gave orders for the march upon Irak; but the Kings said one to other, "Our hearts will never be at rest nor our wrath cease to rage till we have taken our wreak of the old woman Shawahi, surnamed Zat al-Dawahi, and wiped away our shame and blot upon our honour." Thereupon King Rumzan and his nephew set out, surrounded by their Nobles and Grandees; and indeed Kanmakan rejoiced in his uncle, King Rumzan, and called down blessings on nurse Marjanah who had made them known to each other. They fared on and ceased not faring till they drew near their home Baghdad, and when the Chief Chamberlain, Sasan, heard of their approach, he came out to meet them and kissed the hand of King Rumzan who bestowed on him a dress of honour. Then the King of Roum sat down on the 100 throne and seated by his side his nephew Sultan Kanmakan, who said to him, "O my uncle, this Kingdom befitteth none but thee." Replied Rumzan, "Allah be my refuge and the Lord forbid that I should supplant thee in thy Kingdom!" Upon this the Wazir Dandan counselled them to share the throne between the two, ruling each one day in turn; and with this they were well satisfied.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the two Kings agreed each to rule one day in turn: then made they feasts and offered sacrifices of clean beasts and held high festival; and they abode thus awhile, whilst Sultan Kanmakan spent his nights with his cousin Kuzia Fakan. And after that period, as the two Kings sat rejoicing in their condition and in the happy ending of their troubles, behold, they saw a cloud of dust arise and tower till it walled the world from their eyes. And out of it came a merchant shrieking and crying aloud for succour and saying, "O Kings of the Age! how cometh it that I woned safely in the land of the Infidels and I am plundered in your realm, though it be the biding place of justice[113] and peace?" Then King Rumzan went up to him and questioned him of his case and he replied, "I am a merchant and, like other merchants, I have been long absent from my native land, travelling in far countries for some twenty years; and I have a patent of exemption from the city of Damascus which the Viceroy, King Sharrkan (who hath found mercy) wrote me, for the cause that I had made him gift of a slave-girl. Now as I was drawing near my home, having with me an hundred loads of rarities of Hind, when I brought them near Baghdad, which be the seat of your sovereignty and the place of your peace and your justice, out there came upon me wild Arabs and Kurds[114] in band gathered together 101 from every land; and they slew my many and they robbed my money and this is what they have done me." Then the trader wept in presence of King Rumzan, saying that he was an old man and infirm; and he bemoaned himself till the King felt for him and had compassion on him; and likewise did King Kanmakan and they swore that they would sally forth upon the thieves. So they set out amid an hundred horse, each reckoned worth thousands of men, and the merchant went before them to guide them in the right way; and they ceased not faring on all that day and the livelong night till dawn-break, when they came to a valley abounding in rills and shady with trees. Here they found the foray dispersed about the valley, having divided that merchant's bales among them; but there was yet some of the goods left. So the hundred horsemen fell upon them and surrounded them on all sides, and King Rumzan shouted his war cry, and thus also did his nephew Kanmakan, and ere long they made prize of them all, to the number of near three hundred horsemen, banded together of the refuse of rascality.[115] They took what they could find of the merchant's goods and, binding them tightly, brought them to Baghdad, where King Rumzan and his nephew, King Kanmakan, sat down together on one throne and, passing the prisoners in review before them, questioned them of their case and their chiefs. They said, "We have no chiefs but these three men and it was they who gathered us together from all corners and countries." The Kings said to them, "Point out to us your head-men!"; and, when this was done, they bade lay hands on the leaders and set their comrades free, after taking from them all the goods in their possession and restoring them to the merchant, who examined his stuffs and monies and found that a fourth of his stock was missing. The Kings engaged to make good the whole of his loss,

whereupon the trader pulled out two letters, one in the handwriting of 102 Sharrkan, and the other in that of Nuzhat al-Zaman; for this was the very merchant who had bought Nuzhat al-Zaman of the Badawi, when she was a virgin, and had forwarded her to her brother Sharrkan; and that happened between them which happened.[116] Hereupon King Kanmakan examined the letters and recognised the handwriting of his uncle Sharrkan, and, having heard the history of his aunt, Nuzhat al-Zaman, he went in to her with the second letter written by her to the merchant who had lost through her his monies; Kanmakan also told her what had befallen the trader from first to last. She knew her own handwriting and, recognising the merchant, despatched to him guest-gifts and commended him to her brother and nephew, who ordered him largesse of money and black slaves and pages to wait on him; besides which Nuzhat al-Zaman sent him an hundred thousand dirhams in cash and fifty loads of merchandise and presented to him other rich presents. Then she sent for him and when he came, she went up to him and saluted him and told him that she was the daughter of King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and that her brother was King Rumzan and that King Kanmakan was her nephew. Thereupon the merchant rejoiced with great joy, and congratulated her on her safety and on her reunion with her brother, and kissed her hands thanking her for her bounty; and said to her, "By Allah! a good deed is not lost upon thee!" Then she withdrew to her own apartment and the trader sojourned with them three days, after which he took leave of them and set out on his return march to the land of Syria. Thereupon the two Kings sent for the three robber-chiefs who were of the highwaymen, and questioned them of their case, when one of them came forward and said, "Know ye that I am a Badawi who am wont to lie in wait, by the way, to snatch small children[117] and virgin girls and sell them to merchants; and this I did for many a year until these latter days, when Satan incited me to join yon two gallows-birds in gathering together all the riff-raff of the Arabs and other peoples, that we might plunder merchandise and waylay merchants." Said the Kings, "Tell us the rarest of the adventures that have befallen thee in kidnapping children and maidens." Replied he, "O Kings of the Age, the strangest thing that happened 103 to me was that one day, two-and-twenty years ago, I snatched a girl who belonged to the Holy City; she was gifted with beauty and comeliness, despite that she was but a servant and was clad in threadbare clothes, with a piece of camlet-cloth on her head. So I entrapped her by guile as she came out of the caravanserai; and at that very hour mounting her on a camel, made off with her, thinking to carry her to my own people in the Desert and there set her to pasture the camels and gather their droppings in the valley. But she wept with so sore a weeping that after coming down upon her with blows, I took her and carried her to Damascus city where a merchant saw her with me and, being astounded at her beauty and marvelling at her accomplishments, wished to buy her of me and kept on bidding me more and more for her, till at last I sold her to him for an hundred thousand dirhams. After selling her I

heard her display prodigious eloquence; and it reached me that the merchant clothed her in handsome gear and presented her to the Viceroy of Damascus, who gave him three times the price which he had paid to me, and this price, by my life! was but little for such a damsel. This, O Kings of the Age, is the strangest thing that ever befel me." When the two Kings heard her story they wondered thereat, but when Nuzhat al-Zaman heard what the Badawi related, the light became darkness before her face and she cried out and said to her brother Rumzan, "Sure and sans doubt this is the very Badawi who kidnapped me in the Holy City Jerusalem!" Then she told them all that she had endured from him in her strangerhood of hardship, blows, hunger, humiliation, contempt, adding, "And now it is lawful for me to slay him." So saying she seized a sword and made at him to smite him; and behold, he cried out and said, "O Kings of the Age, suffer her not to slay me, till I shall have told you the rare adventures that have betided me." And her nephew Kanmakan said to her, "O my aunt, let him tell us his tale, and after that do with him as thou wilt." So she held her hand and the Kings said to him, "Now let us hear thy history." Quoth he, "O Kings of the Age, if I tell you a rare tale will ye pardon me?" "Yes," answered they. Then the Badawi robber-chief began,

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THE TALE OF HAMMAD THE BADAWI;

And he said:—Know ye that a short while ago, I was sore wakeful one night and thought the morn would never dawn; so, as soon as it was break of day I rose, without stay or delay; and, slinging over my shoulder my sword, mounted horse and set my lance in rest. Then I rode out to sport and hunt and, as I went along, a company of men accosted me and asked me whither I was bound. I told them and they said, "We will keep thee company." So we all fared on together, and, whilst we were faring, lo and behold! up started an ostrich and we gave her chase, but she escaped our pursuit and spreading wings ceased not to fly before us (and we following by sight) till she lost us in a desert wherein there was neither grass nor water, nor heard we aught therein save hiss of snake and wail of Jinn and howl of Ghul; and when we reached that place the ostrich disappeared nor could we tell whether she had flown up into the sky or into the ground had gone down. Then we turned our horses' heads and thought to return; but found that to retrace our steps at that time of burning heat would be toilsome and dangerous; for the sultry air was grievous to us, so that we thirsted with sore thirst and our steeds stood still. We made sure of death; but while we were in this case we suddenly espied from afar a spacious mead where gazelles were frisking. Therein was a tent pitched and by the tent side a horse tethered and a spear was planted with head glittering in the sun.[118] Upon this our hearts revived after we had despaired, and we turned our horses' heads towards that tent making for the meadow

and the water which irrigated it; and all my comrades fared for it and I at their head, and we ceased not faring till we reached the mead. Then we alighted at the spring and watered our beasts. But I was seized with a fever of foolish curiosity and went up to the door of that tent, wherein I saw a young man, without hair on his cheeks, who fellowed the new moon; and on his right hand was a slender-waisted maid, as she were a willow-wand. No sooner did I set eyes on her than love gat hold upon my heart and I saluted the youth, who returned my greeting. Then said I, "O my brother, tell me who thou art and what to thee is this damsel sitting by thy 105 side?"[119] Thereupon the youth bent his head groundwards awhile, then raised it and replied, "Tell me first who thou art and what are these horsemen with thee?" Answered I, "I am Hammad son of al-Fazári, the renowned knight, who is reckoned among the Arabs as five hundred horse. We went forth from our place this morning to sport and chase and were overcome by thirst; so I came to the door of this tent, thinking haply to get of thee a draught of water." When he heard these my words, he turned to the fair maiden and said, "Bring this man water and what food there is ready." So she arose trailing her skirts, whilst the golden bangles tinkled on her ankles and her feet stumbled in her long locks, and she disappeared for a little while. Presently she returned bearing in her right hand a silver vessel full of cold water and in her left hand a bowl brimming with milk and dates, together with some flesh of wild cattle. But I could take of her nor meat nor drink for the excess of my passion, and I applied to her these two couplets, saying:—

It was as though the sable dye[120] upon her palms, ✿ Were raven perching on a swathe of freshest snow;

Thou seest Sun and Moon conjoined in her face, ✿ While Sun fear-dimmed and Moon fright-pallid show.

After I had eaten and drunk I said to the youth, "Know thou, O Chief of the Arabs, that I have told thee in all truth who and what I am, and now I would fain have thee do the like by me and tell me the truth of thy case." Replied the young man, "As for this damsel she is my sister." Quoth I, "It is my desire that thou give me her to wife of thy free will: else will I slay thee and take her by force." Upon this, he bowed his head groundwards awhile, then he raised his eyes to me and answered, "Thou sayest sooth in avouching thyself a renowned knight and famed in fight and verily thou art the lion of the desert; but if ye all attack me treacherously and slay me in your wrath and take my sister by force, it will be a stain upon your honour. An you be, as ye aver, cavaliers who are counted among the Champions and reck not the 106 shock of foray and fray, give me a little time to don my armour and sling on my sword and set lance in rest and mount war-steed. Then will we go forth into the field of fight, I and you; and, if I conquer you, I will kill you to the last man; but if you overcome me and slay me, this damsel, my sister, is yours." Hearing such words I replied, "This is only just, and we oppose it not." Then I turned back my horse's head (for my love for the damsel waxed hotter and hotter) and returned to my companions, to whom I set forth her beauty and loveliness as also the comeliness of the young man who was with her,

together with his valour and strength of soul and how he had avouched himself a match for a thousand horse. Moreover, I described to my company the tent and all the riches and rarities therein and said to them, "Know ye that this youth would not have cut himself off from society and have taken up his abode alone in this place, were he not a man of great prowess: so I propose that whoso slayeth the younker shall take his sister." And they said, "This contenteth us." Then my company armed themselves and mounting, rode to the tent, where we found that the young man had donned his gear and backed his steed; but his sister ran up to him (her veil being drenched with tears), and took hold of his stirrup and cried out, saying, "Alas!" and, "Woe worth the day!" in her fear for her brother, and recited these couplets:-

To Allah will I make my moan of travail and of woe; ✿ Maybe Ilàh of Arsh[121] will smite their faces with affright:

Fain would they slay thee, brother mine, with purpose felon-fell; ✿ Albe no cause of vengeance was, nor fault forewent the fight.

Yet for a rider art thou known to those who back the steed, ✿ And twixt the East and West of knights thou art the prowest knight:

Thy sister's honour thou shalt guard though little might be hers, ✿ For thou'rt her brother and for thee she sueth Allah's might:

Then let not enemy possess my soul nor 'thrall my frame, ✿ And work on me their will and treat thy sister with despight.

I'll ne'er abide, by Allah's truth, in any land or home ✿ Where thou art not, though dight it be with joyance and delight:

For love and yearning after thee myself I fain will slay, ✿ And in the gloomy darksome tomb spread bed upon the clay.

But when her brother heard her verse he wept with sore weeping 107 and turned his horse's head towards his sister and made this answer to her poetry:—

Stand by and see the derring-do which I to-day will show, ✿ When meet we and I deal them blows that rend and cleave and split;

E'en though rush out to seek a bout the lion of the war, ✿ The stoutest hearted brave of all and eke the best in wit;

To him I'll deal without delay a Sa'alabiyan blow,[122] ✿ And dye my cane-spear's joint in blood by wound of foe bespit:

If all I beat not off from thee, O sister, may this frame ✿ Be slain, and cast my corpse to birds, for so it would befit:

Yes, for thy dearest sake I'll strike my blows with might and main, ✿ And when we're gone shall this event in many a book be writ.

And when he had ended his verse, he said, "O my sister, give ear to what I shall enjoin on thee"; whereto she replied, "Hearkening and obedience." Quoth he, "If I fall, let none possess thy person;" and thereupon she buffeted her face and said, "Allah forbid, O my brother, that I should see thee laid low and yield myself to thy foe!" With this the youth put out his hand to her and withdrew her veil from her face, whereupon it shone forth as the sun shineth out from the white clouds. Then he kissed her between the eyes and bade her farewell; after which he turned to us and said,

"Holla, Knights! Come ye as guests or crave ye cuts and thrusts? If ye come to us as your hosts, rejoice ye in the guest-rite; and, if ye covet the shining moon, come ye out against me, knight by knight, into this plain and place of fight." Thereupon rushed out to him a doughty rider and the young man said to him, "Tell me thy name and thy father's name, for I am under an oath not to slay any whose name tallies with mine and whose father's name is that of my father; and if this be the case with thee, I will give thee up the maid." Quoth the horseman, "My name is Bilál;"[123] and the young man answered him, saying:—

108 Thou liest when speaking of "benefits," while ✿ Thou comest to front with thine evillest will:

An of prowess thou'rt prow, to my words give ear, ✿ I'm he who makes champions in battle-field reel

With keen blade, like the horn of the cuspèd moon, ✿ So 'ware thrust that shall drill through the durest hill!

Then they charged down, each at each, and the youth thrust his adversary in the breast so that the lance-head issued from his back. With this, another came out, and the youth cried:—

Ho thou hound, who art rotten with foulness in grain,[124] ✿ What high meed is there easy for warrior to gain?

'Tis none save the lion of strain purest pure ✿ Who uncareth for life in the battle-plain!

Nor was it long before the youth left him drowned in his blood and cried out, "Who will come forth to me?" So a third horseman rushed out upon the youth and began saying:—

To thee come I forth with my heart a-flame, ✿ And summon my friends and my comrades by name:

When thou slewest the chief of the Arabs this day, ✿ This day thou remainest the pledge of my claim.

Now when the youth heard this he answered him in these words:—

Thou liest, O foulest of Satans that are, ✿ And with leasings calumnious thou comest to war:

This day thou shalt fall by a death-dealing point ✿ Where the lances lunge and the scymitars jar!

Then he so foined him in the breast that the spear-point issued from his back and he cried out, saying, "Ho! will none come out?" So a fourth fared forwards and the youth asked him his name and he answered, "My name is Hilál, the New Moon." And the youth began repeating:—

Thou hast failed who would sink me in ruin-sea, ✿ Thou who camest in malice with perfidy:

I, whose verses hast heard from the mouth of me, ✿ Will ravish thy soul though unknown to thee.

Then they drave at each other and delivered two cuts, but the youth's stroke devanced that of the rider his adversary and 109 slew him: and thus he went on to kill all who sallied out against him. Now when I saw my comrades slain, I said to myself, "If I go down to fight with him, I shall not be able to prevail against him; and, if I flee, I shall become a byword of shame among the Arabs." But the youth gave me no time to think, for he ran at me and dragged me from my saddle and hurled me to the ground. I fainted at the fall and he raised his sword designing to cut off my head; but I clung to his skirts, and he lifted me in his hand as though I were a sparrow. When the maiden saw this, she rejoiced in her brother's prowess and coming up to

him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he delivered me to her, saying, "Take him and look to him and entreat him hospitably, for he is come under our rule." So she took hold of the collar of my hauberk[125] and led me away by it as one would lead a dog. Then she did off her brother's coat of mail and clad him in a robe, and set for him a stool of ivory, on which he sat down; and she said to him, "Allah whiten thy honour and prevent from thee the shifts of fortune!" And he answered her with these couplets:—

My sister said, as saw she how I stood ✿ In fight, when sun-rays lit my knightlihood,
"Allah assain thee for a Brave of braves ✿ To whom in vale bow lions howso wood!"
Quoth I, "Go ask the champions of my case, ✿ When feared the Lords of war my warrior-mood!
My name is famed for fortune and for force, ✿ And soared my spirit to such altitude;"
Ho thou, Hammád, a lion hast upstirred, ✿ Shall show thee speedy death like viper-brood!

110 Now when I heard his verse, I was perplexed as to my case and, considering my condition and how I was become a captive, I was lowered in my own esteem. Then I looked at the damsel, his sister, and seeing her beauty I said to myself, "'Tis she who caused all this trouble; and I fell a-marvelling at her loveliness till the tears streamed from my eyes and I recited these couplets:—

Dear friend! ah leave thy loud reproach and blame; ✿ Such blame but irks me yet may not alarm:
I'm clean distraught for one whom saw I not ✿ Without her winning me by winsome charm:
Yestreen her brother crossed me in her love, ✿ A Brave stout-hearted and right long of arm."

Then the maiden set food before her brother and he bade me eat with him, whereat I rejoiced and felt assured that I should not be slain. And when he had ended eating, she brought him a flagon of pure wine and he applied him to it till the fumes of the drink mounted to his head and his face flushed red. Then he turned to me and said, "Woe to thee, O Hammad! dost thou know me or not?" Replied I, "By thy life, I am rich in naught save ignorance!" Quoth he "O Hammad, I am 'Abbád bin Tamím bin Sa'labah and indeed Allah giveth thee thy liberty and leadeth thee to a happy bride and spareth thee confusion." Then he drank to my long life and gave me a cup of wine and I drank it off; and presently he filled me a second and a third and a fourth, and I drained them all; while he made merry with me and swore me never to betray him. So I sware to him one thousand five hundred oaths that I would never deal perfidiously with him at any time, but that I would be a friend and a helper to him. Thereupon he bade his sister bring me ten suits of silk; so she brought them and laid them on my person, and this dress I have on my body is one of them. Moreover, he made bring one of the best of his she-dromedaries[126] carrying stuffs and provaunt, he 111 bade her also bring a sorrel horse, and when they were brought he gave the whole of them to me. I abode with them three days, eating and drinking, and what he gave me of gifts is with me to this present. At the end of the three days he said to me, "O Hammad, O my brother, I would sleep awhile and take my rest and verily I trust my life to thee; but, if thou see

horsemen making hither, fear not, for know that they are of the Banu Sa'labah, seeking to wage war on me." Then he laid his sword under his head-pillow and slept; and when he was drowned in slumber Iblis tempted me to slay him; so I arose in haste, and drawing the sword from under his head, dealt him a blow that made his head fall from his body. But his sister knew what I had done, and rushing out from within the tent, threw herself on his corpse, rending her raiment and repeating these couplets:—

To kith and kin bear thou sad tidings of our plight; ✿ From doom th' All-wise decreed shall none of men take flight:

Low art thou laid, O brother! strewn upon the stones, ✿ With face that mirrors moon when shining brightest bright!

Good sooth, it is a day accurst, thy slaughter-day ✿ Shivering thy spear that won the day in many a fight!

Now thou be slain no rider shall delight in steed, ✿ Nor man-child shall the breeding woman bring to light.

This morn Hammád uprose and foully murthered thee, ✿ Falsing his oath and troth with foulest perjury.

When she had ended her verse she said to me, "O thou of accursed forefathers, wherefore didst thou play my brother false and slay him when he purposed returning thee to thy native land with provisions; and it was his intent also to marry thee to me at the first of the month?" Then she drew a sword she had with her, and planting the hilt in the earth, with the point set to her breast, she bent over it and threw herself thereon till the blade issued from her back and she fell to the ground, dead. I mourned for her and wept and repented when repentance availed me naught. Then I arose in haste and went to the tent and, taking whatever was light of load and weighty of worth, went my way; but in my haste and horror I took no heed of my dead comrades, nor did I bury the maiden and the youth. And this my tale is still more wondrous than the story of the serving-girl I kidnapped from the Holy City, Jerusalem. But when Nuzhat al-Zaman heard these words from the Badawi, the light was changed in her eyes to night——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,



She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nuzhat al-Zaman heard these words from the Badawi, the light was changed in her eyes to night, and she rose and drawing the sword, smote Hammad the Arab between the shoulder-blades so that the point issued from the apple of his throat.[127] And when all present asked her, "Why hast thou made haste to slay him;" she answered, "Praised be Allah who hath granted me in my life-tide to avenge myself with mine own hand!" And she bade the slaves drag the body out by the feet and cast it to the dogs. Thereupon they turned to the two prisoners who remained of the three; and one of them was a black slave, so they said to him, "What is thy name, fellow? Tell us the truth of thy case." He replied, "As for me my name is Al-Ghazbán," and acquainted them what had passed between himself and Queen Abrizah, daughter of King Hardub, Lord of Greece, and how he had slain

her and fled. Hardly had the negro made an end of his story, when King Rumzan struck off his head with his scymitar, saying, "Praise to Allah who gave me life! I have avenged my mother with my own hand." Then he repeated to them what his nurse Marjanah had told him of this same slave whose name was Al-Ghazban; after which they turned to the third prisoner. Now this was the very camel-driver[128] whom the people of the Holy City, Jerusalem, hired to carry Zau al-Makan and lodge him in the hospital at Damascus of Syria; but he threw him down on the ashes-midden and went his way. And they said to him, "Acquaint us with thy case and tell the truth." So he related to them all that had happened to him with Sultan Zau al-Makan; how he had been carried from the Holy City, at the time when he was sick, till they made Damascus and he had been thrown into the hospital; how also the Jerusalem folk had paid the cameleer money to transport the stranger to Damascus, and he had taken it and fled after casting his charge upon the midden by the side of the ash-heap of the Hammam. But when he ended his words, Sultan 113 Kanmakan took his sword forthright and cut off his head, saying, "Praised be Allah who hath given me life, that I might requite this traitor what he did with my father, for I have heard this very story from King Zau al-Makan himself." Then the Kings said each to other, "It remaineth only for us to wreak our revenge upon the old woman Shawahi, yclept Zat al-Dawahi, because she is the prime cause of all these calamities and cast us into adversity on this wise. Who will deliver her into our hands that we may avenge ourselves upon her and wipe out our dishonour?" And King Rumzan said, "Needs must we bring her hither." So without stay or delay he wrote a letter to his grandmother, the aforesaid ancient woman, giving her to know therein that he had subdued the kingdoms of Damascus and Mosul and Irak, and had broken up the host of the Moslems and captured their princes, adding, "I desire thee of all urgency to come to me, bringing with thee Queen Sophia, daughter of King Afridun, and whom thou wilt of the Nazarene chiefs, but no armies; for the country is quiet and wholly under our hand." And when she read the letter and recognised the writing of King Rumzan, she rejoiced with great joy and forthright equipping herself and Queen Sophia, set out with their attendants and journeyed, without stopping, till they drew near Baghdad. Then she fore-sent a messenger to acquaint the King of her arrival, whereupon quoth Rumzan, "We should do well to don the habit of the Franks and fare forth to meet the old woman, to the intent that we may be assured against her craft and perfidy." Whereto Kanmakan replied, "Hearing is consenting." So they clad themselves in Frankish clothes and, when Kuzia Fakan saw them, she exclaimed, "By the truth of the Lord of Worship, did I not know you, I should take you to be indeed Franks!" Then they sallied forth with a thousand horse, King Rumzan riding on before them, to meet the old woman. As soon as his eyes fell on hers, he dismounted and walked towards her and she, recognizing him, dismounted also and embraced him; but he pressed her ribs with his hands, till he well nigh broke them. Quoth she, "What is this, O my son?" But before she had done speaking, up came Kanmakan and Dandan; and the horsemen with them

cried out at the women and slaves and took them all prisoners. Then the two Kings returned to Baghdad, with their captives, and Rumzan bade them decorate the city which they did for three days, at the end of which they brought out the old woman Shawahi, hight Zat al-Dawahi, with a peaked red turband of palm-leaves on her head, diademed with asses'-dung and preceded by a herald proclaiming aloud, "This is the reward of those who presume to lay hands on Kings and the sons of Kings!" Then they crucified her on one of the gates of Baghdad; and, when her companions saw what befel her, all embraced in a body the faith of Al-Islam. As for Kanmakan and his uncle Rumzan and his aunt Nuzhat al-Zaman and the Wazir Dandan, they marvelled at the wonderful events that had betided them and bade the scribes chronicle them in books that those who came after might read. Then they all abode for the remainder of their days in the enjoyment of every solace and comfort of life, till there overtook them the Destroyer of all delights and the Sunderer of all societies. And this is the whole that hath come down to us of the dealings of fortune with King Omar bin al-Nu'uman and his sons Sharrkan and Zau al-Makan and his son's son Kanmakan and his daughter Nuzhat al-Zaman and her daughter Kuzia Fakan. Thereupon quoth Shahryar to Shahrazad, "I desire that thou tell me somewhat about birds;" and hearing this Dunyazad said to her sister, "I have never seen the Sultan light at heart all this while till the present night; and his pleasure garreth me hope that the issue for thee with him may be a happy issue." Then drowsiness overcame the Sultan, so he slept;[129]——And Shahrazad perceived the approach of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

Shahrazad began to relate, in these words,

9- THE TALE OF THE BIRDS AND BEASTS AND THE CARPENTER.[130]

[peacock and the duck]

Quoth she, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in times of yore and in ages long gone before, a peacock abode with his wife on the sea-shore. Now the place was infested with lions 115 and all manner wild beasts, withal it abounded in trees and streams. So cock and hen were wont to roost by night upon one of the trees, being in fear of the beasts, and went forth by day questing food. And they ceased not thus to do till their fear increased on them and they searched for some place wherein to dwell other than their old dwelling-place; and in the course of their search behold, they happened on an island abounding in streams and trees. So they alighted there and ate of its fruits and drank of its waters. But whilst they were thus engaged, lo! up came to them a duck in a state of extreme terror, and stayed not faring forwards till she reached the tree whereon were perched the two peafowl, when she seemed re-assured in mind. The peacock doubted not but that she had some rare story; so he asked her of her case and the cause of her concern, whereto she answered, "I am sick for sorrow, and my horror of the son of Adam:[131] so beware, and again I say beware of the sons of Adam!" Rejoined the peacock, "Fear not now that thou hast won our protection." Cried the duck, "Alhamdolillah! glory to God, who hath done away my cark and care by means of you being near! For indeed I come of friendship fain with you twain." And when she had ended her speech the peacock's wife came down to her and said, "Well come and welcome and fair cheer! No harm shall hurt thee: how can son of Adam come to us and we in this isle which lieth a-middlemost of the sea? From the land he cannot reach us neither can he come against us from the water. So be of good cheer and tell us what hath betided thee from the child of Adam." Answered the duck, "Know, then, O thou peahen, that of a truth I have dwelt all my life in this island safely and peacefully, nor have I seen any disquieting thing, till one night, as I was asleep, I sighted in my dream the semblance of a son of Adam, who talked with me and I with him. Then I heard a voice say to me:—O thou duck, beware of the son of

Adam and be not imposed on by his words nor by that he may suggest to thee; for he aboundeth in wiles and guiles; so beware with all wariness of his perfidy, for again I say, he is crafty and right cunning even as singeth of him the poet:—

He'll offer sweetmeats with his edgèd tongue, ✿ And fox thee with the foxy guile of fox."



116 And know thou that the son of Adam circumventeth the fishes and draweth them forth of the seas; and he shooteth the birds with a pellet of clay,[132] and trappeth the elephant with his craft. None is safe from his mischief and neither bird nor beast escapeth him; and on this wise have I told thee what I have heard concerning the son of Adam. So I awoke, fearful and trembling, and from that hour to this my heart hath not known gladness, for dread of the son of Adam, lest he surprise me unawares by his wile or trap me in his snares. By the time the end of the day overtook me, my

strength was grown weak and my spunk failed me; so, desiring to eat and drink, I went forth walking, troubled in spirit and with a heart ill at ease. Now when I reached yonder mountain I saw a tawny lion-whelp at the door of a cave; and sighting me he joyed in me with great joy, for my colour pleased him and my gracious shape; so he cried out to me saying:—Draw nigh unto me. I went up to him and he asked me, What is thy name, and what is thy nature? Answered I, My name is Duck, and I am of the bird-kind; and I added, But thou, why tarriest thou in this place till this time? Answered the whelp, My father the lion hath for many a day warned me against the son of Adam, and it came to pass this night that I saw in my sleep the semblance of a son of Adam. And he went on to tell me the like of that I have told you. When I heard these words, I said to him, O lion, I take asylum with thee, that thou mayest kill the son of Adam and be steadfast in resolve to his slaughter; verily I fear him for myself with extreme fear and to my fright affright is added for that thou also dreadest the son of Adam, albeit thou art Sultan of savage beasts. Then I ceased not, O my sister, to bid the young lion beware of the son of Adam and urge him to slay him, till he rose of a sudden and at once from his stead and went out and he fared on, and I after him and I noted him lashing flanks with tail. We advanced in the same order till we came to a place where the roads forked and saw a cloud of dust arise which, presently clearing away, discovered below it a runaway naked ass, now galloping and running at speed and now rolling in the dust. When the lion saw the ass, he cried out to him, and he came up to him in all humility. Then said the lion:—Harkye, crack-brain brute! What is thy kind and what be the cause of thy coming hither? He replied, 117 O son of the Sultan! I am by kind an ass—Asinus Caballus—and the cause of my coming to this place is that I am fleeing from the son of Adam. Asked the lion-whelp, Dost thou fear then that he will kill thee? Answered the ass, Not so, O son of the Sultan, but I dread lest he put a cheat on me and mount upon me; for he hath a thing called Pack-saddle, which he setteth on my back; also a thing called Girths which he bindeth about my belly; and a thing called Crupper which he putteth under my tail, and a thing called Bit which he placeth in my mouth: and he fashioneth me a goad[133] and goadeth me with it and maketh me run more than my strength. If I stumble he curseth me, and if I bray, he revileth me;[134] and at last when I grow old and can no longer run, he putteth on me a pannel[135] of wood and delivereth me to the water-carriers, who load my back with water from the river in skins and other vessels, such as jars, and I cease not to wone in misery and abasement and fatigue till I die, when they cast me on the rubbish-heaps to the dogs. So what grief can surpass this grief and what calamities can be greater than these calamities? Now when I heard, O peahen, the ass's words, my skin shuddered, and became as gooseflesh at the son of Adam; and I said to the lion-whelp, O my lord, the ass of a verity hath excuse and his words add terror to my terror. Then quoth the young lion to the ass, Whither goest thou? Quoth he, Before sunrise I espied the son of Adam afar off, and fled from him; and now I am minded to flee forth and run without ceasing for the greatness of my fear of him, so haply I may

find me a place of shelter from the perfidious son of Adam. Whilst the ass was thus discoursing with the lion-whelp, seeking the while to 118take leave of us and go away, behold, appeared to us another cloud of dust, whereat the ass brayed and cried out and looked hard and let fly a loud fart.[136] After a while the dust lifted and discovered a black steed finely dight with a blaze on the forehead like a dirham round and bright;[137] handsomely marked about the hoof with white and with firm strong legs pleasing to sight and he neighed with affright. This horse ceased not running till he stood before the whelp, the son of the lion who, when he saw him, marvelled and made much of him and said, What is thy kind, O majestic wild beast and wherefore fleest thou into this desert wide and vast? He replied, O lord of wild beasts, I am a steed of the horse-kind, and the cause of my running is that I am fleeing from the son of Adam. The lion-whelp wondered at the horse's speech and cried to him:—Speak not such words for it is shame to thee, seeing that thou art tall and stout. And how cometh it that thou fearest the son of Adam, thou, with thy bulk of body and thy swiftness of running, when I, for all my littleness of stature am resolved to encounter the son of Adam and, rushing on him, eat his flesh, that I may allay the affright of this poor duck and make her dwell in peace in her 119own place? But now thou hast come here and thou hast wrung my heart with thy talk and turned me back from what I had resolved to do, seeing that, for all thy bulk, the son of Adam hath mastered thee and hath feared neither thy height nor thy breadth, albeit, wert thou to kick him with one hoof thou wouldst kill him, nor could he prevail against thee, but thou wouldst make him drink the cup of death. The horse laughed when he heard the whelp's words and replied, Far, far is it from my power to overcome him, O Prince. Let not my length and my breadth nor yet my bulk delude thee with respect to the son of Adam; for that he, of the excess of his guile and his wiles, fashioneth me a thing called Hobble and applieth to my four legs a pair of ropes made of palm-fibres bound with felt, and gibbeteth me by the head to a high peg, so that I being tied up remain standing and can neither sit nor lie down. And when he is minded to ride me, he bindeth on his feet a thing of iron called Stirrup[138] and layeth on my back another thing called Saddle, which he fasteneth by two Girths passed under my armpits. Then he setteth in my mouth a thing of iron he calleth Bit, to which he tieth a thing of leather called Rein; and, when he sitteth in the saddle on my back, he taketh the rein in his hand and guideth me with it, goading my flanks the while with the shovel-stirrups till he maketh them bleed. So do not ask, O son of our Sultan, the hardships I endure from the son of Adam. And when I grow old and lean and can no longer run swiftly, he selleth me to the miller who maketh me turn in the mill, and I cease not from turning night and day till I grow decrepit. Then he in turn vendeth me to the knacker who cutteth my throat and flayeth off my hide and plucketh out my tail, which he selleth to the sieve-maker; and he melteth down my fat for tallow-candles. When the young lion heard the horse's words, his rage and vexation redoubled and he said, When didst thou

leave the son of Adam? Replied the horse, At mid-day and he is upon my track. Whilst the whelp was thus conversing with the horse lo! there rose a cloud of dust and, presently opening out, discovered below it a furious camel gurgling and pawing the earth with his feet and never ceasing so to do till he came up with us. Now when the lion-whelp saw how big and buxom he was, he took him to be the son of Adam and was about to spring upon him when I said to him, O Prince, of a truth this is not the son of Adam, this be a camel, and he seemeth to be 120 fleeing from the son of Adam. As I was thus conversing, O my sister, with the lion-whelp, the camel came up and saluted him; whereupon he returned the greeting and said:—What bringeth thee hither? Replied he, I came here fleeing from the son of Adam. Quoth the whelp, And thou, with thy huge frame and length and breadth, how cometh it that thou fearest the son of Adam, seeing that with one kick of thy foot thou wouldst kill him? Quoth the camel, O son of the Sultan, know that the son of Adam hath subtleties and wiles, which none can withstand nor can any prevail against him, save only Death; for he putteth into my nostrils a twine of goat's hair he calleth Nose-ring,[139] and over my head a thing he calleth Halter; then he delivereth me to the least of his little children, and the youngling draweth me along by the nose-ring, my size and strength notwithstanding. Then they load me with the heaviest of burdens and go long journeys with me and put me to hard labour through the hours of the night and the day. When I grow old and stricken in years and disabled from working, my master keepeth me not with him, but selleth me to the knacker who cutteth my throat and vendeth my hide to the tanners and my flesh to the cooks: so do not ask the hardships I suffer from the son of Adam. When didst thou leave the son of Adam? asked the young lion; and he answered, At sundown, and I suppose that coming to my place after my departure and not finding me there, he is now in search of me: wherefore let me go, O son of the Sultan, that I may flee into the wolds and the wilds. Said the whelp, Wait awhile, O camel, till thou see how I will tear him, and give thee to eat of his flesh, whilst I craunch his bones and drink his blood. Replied the camel, O King's son, I fear for thee from the child of Adam, for he is wily and guilefull. And he began repeating these verses:—

When the tyrant enters the lieges' land, ✿ Naught remains for the lieges but quick remove!

Now whilst the camel was speaking with the lion-whelp, behold, there rose a cloud of dust which, after a time, opened and showed an old man scanty of stature and lean of limb; and he bore on his shoulder a basket of carpenter's tools and on his head a branch of a tree and eight planks. He led little children by the hand and came on 121 at a trotting pace,[140] never stopping till he drew near the whelp. When I saw him, O my sister, I fell down for excess of fear; but the young lion rose and walked forward to meet the carpenter and when he came up to him, the man smiled in his face and said to him, with a glib tongue and in courtly terms:—O King who defendeth from harm and lord of the long arm, Allah prosper thine evening and thine endeavouring and

increase thy valiancy and strengthen thee! Protect me from that which hath distressed me and with its mischief hath oppressed me, for I have found no helper save only thyself. And the carpenter stood in his presence weeping and wailing and complaining. When the whelp heard his sighing and his crying he said, I will succour thee from that thou fearest. Who hath done thee wrong and what art thou, O wild beast, whose like in my life I never saw, nor ever espied one goodlier of form or more eloquent of tongue than thou? What is thy case? Replied the man, O lord of wild beasts, as to myself I am a carpenter; but as to who hath wronged me, verily he is a son of Adam, and by break of dawn after this coming night[141] he will be with thee in this place. When the lion-whelp heard these words of the carpenter, the light was changed to night before his sight and he snorted and roared with ire and his eyes cast forth sparks of fire. Then he cried out saying, By Allah, I will assuredly watch through this coming night till dawn, nor will I return to my father till I have won my will. Then he turned to the carpenter and asked, Of a truth I see thou art short of step and I would not hurt thy feelings for that I am generous of heart; yet do I deem thee unable to keep pace with the wild beasts: tell me then whither thou goest? Answered the carpenter, Know that I am on my way to thy father's Wazir, the lynx; for when he heard that the son of Adam had set foot in this country he feared greatly for himself and sent one of the wild beasts on a message for me, to make him a house wherein he should dwell, that it might shelter him and fend off his enemy from him, so not one of the sons of Adam should come at him. Accordingly I took up these planks and set forth to find him. Now when the young lion heard these words he envied the lynx and said to the carpenter, By my life there is no help for it but thou 122make me a house with these planks ere thou make one for Sir Lynx! When thou hast done my work, go to him and make him whatso he wisheth. The carpenter replied, O lord of wild beasts, I cannot make thee aught till I have made the lynx what he desireth: then will I return to thy service and build thee a house as a fort to ward thee from thy foe. Exclaimed the lion-whelp, By Allah, I will not let thee leave this place till thou build me a house of planks. So saying he made for the carpenter and sprang upon him, thinking to jest with him, and cuffed him with his paw, knocking the basket off his shoulder; and threw him down in a fainting fit, whereupon the young lion laughed at him and said, Woe to thee, O carpenter, of a truth thou art feeble and hast no force; so it is excusable in thee to fear the son of Adam. Now when the carpenter fell on his back, he waxed exceeding wroth; but he dissembled his wrath for fear of the whelp and sat up and smiled in his face, saying, Well, I will make for thee the house. With this he took the planks he had brought and nailed together the house, which he made in the form of a chest after the measure of the young lion. And he left the door open, for he had cut in the box a large aperture, to which he made a stout cover and bored many holes therein. Then he took out some newly wrought nails and a hammer and said to the young lion, Enter the house through this opening, that I may fit it to thy measure. Thereat the whelp rejoiced and went up to the opening, but saw that it was strait; and

the carpenter said to him, Enter and crouch down on thy legs and arms! So the whelp did thus and entered the chest, but his tail remained outside. Then he would have drawn back and come out; but the carpenter said to him, Wait patiently a while till I see if there be room for thy tail with thee. The young lion did as he was bid when the carpenter twisted up his tail and, stuffing it into the chest, whipped the lid on to the opening and nailed it down; whereat the whelp cried out and said, O carpenter, what is this narrow house thou hast made me? Let me out, sirrah! But the carpenter answered, Far be it, far be it from thy thought! Repentance for past avails naught, and indeed of this place thou shalt not come out. He then laughed and resumed, Verily thou art fallen into the trap and from thy duresse there is no escape, O vilest of wild beasts! Rejoined the whelp, O my brother, what manner of words are these thou addressest to me? The carpenter replied "Know, O dog of the desert! that thou hast fallen into that which thou fearedst: Fate hath upset thee, nor shall caution set 123 thee up. When the whelp heard these words, O my sister, he knew that this was indeed the very son of Adam, against whom he had been warned by his sire in waking state and by the mysterious Voice in sleeping while; and I also was certified that this was indeed he without doubt; wherefore great fear of him for myself seized me and I withdrew a little apart from him and waited to see what he would do with the young lion. Then I saw, O my sister, the son of Adam dig a pit in that place hard by the chest which held the whelp and, throwing the box into the hole, heap dry wood upon it and burn the young lion with fire. At this sight, O sister mine, my fear of the son of Adam redoubled and in my affright I have been these two days fleeing from him." But when the peahen heard from the duck this story,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the peahen heard from the duck this story, she wondered with exceeding wonder and said to her, "O my sister, here thou art safe from the son of Adam, for we are in one of the islands of the sea whither there is no way for the son of Adam; so do thou take up thine abode with us till Allah make easy thy case and our case." Quoth the duck, "I fear lest some calamity come upon me by night, for no runaway can rid him of fate by flight." Rejoined the peahen, "Abide with us, and be like unto us;" and ceased not to persuade her, till she yielded, saying, "O my sister, thou knowest how weak is my resistance; but verily had I not seen thee here, I had not remained." Said the peahen, "That which is on our foreheads[142] we must indeed fulfil, and when our doomed day draweth near, who shall deliver us? But not a soul departeth except it have accomplished its predestined livelihood and term." Now the while they talked thus, a cloud of dust appeared and approached them, at sight of which the duck shrieked aloud and ran down into the sea, crying out, "Beware! beware! though flight there is not from Fate and Lot!"[143] After awhile, the dust opened out and discovered under it an antelope; whereat the duck and

the peahen were re-assured and the peacock's wife said to her companion, 124"O my sister, this thou seest and wouldst have me beware of is an antelope, and here he is, making for us. He will do us no hurt, for the antelope feedeth upon the herbs of the earth and, even as thou art of the bird-kind, so is he of the beast-kind. Be therefore of good cheer and cease care-taking; for care-taking wasteth the body." Hardly had the peahen done speaking, when the antelope came up to them, thinking to shelter him under the shade of the tree; and, sighting the peahen and the duck, saluted them and said, "I came to this island to-day and I have seen none richer in herbage nor pleasanter for habitation." Then he besought them for company, and amity and, when they saw his friendly behaviour to them, they welcomed him and gladly accepted his offer. So they struck up a sincere friendship and sware thereto; and they slept in one place and they ate and drank together; nor did they cease dwelling in safety, eating and drinking their fill, till one day there came thither a ship which had strayed from her course in the sea. She cast anchor near them and the crew came forth and dispersed about the island. They soon caught sight of the three friends, antelope, peahen and duck, and made for them; whereupon the peahen flew up into the tree and thence winged her way through air; and the antelope fled into the desert, but the duck abode paralysed by fear. So they chased her till they caught her and she cried out and said, "Caution availed me naught against Fate and Lot!"; and they bore her off to the ship. Now when the peahen saw what had betided the duck, she removed from the island, saying, "I see that misfortunes lie in ambush for all. But for yonder ship, parting had not befallen between me and this duck, because she was one of the truest of friends." Then she flew off and rejoined the antelope, who saluted her and gave her joy of her safety and asked for the duck, to which she replied, "The enemy hath taken her, and I loathe the sojourn of this island after her." Then she wept for the loss of the duck and began repeating:—

The day of parting cut my heart in twain: ✿ In twain may Allah cut the parting-day!

And she spake also this couplet:—

I pray some day that we reunion gain, ✿ So may I tell him Parting's ugly way.

The antelope sorrowed with great sorrow, but dissuaded the peahen from her resolve to remove from the island. So they abode there together with him, eating and drinking, in peace and safety, except that they ceased not to mourn for the loss of the duck; and the antelope said to the peahen, "O my sister, thou seest how the folk who came forth of the ship were the cause of our severance from the duck and of her destruction; so do thou beware of them and guard thyself from them and from the wile of the son of Adam and his guile." But the peahen replied, "I am assured that nought caused her death save her neglecting to say Subhán' Allah, glory to God; indeed I often said to her:—Exclaim thou, Praised be Allah, and verily I fear for thee, because thou neglectest to laud the Almighty; for all things created by Allah glorify Him on this wise, and whoso neglecteth the formula of praise[1144] him destruction waylays."

When the antelope heard the peahen's words he exclaimed, "Allah make fair thy face!" and betook himself to repeating the formula of praise, and ceased not therefrom a single hour. And it is said that his form of adoration was as follows:—"Praise be to the Requiter of every good and evil thing, the Lord of Majesty and of Kings the King!" And a tale is also told on this wise of[125]

THE HERMITS.

A certain hermit worshipped on a certain mountain, whither resorted a pair of pigeons; and the worshipper was wont to make two parts of his daily bread,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the worshipper was wont to make two parts of his daily bread, eating one half himself and giving the other to the pigeon pair. He also prayed for them both that they might be blest with issue: so they increased and multiplied greatly. Now they resorted only to that mountain where the hermit was, and the reason of their foregathering with the holy man was their assiduity in repeating[126] "Praised be Allah!" for it is recounted that the pigeon[145] sayeth in praise, "Praised be the Creator of all Creatures, the Distributor of daily bread, the Builder of the heavens and Dispreader of the earths!" And that couple ceased not to dwell together in the happiest of life, they and their brood till the holy man died, when the company of the pigeons was broken up and they dispersed among the towns and villages and mountains. Now it is told that on a certain other mountain there dwelt a shepherd, a man of piety and good sense and chastity; and he had flocks of sheep which he tended, and he made his living by their milk and wool. The mountain which gave him a home abounded in trees and pasturage and also in wild beasts, but these had no power over his flocks; so he ceased not to dwell upon that highland in full security, taking no thought to the things of the world, by reason of his beatitude and his assiduity in prayer and devotion, till Allah ordained that he should fall sick with exceeding sickness. Thereupon he betook himself to a cavern in the mountain and his sheep used to go out in the morning to the pasturage and take refuge at night in the cave. But Allah Almighty, being minded to try him and prove his patience and his obedience, sent him one of His angels, who came in to him in the semblance of a fair woman and sat down before him. When the shepherd saw that woman seated before him, his flesh shuddered at her with horripilation[146] and he said to her, "O thou woman, what was it invited thee to this my retreat? I have no need of thee, nor is there aught betwixt me and thee which calleth for thy coming in to me." Quoth she, "O man, dost thou not behold my beauty and loveliness and the fragrance

of my breath; and knowest thou not the need women have of men and men of women? So who shall forbid thee from me when I have chosen to be near thee and desire to enjoy thy company? Indeed, I come to thee willingly and do not withhold myself from thee, and near us there is none whom we need fear; and I wish to abide 127with thee as long as thou sojournest in this mountain, and be thy companion and thy true friend. I offer myself to thee, for thou needest the service of woman: and if thou have carnal connection with me and know me, thy sickness shall be turned from thee and health return to thee; and thou wilt repent thee of the past for having foresworn the company of women during the days that are now no more. In very sooth, I give thee good advice: so incline to my counsel and approach me." Quoth the shepherd, "Go out from me, O woman deceitful and perfidious! I will not incline to thee nor approach thee. I want not thy company nor wish for union with thee; he who coveteth the coming life renounceth thee, for thou seducest mankind, those of past time and those of present time. Allah the Most High lieth in wait for His servants and woe unto him who is cursed with thy company!" Answered she, "O thou that errest from the truth and wanderest from the way of reason, turn thy face to me and look upon my charms and take thy full of my nearness, as did the wise who have gone before thee. Indeed, they were richer than thou in experience and sharper of wit; withal they rejected not, as thou rejectest, the enjoyment of women; nay, they took their pleasure of them and their company even as thou renouncest them, and it did them no hurt in things temporal or things spiritual. Wherefore do thou recede from thy resolve and thou shalt praise the issue of thy case." Rejoined the shepherd, "All thou sayest I deny and abhor, and all thou offerest I reject: for thou art cunning and perfidious and there is no honesty in thee nor is there honour. How much of foulness hidest thou under thy beauty, and how many a pious man hast thou seduced from his duty and made his end penitence and perdition? Avaunt from me, O thou who devotest thyself to corrupt others!" Thereupon, he threw his goat's-hair cloak over his head that he might not see her face, and betook himself to calling upon the name of his Lord. And when the angel saw the excellence of his submission to the Divine Will, he went out from him and ascended to heaven. Now hard by the hermit's hill was a village wherein dwelt a pious man, who knew not the other's station, till one night he heard in a dream a Voice saying to him, "In such a place near to thee is a devout man: go thou to him and be at his command!" So when morning dawned he set out to wend thither, and what time the heat was grievous upon him, he came to a tree which grew beside a spring of running water. So he sat down to rest in the shadow of that tree and 128behold, he saw beasts and birds coming to that fount to drink; but when they caught sight of the devotee sitting there, they took fright and fled from before his face. Then said he, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! I rest not here but to the hurt of these beasts and fowls." So he arose, blaming himself and saying, "Verily my tarrying here this day hath wronged these animals,

and what excuse have I towards my Creator and the Creator of these birds and beasts for that I was the cause of their flight from their drink and their daily food and their place of pasturage? Alas for my shame before my Lord on the day when He shall avenge the hornless sheep on the sheep with horns!"[147] And he wept and began repeating these couplets:—

Now an, by Allah, unto man were fully known ✿ Why he is made, in careless sleep he ne'er would wone:
First Death, then cometh Wake and dreadful Day of Doom ✿ Reproof with threats, sore terror, frightful malison.
Bid we or else forbid we, all of us are like ✿ The Cave-companions[148] when at length their sleep was done.

Then he again wept for that he had driven the birds and beasts from the spring by sitting down under the tree, and he fared on till he came to the shepherd's dwelling and going in, saluted him. The shepherd returned his salutation and embraced him, weeping and saying, "What hath brought thee to this place where no man hath ever yet come to me." Quoth the other devotee, "I saw in my sleep one who described to me this thy stead and bade me repair to thee and salute thee: so I came, in obedience to the commandment." The shepherd welcomed him, rejoicing in his company and the twain abode upon that mountain, worshipping Allah with the best of worship; and they ceased not serving their Lord in the cavern and living upon the flesh and milk of their sheep, having clean put away from them riches and children and what not, till the Certain, the Inevitable became their lot. And this is the end of their story. Then said King Shahyrar, "O Shahrazad, thou wouldst cause me to renounce my kingdom and thou makest me repent of having slain so many women and maidens. Hast thou any bird-stories?" "Yes," replied she, and began to tell the

TALE OF THE WATER-FOWL AND THE TORTOISE.

It is related by truthful men, O King, that a certain bird flew high up firmament-wards and presently lit on a rock in the midst of water which was running. And as he sat there, behold, the current carried to him the carcass of a man, and lodged it against the rock, for being swollen it floated. The bird, which was a water-fowl, drew near and examining it, found that it was the dead body of a son of Adam and saw in it sign of spear and stroke of sword. So he said to himself, "I presume that this man who hath been slain was some evil-doer, and that a company banded themselves together against him and put him to death and were at peace from him and his evil-doing." And as he continued marvelling at this, suddenly the vultures and kites came down upon the carcass from all sides and gat round it; which when the water-fowl saw, he feared with sore affright and said, "I cannot abide here any longer." So he flew away in quest of a place where he might wone, till that carcass should come to an end and the birds

of prey leave it; and he stayed not in his flight, till he found 130 a river with a tree in its midst. So he alighted on the tree, troubled and distraught and sore grieved for departing from his birth-place, and said to himself, "Verily sorrows cease not to follow me: I was at my ease when I saw that carcass, and rejoiced therein with much joy, saying, "This is a gift of daily bread which Allah hath dealt to me: but my joy became annoy and my gladness turned to sadness, for the ravenous birds, which are like lions, seized upon it and tare it to pieces and came between me and my prize. So how can I hope to be secure from misfortune in this world; or put any trust therein? Indeed, the proverb saith:—The world is the dwelling of him who hath no dwelling: he who hath no wits is cozened by it and entrusteth it with his wealth and his child and his family and his folk; and whoso is cozened ceaseth not to rely upon it, pacing proudly upon earth until he is laid under earth and the dust is cast over his corpse by him who of all men was dearest to him and nearest. But naught is better for generous youth than patience under its cares and miseries. I have left my native place and it is abhorrent to me to quit my brethren and friends and loved ones." Now whilst he was thus musing lo! a male-tortoise descended into the river and, approaching the water-fowl, saluted him, saying, "O my lord, what hath exiled thee and driven thee so far from thy place?" Replied the water-fowl, "The descent of enemies thereon; for the wise brooketh not the neighbourhood of his foe; and how well saith the poet:—

Whenas on any land the oppressor doth alight, ✿ There's nothing left for those, that dwell therein, but flight.[149]

Quoth the tortoise, "If the matter be as thou sayest and the case as thou describest, I will not leave thee nor cease to stand before thee, that I may do thy need and fulfil thy service; for it is said that there is no sorer desolation than that of him who is an exile, cut off from friends and home; and it is also said that no calamity equalleth that of severance from the good; but the best solace for men of understanding is to seek companionship in strangerhood and be patient under sorrows and adversity. Wherefore I hope that thou wilt approve of my company, for I will be to thee a servant and a helper." Now when the water-fowl heard the tortoise's words he answered, "Verily, thou art right in what thou 131 sayest for, by my life, I have found grief and pain in separation, what while I have been parted from my place and sundered from my brethren and friends; seeing that in severance is an admonition to him who will be admonished and matter of thought for him who will take thought. If the generous youth find not a companion to console him, weal is for ever cut off from him and ill is eternally established with him; and there is nothing for the sage but to solace himself in every event with brethren and be constant in patience and endurance: indeed these two are praiseworthy qualities, and both uphold one under calamities and vicissitudes of the world and ward off startling sorrows and harrowing cares, come what will." Rejoined the tortoise, "Beware of sorrow, for it will spoil thy life and waste thy manliness." And the two gave not over conversing till the bird said, "Never shall I cease fearing the shifts of time and vicissitudes of events." When the

tortoise heard this, he came up to him and, kissing him between the eyes, said to him, "Never may the company of the birds cease to be blest in thee and through thee, and find wisdom in thy good counsel! How shalt thou be burdened with care and harm?" And he went on to comfort the water-fowl and soothe his terrors till he became re-assured. Then he flew to the place where the carcass was and found on arriving there the birds of prey gone, and they had left nothing of the body but bones; whereupon he returned to the tortoise and acquainted him with the fact that the foe had disappeared from his place, saying, "Know that of a truth I long for return homewards to enjoy the society of my friends; for the sage cannot endure separation from his native place." So they both went thither and found naught to affright them; whereupon the water-fowl began repeating:—

And haply whenas strait descends on lot of generous youth ✿ Right sore, with Allah only lies his issue from annoy:

He's straitened, but full oft when rings and meshes straitest clip, ✿ He 'scapes his strait and joyance finds, albe I see no joy.

So the twain abode in that island; and while the water-fowl was enjoying a life of peace and gladness, suddenly Fate led thither a hungry falcon, which drove its talons into the bird's belly and killed him, nor did caution avail him when his term of life was ended. Now the cause of his death was that he neglected to use the formula of praise, and it is said that his form of adoration was as follows, "Praised be our Lord in that He ordereth and ordaineth; and praised be our Lord in that He enricheth and impoverisheth!" Such was the water-fowl's end and the tale of the ravenous birds. And when it was finished quoth the Sultan, "O Shahrazad, verily thou overwhelmest me with admonitions and salutary instances. Hast thou any stories of beasts?" "Yes," answered she; and began to tell the

TALE OF THE WOLF AND THE FOX.[150]

Know, O King, that a fox and a wolf once cohabited in the same den, harbouring therein together by day and resorting thither by night; but the wolf was cruel and oppressive to the fox. They abode thus awhile, till it so befel that the fox exhorted the wolf to use gentle dealing and leave off his ill deeds, saying, "If thou persist in thine arrogance, belike Allah will give the Son of Adam power over thee, for he is past master in guile and wile; and by his artifice he bringeth down the birds from the firmament and he haleth the mighty fish forth of the flood-waters: and he cutteth the mountain and transporteth it from place to place. All this is of his craft and wiliness: wherefore do thou betake thyself to equity and fair dealing and leave frowardness and tyranny; and thou shalt fare all the better for it." But the wolf would not accept his counsel and answered him roughly, saying, "What right hast thou to speak of matters of weight and importance?" And he dealt the fox a cuff that laid him senseless; but,

when he revived, he smiled in the wolf's face and, excusing himself for his unseemly speech, repeated these two couplets:—

If any sin I sinned, or did I aught ✿ In love of you, which hateful mischief wrought;

My sin I sore repent and pardon sue; ✿ So give the sinner gift of pardon sought.

133 The wolf accepted his excuse and held his hand from further ill-treatment, saying, "Speak not of whatso concerneth thee not, lest thou hear what will please thee not." Answered the fox, "To hear is to obey!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the wolf to the fox, "Speak not of whatso concerneth thee not, lest thou hear what will please thee not!" Answered the fox, "To hear is to obey! I will abstain henceforth from what pleaseth thee not; for the sage saith:—Have a care that thou speak not of that whereof thou art not asked; leave that which concerneth thee not for that which concerneth thee, and by no means lavish good counsel on the wrongous, for they will repay it to thee with wrong." And reflecting on the words of the wolf he smiled in his face, but in his heart he meditated treachery against him and privily said, "There is no help but that I compass the destruction of this wolf." So he bore with his injurious usage, saying to himself, "Verily insolence and evil-speaking are causes of perdition and cast into confusion, and it is said:—The insolent is shent and the ignorant doth repent; and whoso feareth, to him safety is sent: moderation marketh the noble and gentle manners are of gains the grandest. It behoveth me to dissemble with this tyrant and needs must he be cast down." Then quoth he to the wolf, "Verily, the Lord pardoneth his erring servant and relenteth towards him, if he confess his offences; and I am a weak slave and have offended in presuming to counsel thee. If thou knewest the pain that befel me by thy buffet, thou wouldst ken that even the elephant could not stand against it nor endure it: but I complain not of this blow's hurt, because of the joy and gladness that hath betided me through it; for though it was to me exceeding sore yet was its issue of the happiest. And with sooth saith the sage:—The blow of the teacher is at first right hurtful, but the end of it is sweeter than strained honey." Quoth the wolf, "I pardon thine offence and I cancel thy fault; but beware of my force and avow thyself my thrall; for thou hast learned my severity unto him who showeth his hostility!" Thereupon the fox prostrated himself before the wolf, saying, "Allah lengthen thy life and mayst thou never cease to overthrow thy foes!" And he stinted not to fear 134 the wolf and to wheedle him and dissemble with him. Now it came to pass that one day, the fox went to a vineyard and saw a breach in its walls; but he mistrusted it and said to himself, "Verily, for this breach there must be some cause and the old saw saith:—Whoso seeth a cleft in the earth and shunneth it not and is not wary in approaching it, the same is self-deluded and exposeth himself to danger and

destruction. Indeed, it is well known that some folk make the figure of a fox in their vineyards; nay, they even set before the semblance grapes in plates, that foxes may see it and come to it and fall into perdition. In very sooth I regard this breach as a snare and the proverb saith:—Caution is one half of cleverness. Now prudence requireth that I examine this breach and see if there be aught therein which may lead to perdition; and coveting shall not make me cast myself into destruction." So he went up to the hole and walked round it right warily, and lo! it was a deep pit, which the owner of the vineyard had dug to trap therein the wild beasts which laid waste his vines. Then he said to himself, "Thou hast gained, for that thou hast refrained!"; and he looked and saw that the hole was lightly covered with dust and matting. So he drew back from it saying, "Praised be Allah that I was wary of it! I hope that my enemy, the wolf, who maketh my life miserable, will fall into it; so will the vineyard be left to me and I shall enjoy it alone and dwell therein at peace." Saying thus, he shook his head and laughed a loud laugh and began versifying:—

Would Heaven I saw at this hour ✿ The Wolf fallen down in this well,

He who anguisht my heart for so long, ✿ And garred me drain eisel and fell!

Heaven grant after this I may live ✿ Free of Wolf for long fortunate spell,

When I've rid grapes and vineyard of him, ✿ And in bunch-spoiling happily dwell.

His verse being finished he returned in haste to the wolf and said to him, "Allah hath made plain for thee the way into the vineyard without toil and moil. This is of thine auspicious fortune; so good luck to thee and mayest thou enjoy the plentiful plunder and the profuse provaunt which Allah hath opened up to thee without trouble!" Asked the wolf, "What proof hast thou of what thou assertest?": and the fox answered, "I went up to the vineyard 135 and found that the owner was dead, having been torn to pieces by wolves: so I entered the orchard and saw the fruit shining upon the trees." The wolf doubted not the fox's report and his gluttony gat hold of him; so he arose and repaired to the cleft, for that greed blinded him; whilst the fox falling behind him lay as one dead, quoting to the case the following couplet:—

For Layla's[151] favour dost thou greed? But, bear in mind ✿ Greed is a yoke of harmful weight on neck of man.

And when the wolf had reached the breach the fox said, "Enter the vineyard: thou art spared the trouble of climbing a ladder, for the garden-wall is broken down, and with Allah it resteth to fulfil the benefit." So the wolf went on walking and thought to enter the vineyard; but when he came to the middle of the pit-covering he fell through; whereupon the fox shook for joy and gladness; his care and concern left him and he sang out for delight and improvised these couplets:—

Fortune had mercy on the soul of me, ✿ And for my torments now shows clemency,

Granting whatever gift my heart desired, ✿ And far removing what I feared to see:

I will, good sooth, excuse her all her sins ✿ She sinned in days gone by and much sinned she:

Yea, her injustice she hath shown in this, ✿ She whitened locks that were so black of blee:

But now for this same wolf escape there's none, ✿ Of death and doom he hath full certainty.

Then all the vineyard comes beneath my rule, ✿ I'll brook no partner who's so fond a fool.

Then the fox looked into the cleft and, seeing the wolf weeping in repentance and sorrow for himself, wept with him; whereupon the wolf raised his head to him and asked, "Is it of pity for me thou weepest, O Father of the Fortlet[152]?" Answered the fox, "No, by Him who cast thee into this pit! I weep for the length of thy past life and for regret that thou didst not fall into the pit before 136 this day; for hadst thou done so before I foregathered with thee, I had rested and enjoyed repose: but thou wast spared till the fulfilment of thine allotted term and thy destined time." Then the wolf said to him as one jesting, "O evil-doer, go to my mother and tell her what hath befallen me; haply she may devise some device for my release." Replied the fox, "Of a truth thou hast been brought to destruction by the excess of thy greed and thine exceeding gluttony, since thou art fallen into a pit whence thou wilt never escape. Knowest thou not the common proverb, O thou witless wolf:—Whoso taketh no thought as to how things end, him shall Fate never befriend nor shall be safe from perils wend." "O Reynard," quoth the wolf, "thou wast wont to show me fondness and covet my friendliness and fear the greatness of my strength. Hate me not rancorously because of that I did with thee; for he who hath power and forgiveth, his reward Allah giveth; even as saith the poet:—

Sow kindness-seed in the unfittest stead; ✿ 'Twill not be wasted whereso thou shalt sow:

For kindness albe buried long, yet none ✿ Shall reap the crop save sower who garred it grow."

Rejoined the fox, "O witlessest of beasts of prey and stupidest of the wild brutes which the wolds over-stray! Hast thou forgotten thine arrogance and insolence and tyranny, and thy disregarding the due of good-fellowship and thy refusing to be advised by what the poet saith?—

Wrong not thy neighbour e'en if thou have power; ✿ The wronger alway vengeance-harvest reaps:

Thine eyes shall sleep, while bides the wronged on wake ✿ A-cursing thee; and Allah's eye ne'er sleeps."

"O Abu 'l-Hosayn," replied the wolf, "twit me not with my past sins; for forgiveness is expected of the generous and doing kind deeds is the truest of treasures. How well saith the poet:—

Haste to do kindness while thou hast much power, ✿ For at all seasons thou hast not such power."

And he ceased not to humble himself before the fox and say, "Haply, thou canst do somewhat to deliver me from destruction." Replied the fox, "O thou wolf, thou witless, deluded, deceitful trickster! hope not for deliverance, for this is but the just reward 137 of thy foul dealing and its due retaliation." Then he laughed with chops wide open and repeated these two couplets:—

No longer beguile me, ✿ Thou'lt fail of thy will!

What can't be thou seekest; ✿ Thou hast sown so reap Ill!

Quoth the wolf, "O gentlest of ravenous beasts, I fain hold thee too faithful to leave me in this pit." Then he wept and complained and, with tears streaming from his eyes, recited these two couplets:—

O thou whose favours have been out of compt, ✿ Whose gifts are more than may be numberèd!

Never mischance befel me yet from time ✿ But that I found thy hand right fain to aid.

"O thou ninny foe," quoth the fox, "how art thou reduced to humiliation and prostration and abjection and submission, after insolence and pride and tyranny and arrogance! Verily, I kept company with thee only for fear of thy fury and I cajoled thee without one hope of fair treatment from thee: but now trembling is come upon thee and vengeance hath overtaken thee." And he repeated these two couplets:—

O thou who seekest innocence to 'guile, ✿ Thou'rt caught in trap of thine intentions vile:

Now drain the draught of shamefullest mischance, ✿ And be with other wolves cut off, thou scroyle!

Replied the wolf, "O thou clement one, speak not with the tongue of enemies nor look with their eyes; but fulfil the covenant of fellowship with me, ere the time of applying remedy cease to be. Rise and make ready to get me a rope and tie one end of it to a tree; then let the other down to me, that I may lay hold of it, so haply I shall from this my strait win free, and I will give thee all my hand possesseth of wealth and fee." Quoth the fox, "Thou persistest in conversation concerning what will not procure thy liberation. Hope not for this, for thou shalt never, never get of me wherewithal to set thee at liberty; but call to mind thy past misdeeds and the craft and perfidy thou didst imagine against me and bethink thee how near thou art to being stoned to death. For know that thy soul is about the world to quit and cease in it and depart from it; so shalt thou to destruction hie and ill is the abiding-place thou shalt aby!"[153] Rejoined the wolf, "O Father of the Fortlet, hasten to return to amity and persist not in this rancorous enmity. Know that whoso from ruin saveth a soul, is as if he had quickened it and made it whole; and whoso saveth a soul alive, is as if he had saved all mankind.[154] Follow not frowardness, for the wise forbid it: and it were most manifest frowardness to leave me in this pit draining the agony of death and dight to look upon mine own doom, whenas it lieth in thy power to deliver me from my stowre. So do thy best to release me and deal with me benevolently." Answered the fox, "O thou base and barbarous wretch, I compare thee, because of the fairness of thy professions and expressions, and the foulness of thy intentions and thy inventions to the Falcon and the Partridge." Asked the wolf, "How so?"; and the fox began to tell the

TALE OF THE FALCON[155] AND THE PARTRIDGE.[156]

Once upon a time I entered a vineyard to eat of its grapes; and, whilst so doing behold, I saw a falcon stoop upon a partridge and seize him; but the partridge escaped from the seizer and, entering his nest, hid himself there. The falcon followed apace

and called out to him, saying, "O imbecile, I saw thee an-hungered in the wold and took pity on thee; so I picked up for thee some grain and took hold of thee that thou mightest eat; but thou fleddest from me; and I wot not the cause of thy flight, except it were to put upon me a slight. Come out, then, and take the grain I have brought thee to eat and much good may it do thee, and with 139 thy health agree." When the partridge heard these words, he believed and came out to him, whereupon the falcon struck his talons into him and seized him. Cried the partridge, "Is this that which thou toldest me thou hadst brought me from the wold, and whereof thou badest me eat, saying:—Much good may it do thee, and with thy health agree? Thou hast lied to me, and may Allah cause what thou eatest of my flesh to be a killing poison in thy maw!" So when the falcon had eaten the partridge, his feathers fell off and his strength failed and he died on the spot. Know, then, O wolf! (pursued the fox), "that he who diggeth for his brother a pit himself soon falleth into it, and thou first deceivedst me in mode unfit." Quoth the wolf, "Spare me this discourse nor saws and tales enforce, and remind me not of my former ill course, for sufficeth me the sorry plight I endure perforce, seeing that I am fallen into a place, in which even my foe would pity me, much more a true friend. Rather find some trick to deliver me and be thou thereby my saviour. If this cause thee trouble, remember that a true friend will undertake the sorest travail for his true friend's sake and will risk his life to deliver him from evil; and indeed it hath been said:—A leal friend is better than a real brother. So if thou stir thyself to save me and I be saved, I will forsure gather thee such store as shall be a provision for thee against want however sore; and truly I will teach thee rare tricks whereby to open whatso bounteous vineyards thou please and strip the fruit-laden trees." Rejoined the fox, laughing, "How excellent is what the learned say of him who aboundeth in ignorance like unto thee!" Asked the wolf, "What do the wise men say?" And the fox answered, "They have observed that the gross of body are gross of mind, far from intelligence and nigh unto ignorance. As for thy saying, O thou stupid, cunning idiot! that a true friend should undertake sore travail for his true friend's sake, it is sooth as thou sayest, but tell me, of thine ignorance and poverty of intelligence, how can I be a true friend to thee, considering thy treachery. Dost thou count me thy true friend? Nay, I am thy foe who joyeth in thy woe; and couldst thou trow it, this word were sorer to thee than slaughter by shot of shaft. As for thy promise to provide me a store against want however sore and teach me tricks, to plunder whatso bounteous vineyards I please, and spoil fruit-laden trees, how cometh it, O guileful traitor, that thou knowest not a wile to save thyself from destruction? How far art thou from profiting 140 thyself and how far am I from accepting thy counsel! If thou have any tricks, make shift for thyself to save thee from the risk, wherefrom I pray Allah to make thine escape far distant! So look, O fool, if there be any trick with thee; and therewith save thyself from death ere thou lavish instruction upon thy neighbours. But thou art like a certain man attacked by a disease, who went to another diseased with

the same disease, and said to him:—Shall I heal thee of thy disease? Replied the sick man, Why dost thou not begin by healing thyself? So he left him and went his way. And thou, O ignorant wolf, art like this; so stay where thou art and under what hath befallen thee be of good heart!" When the wolf heard what the fox said, he knew that from him he had no hope of favour; so he wept for himself, saying, "Verily, I have been heedless of my weal; but if Allah deliver me from this ill I will assuredly repent of my arrogance towards those who are weaker than I, and will wear woollens[157] and go upon the mountains, celebrating the praises of Almighty Allah and fearing His punishment. And I will withdraw from the company of other wild beasts and forsure will I feed the poor fighters for the Faith." Then he wept and wailed, till the heart of the fox softened when he heard his humble words and his professions of penitence for his past insolence and arrogance. So he took pity upon him and sprang up joyfully and, going to the brink of the breach, squatted down on his hind quarters and let his tail hang in the hole; whereupon the wolf arose and putting out his paw, pulled the fox's tail, so that he fell down in the pit with him. Then said the wolf, "O fox of little mercy, why didst thou exult in my misery, thou that wast my companion and under my dominion? Now thou art fallen into the pit with me and retribution hath soon overtaken thee. Verily, the sages have said:—If one of you reproach his brother with sucking the dugs 141 of a bitch, he also shall suck her. And how well quoth the poet:—

When Fortune weighs heavy on some of us, ✿ And makes camel kneel by some other one,[158]

Say to those who rejoice in our ills:—Awake! ✿ The rejoicer shall suffer as we have done!

And death in company is the best of things;[159] wherefore I will certainly and assuredly hasten to slay thee ere thou see me slain." Said the fox to himself, "Ah! Ah! I am fallen into the snare with this tyrant, and my case calleth for the use of craft and cunning; for indeed it is said that a woman fashioneth her jewellery for the day of display, and quoth the proverb:—I have not kept thee, O my tear, save for the time when distress draweth near. And unless I make haste to circumvent this prepotent beast I am lost without recourse; and how well saith the poet:—

Make thy game by guile, for thou'rt born in a Time ✿ Whose sons are lions in forest lain;

And turn on the leat[160] of thy knavery ✿ That the mill of subsistence may grind thy grain;

And pluck the fruits or, if out of reach, ✿ Why, cram thy maw with the gras on plain."

Then said the fox to the wolf, "Hasten not to slay me, for that is not the way to pay me and thou wouldst repent it, O thou valiant wild beast, lord of force and exceeding prowess! An thou accord delay and consider what I shall say, thou wilt ken what purpose I proposed; but if thou hasten to kill me it will profit thee naught and we shall both die in this very place." Answered the wolf "O thou wily trickster, what garreth thee hope to work my deliverance and thine own, that thou prayest me to grant thee delay? Speak and propound to me thy purpose." Replied the fox, "As for the purpose I proposed, it was one which deserveth that thou guerdon me handsomely for it; for when I heard thy promises and 142 thy confessions of thy past misdeeds and regrets

for not having earlier repented and done good; and when I heard thee vowing, shouldst thou escape from this strait, to leave harming thy fellows and others; forswear the eating of grapes and of all manner fruits; devote thyself to humility; cut thy claws and break thy dog-teeth; don woollens and offer thyself as an offering to Almighty Allah, then indeed I had pity upon thee, for true words are the best words. And although before I had been anxious for thy destruction, whenas I heard thy repenting and thy vows of amending should Allah vouchsafe to save thee, I felt bound to free thee from this thy present plight. So I let down my tail, that thou mightest grasp it and be saved. Yet wouldest thou not quit thy wonted violence and habit of brutality; nor soughtest thou to save thyself by fair means, but thou gavest me a tug which I thought would sever body from soul, so that thou and I are fallen into the same place of distress and death. And now there is but one thing can save us and, if thou accept it of me, we shall both escape; and after it behoveth thee to fulfil the vows thou hast made and I will be thy veritable friend." Asked the wolf, "What is it thou proposest for mine acceptance?" Answered the fox, "It is that thou stand up at full height till I come nigh on a level with the surface of the earth. Then will I give a spring and reach the ground; and, when out of the pit, I will bring thee what thou mayst lay hold of, and thus shalt thou make thine escape." Rejoined the wolf, "I have no faith in thy word, for sages have said:—Whoso practiseth trust in the place of hate, erreth; and:—Whoso trusteth in the untrustworthy is a dupe; he who re-trieth him who hath been tried shall reap repentance and his days shall go waste; and he who cannot distinguish between case and case, giving each its due, and assigneth all the weight to one side, his luck shall be little and his miseries shall be many. How well saith the poet:—

Let thy thought be ill and none else but ill; ✿ For suspicion is best of the worldling's skill:
Naught casteth a man into parlous place ✿ But good opinion and (worse) good-will!

And the saying of another:—

Be sure all are villains and so bide safe; ✿ Who lives wide awake on few Ills shall light:
Meet thy foe with smiles and a smooth fair brow, ✿ And in heart raise a host for the battle dight!

143 And that of yet another:[161]—

He thou trusted most is thy worst unfriend; ✿ 'Ware all and take heed with whom thou wend:
Fair opinion of Fortune is feeble sign; ✿ So believe her ill and her Ills perpend!"

Quoth the fox, "Verily mistrust and ill opinion of others are not to be commended in every case; nay trust and confidence are the characteristics of a noble nature and the issue thereof is freedom from stress of fear. Now it behoveth thee, O thou wolf, to devise some device for thy deliverance from this thou art in, and our escape will be better to us both than our death: so quit thy distrust and rancour; for if thou trust in me one of two things will happen; either I shall bring thee something whereof to lay hold and escape from this case, or I shall abandon thee to thy doom. But this thing may not

be, for I am not safe from falling into some such strait as this thou art in, which, indeed, would be fitting punishment of perfidy. Of a truth the adage saith:—Faith is fair and faithlessness is foul.[162] So it behoveth thee to trust in me, for I am not ignorant of the haps and mishaps of the world; and delay not to contrive some device for our deliverance, as the case is too close to allow further talk." Replied the wolf, "For all my want of confidence in thy fidelity, verily I knew what was in thy mind and that thou wast moved to deliver me whenas thou heardest my repentance, and I said to myself:—If what he asserteth be true, he will have repaired the ill he did; and if false, it resteth with the Lord to requite him. So, look'ee, I have accepted thy proposal and, if thou betray me, may thy traitorous deed be the cause of thy destruction!" Then the wolf stood bolt upright in the pit and, taking the fox upon his shoulders, raised him to the level of the ground, 144whereupon Reynard gave a spring from his back and lighted on the surface of the earth. When he found himself safely out of the cleft he fell down senseless and the wolf said to him, "O my friend! neglect not my case and delay not to deliver me." The fox laughed with a loud haw-haw and replied, "O dupe, naught threw me into thy hands save my laughing at thee and making mock of thee; for in good sooth when I heard thee profess repentance, mirth and gladness seized me and I frisked about and made merry and danced, so that my tail hung low into the pit and thou caughtest hold of it and draggedst me down with thee. And the end was that Allah Almighty delivered me from thy power. Then why should I be other than a helper in thy destruction, seeing that thou art of Satan's host? I dreamt yesterday that I danced at thy wedding and I told my dream to an interpreter who said to me:—Verily thou shalt fall into imminent deadly danger and thou shalt escape therefrom. So now I know that my falling into thy hand and my escape are the fulfilment of my dream, and thou, O imbecile, knowest me for thy foe; so how couldest thou, of thine ignorance and unintelligence, nurse desire of deliverance at my hands, after all thou hast heard of harsh words from me; and wherefore should I attempt thy salvation whenas the sages have said:—In the death of the wicked is rest for mankind and a purge for the earth? But, were it not that I fear to bear more affliction by keeping faith with thee than the sufferings which follow perfidy, I had done mine endeavour to save thee." When the wolf heard this, he bit his forehand for repentance.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

NOW WHEN IT WAS THE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH NIGHT,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the wolf heard the fox's words he bit his forehand for repentance. Then he gave the fox fair words, but this availed naught and he was at his wits' end for what to do; so he said to him in soft, low accents, "Verily, you tribe of foxes are the most pleasant people in point of tongue and the subtlest in jest, and this is but a joke of thine; but all times are not good for funning and jesting." The fox replied, "O ignoramus, in good sooth jesting

hath a limit which the jester must not overpass; and deem not that Allah will 145 again give thee possession of me after having once delivered me from thy hand." Quoth the wolf, "It behoveth thee to compass my release, by reason of our brotherhood and good fellowship; and, if thou release me, I will assuredly make fair thy recompense." Quoth the fox, "Wise men say:—Take not to brother the wicked fool, for he will disgrace thee in lieu of gracing thee; nor take to brother the liar for, if thou do good, he will conceal it; and if thou do ill he will reveal it. And again, the sages have said:—There is help for everything but death: all may be warded off, except Fate. As for the reward thou declarest to be my due from thee, I compare thee herein with the serpent which fled from the charmer.[163] A man saw her affrighted and said to her:—What aileth thee, O thou serpent? Replied she, I am fleeing from the snake-charmer, for he seeketh to trap me and, if thou wilt save me and hide me with thee, I will make fair thy reward and do thee all manner of kindness. So he took her, incited thereto by lust for the recompense and eager to find favour with Heaven, and set her in his breast-pocket. Now when the charmer had passed and had wended his way and the serpent had no longer any cause to fear, he said to her:—Where is the reward thou didst promise me? Behold, I have saved thee from that thou fearedest and soughtest to fly. Replied she:—Tell me in what limb or in what place shall I strike thee with my fangs, for thou knowest we exceed not that recompense. So saying, she gave him a bite whereof he died. And I liken thee, O dullard, to the serpent in her dealings with that man. Hast thou not heard what the poet saith?—

Trust not to man when thou hast raised his spleen ✿ And wrath, nor that 'twill cool do thou misween:

Smooth feels the viper to the touch and glides ✿ With grace, yet hides she deadliest venene."

Quoth the wolf, "O thou glib of gab and fair of face, ignore not my case and men's fear of me; and well thou weetest how I assault the strongly walled place and uproot the vines from base. Wherefore, do as I bid thee, and stand before me even as the thrall standeth before his lord." Quoth the fox, "O stupid dullard who 146 seekest a vain thing, I marvel at thy folly and thy front of brass in that thou biddest me serve thee and stand up before thee as I were a slave bought with thy silver; but soon shalt thou see what is in store for thee, in the way of cracking thy sconce with stones and knocking out thy traitorous dog-teeth." So saying the fox clomb a hill overlooking the vineyard and standing there, shouted out to the vintagers; nor did he give over shouting till he woke them and they, seeing him, all came up to him in haste. He stood his ground till they drew near him and close to the pit wherein was the wolf; and then he turned and fled. So the folk looked into the cleft and, spying the wolf, set to pelting him with heavy stones, and they stinted not smiting him with stones and sticks, and stabbing him with spears, till they killed him and went away. Thereupon the fox returned to that cleft and, standing over the spot where his foe had been slain, saw the wolf dead: so he wagged his head for very joyance and began to recite these couplets:—

Fate the Wolf's soul snatched up from worldly stead; ✿ Far be from bliss his soul that perishèd!
Abú Sirhán![164] how sore thou sought'st my death; ✿ Thou, burnt this day in fire of sorrow dread:
Thou'rt fallen into pit, where all who fall ✿ Are blown by Death-blast down among the dead.

Thenceforward the aforesaid fox abode alone in the vineyard unto the hour of his death secure and fearing no hurt. And such are the adventures of the wolf and the fox. But men also tell a

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TALE OF THE MOUSE AND THE ICHNEUMON.[165]

A mouse and an ichneumon once dwelt in the house of a peasant who was very poor; and when one of his friends sickened, the doctor prescribed him husked sesame. So the hind sought of one of his comrades sesame to be husked by way of healing the sick man; and, when a measure thereof was given to him, he carried it home to his wife and bade her dress it. So she steeped it and husked it and spread it out to dry. Now when the ichneumon saw the grain, she went up to it and fell to carrying it away to her hole, and she toiled all day, till she had borne off the most of it. Presently, in came the peasant's wife and, seeing much of the grain gone, stood awhile wondering; after which she sat down to watch and find out who might be the intruder and make him account for her loss. After a while, out crept the ichneumon to carry off the grain as was her wont, but spying the woman seated there, knew that she was on the watch for her and said in her mind, "Verily, this affair is like to end blameably; and sore I fear me this woman is on the look-out for me, and Fortune is no friend to who attend not to issue and end: so there is no help for it but that I do a fair deed, whereby I may manifest my innocence and wash out all the ill-doings I have done." So saying, she began to 148take the sesame out of her hole and carry it forth and lay it back upon the rest. The woman stood by and, seeing the ichneumon do thus, said to herself, "Verily this is not the cause of our loss, for she bringeth it back from the hole of him who stole it and returneth it to its place; and of a truth she hath done us a kindness in restoring us the sesame, and the reward of those who do us good is that we do them the like good. It is clear that it is not she who stole the grain; but I will not cease my watching till he fall into my hands and I find out who is the thief." The ichneumon guessed what was in her mind, so she went to the mouse and said to her, "O my sister, there is no good in one who observeth not the claims of neighbourship and who showeth no constancy in friendship." The mouse replied, "Even so, O my friend, and I delight in thee and in thy neighbourhood; but what be the motive of this speech?" Quoth the ichneumon, "The house-master hath brought home sesame and hath eaten his fill of it, he and his family, and hath left much; every living being hath eaten of it and, if thou take of it in thy turn, thou art worthier thereof than any other." This pleased the mouse and she squeaked for joy and danced and frisked her ears and tail,

and greed for the grain deluded her; so she rose at once and issuing forth of her home, saw the sesame husked and dry, shining with whiteness, and the woman sitting at watch and ward. The mouse, taking no thought to the issue of the affair (for the woman had armed herself with a cudgel), and unable to contain herself, ran up to the sesame and began turning it over and eating of it; whereupon the woman smote her with that club and cleft her head: so the cause of her destruction were her greed and heedlessness of consequences. Then said the Sultan, "O Shahrazad, by Allah! this be a goodly parable! Say me, hast thou any story bearing upon the beauty of true friendship and the observance of its duty in time of distress and rescuing from destruction?" Answered she:—Yes, it hath reached me that they tell a tale of

THE CAT[166] AND THE CROW.

Once upon a time, a crow and a cat lived in brotherhood; and one day as they were together under a tree, behold, they spied a leopard making towards them, and they were not aware of his approach till he was close upon them. The crow at once flew up to the tree-top; but the cat abode confounded and said to the crow, "O my friend, hast thou no device to save me, even as all my hope is in thee?" Replied the crow, "Of very truth it behoveth brethren, in case of need, to cast about for a device when peril overtaketh them, and how well saith the poet!—

A friend in need is he who, ever true, ✿ For thy well-doing would himself undo:

One who when Fortune gars us parting rue ✿ Victimeth self reunion to renew."

Now hard by that tree were shepherds with their dogs; so the crow flew towards them and smote the face of the earth with his wings, cawing and crying out. Furthermore he went up to one of the dogs and flapped his wings in his face and flew up a little way, whilst the dog ran after him thinking to catch him. Presently, one of the shepherds raised his head and saw the bird flying near the ground and lighting alternately; so he followed him, and the crow ceased not flying just high enough to save himself and to throw out the dogs; and yet tempting them to follow for the purpose of tearing him to pieces. But as soon as they came near him, he would fly up a little; and so at last he brought them to the tree, under which was the leopard. And when the dogs saw him they rushed upon him and he turned and fled. Now the leopard thought to eat the cat who was saved by the craft of his friend the crow. This story, O King, showeth that the friendship of the Brothers of Purity[167] delivereth and saveth from difficulties and from falling into mortal dangers. And they also tell a tale of

THE FOX AND THE CROW.

A Fox once dwelt in a cave of a certain mountain and, as often as a cub was born to him and grew stout, he would eat the young one, for he had died of hunger, had he instead of so doing left the cub alive and bred it by his side and preserved and cherished his issue. Yet was this very grievous to him. Now on the crest of the same mountain a crow had made his nest, and the fox said to himself, "I have a mind to set up a friendship with this crow and make a comrade of him, that he may help me to my daily bread; for he can do in such matters what I cannot." So he drew near the crow's home and, when he came within sound of speech, he saluted him and said, "O my neighbour, verily a true-believer hath two claims upon his true-believing neighbour, the right of neighbourliness and the right of Al-Islam, our common faith; and know, O my friend, that thou art my neighbour and thou hast a claim upon me which it behoveth me to observe, the more that I have long been thy neighbour. Also, there be implanted in my breast a store of love to thee, which biddeth me speak thee fair and obligeth me to solicit thy brothership. What sayest thou in reply?" Answered the crow, "Verily, the truest speech is the best speech; and haply thou speakest with thy tongue that which is not in thy heart; so I fear lest thy brotherhood be only of the tongue, outward, and thy enmity be in the heart, inward; for that thou art the Eater and I the Eaten, and faring apart were apter to us than friendship and fellowship. What, then, maketh thee seek that which thou mayst not gain and desire what may not be done, seeing that I be of the bird-kind and thou be of the beast-kind? Verily, this thy proffered brotherhood[168] may not be made, neither were it seemly to make it." Rejoined the fox, "Of a truth whoso knoweth the abiding-place of excellent things, maketh better choice in what he chooseth therefrom, so perchance he may advantage his brethren; and indeed I should love to wone near thee and I have sued for thine intimacy, to the end that we may help each other to our several objects; and success shall surely wait upon our amity. I have a many tales of the goodliness of true friendship, which I will relate to thee if thou wish the relating." Answered the crow, "Thou hast my leave to let me hear thy communication; so tell thy tale, and relate it to me that I may hearken to it and weigh it and judge of thine intent thereby." Rejoined the fox, "Hear then, O my friend, that which is told of a flea and a mouse and which beareth out what I have said to thee." Asked the crow, "How so?" and the fox answered:—They tell this tale of

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THE FLEA AND THE MOUSE.

Once upon a time a mouse dwelt in the house of a merchant who owned much merchandise and great store of monies. One night, a flea took shelter in the merchant's carpet-bed and, finding his body soft, and being thirsty drank of his blood. The merchant was awakened by the smart of the bite and sitting up called to his slave-girls

and serving men. So they hastened to him and, tucking up their sleeves, fell to searching for the flea; but as soon as the bloodsucker was aware of the search, he turned to flee and coming on the mouse's home, entered it. When the mouse saw [152] him, she said to him, "What bringeth thee in to me, thou who art not of my nature nor of my kind, and who canst not be assured of safety from violence or of not being expelled with roughness and ill usage?" Answered the flea, "Of a truth, I took refuge in thy dwelling to save me from slaughter; and I have come to thee seeking thy protection and on nowise coveting thy house; nor shall any mischief betide thee from me to make thee leave thy home. Nay, I hope right soon to repay thy favours to me with all good and then shalt thou see and praise the issue of my words." And when the mouse heard the speech of the flea,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the mouse heard the words of the flea, she said, "If the case be as thou dost relate and describe, then be at thine ease here; for naught shall befal thee save the rain of peace and safety; nor shall aught betide thee but what shall joy thee and shall not annoy thee, nor shall it annoy me. I will lavish on thee my affections without stint; and do not thou regret having lost the merchant's blood nor lament for thy subsistence from him, but be content with what sustenance thou canst obtain; for indeed that is the safer for thee. And I have heard, O flea, that one of the gnomic poets saith as follows in these couplets:—

I have fared content in my solitude ✿ With whate'er befel, and led life of ease,
On a water-draught and a bite of bread, ✿ Coarse salt and a gown of tattered frieze:
Allah might, an He pleased, give me easiest life, ✿ But with whatso pleaseth Him self I please."

Now when the flea heard these words of the mouse, he rejoined, "I hearken to thy charge and I submit myself to obey thee, nor have I power to gainsay thee, till life be fulfilled in this righteous intention." Replied the mouse, "Pure intention sufficeth to sincere affection." So the tie of love arose and was knitted between them twain and, after this, the flea used to visit the merchant's bed by night and not exceed in his diet, and house him by day in the hole of the mouse. Now it came to pass one night, the merchant [153] brought home great store of dinars and began to turn them over. When the mouse heard the chink of the coin, she put her head out of her hole and fell to gazing at it, till the merchant laid it under his pillow and went to sleep, when she said to the flea, "Seest thou not the proffered occasion and the great good fortune? Hast thou any device to bring us to our desire of yonder dinars?" Quoth the flea, "Verily, it is not good that one strive for aught, unless he be able to win his will; because, if he lack ability thereto, he falleth into that which he should avoid and he attaineth not his wish by reason of his weakness, albeit he use all power of cunning, like the sparrow which picketh up grain and falleth into the net and is caught by the fowler. Thou hast

no strength to take the dinars and to transport them out of this house, nor have I force sufficient to do this; on the contrary, I could not carry a single ducat of them; so what hast thou to do with them?" Quoth the mouse, "I have made me for my house these seventy openings, whence I may go out at my desire, and I have set apart a place strong and safe, for things of price; and, if thou can contrive to get the merchant out of the house, I doubt not of success, an so be that Fate aid me." Answered the flea, "I will engage to get him out of the house for thee;" and, going to the merchant's bed, bit him a fearful bite, such as he had never before felt, then fled to a place of safety, where he had no fear of the man. So the merchant awoke and sought for the flea, but finding him not, lay down again on his other side. Then the flea bit him a second time more painfully than before. So he lost patience and, leaving his bed, went out and lay down on the bench before his door and slept there and awoke not till the morning. Meanwhile the mouse came out and fell to carrying the dinars into her hole, till she left not a single one; and when day dawned the merchant began to suspect the folk and fancy all manner of fancies. And (continued the fox) know thou, O wise and experienced crow with the clear-seeing eyes, that I tell thee this only to the intent that thou mayst reap the recompense of thy kindness to me, even as the mouse reaped the reward of her kindness to the flea; for see how he repaid her and requited her with the goodliest of requitals. Said the crow, "It lies with the benefactor to show benevolence or not to show it; nor is it incumbent on us to entreat kindly one who seeketh a connection that entaileth separation from kith and kin. If I show thee favour who art my foe by kind, I am the cause of cutting myself off from the world; and thou, O fox, art full of wiles and guiles. Now those whose characteristics are craft and cunning, must not be trusted upon oath; and whoso is not to be trusted upon oath, in him there is no good faith. The tidings lately reached me of thy treacherous dealing with one of thy comrades, which was a wolf; and how thou didst deceive him until thou leddest him into destruction by thy perfidy and stratagems; and this thou diddest after he was of thine own kind and thou hadst long consorted with him: yet didst thou not spare him; and if thou couldst deal thus with thy fellow which was of thine own kind, how can I have trust in thy truth and what would be thy dealing with thy foe of other kind than thy kind? Nor can I compare thee and me but with the saker and the birds." "How so?" asked the fox. Answered the crow:—They relate this tale of

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THE SAKER[169] AND THE BIRDS.

There was once a saker who was a cruel tyrant——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the crow pursued, "They relate that there was once a saker who was a cruel tyrant in the days of his youth, so that the raveners of the air and the scavengers of the earth feared him, none being safe from his mischief; and many were the haps and mishaps of his tyranny and his violence, for this saker was ever in the habit of oppressing and injuring all the other birds. As the years passed over him, he grew feeble and his force failed him, so that he was often famished; but his cunning waxed stronger with the waning of his strength and he redoubled in his endeavour and determined to be present at the general assembly of the birds, that he might eat of their orts and leavings; so in this manner he fed by fraud instead of feeding by fierceness and force. And thou, O fox, art like this: if thy might fail thee, thy sleight faileth thee not; and I doubt not that thy seeking my society is a fraud to get thy food; but I am none of those who fall to thee and put fist into thy fist;[170] for that Allah hath vouchsafed force to my wings and caution to my mind and sharp sight to my eyes; and I know that whoso apeth a stronger than he, wearieth himself and haply cometh to ruin. Wherefore I fear for thee lest, if thou ape a stronger than thyself, there befal thee what befel the sparrow." Asked the fox, "What befel the sparrow? Allah upon thee, tell me his tale." And the crow began to relate the story of

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THE SPARROW AND THE EAGLE.

I have heard that a sparrow was once flitting over a sheep-fold, when he looked at it carefully and behold, he saw a great eagle swoop down upon a newly yeaned lamb and carry it off in his claws and fly away. Thereupon the sparrow clapped his wings and said, "I will do even as this one did;" and he waxed proud in his own conceit and mimicked a greater than he. So he flew down forthright and lighted on the back of a fat ram with a thick fleece, that was become matted by his lying in his dung and stale till it was like woollen felt. As soon as the sparrow pounced upon the sheep's back he flapped his wings to fly away, but his feet became tangled in the wool and, however hard he tried, he could not set himself free. While all this was doing the shepherd was looking on, having seen what happened first with the eagle and afterwards with the sparrow; so he came up to the wee birdie in a rage and seized him. Then he plucked out his wing-feathers and, tying his feet with a twine, carried him to his children and threw him to them. "What is this?" asked, one of them; and he answered, "This is he that aped a greater than himself and came to grief." Now thou, O fox, art like this and I would have thee beware of aping a greater than thou, lest thou perish. This is all I have to say to thee; so fare from me in peace! When the fox despaired of the crow's friendship, he turned away, groaning for sorrow and gnashing teeth upon teeth in his disappointment; and the crow, hearing the sound of weeping and seeing his grief and profound melancholy, said to him, "O fox, what dole and dolour make thee gnash thy

canines?" Answered the fox, "I gnash my canines because I find thee a greater rascal than myself;" and so saying he made off to his house and ceased not to fare till he reached his home. Quoth the Sultan, "O Shahrazad, how excellent are these thy stories, and how delightsome! Hast thou more of such edifying tales?" Answered she:—They tell this legend concerning

THE HEDGEHOG AND THE WOOD-PIGEONS.

A hedgehog once took up his abode by the side of a date-palm, whereon roosted a wood-pigeon and his wife that had built their nest there and lived a life of ease and enjoyment. So he said to himself, "This pigeon-pair eateth of the fruit of the date-tree and I have no means of getting at it; but needs must I find some fashion of tricking them." Upon this he dug a hole at the foot of the palm-tree and took up his lodging there, he and his wife; moreover, he built an oratory beside the hole and went into retreat there and made a show of devotion and edification and renunciation of the world. The male pigeon saw him praying and worshipping, and his heart was softened towards him for his excess of devoutness; so he said to him, "How many years hast thou been thus?" Replied the hedgehog, "During the last thirty years." "What is thy food?" "That which falleth from the palm-tree." "And what is thy clothing?" "Prickles! and I profit by their roughness." "And why hast thou chosen this for place rather than another?" "I chose it and preferred it to all others that I might guide the erring into the right way and teach the ignorant!" "I had fancied thy case," quoth the wood-pigeon, "other than this, but now I yearn for that which is with thee." Quoth the hedgehog,"I fear lest thy deed contradict thy word and thou be even as the husbandman who, when the seed-season came, neglected to sow, saying, Verily I dread lest the days bring me not to 157my desire, and by making haste to sow I shall only waste my substance! When harvest-time came and he saw the folk earing their crops, he repented him of what he had lost by his tardiness and he died of chagrin and vexation." Asked the wood-pigeon, "What then shall I do that I may be freed from the bonds of the world and cut myself loose from all things save the service of my Lord?" Answered the hedgehog, "Betake thee to preparing for the next world and content thyself with a pittance of provision." Quoth the pigeon, "How can I do this, I that am a bird and unable to go beyond the date-tree whereon is my daily bread? And even could I do so, I know of no other place wherein I may wone." Quoth the hedgehog, "Thou canst shake down of the fruit of the date-tree what shall suffice thee and thy wife for a year's provaunt; then do ye take up your abode in a nest under the trunk, that ye may prayerfully seek to be guided in the right way, and then turn thou to what thou hast shaken down and transport it all to thy home and store it up against what

time the dates fail; and when the fruits are spent and the delay is longsome upon you, address thyself to total abstinence." Exclaimed the pigeon, "Allah requite thee with good for the righteous intention wherewith thou hast reminded me of the world to come and hast directed me into the right way!" Then he and his wife worked hard at knocking down the dates, till nothing was left on the palm-tree, whilst the hedgehog, finding whereof to eat, rejoiced and filled his den with the fruit, storing it up for his subsistence and saying in his mind, "When the pigeon and his wife have need of their provision, they will seek it of me and covet what I have, relying upon my devoutness and abstinence; and, from what they have heard of my counsels and admonitions, they will draw near unto me. Then will I make them my prey and eat them, after which I shall have the place and all that drops from the date-tree to suffice me." Presently, having shaken down the fruits, the pigeon and his wife descended from the tree-top and finding that the hedgehog had removed all the dates to his own place, said to him, "O hedgehog! thou pious preacher and of good counsel, we can find no sign of the dates and know not on what else we shall feed." Replied the hedgehog, "Probably the winds have carried them away; but the turning from the provisions to the Provider is of the essence of salvation, and He who the mouth-corners cleft, the mouth without victual hath never left." And he gave not over improving the occasion to them on this wise, and making a show of piety and cozening them with fine words and false till they put faith in him and accepted him and entered his den and had no suspicion of his deceit. Thereupon he sprang to the door and gnashed his teeth, and the wood-pigeon, seeing his perfidy manifested, said to him, "What hath to-night to do with yesternight? Knowest thou not that there is a Helper for the oppressed? Beware of craft and treachery, lest that mishap befal thee which befel the sharpers who plotted against the merchant." "What was that?" asked the hedgehog. Answered the pigeon:—I have heard tell this tale of

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THE MERCHANT AND THE TWO SHARPERS.

In a city called Sindah there was once a very wealthy merchant, who made ready his camel-loads and equipped himself with goods and set out with his outfit for such a city, purposing to sell it there. Now he was followed by two sharpers, who had made up into bales what merchandise they could get; and, giving out to the merchant that they also were merchants, wended with him by the way. So halting at the first halting-place they agreed to play him false and take all he had; but at the same time, each inwardly plotted foul play to the other, saying in his mind, "If I can cheat my comrade, times will go well with me and I shall have all these goods to myself." So after planning this perfidy, one of them took food and putting therein poison, brought it to his fellow; the other did the same and they both ate of the poisoned mess and

they both died. Now they had been sitting with the merchant; so when they left him and were long absent from him, he sought for tidings of them and found the twain lying dead; whereby he knew that they were sharpers who had plotted to play him foul, but their foul play had recoiled upon themselves. So the merchant was preserved and took what they had. Then quoth the Sultan, "O Shahrazad, verily thou hast aroused me to all whereof I was negligent! So continue to edify me with these fables." Quoth she:—It hath reached me, O King, that men tell this tale of
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THE THIEF AND HIS MONKEY.[171]

A certain man had a monkey and that man was a thief, who never entered any of the street-markets of the city wherein he dwelt, but he made off with great profit. Now it came to pass one day that he saw a man offering for sale worn clothes, and he went calling them in the market, but none bid for them and all to whom he showed them refused to buy of him. Presently the thief who had the monkey saw the man with the ragged clothes set them in a wrapper and sit down to rest for weariness; so he made the ape sport before him to catch his eye and, whilst he was busy gazing at it, stole the parcel from him. Then he took the ape and made off to a lonely place, where he opened the wrapper and, taking out the old clothes, folded them in a piece of costly stuff. This he carried to another bazar and exposed for sale together with what was therein, making it a condition that it should not be opened, and tempting the folk with the lowness of the price he set on it. A certain man saw the wrapper and its beauty pleased him; so he bought the parcel on these terms and carried it home, doubting not that he had done well. When his wife saw it she asked, "What is this?" and he answered, "It is costly stuff, which I have bought at lowest price, meaning to sell it again and take the profit." Rejoined she, "O dupe, would this stuff be sold under its value, unless it had been stolen? Dost thou not know that whoso buyeth aught without examining it, falleth into error, and becometh like unto the weaver?" Quoth he, "And what is the story of the weaver?"; and quoth she:—I have heard this tale of

THE FOOLISH WEAVER.

There was once in a certain village a weaver who worked hard but could not earn his living save by overwork. Now it chanced that one of the richards of the neighbourhood made a marriage feast 160 and invited the folk thereto: the weaver also was present and found the guests, who wore rich gear, served with delicate viands and made much of by the house-master for what he saw of their fine clothes. So he said in his mind, "If I change this my craft for another craft easier to compass and better considered and more highly paid, I shall amass great store of money and I shall buy

splendid attire, so I may rise in rank and be exalted in men's eyes and become even with these." Presently, he beheld one of the mountebanks, who was present at the feast, climbing up to the top of a high and towering wall and throwing himself down to the ground and alighting on his feet. Whereupon the weaver said to himself, "Needs must I do as this one hath done, for surely I shall not fail of it. So he arose and swarmed up the wall and casting himself down, broke his neck against the ground and died forthright. Now I tell thee this that thou mayst get thy living by what way thou knowest and thoroughly understandest, lest peradventure greed enter into thee and thou lust after what is not of thy condition." Quoth the woman's husband, "Not every wise man is saved by his wisdom, nor is every fool lost by his folly. I have seen it happen to a skilful charmer, well versed in the ways of serpents, to be struck by the fangs of a snake[172] and killed, and others prevail over serpents who had no skill in them and no knowledge of their ways." And he went contrary to his wife and persisted in buying stolen goods below their value till he fell under suspicion and perished therefor: even as perished the sparrow in the tale of

THE SPARROW AND THE PEACOCK.

There was once upon a time a sparrow, that used every day to visit a certain king of the birds and ceased not to wait upon him in the mornings and not to leave him till the evenings, being the first to go in and the last to go out. One day, a company of birds chanced to assemble on a high mountain and one of them said to another, "Verily, we are waxed many, and many are the differences between us, and there is no help for it but we have a king to look into our affairs; so shall we all be at one and our differences will disappear." Thereupon up came that sparrow and counselled them to choose for King the peacock (that is, the prince he used to visit). So they chose the peacock to their King and he, become their sovereign, bestowed largesse on them and made the sparrow his secretary and Prime Minister. Now the sparrow was wont bytimes to quit his assiduous service in the presence and look into matters in general. So one day he absented himself at the usual time, whereat the peacock was sore troubled; and, while things stood thus, he returned and the peacock said to him, "What hath delayed thee, and thou the nearest to me of all my servants and the dearest of all my dependents?" Replied the sparrow, "I have seen a thing which is doubtful to me and whereat I am affrighted." Asked the peacock, "What was it thou sawest?"; and the sparrow answered, "I saw a man set up a net, hard by my nest, peg down its pegs, strew grain in its midst and withdraw afar off. And I sat watching what he would do when behold, fate and fortune drave thither a crane and his wife, which fell into the midst of the net and began to cry out; whereupon the fowler rose up and took them. This troubled me, and such is the reason of my absence from thee, O King of the Age, but never again will I abide in that nest for fear of the net." Rejoined the peacock,

"Depart not thy dwelling, for against fate and lot forethought will avail thee naught." And the sparrow obeyed his bidding and said, "I will forthwith arm myself with patience and forbear to depart in obedience to the King." So he ceased not taking care of himself, and carrying food to his sovereign, who would eat what sufficed him and after feeding drink his water and dismiss the sparrow. Now one day as he was looking into matters, lo and behold! he saw two sparrows fighting on the ground and said in his mind, "How can I, who am the King's Wazir, look on and see sparrows fighting in my neighbourhood? By Allah, I must make peace between them!" So he flew down to reconcile them; but the fowler cast the net over the whole number and the sparrow happened to be in their very midst. Then the fowler arose and took him and gave him to his comrade, saying, "Take care of him, I never saw fatter or finer." But the sparrow said to himself "I have fallen into that which I feared and none but the peacock inspired me with false confidence. It availed me naught to beware of the stroke of fate and fortune, since even he who taketh precaution may never flee from destiny. And how well said the poet in this poetry:—

Whatso is not to be shall ne'er become; ✿ No wise! and that to be must come to pass;

Yea, it shall come to pass at time ordained, ✿ And th' Ignoramus[173] aye shall cry 'Alas!'"

Whereupon quoth the King, "O Shahrazad, recount me other of these tales!"; and quoth she, "I will do so during the coming night, if life be granted to me by the King whom Allah bring to honour!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She said:—I will relate the

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10- TALE of ALI BIN BAKKAR and of SHAMS AL-NAHAR.

It hath reached me, O august King, that in days of yore and in times and ages long gone before, during the Caliphate of Harun al-Rashid, there was a merchant who named his son Abú al-Hasan[174] 163 Ali bin Táhir; and the same was great of goods and grace, while his son was fair of form and face and held in favour by all folk. He used to enter the royal palace without asking leave, for all the Caliph's concubines and

slave-girls loved him, and he was wont to be companion with Al-Rashid in his cups and recite verses to him and tell him curious tales and witty. Withal he sold and bought in the merchants' bazar, and there used to sit in his shop a youth named Ali bin Bakkár, of the sons of the Persian Kings[175] who was formous of form and symmetrical of shape and perfect of figure, with cheeks red as roses and joined eyebrows; sweet of speech, laughing-lipped and delighting in mirth and gaiety. Now it chanced one day, as the two sat talking and laughing behold, there came up ten damsels like moons, every one of them complete in beauty and loveliness, and elegance and grace; and amongst them was a young lady riding on a she-mule with a saddle of brocade and stirrups of gold. She wore an outer veil of fine stuff, and her waist was girt with a girdle of gold-embroidered silk; and she was even as saith the poet:—

Silky her skin and silk that zonèd waist; ✿ Sweet voice; words not o'er many nor too few:

Two eyes quoth Allah "Be," and they became; ✿ And work like wine on hearts they make to rue:

O love I feel! grow greater every night: ✿ O solace! Doom-day bring our interview.

And when the cortège reached Abu al-Hasan's shop, she alighted from her mule, and sitting down on the front board,[176] saluted him, and he returned her salam. When Ali bin Bakkar saw her, she ravished his understanding and he rose to go away; but she said to him, "Sit in thy place. We came to thee and thou goest away: this is not fair!" Replied he, "O my lady, by Allah, I flee from what I see; for the tongue of the case saith:—

She is a sun which towereth high a-sky; ✿ So ease thy heart with cure by Patience lent:

Thou to her skyey height shalt fail to fly; ✿ Nor she from skyey height can make descent."

When she heard this, she smiled and asked Abu al-Hasan, "What 164 is the name of this young man?"; who answered, "He is a stranger;" and she enquired, "What countryman is he?"; whereto the merchant replied, "He is a descendant of the Persian Kings; his name is Ali son of Bakkar and the stranger deserveth honour." Rejoined she, "When my damsel comes to thee, come thou at once to us and bring him with thee, that we may entertain him in our abode, lest he blame us and say:—There is no hospitality in the people of Baghdad; for niggardliness is the worst fault a man can have. Thou hearest what I say to thee and, if thou disobey me, thou wilt incur my displeasure and I will never again visit thee or salute thee." Quoth Abu al-Hasan, "On my head and my eyes: Allah preserve me from thy displeasure, fair lady!" Then she rose and went her way. Such was her case; but as regards Ali bin Bakkar he remained in a state of bewilderment. Now after an hour the damsel came to Abu al-Hasan and said to him, "Of a truth my lady Shams al-Nahár, the favourite of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, biddeth thee to her, thee and thy friend, my lord Ali bin Bakkar." So he rose and, taking Ali with him, followed the girl to the Caliph's palace, where she carried them into a chamber and made them sit down. They talked together awhile, when behold, trays of food were set before them, and they ate and washed their hands. Then she brought them wine, and they drank deep and made merry; after

which she bade them rise and carried them into another chamber, vaulted upon four columns, furnished after the goodliest fashion with various kinds of furniture, and adorned with decorations as it were one of the pavilions of Paradise. They were amazed at the rarities they saw; and, as they were enjoying a review of these marvels, suddenly up came ten slave-girls, like moons, swaying and swimming in beauty's pride, dazzling the sight and confounding the sprite; and they ranged themselves in two ranks as if they were of the black-eyed Brides of Paradise. And after a while in came other ten damsels, bearing in their hands lutes and divers instruments of mirth and music; and these, having saluted the two guests, sat down and fell to tuning their lute-strings. Then they rose and standing before them, played and sang and recited verses: and indeed each one of them was a seduction to the servants of the Lord. Whilst they were thus busied there entered other ten damsels like unto them, high-bosomed maids and of an equal age, with black eyes and cheeks like the rose, joined eyebrows and looks languorous; a very fascination to every faithful wight and to all who looked upon them a delight; 165 clad in various kinds of coloured silks, with ornaments that amazed man's intelligence. They took up their station at the door, and there succeeded them yet other ten damsels even fairer than they, clad in gorgeous array, such as no tongue can say; and they also stationed themselves by the doorway. Then in came a band of twenty damsels and amongst them the lady, Shams al-Nahar hight, as she were the moon among the stars swaying from side to side, with luring gait and in beauty's pride. And she was veiled to the middle with the luxuriance of her locks, and clad in a robe of azure blue and a mantilla of silk embroidered with gold and gems of price; and her waist was girt with a zone set with various kinds of precious stones. She ceased not to advance with her graceful and coquettish swaying, till she came to the couch that stood at the upper end of the chamber and seated herself thereon. But when Ali bin Bakkar saw her, he versified with these verses:—

Source of mine evils, truly, she alone 's, ✿ Of long love-longing and my groans and moans;

Near her I find my soul in melting mood, ✿ For love of her and wasting of my bones.

And finishing his poetry he said to Abu al-Hasan, "Hadst thou dealt more kindly with me thou haddest forewarned me of these things ere I came hither, that I might have made up my mind and taken patience to support what hath befallen me." And he wept and groaned and complained. Replied Abu al-Hasan, "O my brother, I meant thee naught but good; but I feared to tell thee this, lest such transport should betide thee as might hinder thee from foregathering with her, and be a stumbling-block between thee and her. But be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear;[177] for she to thee inclineth and to favour thee designeth." Asked Ali bin Bakkar, "What is this young lady's name?" Answered Abu al Hasan, "She is hight Shams al-Nahar, one of the favourites of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, and this is the palace of the Caliphate." Then Shams al-Nahar sat gazing upon the charms of Ali bin Bakkar and he upon hers, till both were engrossed with love for each other. Presently she

commanded the damsels, one and all, to be seated, each in her rank 166 and place, and all sat on a couch before one of the windows, and she bade them sing; whereupon one of them took up the lute and began carolling:—

Give thou my message twice ✿ Bring clear reply in trice!
To thee, O Prince of Beau- ✿ ty[1178] with complaint I rise:
My lord, as heart-blood dear ✿ And Life's most precious prize!
Give me one kiss in gift ✿ Or loan, if thou devise:
And if thou crave for more ✿ Take all that satisfies.[1179]
Thou donn'st me sickness-dress ✿ Thee with health's weed I bless.

Her singing charmed Ali bin Bakkar, and he said to her, "Sing me more of the like of these verses." So she struck the strings and began to chaunt these lines:—

By stress of parting, O beloved one, ✿ Thou mad'st these eyelids torrent-race to run:
Oh gladness of my sight and dear desire, ✿ Goal of my wishes, my religion!
Pity the youth whose eyne are drowned in tears ✿ Of lover gone distraught and clean undone.

When she had finished her verses, Shams al-Nahar said to another damsel, "Let us hear something from thee!" So she played a lively measure and began these couplets:—

His[1180] looks have made me drunken, not his wine; ✿ His grace of gait disgraced sleep to these eyne:
Dazed me no cup, but cop with curly crop; ✿ His gifts overcame me not the gifts of vine:
His winding locks my patience-clue unwound: ✿ His robèd beauties robbed all wits of mine.

When Shams Al-Nahar heard this recital from the damsel, she sighed heavily and the song pleased her. Then she bade another damsel sing; so she took the lute and began chanting:—

167 Face that with Sol in Heaven lamping vies; ✿ Youth-tide's fair fountain which begins to rise;
Whose curly side-beard writeth writ of love, ✿ And in each curl concealeth mysteries:
Cried Beauty, "When I met this youth I knew ✿ 'Tis Allah's loom such gorgeous robe supplies."

When she had finished her song, Ali bin Bakkar said to the slave-maiden nearest him, "Sing us somewhat, thou O damsel." So she took the lute and began singing:—

"Our trysting-time is all too short ✿ For this long coyish coquetry:
How long this 'Nay, Nay!' and 'Wait, wait?' ✿ This is not old nobility!
And now that Time deigns lend delight ✿ Profit of th' opportunity."

When she ended, Ali bin Bakkar followed up her song with flowing tears; and, as Shams al-Nahar saw him weeping and groaning and complaining, she burned with love-longing and desire; and passion and transport consumed her. So she rose from the sofa and came to the door of the alcove, where Ali met her and they embraced with arms round the neck, and fell down fainting in the doorway; whereupon the damsels came to them and carrying them into the alcove, sprinkled rose-water upon them both. When they recovered, they found not Abu al-Hasan who had hidden

himself by the side of a couch, and the young lady said, "Where is Abu al-Hasan?" So he showed himself to her from beside the couch and she saluted him, saying, "I pray Allah to give me the means of requiting thee, O kindest of men!" Then she turned to Ali bin Bakkar and said to him, "O my lord, passion hath not reached this extreme pass with thee without my feeling the like; but we have nothing to do save to bear patiently what calamity hath befallen us." Replied he, "By Allah, O my lady, union with thee may not content me nor gazing upon thee assuage the fire thou hast lighted, nor shall leave me the love of thee which hath mastered my heart but with the leaving of my life." So saying, he wept and the tears ran down upon his cheeks like thridded pearls; and when Shams al-Nahar saw him weep, she wept for his weeping. But Abu al-Hasan exclaimed, "By Allah, I wonder at your case and am confounded at your condition; of a truth, your affair is amazing and your chance dazing. What! this weeping while ye are yet together: then how will it be what time ye are parted and far separated?" And he continued, "Indeed, this is no tide for weeping and wailing, but a season for meeting and 168 merry-making; rejoice, therefore, and take your pleasure and shed no more tears!" Then Shams al-Nahar signed to a slave-girl, who arose and presently returned with handmaids bearing a table, whose dishes of silver were full of various rich viands. They set the table before the pair and Shams al-Nahar began to eat[181] and to place tid-bits in the mouth of Ali bin Bakkar; and they ceased not so doing till they were satisfied, when the table was removed and they washed their hands. Then the waiting-women fetched censers with all manner of incense, aloe-wood and ambergris and mixed scents; and sprinkling-flasks full of rose-water were also brought and they were fumigated and perfumed. After this the slaves set on vessels of graven gold, containing all kinds of sherbets, besides fruits fresh and dried, that heart can desire and eye delight in; and lastly one brought a flagon of carnelion full of old wine. Then Shams al-Nahar chose out ten handmaids to attend on them and ten singing women; and, dismissing the rest to their apartments, bade some of those who remained strike the lute. They did as she bade them and one of them began to sing:—

My soul to him who smiled back my salute, ✿ In breast reviving hopes that were no mo'e:

The hand o' Love my secret brought to light, ✿ And censor's tongues what lies my ribs below:[182]

My tear-drops ever press twixt me and him, ✿ As though my tear-drops showing love would flow.

When she had finished her singing, Shams al-Nahar rose and, filling a goblet, drank it off, then crowned it again and handed it to Ali bin Bakkar;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shams al-Nahar filled a goblet and handed it to Ali bin Bakkar; after which she bade another damsel sing; and she began singing these couplets:—

169 My tears thus flowing rival with my wine, ✿ Pouring the like of what fills cup to brink:[183]

By Allah wot I not an run these eyne ✿ Wi' wine, or else it is of tears I drink.

And when she ended her recitation, Ali bin Bakkar drained his cup and returned it to Shams al-Nahar. She filled it again and gave it to Abu al-Hasan who tossed it off. Then she took the lute, saying, "None shall sing over my cup save myself;" so she screwed up the strings and intoned these verses:—

The tears run down his cheeks in double row, ✿ And in his breast high flameth lover-lowe:

He weeps when near, a-fearing to be far; ✿ And, whether far or near, his tear-drops flow.

And the words of another:—

Our life to thee, O cup-boy Beauty-dight! ✿ From parted hair to calves; from black to white:

Sol beameth from thy hands, and from thy lips ✿ Pleiads, and full Moon through thy collar's night,[184]

Good sooth the cups, which made our heads fly round, ✿ Are those thine eyes pass round to daze the sight:

No wonder lovers hail thee as full moon ✿ Waning to them, for self e'er waxing bright:

Art thou a deity to kill and quicken, ✿ Bidding this fere, forbidding other wight?

Allah from model of thy form made Beau- ✿ ty and the Zephyr scented with thy sprite.

Thou art not of this order of human- ✿ ity but angel lent by Heaven to man.

When Ali bin Bakkar and Abu al-Hasan and those present heard Shams al-Nahar's song, they were like to fly for joy, and sported and laughed; but while they were thus enjoying themselves lo! up came a damsel, trembling for fear and said, "O my lady, the Commander of the Faithful's eunuchs are at the door, Afíf and Masrúr and Marján[185] and others whom wot I not." When they 170 heard this they were like to die with fright, but Shams al-Nahar laughed and said, "Have no fear!" Then quoth she to the damsel, "Keep answering them whilst we remove hence." And she caused the doors of the alcove to be closed upon Ali and Abu al-Hasan, and let down the curtains over the entrance (they being still within); after which she shut the door of the saloon and went out by the privy wicket into the flower-garden, where she seated herself on a couch she had there and made one of the damsels knead her feet.[186] Then she dismissed the rest of her women to their rooms and bade the portress admit those who were at the door; whereupon Masrur entered, he and his company of twenty with drawn swords. And when they saluted her, she asked, "Wherefore come ye?"; whereto they answered, "The Commander of the Faithful saluteth thee. Indeed he is desolated for want of thy sight; he letteth thee know that this be to him a day of joy and great gladness and he wisheth to seal his day and complete his pleasure with thy company at this very hour. So say, wilt go to him or shall he come to thee?" Upon this she rose and, kissing the earth, replied, "I hear and I obey the commandment of the Prince of True Believers!" Then she summoned the women guards of her household and other slave-damsels, who lost no time in attending upon her and made a show of obeying the Caliph's orders. And albeit everything about the place was in readiness, she said to the eunuchs, "Go to the Commander of the Faithful and tell him that I await him after

a little space, that I may make ready for him a place with carpets and other matters." So they returned in haste to the Caliph, whilst Shams al-Nahar, doffing her outer gear, repaired to her lover, Ali bin Bakkar, and drew him to her bosom and bade him farewell, whereat he wept sore and said, "O my lady, this leave-taking will cause the ruin of my very self and the loss of my very soul; but I pray Allah grant me patience to support the passion wherewith he hath afflicted me!" Replied she, "By Allah, none shall suffer perdition save I; for thou wilt fare forth to the bazar and consort with those that shall divert thee, and thy life will be sound and thy love hidden forsure; but I shall fall into trouble and tristesse nor find any to console me, more by token that I have given the Caliph a tryst, wherein haply great peril shall betide me by reason of my love for thee and my longing for thee and my grief at being parted from thee. For with 171 what tongue shall I sing and with what heart shall I present myself before the Caliph? and with what speech shall I company the Commander of the Faithful in his cups? and with what eyes shall I look upon a place where thou art absent? and with what taste shall I drink wine of which thou drinkest not?" Quoth Abu al-Hasan, "Be not troubled but take patience and be not remiss in entertaining the Commander of the Faithful this night, neither show him any neglect, but be of good heart." Now at this juncture, behold, up came a damsel, who said to Shams al-Nahar, "O my lady, the Caliph's pages are come." So she hastily rose to her feet and said to the maid, "Take Abu al-Hasan and his friend and carry them to the upper balcony[187] giving upon the garden and there leave them till darkness came on; when do thou contrive to carry them forth." Accordingly the girl led them up to the balcony and, locking the door upon them both, went her way. As they sat looking on the garden lo! the Caliph appeared escorted by near an hundred eunuchs, with drawn swords in hand and girt about with a score of damsels, as they were moons, all clad in the richest of raiment and on each one's head was a crown set with jewels and rubies; while each carried a lighted flambeau. The Caliph walked in their midst, they encompassing him about on all sides, and Masrur and Afíf and Wasíf[1888] went before him and he bore himself with a graceful gait. So Shams al-Nahar and her maidens rose to receive him and, meeting him at the garden-door, kissed ground between his hands; nor did they cease to go before him till they brought him to the couch whereon he sat down, whilst all the waiting-women who were in the garden and the eunuchs stood before him and there came fair handmaids and concubines holding in hand lighted candles and perfumes and incense and instruments of mirth and music. Then the Sovereign bade the singers sit down, each in her place, and Shams al-Nahar came up and, seating herself on a stool by the side of the Caliph's couch, began to converse with him; all this happening whilst Abu al-Hasan and Ali bin Bakkar looked on and listened, unseen of the King. Presently the Caliph fell to jesting and toying with Shams al-Nahar and 172 both were in the highest spirits, glad and gay, when he bade them throw open the garden pavilion. So they opened the doors and windows and lighted the tapers till the place

shone in the season of darkness even as the day. Then the eunuchs removed thither the wine-service and (quoth Abu al-Hasan) "I saw drinking-vessels and rarities whose like mine eyes never beheld, vases of gold and silver and all manner of noble metals and precious stones, such as no power of description can describe, till indeed it seemed to me I was dreaming, for excess of amazement at what I saw!" But as for Ali bin Bakkar, from the moment Shams al-Nahar left him, he lay strown on the ground for stress of love and desire; and, when he revived, he fell to gazing upon these things that had not their like and saying to Abu al-Hasan, "O my brother, I fear lest the Caliph see us or come to know of our case; but the most of my fear is for thee. For myself, of a truth I know that I am about to be lost past recourse, and the cause of my destruction is naught but love and longing and excess of desire and distraction, and disunion from my beloved after union with her; but I beseech Allah to deliver us from this perilous predicament." And they ceased not to look out of the balcony on the Caliph who was taking his pleasure, till the banquet was spread before him, when he turned to one of the damsels and said to her, "O Gharám,[189] let us hear some of thine enchanting songs." So she took the lute and tuning it, began singing:—

The longing of a Bedouin maid, whose folks are far away, ✿ Who yearns after the willow of the Hejaz and the bay,[190]—

Whose tears, when she on travellers lights, might for their water serve ✿ And eke her her passion, with its heat, their bivouc-fire purvey,—

Is not more fierce nor ardent than my longing for my love, ✿ Who deems that I commit a crime in loving him alway.[191]

Now when Shams al-Nahar heard these verses she slipped off the stool whereon she sat and fell to the earth fainting and became insensible to the world around her; upon which the damsels came and lifted her up. And when Ali Bin Bakkar saw this from the balcony he also slipped down senseless, and Abu al-Hasan said, 173 "Verily Fate hath divided love-desire equally upon you twain!"[192] As he spoke lo! in came the damsel who had led them up to the balcony and said to him, "O Abu al-Hasan, arise thou and thy friend and come down, for of a truth the world hath waxed strait upon us and I fear lest our case be discovered or the Caliph become aware of you; unless you descend at once we are dead ones." Quoth he, "And how shall this youth descend with me seeing that he hath no strength to rise?" Thereupon the damsel began sprinkling rose-water on Ali bin Bakkar till he came to his senses, when Abu al-Hasan lifted him up and the damsel made him lean upon her. So they went down from the balcony and walked on awhile till the damsel opened a little iron door, and made the two friends pass through it, and they came upon a bench by the Tigris' bank. Thereupon the slave-girl clapped her hands[193] and there came up a man with a little boat to whom said she, "Take up these two young men and land them on the opposite side." So both entered the boat and, as the man rowed off with them and they left the garden behind them, Ali bin Bakkar looked back towards the Caliph's palace and the pavilion and the grounds; and bade them farewell with these two couplets:—

I offered *this* weak hand as last farewell, ✿ While to heart-burning fire *that* hand is guided:
O let not this end union! Let not this ✿ Be last provision for long road provided!

Thereupon the damsel said to the boatman, "Make haste with them both." So he plied his oars deftly (the slave-girl being still with them);——And Shahrazad perceived the dawning day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the boatman rowed them towards the other bank till they reached it and landed, whereupon she took leave of them, saying, "It were my wish not to abandon you, but I can go no farther than this." Then she 174 turned back, whilst Ali bin Bakkar lay prostrate on the ground before Abu al-Hasan and by no manner of means could he rise, till his friend said to him, "Indeed this place is not sure and I fear lest we lose our lives in this very spot, by reason of the lewd fellows who infest it and highwaymen and men of lawlessness." Upon this Ali bin Bakkar arose and walked a little but could not continue walking. Now Abu al-Hasan had friends in that quarter; so he made search for one of them, in whom he trusted, and who was of his intimates, and knocked at the door. The man came out quickly and seeing them, bade them welcome and brought them into his house, where he seated them and talked with them and asked them whence they came. Quoth Abu al-Hasan, "We came out but now, being obliged thereto by a person with whom I had dealings and who hath in his hands dirhams of mine. And it reached me that he designed to flee into foreign parts with my monies; so I fared forth to-night in quest of him, taking with me for company this youth, Ali bin Bakkar; but, when we came hoping to see the debtor, he hid from us and we could get no sight of him. Accordingly we turned back, empty-handed without a doit, but it was irksome to us to return home at this hour of the night; so weeting not whither to go, we came to thee, well knowing thy kindness and wonted courtesy." "Ye are welcome and well come!" answered the host, and studied to do them honour; so the twain abode with him the rest of their night and as soon as the daylight dawned, they left him and made their way back without aught of delay to the city. When they came to the house of Abu al-Hasan, he conjured his comrade to enter; so they went in and lying down on the bed, slept awhile. As soon as they awoke, Abu al-Hasan bade his servants spread the house with rich carpets, saying in his mind, "Needs must I divert this youth and distract him from thinking of his affliction, for I know his case better than another." Then he called for water for Ali bin Bakkar who, when it was brought, rose up from his bed and making his ablutions, prayed the obligatory prayers which he had omitted for the past day and night[194]; after which he sat down and began to solace himself by talking with his friend. When Abu al-Hasan saw this, he turned to him and said, "O my lord, it were fitter for thy case that thou abide with me this night, so thy 175 breast may be broadened and the distress of love-longing that is upon thee be dispelled and thou make merry with us, so haply the fire of thy heart may thus be quenched." Ali replied,

"O my brother, do what seemeth good to thee; for I may not on any wise escape from what calamity hath befallen me; so act as thou wilt." Accordingly, Abu al-Hasan arose and bade his servants summon some of the choicest of his friends and sent for singers and musicians who came; and meanwhile he made ready meat and drink for them; so they sat eating and drinking and making merry through the rest of the day till nightfall. Then they lit the candles, and the cups of friendship and good fellowship went round amongst them and the time passed pleasantly with them. Presently, a singing-woman took the lute and began singing:—

I've been shot by Fortune, and shaft of eye ✿ Down struck me and parted from fondest friend:

Time has proved him foe and my patience failed, ✿ Yet I ever expected it thus would end.

When Ali bin Bakkar heard her words, he fell to the earth in a swoon and ceased not lying in his fainting fit till daybreak; and Abu al-Hasan despaired of him. But, with the dawning, he came to himself and sought to go home; nor could his friend hinder him, for fear of the issue of his affair. So he made his servants bring a she-mule and, mounting Ali thereon, carried him to his lodgings, he and one of his men. When he was safe at home; Abu al-Hasan thanked Allah for his deliverance from that sore peril and sat awhile with him, comforting him; but Ali could not contain himself, for the violence of his love and longing. So Abu al-Hasan rose to take leave of him and return to his own place.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abu al-Hasan rose to take leave of him, Ali son of Bakkar exclaimed, "O my brother, leave me not without news." "I hear and obey," replied the other; and forthwith went away and, repairing to his shop, opened it and sat there all day, expecting news of Shams 176 al-Nahar. But none came. He passed the night in his own house and, when dawned the day, he walked to Ali bin Bakkar's lodging and went in and found him thrown on his bed, with his friends about him and physicians around him prescribing something or other, and the doctors feeling his pulse. When he saw Abu al-Hasan enter he smiled, and the visitor, after saluting him, enquired how he did and sat with him till the folk withdrew, when he said to him, "What plight is this?" Quoth Ali bin Bakkar, "It was bruited abroad that I was ill and my comrades heard the report; and I have no strength to rise and walk so as to give him the lie who noised abroad my sickness, but continue lying strown here as thou seest. So my friends came to visit me; say, however, O my brother, hast thou seen the slave-girl or heard any news of her?" He replied, "I have not seen her, since the day we parted from her on Tigris' bank;" and he presently added, "O my brother, beware thou of scandal and leave this weeping." Rejoined Ali, "O my brother, indeed, I have no control over myself;" and he sighed and began reciting:—

She gives her woman's hand a force that fails the hand of me, ✿ And with red dye on wrist she gars my patience fail and flee:

And for her hand she fears so sore what shafts her eyes discharge, ✿ She's fain to clothe and guard her hand with mail-ring panoply:[195]

The leach in ignorance felt my pulse the while to him I cried, ✿ "Sick is my heart, so quit my hand which hath no malady:"

Quoth she to that fair nightly vision favoured me and fled, ✿ "By Allah picture him nor add nor 'bate in least degree!"

Replied the Dream, "I leave him though he die of thirst," I cry, ✿ "Stand off from water-pit and say why this persistency."

Rained tear-pearls her Narcissus-eyes, and rose on cheek belit ✿ She made my sherbet, and the lote with bits of hail she bit.[196]

And when his recital was ended he said, "O Abu al-Hasan, I am smitten with an affliction from which I deemed myself in perfect surety, and there is no greater ease for me than death." Replied he, "Be patient, haply Allah will heal thee!" Then he went out from him and repairing to his shop opened it, nor had he sat long, when suddenly up came the handmaid who saluted him. He 177returned her salam and looking at her, saw that her heart was palpitating and that she was in sore trouble and showed signs of great affliction: so he said to her, "Thou art welcome and well come! How is it with Shams al-Nahar?" She answered, "I will presently tell thee, but first let me know how doth Ali bin Bakkar." So he told her all that had passed and how his case stood, whereat she grieved and sighed and lamented and marvelled at his condition. Then said she, "My lady's case is still stranger than this; for when you went away and fared homewards, I turned back, my heart beating hard on your account and hardly crediting your escape. On entering I found her lying prostrate in the pavilion, speaking not nor answering any, whilst the Commander of the Faithful sat by her head not knowing what ailed her and finding none who could make known to him aught of her ailment. She ceased not from her swoon till midnight, when she recovered and the Prince of the Faithful said to her, What harm hath happened to thee, O Shams al-Nahar, and what hath befallen thee this night? Now when she heard the Caliph's words she kissed his feet and said, Allah make me thy ransom, O Prince of True Believers! Verily a sourness of stomach lighted a fire in my body, so that I lost my senses for excess of pain, and I know no more of my condition. Asked the Caliph, What hast thou eaten to-day?; and she answered, I broke my fast on something I had never tasted before. Then she feigned to be recovered and calling for a something of wine, drank it, and begged the Sovereign to resume his diversion. So he sat down again on his couch in the pavilion and the sitting was resumed; but when she saw me, she asked me how you fared. I told her what I had done with you both and repeated to her the verses which Ali bin Bakkar had composed at parting-tide, whereat she wept secretly, but presently held her peace. After awhile, the Commander of the Faithful ordered a damsel to sing, and she began reciting:—

Life has no sweet for me since forth ye fared; ✿ Would Heaven I wot how fare ye who forsake:
'Twere only fit my tears were tears of blood, ✿ Since you are weeping for mine absence sake.

But when my lady heard this verse she fell back on the sofa in a swoon,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the slave-girl continued to Abu al-Hasan, "But when my lady heard this verse, she fell back on the sofa in a swoon, and I seized her hand and sprinkled rose-water on her face, till she revived, when I said to her:—O my lady, expose not thyself and all thy palace containeth. By the life of thy beloved, be thou patient! She replied:—Can aught befal me worse than death which indeed I seek, for by Allah, my ease is therein?" Whilst we were thus talking, another damsel sang these words of the poet:—

Quoth they, "Maybe that Patience lend thee ease!" ✿ Quoth I, "Since fared he where is Patience' place?"
Covenant he made 'twixt me and him, to cut ✿ The cords of Patience at our last embrace![197]

And as soon as she had finished her verse Shams al-Nahar swooned away once more, which when the Caliph saw, he came to her in haste and commanded the wine to be removed and each damsel to return to her chamber. He abode with her the rest of the night, and when dawned the day, he sent for chirurgeons and leaches and bade them medicine her, knowing not that her sickness arose from love and longing. "I tarried with her till I deemed her in a way of recovery, and this is what kept me from thee. I have now left her with a number of her body-women, who were greatly concerned for her, when she bade me go to you two and bring her news of Ali bin Bakkar and return to her with the tidings." When Abu al-Hasan heard her story, he marvelled and said, "By Allah, I have acquainted thee with his whole case; so now return to thy mistress; and salute her for me and diligently exhort her to have patience and say to her:—Keep thy secret!; and tell her that I know all her case which is indeed hard and one which calleth for nice conduct." She thanked him and taking leave of him, returned to her mistress. So far concerning her; but as regards Abu al-Hasan, he ceased not to abide in his shop till the end of the day, when he arose and shut it and locked it and betaking himself to Ali bin Bakkar's house knocked at the door. One of the servants came out and admitted him; and when Ali saw him, he smiled and congratulated himself on his coming, 179saying, "O Abu al-Hasan, thou hast desolated me by thine absence this day; for indeed my soul is pledged to thee during the rest of my time." Answered the other, "Leave this talk! Were thy healing at the price of my hand, I would cut it off ere thou couldst ask me; and, could I ransom thee with my life, I had already laid it down for thee. Now this very day, Shams al-Nahar's handmaid hath been with me and told me that what hindered her coming ere this was the Caliph's sojourn with her mistress; and she acquainted me with everything which had betided her." And he went on to

repeat to him all that the girl had told him of Shams al-Nahar; at which Ali bin Bakkar lamented sore and wept and said to him, "Allah upon thee, O my brother, help me in this affliction and teach me what course I shall take. Moreover, I beg thee of thy grace to abide with me this night, that I may have the solace of thy society." Abu al-Hasan agreed to this request, replying that he would readily night there; so they talked together till eventide darkened, when Ali bin Bakkar groaned aloud and lamented and wept copious tears, reciting these couplets:—

Thine image in these eyne, a-lip thy name, ✿ My heart thy home; how couldst thou disappear?

How sore I grieve for life which comes to end, ✿ Nor see I boon of union far or near.

And these the words of another:—

She split my casque of courage with eye-swords that sorely smite; ✿ She pierced my patience' ring-mail with her shape like cane-spear light:

Patched by the musky mole on cheek was to our sight displayed ✿ Camphor set round with ambergris, light dawning through the night.[198]

Her soul was sorrowed and she bit carnelion stone with pearls ✿ Whose unions in a sugred tank ever to lurk unite:[199]

Restless she sighed and smote with palm the snows that clothe her breast, ✿ And left a mark whereon I looked and ne'er beheld such sight.

Pens, fashioned of her coral nails with ambergris for ink, ✿ Five lines on crystal page of breast did cruelly indite:

180 O swordsmen armed with trusty steel! I bid you all beware ✿ When she on you bends deadly glance which fascinates the sprite:

And guard thyself, O thou of spear! whenas she draweth near ✿ To tilt with slender quivering shape, likest the nut-brown spear.

And when Ali bin Bakkar ended his verse, he cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fit. Abu al-Hasan thought that his soul had fled his body and he ceased not from his swoon till daybreak, when he came to himself and talked with his friend, who continued to sit with him till the forenoon. Then he left him and repaired to his shop; and hardly had he opened it, when lo! the damsel came and stood by his side. As soon as he saw her, she made him a sign of salutation which he returned; and she delivered to him the greeting message of her mistress and asked, "How doth Ali bin Bakkar?" Answered he, "O handmaid of good, ask me not of his case nor what he suffereth for excess of love-longing; he sleepeth not by night neither resteth he by day; wakefulness wasteth him and care hath conquered him and his condition is a consternation to his friend." Quoth she, "My lady saluteth thee and him, and she hath written him a letter, for indeed she is in worse case than he; and she entrusted the same to me, saying:—Do not return save with the answer; and do thou obey my bidding. Here now is the letter, so say, wilt thou wend with me to him that we may get his reply?" "I hear and obey," answered Abu al-Hasan, and locking his shop and taking with him the girl he went, by a way different from that whereby he came, to

Ali bin Bakkar's house, where he left her standing at the door and walked in——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu al-Hasan went with the girl to the house of Ali son of Bakkar, where he left her standing at the door and walked in to his great joy. And Abu al-Hasan said to him, "The reason of my coming is that such an one hath sent his handmaid to thee with a letter, containing his greeting to thee and mentioning therein that the cause of his not coming to thee was a matter that hath betided him. The girl standeth even now at the door: shall she have leave to enter?"; and he signed to him that it was Shams al-Nahar's slave-girl. Ali understood his signal and answered, "Bring her in," 181 and when he saw her, he shook for joy and signed to her, "How doth thy lord?; Allah grant him health and healing!" "He is well," answered she and pulling out the letter gave it to him. He took it and kissing it, opened and read it; after which he handed it to Abu al-Hasan, who found these verses written therein:—

This messenger shall give my news to thee; ✿ Patience what while my sight thou canst not see:
A lover leav'st in love's insanity, ✿ Whose eyne abide on wake incessantly:
I suffer patience-pangs in woes that none ✿ Of men can medicine;—such my destiny!
Keep cool thine eyes; ne'er shall my heart forget, ✿ Nor without dream of thee one day shall be.
Look what befel thy wasted frame, and thence ✿ Argue what I am doomed for love to dree!

"And afterwards[200]: Without fingers[201] I have written to thee, and without tongue I have spoken to thee ✿ to resume my case, I have an eye wherefrom sleeplessness departeth not ✿ and a heart whence sorrowful thought stirreth not ✿ It is with me as though health I had never known ✿ nor in sadness ever ceased to wone ✿ nor spent an hour in pleasant place ✿ but it is as if I were made up of pine and of the pain of passion and chagrin ✿ Sickness unceasingly troubleth ✿ and my yearning ever redoubleth ✿ desire still groweth ✿ and longing in my heart still gloweth ✿ I pray Allah to hasten our union ✿ and dispel of my mind the confusion ✿ And I would fain thou favour me ✿ with some words of thine ✿ that I may cheer my heart in pain and repine ✿ Moreover, I would have thee put on a patience lief, until Allah vouchsafe relief ✿ And His peace be with thee."[202] When Ali bin Bakkar had read this letter he said in weak accents and feeble voice, "With what hand shall I write and with what tongue shall I make moan and lament? Indeed she addeth sickness to my sickness and draweth death upon my death!" Then he sat up and taking 182 in hand ink-case and paper, wrote the following reply:—"In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate![203] Thy letter hath reached me, O my lady, and hath given ease to a sprite worn out with passion and love-longing, and hath brought

healing to a wounded heart cankered with languishment and sickness; for indeed I am become even as saith the poet:—

Straitenèd bosom; reveries dispread; ✿ Slumberless eyelids; body wearièd;

Patience cut short; disunion longsomest; ✿ Reason deranged and heart whose life is fled!

And know that complaining is unavailing; but it easeth him whom love-longing disordereth and separation destroyeth and, with repeating:—Union, I keep myself comforted and how fine is the saying of the poet who said:—

Did not in love-plight joys and sorrows meet, ✿ How would the message or the writ be sweet?"

When he had made an end of this letter, he handed it to Abu al-Hasan, saying, "Read it and give it to the damsel." So he took it and read it and its words stirred his soul and its meaning wounded his vitals. Then he committed it to the girl, and when she took it Ali bin Bakkar said to her, "Salute thy lady for me and acquaint her with my love and longing and how passion is blended with my flesh and my bones; and say to her that in very deed I need a woman who shall snatch me from the sea of destruction and save me from this dilemma; for of a truth Fortune oppresseth me with her vicissitudes; and is there any helper to free me from her turpitudes?" 183 And he wept and the damsel wept for his weeping. Then she took leave of him and went forth and Abu al-Hasan went out with her and farewelled her. So she ganged her gait and he returned to his shop, which he opened and sat down there, as was his wont;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu al-Hasan farewelled the slave-girl and returned to his shop which he opened and sat down there according to his custom; but as he tarried, he found his heart oppressed and his breast straitened, and he was perplexed about his case. So he ceased not from melancholy the rest of that day and night, and on the morrow he betook himself to Ali bin Bakkar, with whom he sat till the folk withdrew, when he asked him how he did. Ali began to complain of desire and to descant upon the longing and distraction which possessed him, and repeated these words of the poet:—

Men have 'plained of pining before my time, ✿ Live and dead by parting been terrified:

But such feelings as those which my ribs immure ✿ I have never heard of nor ever espied.

And these of another poet:—

I have borne for thy love what never bore ✿ For his fair, Kays the "Daft one"[204] hight of old:

Yet I chase not the wildlings of wold and wild ✿ Like Kays, for madness is manifold.

184 Thereupon quoth Abu al-Hasan, "Never did I see or hear of one like unto thee in thy love! When thou sufferest all this transport and sickness and trouble being enamoured of one who returneth thy passion, how would it be with thee if she whom thou lovest were contrary and contumelious, and thy case were discovered through her perfidy?" And Ali the son of Bakkar (says Abu al-Hasan) was pleased with my

words and he relied upon them and he thanked me for what I had said and done. I had a friend (continued Abu al-Hasan), to whom I discovered my affair and that of Ali and who knew that we were intimates; but none other than he was acquainted with what was betwixt us. He was wont to come to me and enquire how Ali did and after a little, he began to ask me about the damsel; but I fenced him off, saying, "She invited him to her and there was between him and her as much as can possibly take place, and this is the end of their affair; but I have devised me a plan and an idea which I would submit to thee." Asked his friend, "And what is that?" Answered Abu al-Hasan, "I am a person well known to have much dealing among men and women, and I fear, O my brother, lest the affair of these twain come to light and this lead to my death and the seizure of my goods and the rending of my repute and that of my family. Wherefore I have resolved to get together my monies and make ready forthright and repair to the city of Bassorah and there abide, till I see what cometh of their case, that none may know of me; for love hath lorded over both and correspondence passeth between them. At this present their go-between and confidante is a slave-girl who hath till now kept their counsel, but I fear lest haply anxiety get the better of her and she discover their secret to some one and the matter, being bruited abroad, might bring me to great grief and prove the cause of my ruin; for I have no excuse to offer my accusers." Rejoined his friend, "Thou hast acquainted me with a parlous affair, from the like of which the wise and understanding will shrink with fear. Allah avert from thee the evil thou dreadest with such dread and save thee from the consequences thou apprehendest! Assuredly thy recking is aright." So Abu al-Hasan returned to his place and began ordering his affairs and preparing for his travel; nor had three days passed ere he made an end of his business and fared forth Bassorah-wards. His friend came to visit him three days after but finding him not, asked of him from the neighbours who answered, "He set out for Bassorah three days ago, for he had 185 dealings with its merchants and he is gone thither to collect monies from his debtors; but he will soon return." The young man was confounded at the news and knew not whither to wend; and he said in his mind, "Would I had not parted from Abu al-Hasan!" Then he bethought him of some plan whereby he should gain access to Ali bin Bakkar; so he went to his lodging, and said to one of his servants, "Ask leave for me of thy lord that I may go in and salute him." The servant entered and told his master and presently returning, invited the man to walk in. So he entered and found Ali bin Bakkar thrown back on the pillow and saluted him. Ali returned his greeting and bade him welcome; whereupon the young man began to excuse himself for having held aloof from him all that while and added, "O my lord, between Abu al-Hasan and myself there was close friendship, so that I used to trust him with my secrets and could not sever myself from him an hour. Now it so chanced that I was absent three days' space on certain business with a company of my friends; and, when I came back and went to him, I found his shop locked up; so I asked the neighbours about him and they replied:—He is gone to Bassorah. Now I know he had no surer friend than thou; so, by Allah, tell me what

thou knowest of him." When Ali bin Bakkar heard this, his colour changed and he was troubled and answered, "I never heard till this day of his departure and, if the case be as thou sayest, weariness is come upon me." And he began repeating:—

For joys that are no more I wont to weep, ✿ While friends and lovers stood by me unscattered;

This day when disunited me and them ✿ Fortune, I weep lost loves and friendship shattered.

Then he hung his head groundwards in thought awhile and presently raising it and looking to one of his servants, said, "Go to Abu al-Hasan's house and enquire anent him whether he be at home or journeying abroad. If they say:—He is abroad; ask whither he be gone." The servant went out and returning after a while said to his master, "When I asked for Abu al-Hasan, his people told me that he was gone on a journey to Bassorah; but I saw a damsel standing at the door who, knowing me by sight, though I knew her not, said to me:—Art thou not servant to Ali bin Bakkar? Even so, answered I; and she rejoined:—I bear a 186 message for him from one who is the dearest of all folk to him. So she came with me and she is now standing at the door." Quoth Ali bin Bakkar, "Bring her in." The servant went out to her and brought her in, and the man who was with Ali looked at her and found her pretty. Then she advanced to the son of Bakkar and saluted him——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the slave-girl came in to Ali bin Bakkar, she advanced to him and saluted him and spake with him secretly; and from time to time during the dialogue he exclaimed with an oath and swore that he had not talked and tattled of it. Then she took leave of him and went away. Now Abu al-Hasan's friend was a jeweller,[205] and when she was gone, he found a place for speech and said to Ali bin Bakkar, "Doubtless and assuredly the Caliph's household have some demand upon thee or thou hast dealings therewith?" "Who told thee of this?" asked Ali; and the jeweller answered, "I know it by yonder damsel who is Shams al-Nahar's slave-girl; for she came to me a while since with a note wherein was written that she wanted a necklace of jewels; and I sent her a costly collar." But when Ali bin Bakkar heard this, he was greatly troubled, so that the jeweller feared to see him give up the ghost, yet after a while he recovered himself and said, "O my brother, I conjure thee by Allah to tell me truly how thou knowest her." Replied he, "Do not press this question upon me;" and Ali rejoined, "Indeed, I will not turn from thee till thou tell me the whole truth." Quoth the jeweller, "I will tell thee all, on condition that thou distrust me not, and that my words cause thee no restraint; nor will I conceal aught from thee by way of secret but will discover to thee the truth of the affair, provided that thou acquaint me with the true state of thy case and the cause of thy sickness." Then he told him all that had passed from first to last between Abu al-Hasan and himself, adding, "I acted thus only out of friendship 187 for thee and of my

desire to serve thee;" and assured him that he would keep his secret and venture life and good in his service. So Ali in turn told him his story and added, "By Allah, O my brother, naught moved me to keep my case secret from thee and from others but my fear lest folk should lift the veils of protection from certain persons." Rejoined the jeweller, "And I desired not to foregather with thee but of the great affection I bear thee and my zeal for thee in every case, and my compassion for the anguish thy heart endureth from severance. Haply I may be a comforter to thee in the room of my friend, Abu al-Hasan, during the length of his absence: so be thou of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear." Thereupon Ali thanked him and repeated these couplets:—

"An say I:—Patient I can bear his faring, ✿ My tears and sighings give my say the lie;
How can I hide these tears that course adown ✿ This plain, my cheek, for friend too fain to fly?"

Then he was silent awhile, and presently said to the jeweller "Knowest thou what secret the girl whispered to me?" Answered he, "Not I, by Allah, O my lord!" Quoth Ali, "She fancied that I directed Abu al-Hasan to go to Bassorah and that I had devised this device to put a stop to our correspondence and consorting. I swore to her that this was on nowise so; but she would not credit me and went away to her mistress, persisting in her injurious suspicions; for she inclined to Abu al-Hasan and gave ear to his word." Answered the young jeweller, "O my brother, I understood as much from the girl's manner; but I will win for thee thy wish, Inshallah!" Rejoined Ali bin Bakkar, "Who can be with me in this and how wilt thou do with her, when she shies and flies like a wildling of the wold?" Cried the jeweller "By Allah, needs must I do my utmost to help thee and contrive to scrape acquaintance with her without exposure or mischief!" Then he asked leave to depart and Ali bin Bakkar said, "O my brother, mind thou keep my counsel;" and he looked at him and wept. The jeweller bade him good-bye and fared forth——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the jeweller bade him good-bye and fared forth not knowing what he should do to win for him his wishes; and he ceased not walking, while over-musing the matter, till he spied a letter lying in the road. He took it up and looked at its direction and superscription, then read it and behold, it ran:—"From the least worthy of lovers to the most worthy of beloveds." So he opened it and found these words written therein:—

"A messenger from thee came bringing union-hope, ✿ But that he erred somehow with me the thought prevailed;
So I rejoiced not; rather grew my grief still more; ✿ Weeting my messenger of wits and wit had failed.

"But afterwards: Know, O my lord! that I ken not the reason why our correspondence between thee and me hath been broken off: but, if the cruelty arise from thy part, I

will requite it with fidelity, and if thy love have departed, I will remain constant to my love of the parted, for I am with thee even as says the poet:—

Be proud; I'll crouch! Bully; I'll bear! Despise; I'll pray! ✿ Go; I will come! Speak; I will hear! Bid; I'll obey!"

As he was reading lo! up came the slave-girl, looking right and left, and seeing the paper in the jeweller's hand, said to him, "O my master, this letter is one I let fall." He made her no answer, but walked on, and she walked behind him, till he came to his house, when he entered and she after him, saying, "O my master, give me back this letter, for it fell from me." Thereupon he turned to her and said, "O handmaid of good, fear not neither grieve, for verily Allah the Protector loveth those who protect; but tell me in truthful way thy case, as I am one who keepeth counsel. I conjure thee by an oath not to hide from me aught of thy lady's affairs; for haply Allah shall help me to further her wishes and make easy by my hand that which is hard." When the slave-girl heard these words she said, "O my lord, indeed a secret is not lost whereof thou art the secretist; nor shall any affair come to naught for which thou strivest. Know that my heart inclineth to thee and would interest thee with my tidings, but do thou give me the letter." Then she told him the whole story, adding, "Allah is 189 witness to whatso I say." Quoth he, "Thou hast spoken truly, for I am acquainted with the root of the matter." Then he told her his tale of Ali bin Bakkar and how he had learned his state of mind; and related to her all that had passed from first to last, whereat she rejoiced; and they two agreed that she should take the letter and carry it to Ali and return and acquaint the jeweller with all that happened. So he gave her the letter and she took it and sealed it up as it was before, saying, "My mistress Shams al-Nahar gave it to me sealed; and when he hath read it and given me its reply, I will bring it to thee." Then she took leave and repaired to Ali bin Bakkar, whom she found waiting, and gave him the letter. He read it and writing a paper by way of reply, gave it to her; and she carried it to the jeweller, who tore asunder the seal[206] and read it and found written therein these two couplets:—

"The messenger, who kept our commerce hid, ✿ Hath failed, and showeth wrath without disguise;[207]

Choose one more leal from your many friends ✿ Who, truth approving, disapproves of lies.

"To proceed: Verily, I have not entered upon perfidy ✿ nor have I abandoned fidelity ✿ I have not used cruelty ✿ neither have I put off lealty ✿ no covenant hath been broken by me ✿ nor hath love-tie been severed by me ✿ I have not parted from penitence ✿ nor have I found aught but misery and ruin after severance ✿ I know nothing of that thou avouchest ✿ nor do I love aught but that which thou lovest ✿ By Him who knoweth the secret of hidden things none discover ✿ I have no desire save union with my lover ✿ and my one business is my passion to conceal ✿ albeit with sore sickness I ail ✿ This is the exposition of my case and now all hail!" When the jeweller read this letter and learnt its 190 contents he wept with sore weeping, and the slave-girl said to him, "Leave not this place till I return to thee; for he suspecteth me

of such and such things, in which he is excusable; so it is my desire to bring about a meeting between thee and my mistress, Shams al-Nahar, howsoever I may trick you to it. For the present I left her prostrate, awaiting my return with the reply." Then she went away and the jeweller passed the night with a troubled mind. And when day dawned he prayed his dawn-prayer and sat expecting the girl's coming; and behold, she came in to him rejoicing with much joy and he asked her, "What news, O damsel?" She answered, "After leaving thee I went to my mistress and gave her the letter written by Ali bin Bakkar; and, when she read it and understood it, she was troubled and confounded; but I said to her:—O my lady, have no fear of your affair being frustrated by Abu al-Hasan's disappearance, for I have found one to take his place, better than he and more of worth and a good man to keep secrets. Then I told her what was between thyself and Abu al-Hasan and how thou camest by his confidence and that of Ali bin Bakkar and how that note was dropped and thou camest by it; and I also showed her how we arranged matters betwixt me and thee." The jeweller marvelled with much wonder, when she resumed, "And now my mistress would hear whatso thou sayest, that she may be assured by thy speech of the covenants between thee and him; so get thee ready to go with me to her forthwith." When the jeweller heard the slave-girl's words, he saw that the proposed affair was grave and a great peril to brave, not lightly to be undertaken or suddenly entered upon, and he said to her, "O my sister, verily, I am of the ordinary and not like unto Abu al-Hasan; for he being of high rank and of well-known repute, was wont to frequent the Caliph's household, because of their need of his merchandise. As for me, he used to talk with me and I trembled before him the while. So, if thy mistress would speak with me, our meeting must be in some place other than the Caliph's palace and far from the abode of the Commander of the Faithful; for my common sense will not let me consent to what thou proposest." On this wise he refused to go with her and she went on to say that she would be surety for his safety, adding, "Take heart and fear no harm!" and pressed him to courage till he consented to accompany her; withal, his legs bent and shivered and his hands quivered and he exclaimed, "Allah forbid that I should go with thee! Indeed, I have not 191 strength to do this thing!" Replied she, "Hearten thy heart, if it be hard for thee to go to the Caliph's palace and thou canst not muster up courage to accompany me, I will make her come to thee; so budge not from thy place till I return to thee with her." Then the slave-girl went away and was absent for a while, but a short while, after which she returned to the jeweller and said to him, "Take thou care that there be with thee none save thyself, neither man-slave nor girl-slave." Quoth he, "I have but a negress, who is in years and who waiteth on me."[208] So she arose and locked the door between his negress and the jeweller and sent his manservants out of the place; after which she fared forth and presently returned, followed by a lady who, entering the house, filled it with the sweet scent of her perfumes. When the jeweller saw her, he sprang up and set her a couch and a cushion; and she sat down while he seated himself before her. She abode awhile without

speaking till she had rested herself, when she unveiled her face and it seemed to the jeweller's fancy as if the sun had risen in his home. Then she asked her slave-girl, "Is this the man of whom thou spakest to me?" "Yes," answered she; whereupon the lady turned to the jeweller and said to him, "How is it with thee?" Replied he, "Right well! I pray Allah for thy preservation and that of the Commander of the Faithful." Quoth she, "Thou hast moved us to come to thee and possess thee with what we hold secret." Then she questioned him of his household and family; and he disclosed to her all his circumstance and his condition and said to her, "I have a house other than this; and I have set it apart for gathering together my friends and brethren; and there is none there save the old negress, of whom I spoke to thy handmaid." She asked him on what wise he came first to know how the affair began and the matter of Abu al-Hasan and the cause of his wayfaring: accordingly he told her all he knew and how he had advised the journey. Thereupon she bewailed the loss of Abu al-Hasan and said to the jeweller, "Know, O such an one,[209] that men's souls are active in their lusts and that men are still men; and that deeds are not done without words nor is end ever reached 192 without endeavour. Rest is won only by work"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shams al-Nahar thus addressed the jeweller, "Rest is gained only by work and success is gendered only by help of the generous. Now I have acquainted thee with our affair and it is in thy hand to expose us or to shield us; I say no more, because thy generosity requireth naught. Thou knowest that this my handmaiden keepeth my counsel and therefore occupieth high place in my favour; and I have selected her to transact my affairs of importance. So let none be worthier in thy sight than she and acquaint her with thine affair; and be of good cheer, for on her account thou art safe from all fear, and there is no place shut upon thee but she shall open it to thee. She shall bring thee my messages to Ali bin Bakkar and thou shalt be our intermediary." So saying, she rose, scarcely able to rise, and fared forth, the jeweller faring before her to the door of her house, after which he returned and sat down again in his place, having seen of her beauty and heard of her speech what dazzled him and dazed his wit, and having witnessed of her grace and courtesy what bewitched his sprite. He sat musing on her perfections till his mind waxed tranquil, when he called for food and ate enough to keep soul and body together. Then he changed his clothes and went out; and, repairing to the house of the youth Ali bin Bakkar, knocked at the door. The servants hastened to admit him and walked before him till they had brought him to their master, whom he found strown upon his bed. Now when he saw the jeweller, he said to him, "Thou hast tarried long from me, and that hath heaped care upon my care." Then he dismissed his servants and bade the doors be shut; after which he said to the jeweller, "By Allah, O my brother, I have not closed my eyes since the day I saw thee last; for the slave-girl

came to me yesterday with a sealed letter from her mistress Shams al-Nahar;" and went on to tell him all that had passed with her, adding, "By the Lord, I am indeed perplexed concerning mine affair and my patience faileth me: for Abu al-Hasan was a comforter who cheered me because he knew the slave-girl." When the jeweller heard his words, he laughed; and Ali said, "Why dost thou laugh 193 at my words, thou on whose coming I congratulated myself and to whom I looked for provision against the shifts of fortune?" Then he sighed and wept and repeated these couplets:[210]—

Full many laugh at tears they see me shed ✿ Who had shed tears an bore they what I bore;
None feeleth pity for th' afflicted's woe, ✿ Save one as anxious and in woe galore:
My passion, yearning, sighing, thought, repine ✿ Are for me cornered in my heart's deep core:
He made a home there which he never quits, ✿ Yet rare our meetings, not as heretofore:
No friend to stablish in his place I see; ✿ No intimate but only he and——he.

Now when the jeweller heard these lines and understood their significance, he wept also and told him all that had passed betwixt himself and the slave-girl and her mistress since he left him. And Ali bin Bakkar gave ear to his speech, and at every word he heard his colour shifted from white to red and his body grew now stronger and then weaker till the tale came to an end, when he wept and said, "O my brother, I am a lost man in any case: would mine end were nigh, that I might be at rest from all this! But I beg thee, of thy favour, to be my helper and comforter in all my affairs till Allah fulfil whatso be His will; and I will not gainsay thee with a single word." Quoth the jeweller, "Nothing will quench thy fire save union with her whom thou lovest; and the meeting must be in other than this perilous place. Better it were in a house of mine where the girl and her mistress met me; which place she chose for herself, to the intent that ye twain may there meet and complain each to other of what you have suffered from the pangs of love." Quoth Ali bin Bakkar, "O good Sir, do as thou wilt and with Allah be thy reward!; and what thou deemest is right do it forthright: but be not long in doing it, lest I perish of this anguish." So I abode with him (said the jeweller) that night conversing with him till the morning morrowed,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the jeweller continued:—So I abode with him that night conversing with him till the morning morrowed, when I prayed the dawn-prayers and, going out from him, returned to my house. Hardly had I settled down when the damsel came up and saluted me; and I returned her salutation and told her what had passed between myself and Ali bin Bakkar, and she said, "Know that the Caliph hath left us and there is no one in our place and it is safer for us and better." Replied I, "Sooth thou sayest; yet is it not like my other house which is both fitter and surer for us;" and the slave-girl rejoined, "Be it as thou seest fit. I am

now going to my lady and will tell her what thou sayest and acquaint her with all thou hast mentioned." So she went away and sought her mistress and laid the project before her, and presently returned and said to me, "It is to be as thou sayest: so make us ready the place and expect us." Then she took out of her breast-pocket a purse of dinars and gave this message, "My lady saluteth thee and saith to thee:—Take this and provide therewith what the case requireth." But I swore that I would accept naught of it; so she took the purse and returning to her mistress, told her, "He would not receive the money, but gave it back to me." "No matter," answered Shams al-Nahar. As soon as the slave-girl was gone (continued the jeweller), I arose and betook myself to my other house and transported thither all that was needful, by way of vessels and furniture and rich carpets; and I did not forget china vases and cups of glass and gold and silver; and I made ready meat and drink required for the occasion. When the damsel came and saw what I had done, it pleased her and she bade me fetch Ali bin Bakkar; but I said, "None shall bring him save thou." Accordingly she went to him and brought him back perfectly dressed and looking his best. I met him and greeted him and then seated him upon a divan befitting his condition, and set before him sweet-scented flowers in vases of china and vari-coloured glass.[211] Then I set on a tray of many-tinted meats such as broaden the breast with their 195 sight, and sat talking with him and diverting him, whilst the slave-girl went away and was absent till after sundown-prayers, when she returned with Shams al-Nahar, attended by two maids and none else. Now as soon as she saw Ali bin Bakkar and he saw her, he rose and embraced her, and she on her side embraced him and both fell in a fit to the ground. They lay for a whole hour insensible; then, coming to themselves, they began mutually to complain of the pains of separation. Thereupon they drew near to each other and sat talking charmingly, softly, tenderly; after which they somewhat perfumed themselves and fell to thanking me for what I had done for them. Quoth I, "Have ye a mind for food?" "Yes," quoth they. So I set before them a small matter of food and they ate till they were satisfied and then washed their hands; after which I led them to another sitting-room and brought them wine. So they drank and drank deep and inclined to each other; and presently Shams al-Nahar said to me, "O my master, complete thy kindness by bringing us a lute or other instrument of mirth and music that the measure of our joy may be fully filled." I replied, "On my head and eyes!" and rising brought her a lute, which she took and tuned; then laying it in her lap she touched it with a masterly touch, at once exciting to sadness and changing sorrow to gladness; after which she sang these two couplets:—

My sleeplessness would show I love to bide on wake; ✿ And would my leanness prove that sickness is my make:
And tear-floods course adown the cheeks they only scald; ✿ Would I knew union shall disunion overtake!

Then she went on to sing the choicest and most affecting poesy to many and various modes, till our senses were bewitched and the very room danced with excess of delight and surprise at her sweet singing; and neither thought nor reason was left in

us. When we had sat awhile and the cup had gone round amongst us, the damsel took the lute and sang to a lively measure these couplets:—

My love a meeting promised me and kept it faithfully, ✿ One night as many I shall count in number and degree:
O Night of joyance Fate vouchsafed to faithful lovers tway, ✿ Uncaring for the railer loon and all his company!
My lover lay the Night with me and clipt me with his right, ✿ While I with left embraced him, a-faint for ecstasy;
And hugged him to my breast and sucked the sweet wine of his lips, ✿ Full savouring the honey-draught the honey-man sold to me.

196 Whilst we were thus drowned in the sea of gladness (continued the jeweller) behold, there came in to us a little maid trembling and said, "O my lady, look how you may go away for the folk have found you out and have surrounded the house; and we know not the cause of this!" When I heard her words, I arose startled and lo! in rushed a slave-girl who cried, "Calamity hath come upon you." At the same moment the door was burst open and there rushed in upon us ten men masked in kerchiefs with hangers in their hands and swords by their sides, and as many more behind them. When I saw this, the world was straitened on me for all its wideness, and I looked to the door but saw no issue; so I sprang from the terrace into the house of one of my neighbours and there hid myself. Thence I found that folk had entered my lodgings and were making a mighty hubbub; and I concluded that the Caliph had got wind of us and had sent his Chief of the Watch to seize us and bring us before him. So I abode confounded and ceased not remaining in my place, without any possibility of quitting it till midnight. And presently the house-master arose, for he had heard me moving, and he feared with exceeding great fear of me; so he came forth from his room with drawn brand in hand and made at me, saying, "Who is this in my house?" Quoth I, "I am thy neighbour the jeweller;" and he knew me and retired. Then he fetched a light and coming up to me, said, "O my brother, indeed that which hath befallen thee this night is no light matter to me." I replied, "O my brother, tell me who was in my house and entered it breaking in my door; for I fled to thee not knowing what was to do." He answered, "Of a truth the robbers who attacked our neighbours yesterday and slew such an one and took his goods, saw thee on the same day bringing furniture into this house; so they broke in upon thee and stole thy goods and slew thy guests." Then we arose (pursued the jeweller), I and he, and repaired to my house, which we found empty without a stick remaining in it; so I was confounded at the case and said to myself, "As for the gear I care naught about its loss, albeit I borrowed part of the stuff from my friends and it hath come to grief; yet there is no harm in that, for they know my excuse in the plunder of my property and the pillage of my place. But as for Ali bin Bakkar and the Caliph's favourite concubine, I fear lest their case get bruited abroad and this cause the loss of my life." So I turned to my neighbour and said to him, "Thou art my brother and my neighbour and wilt cover my nakedness; what then dost 197 thou advise me to do?" The man answered, "What I counsel thee to do is to keep quiet and wait; for they who entered thy house and took thy goods have

murdered the best men of a party from the palace of the Caliphate and have killed not a few of the watchmen: the government officers and guards are now in quest of them on every road and haply they will hit upon them, whereby thy wish will come about without effort of thine." The jeweller hearing these words returned to his other house, that wherein he dwelt,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the jeweller heard these words he returned to his other house wherein he dwelt, and said to himself, "Indeed this that hath befallen me is what Abu al-Hasan feared and from which he fled to Bassorah. And now I have fallen into it." Presently the pillage of his pleasure-house was noised abroad among the folk, and they came to him from all sides and places, some exulting in his misfortune and others excusing him and condoling with his sorrow; whilst he bewailed himself to them and for grief neither ate meat nor drank drink. And as he sat, repenting him of what he had done, behold one of his servants came in to him and said, "There is a person at the door who asketh for thee; and I know him not." The jeweller went forth to him and saluted him who was a stranger; and the man whispered to him, "I have somewhat to say between our two selves." Thereupon he brought him in and asked him, "What hast thou to tell me?" Quoth the man, "Come with me to thine other house;" and the jeweller enquired, "Dost thou then know my other house?" Replied the other, "I know all about thee and I know that also whereby Allah will dispel thy dolours." So I said to myself (continued the jeweller) "I will go with him whither he will;" and went out and walked on till we came to my second house; and when the man saw it he said to me, "It is without door or door-keeper, and we cannot possibly sit in it; so come thou with me to another place." Then the man continued passing from stead to stead (and I with him) till night overtook us. Yet I put no question to him of the matter in hand and we ceased not to walk on, till we reached the open country. He kept saying, "Follow 198me," and quickened his pace to a trot, whilst I trotted after him heartening my heart to go on, until we reached the river, where he took boat with me, and the boatman rowed us over to the other bank. Then he landed from the boat and I landed after him; and he took my hand and led me to a street which I had never entered in all my days, nor do I know in what quarter it was. Presently the man stopped at the door of a house, and opening it entered and made me enter with him; after which he locked the door with an iron padlock,[212] and led me along the vestibule, till he brought me in the presence of ten men who were as though they were one and the same man; they being brothers. We saluted them (continued the jeweller) and they returned our greeting and bade us be seated; so we sat down. Now I was like to die for excess of weariness; but they brought me rose-water and sprinkled it on my face; after which they gave me a sherbet to drink and set before me food whereof some of them ate with me. Quoth I to

myself, "Were there aught harmful in the food, they would not eat with me." So I ate, and when we had washed our hands, each of us returned to his place. Then they asked me, "Dost thou know us?" and I answered, "No! nor in my life have I ever seen you; nay, I know not even him who brought me hither." Said they, "Tell us thy tidings and lie not at all." Replied I, "Know then that my case is wondrous and my affair marvellous; but wot ye anything about me?" They rejoined, "Yes! it was we took thy goods yesternight and carried off thy friend and her who was singing to him." Quoth I, "Allah let down His veil over you! Where be my friend and she who was singing to him?" They pointed with their hands to one side and replied, "Yonder, but, by Allah, O our brother, the secret of their case is known to none save to thee, for from the time we brought the twain hither up to this day, we have not looked upon them nor questioned them of their condition, seeing them to be persons of rank and dignity. Now this and this only it was that hindered our killing them: so tell us the truth of their case and thou shalt be assured of thy safety and of theirs." When I heard this (continued the jeweller) I almost died of fright and horror, and I said to them, "Know ye, O my brethren, that if generosity were lost, it would not be found save with you; and had I a secret which I feared to reveal, none but your breasts would conceal it." And I went on exaggerating 199 their praises in this fashion, till I saw that frankness and readiness to speak out would profit me more than concealing facts; so I told them all that had betided me to the very end of the tale. When they heard it, they said, "And is this young man Ali Bakkar-son and this lady Shams al-Nahar?" I replied "Yes." Now this was grievous to them and they rose and made their excuses to the two and then they said to me, "Of what we took from thy house part is spent, but here is what is left of it." So speaking, they gave me back most of my goods and they engaged to return them to their places in my house, and to restore me the rest as soon as they could. My heart was set at ease till they split into two parties, one with me and the other against me; and we fared forth from that house and such was my case. But as regards Ali bin Bakkar and Shams al-Nahar; they were well-nigh dying for excess of fear, when I went up to them and saluting them, asked, "What happened to the damsel and the two maids, and where be they gone?"; and they answered only, "We know nothing of them." Then we walked on and stinted not till we came to the river-bank where the barque lay; and we all boarded it, for it was the same which had brought me over on the day before. The boatman rowed us to the other side; but hardly had we landed and taken seat on the bank to rest, when a troop of horse swooped down on us like eagles and surrounded us on all sides and places, whereupon the robbers with us sprang up in haste like vultures, and the boat put back for them and took them in and the boatman pushed off into mid-stream, leaving us on the river bank, unable to move or to stand still. Then the chief horseman said to us, "Whence be ye!"; and we were perplexed for an answer, but I said (continued the jeweller), "Those ye saw with us are rogues; we know them not. As for us, we are singers, and they intended taking us to sing for them, nor could we get free of them, save by subtlety and soft words; so on

this occasion they let us go, their works being such as you have seen." But they looked at Shams al-Nahar and Ali bin Bakkar and said to me, "Thou hast not spoken sooth but, if thy tale be true, tell us who ye are and whence ye are; and what be your place and in what quarter you dwell." I knew not what to answer them, but Shams al-Nahar sprang up and approaching the Captain of the horsemen spoke with him privily, whereupon he dismounted from his steed and, setting her on horseback, took the bridle and began to lead his beast. And two of his men did the like with the youth, Ali bin Bakkar, and it was the same 200 with myself. The Commandant of the troop ceased not faring on with us, till they reached a certain part of the river bank, when he sang out in some barbarous jargon[213] and there came to us a number of men with two boats. Then the Captain embarked us in one of them (and he with us) whilst the rest of his men put off in the other, and rowed on with us till we arrived at the palace of the Caliphate where Shams al-Nahar landed. And all the while we endured the agonies of death for excess of fear, and they ceased not faring till they came to a place whence there was a way to our quarter. Here we landed and walked on, escorted by some of the horsemen, till we came to Ali bin Bakkar's house; and when we entered it, our escort took leave of us and went their way. We abode there, unable to stir from the place and not knowing the difference between morning and evening; and in such case we continued till the dawn of the next day. And when it was again nightfall, I came to myself and saw Ali bin Bakkar and the women and men of his household weeping over him, for he was stretched out without sense or motion. Some of them came to me and thoroughly arousing me said, "Tell us what hath befallen our son and say how came he in this plight?" Replied I, "O folk, hearken to me"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the jeweller answered them, "O folk, hearken to my words and give me no trouble and annoyance! but be patient and he will come to and tell you his tale for himself." And I was hard upon them and made them afraid of a scandal between me and them, but as we were thus, behold, Ali bin Bakkar moved on his carpet-bed; whereat his friends rejoiced and the stranger folk withdrew from him; but his people forbade me to go away. Then they sprinkled rose-water on his face and he presently revived and sensed the air; whereupon they questioned him of his case, and he essayed to answer them but his tongue could not speak forthright and he signed to them 201 to let me go home. So they let me go, and I went forth hardly crediting my escape and returned to my own house, supported by two men. When my people saw me thus, they rose up and set to shrieking and slapping their faces; but I signed to them with my hand to be silent and they were silent. Then the two men went their way and I threw myself down on my bed, where I lay the rest of the night and awoke not till the forenoon, when I found my people gathered round me and saying, "What calamity befel thee, and what evil with its

mischief did fell thee?" Quoth I, "Bring me somewhat to drink." So they brought me drink, and I drank of it what I would and said to them, "What happened, happened." Thereupon they went away and I made my excuses to my friends, and asked if any of the goods that had been stolen from my other house had been returned. They answered, "Yes! some of them have come back; by token that a man entered and threw them down within the doorway and we saw him not." So I comforted myself and abode in my place two days, unable to rise and leave it; and presently I took courage and went to the bath, for I was worn out with fatigue and troubled in mind for Ali bin Bakkar and Shams al-Nahar, because I had no news of them all this time and could neither get to Ali's house nor, out of fear for my life, take my rest in mine own. And I repented to Almighty Allah of what I had done and praised Him for my safety. Presently my fancy suggested to me to go to such and such a place and see the folk and solace myself; so I went on foot to the cloth-market and sat awhile with a friend of mine there. When I rose to go, I saw a woman standing over against me; so I looked at her, and lo! it was Shams al-Nahar's slave-girl. When I saw her, the world grew dark in my eyes and I hurried on. She followed me, but I was seized with affright and fled from her, and whenever I looked at her, a trembling came upon me whilst she pursued me, saying, "Stop, that I may tell thee somewhat!" But I heeded her not and never ceased walking till I reached a mosque, and she entered after me. I prayed a two-bow prayer, after which I turned to her and, sighing, said, "What dost thou want?" She asked me how I did, and I told her all that had befallen myself and Ali bin Bakkar and besought her for news of herself. She answered, "Know that when I saw the robbers break open thy door and rush in, I was in sore terror, for I doubted not but that they were the Caliph's officers and would seize me and my mistress and we should perish forthwith: so we fled over the roofs, I and the 202 maids; and, casting ourselves down from a high place, came upon some people with whom we took refuge; and they received us and brought us to the palace of the Caliphate, where we arrived in the sorriest of plights. We concealed our case and abode on coals of fire till nightfall, when I opened the river-gate and, calling the boatman who had carried us the night before, said to him:—I know not what is become of my mistress; so take me in the boat, that we may go seek her on the river: haply I shall chance on some news of her. Accordingly he took me into the boat and went about with me and ceased not wending till midnight, when I spied a barque making towards the water gate, with one man rowing and another standing up and a woman lying prostrate between them twain. And they rowed on till they reached the shore when the woman landed, and I looked at her, and behold, it was Shams al-Nahar. Thereupon I got out and joined her, dazed for joy to see her after having lost all hopes of finding her alive."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the slave-girl went on telling the jeweller, "I was dazed for joy to see her, after having lost all hopes of finding her alive. When I came up to her, she bade me give the man who had brought her thither a thousand gold pieces; and we carried her in, I and the two maids, and laid her on her bed; where she passed that night in a sorely troubled state; and, when morning dawned, I forbade the women and eunuchs to go in to her, or even to draw near her for the whole of that day; but on the next she revived and somewhat recovered and I found her as if she had come out of her grave. I sprinkled rose-water upon her face and changed her clothes and washed her hands and feet; nor did I cease to coax her, till I brought her to eat a little and drink some wine, though she had no mind to any such matter. As soon as she had breathed the fresh air and strength began to return to her, I took to upbraiding her, saying:—O my lady, consider and have pity on thyself; thou seest what hath betided us: surely, enough and more than enough of evil hath befallen thee; for indeed thou hast been nigh upon death. She said:—By Allah, O good damsel, in sooth 203 death were easier to me than what hath betided me; for it seemed as though I should be slain and no power could save me. When the robbers took us from the jeweller's house they asked me, Who mayst thou be? and hearing my answer:—I am a singing girl, they believed me. Then they turned to Ali bin Bakkar and made enquiries about him:—And who art thou and what is thy condition?; whereto he replied:—I am of the common kind. So they took us and carried us along, without our resisting, to their abode; and we hurried on with them for excess of fear; but when they had us set down with them in the house, they looked hard at me and seeing the clothes I wore and my necklaces and jewellery, believed not my account of myself and said to me:—Of a truth these necklaces belong to no singing-girl; so be soothfast and tell us the truth of thy case. I returned them no answer whatever, saying in my mind:—Now will they slay me for the sake of my apparel and ornaments; and I spoke not a word. Then the villains turned to Ali bin Bakkar, asking:—And thou, who art thou and whence art thou? for thy semblance seemeth not as that of the common kind. But he was silent and we ceased not to keep our counsel and to weep, till Allah softened the rogues' hearts to pity and they said to us:—Who is the owner of the house wherein ye were? We answered:—Such an one, the jeweller; whereupon quoth one of them:—I know him right well and I wot the other house where he liveth and I will engage to bring him to you this very hour. Then they agreed to set me in a place by myself and Ali bin Bakkar in a place by himself, and said to us:—Be at rest ye twain and fear not lest your secret be divulged; ye are safe from us. Meanwhile their comrade went away and returned with the jeweller, who made known to them our case, and we joined company with him; after which a man of the band fetched a barque, wherein they embarked us all three and, rowing us over the river, landed us with scant ceremony on the opposite bank and went their ways. Thereupon up came a horse-patrol and asked us who we were; so I spoke with the Captain of the watch and said to him:—I am Shams al-Nahar, the Caliph's favourite; I had drunken strong wine

and went out to visit certain of my acquaintance of the wives of the Wazirs, when yonder rogues came upon me and laid hold of me and brought me to this place; but when they saw you, they fled as fast as they could. I met these men with them; so do thou escort me and them to a place of safety and [204] I will requite thee as I am well able to do. When the Captain of the watch heard my speech, he knew me and alighting, mounted me on his horse; and in like manner did two of his men with Ali bin Bakkar. So I spoke to her (continued the handmaid) and blamed her doings, and bade her beware, and said to her:—O my lady, have some care for thy life! But she was angered at my words and cried out at me; accordingly I left her and came forth in quest of thee, but found thee not and dared not go to the house of Ali bin Bakkar; so stood watching for thee, that I might ask thee of him and wot how it goes with him. And I pray thee, of thy favour, to take of me some money, for thou hast doubtless borrowed from thy friends part of the gear and as it is lost, it behoveth thee to make it good with folk." I replied, "To hear is to obey! go on;" and I walked with her till we drew near my house, when she said to me, "Wait here till I come back to thee."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after the slave-girl had addressed the jeweller, "Wait here till I come back to thee!" she went away and presently returned with the money, which she put (continued the jeweller) into my hand, saying, "O my master, in what place shall we meet?" Quoth I, "I will start and go to my house at once and suffer hard things for thy sake and contrive how thou mayst win access to him, for such access is difficult at this present." Said she, "Let me know some spot, where I shall come to thee," and I answered, "In my other house; I will go thither forthright and have the doors mended and the place made safe again, and henceforth we will meet there." Then she took leave of me and went her way, whilst I carried the money home, and counting it, found it five thousand dinars. So I gave my people some of it and to all who had lent me aught I made good their loss, after which I arose and took my servants and repaired to my other house whence the things had been stolen; and I brought builders and carpenters and masons who restored it to its former state. Moreover, I placed my negress-slave there and forgot the mishaps which had befallen me. Then I fared forth and repaired to Ali bin Bakkar's house [205] and, when I reached it, his slave-servants accosted me, saying, "Our lord calleth for thee night and day, and hath promised to free whichever of us bringeth thee to him; so they have been wandering about in quest of thee everywhere but knew not in what part to find thee. Our master is by way of recovering strength, but at times he reviveth and at times he relapseth; and whenever he reviveth he nameth thee, and saith:—Needs must ye bring him to me, though but for the twinkling of an eye; and then he sinketh back into his torpor." Accordingly (continued the jeweller) I accompanied the slave and went in to Ali bin Bakkar; and, finding him

unable to speak, sat down at his head, whereupon he opened his eyes and seeing me, wept and said, "Welcome and well come!" I raised him and making him sit up, strained him to my bosom, and he said, "Know, O my brother, that, from the hour I took to my bed, I have not sat up till now: praise to Allah that I see thee again!" And I ceased not to prop him and support him until I made him stand on his feet and walk a few steps, after which I changed his clothes and he drank some wine: but all this he did for my satisfaction. Then, seeing him somewhat restored, I told him what had befallen me with the slave-girl (none else hearing me), and said to him, "Take heart and be of good courage, I know what thou sufferest." He smiled and I added, "Verily nothing shall betide thee save what shall rejoice thee and medicine thee." Thereupon he called for food, which being brought, he signed to his pages, and they withdrew. Then quoth he to me, "O my brother, hast thou seen what hath befallen me?"; and he made excuses to me and asked how I had fared all that while. I told him everything that had befallen me, from beginning to end, whereat he wondered and calling his servants, said, "Bring me such and such things." They brought in fine carpets and hangings and, besides that, vessels of gold and silver, more than I had lost, and he gave them all to me; so I sent them to my house and abode with him that night. When the day began to yellow, he said to me, "Know thou that as to all things there is an end, so the end of love is either death or accomplishment of desire. I am nearer unto death, would I had died ere this befel!; and had not Allah favoured us, we had been found out and put to shame. And now I know not what shall deliver me from this my strait, and were it not that I fear Allah, I would hasten my own death; for know, O my brother, that I am like bird in cage and that my life is of a surety perished, choked by the distresses which have 206 befallen me; yet hath it a period stablished firm and an appointed term." And he wept and groaned and began repeating:—

Enough of tears hath shed the lover-wight, ✿ When grief outcast all patience from his sprite:
He hid the secrets which united us, ✿ But now His eye parts what He did unite!

When he had finished his verses, the jeweller said to him, "O my lord, I now intend returning to my house." He answered, "There be no harm in that; go and come back to me with news as fast as possible, for thou seest my case." So I took leave of him (continued the jeweller) and went home, and hardly had I sat down, when up came the damsel, choked with long weeping. I asked, "What is the matter?"; and she answered, "O my lord, know then that what we feared hath befallen us; for, when I left thee yesterday and returned to my lady, I found her in a fury with one of the two maids who were with us the other night, and she ordered her to be beaten. The girl was frightened and ran away; but, as she was leaving the house, one of the door-porters and guards of the gate met her and took her up and would have sent her back to her mistress. However, she let fall some hints, which were a disclosure to him; so he cajoled her and led her on to talk, and she tattled about our case and let him know of all our doings. This affair came to the ears of the Caliph, who bade remove my

mistress, Shams al-Nahar, and all her gear to the palace of the Caliphate; and set over her a guard of twenty eunuchs. Since then to the present hour he hath not visited her nor hath given her to know the reason of his action, but I suspect this to be the cause; wherefore I am in fear for my life and am sore troubled, O my lord, knowing not what I shall do, nor with what contrivance I shall order my affair and hers; for she hath none by her more trusted or more trustworthy than myself."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the slave-girl thus addressed the jeweller, "And in very sooth my lady hath none by her more trusted or more trustworthy in matter of secrecy than myself. So go thou, O my master, and speed thee without delay to Ali bin Bakkar; and acquaint him with this, that he may 207 be on his guard and ward; and, if the affair be discovered, we will cast about for some means whereby to save our lives." On this (continued the jeweller), I was seized with sore trouble and the world grew dark in my sight for the slave-girl's words; and when she was about to wend, I said to her, "What reckest thou and what is to be done?" Quoth she, "My counsel is that thou hasten to Ali bin Bakkar, if thou be indeed his friend and desire to save him; thine be it to carry him this news at once without aught of stay and delay, or regard for far and near; and mine be it to sniff about for further news." Then she took her leave of me and went away: so I rose and followed her track and, betaking myself to Ali bin Bakkar, found him flattering himself with impossible expectations. When he saw me returning to him so soon, he said, "I see thou hast come back to me forthwith and only too soon." I answered, "Patience, and cut short this foolish connection and shake off the pre-occupation wherein thou art, for there hath befallen that which may bring about the loss of thy life and good." Now when he heard this, he was troubled and strongly moved; and he said to me, "O my brother, tell me what hath happened." Replied I, "O my lord, know that such and such things have happened and thou art lost without recourse, if thou abide in this thy house till the end of the day." At this, he was confounded and his soul well-nigh departed his body, but he recovered himself and said to me, "What shall I do, O my brother, and what counsel hast thou to offer?" Answered I, "My advice is that thou take what thou canst of thy property and whom of thy slaves thou trustest, and flee with us to a land other than this, ere this very day come to an end." And he said, "I hear and I obey." So he rose, confused and dazed like one in epilepsy, now walking and now falling, and took what came under his hand. Then he made an excuse to his household and gave them his last injunctions, after which he loaded three camels and mounted his beast; and I did likewise. We went forth privily in disguise and fared on and ceased not our wayfare the rest of that day and all its night, till nigh upon morning, when we unloaded and, hobbling our camels, lay down to sleep. But we were worn with fatigue and we neglected to keep watch, so that there fell upon us robbers, who stripped us of

all we had and slew our slaves, when these would have beaten them off, leaving us naked and in the sorriest of plights, after they had taken our money and lifted our beasts and disappeared. As soon as they were gone, we arose and walked on till morning dawned, when we came to a village which we entered, and finding a mosque took 208refuge therein for we were naked. So we sat in a corner all that day and we passed the next night without meat or drink; and at daybreak we prayed our dawn-prayer and sat down again. Presently behold, a man entered and saluting us prayed a two-bow prayer, after which he turned to us and said, "O folk, are ye strangers?" We replied, "Yes: the bandits waylaid us and stripped us naked, and we came to this town but know none here with whom we may shelter." Quoth he, "What say ye? will you come home with me?" And (pursued the jeweller) I said to Ali bin Bakkar, "Up and let us go with him, and we shall escape two evils; the first, our fear lest some one who knoweth us enter this mosque and recognise us, so that we come to disgrace; and the second, that we are strangers and have no place wherein to lodge." And he answered helplessly, "As thou wilt." Then the man said to us again, "O ye poor folk, give ear unto me and come with me to my place," and I replied, "Hearkening and obedience;" whereupon he pulled off a part of his own clothes and covered us therewith and made his excuses to us and spoke kindly to us. Then we arose and accompanied him to his house and he knocked at the door, whereupon a little slave-boy came out and opened to us. The host entered and we followed him;[214] when he called for a bundle of clothes and muslins for turbands, and gave us each a suit and a piece; so we dressed and turbanded ourselves and sat us down. Presently, in came a damsel with a tray of food and set it before us, saying, "Eat." We ate some small matter and she took away the tray: after which we abode with our host till nightfall, when Ali bin Bakkar sighed and said to me, "Know, O my brother, that I am a dying man past hope of life and I would charge thee with a charge: it is that, when thou seest me dead, thou go to my parent[215] and tell her of my decease and bid her come hither that she may be here to receive the visits of condolence and be present at the washing of my corpse; and do thou exhort her to bear my loss with patience." Then he fell down in a fainting fit and, when he recovered he heard a damsel singing afar off and making verses as she sang. Thereupon he addressed himself to give ear to her and hearken to her voice; and now he was insensible, absent from the world, and now he came to himself; and anon he wept for grief and mourning at the love which had 209befallen him. Presently, he heard the damsel who was singing repeat these couplets:—

Parting ran up to part from lover-twain ✿ Free converse, perfect concord, friendship fain:

The Nights with shifting drifted us apart, ✿ Would heaven I wot if we shall meet again:

How bitter after meeting 'tis to part, ✿ May lovers ne'er endure so bitter pain!

Death-grip, death-choke, lasts for an hour and ends, ✿ But parting-tortures aye in heart remain:

Could we but trace where Parting's house is placed, ✿ We would make Parting eke of parting taste!

When Ali son of Bakkar heard the damsel's song, he sobbed one sob and his soul quitted his body. As soon as I saw that he was dead (continued the jeweller), I committed his corpse to the care of the house-master and said to him "Know thou, that I am going to Baghdad, to tell his mother and kinsfolk, that they may come hither and conduct his burial." So I betook myself to Baghdad and, going to my house, changed my clothes; after which I repaired to Ali bin Bakkar's lodging. Now when his servants saw me, they came to me and questioned me of him, and I bade them ask permission for me to go in to his mother. She gave me leave; so I entered and saluting her, said, "Verily Allah ordereth the lives of all creatures by His commandment and when He decreeth aught, there is no escaping its fulfilment; nor can any soul depart but by leave of Allah, according to the Writ which affirmeth the appointed term."[216] She guessed by these words that her son was dead and wept with sore weeping, then she said to me, "Allah upon thee! tell me, is my son dead?" I could not answer her for tears and excess of grief, and when she saw me thus, she was choked with weeping and fell to the ground in a fit. As soon as she came to herself she said to me, "Tell me how it was with my son." I replied, "May Allah abundantly compensate thee for his loss!" and I told her all that had befallen him from beginning to end. She then asked, "Did he give thee any charge?"; and I answered, "Yes," and told her what he had said, adding, "Hasten to perform his funeral." When she heard these words, she swooned away again; and, when she recovered, 210 she addressed herself to do as I charged her. Then I returned to my house; and as I went along musing sadly upon the fair gifts of his youth, behold, a woman caught hold of my hand;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the jeweller thus continued:—A woman caught hold of my hand; and I looked at her and lo! it was the slave-girl who used to come from Shams al-Nahar, and she seemed broken by grief. When we knew each other we both wept and ceased not weeping till we reached my house, and I said to her, "Knowest thou the news of the youth, Ali bin Bakkar?" She replied, "No, by Allah!"; so I told her the manner of his death and all that had passed, whilst we both wept; after which quoth I to her, "How is it with thy mistress?" Quoth she, "The Commander of the Faithful would not hear a single word against her; but, for the great love he bore her, saw all her actions in a favourable light, and said to her:—O Shams al-Nahar, thou art dear to me and I will bear with thee and bring the noses of thy foes to the grindstone. Then he bade them furnish her an apartment decorated with gold and a handsome sleeping-chamber, and she abode with him in all ease of life and high favour. Now it came to pass that one day, as he sat at wine according to his custom, with his favourite concubines in presence, he bade them be seated in their several ranks and made Shams al-Nahar sit by his side. But her patience had failed

and her disorder had redoubled upon her. Then he bade one of the damsels sing: so she took a lute and tuning it struck the chords, and began to sing these verses:—

One craved my love and I gave all he craved of me, ✿ And tears on cheek betray how 'twas I came to yield:
Tear-drops, meseemeth, are familiar with our case, ✿ Revealing what I hide, hiding what I revealed:
How can I hope in secret to conceal my love, ✿ Which stress of passion ever showeth unconcealed:
Death, since I lost my lover, is grown sweet to me; ✿ Would I knew what their joys when I shall quit the field!"

Now when Shams al-Nahar heard these verses sung by the slave-girl, 211 she could not keep her seat; but fell down in a fainting-fit whereupon the Caliph cast the cup from his hand and drew her to him crying out; and the damsels also cried out, and the Prince of True Believers turned her over and shook her, and lo and behold! she was dead. The Caliph grieved over her death with sore grief and bade break all the vessels and dulcimers[217] and other instruments of mirth and music which were in the room; then carrying her body to his closet, he abode with her the rest of the night. When the day broke, he laid her out and commanded to wash her and shroud her and bury her. And he mourned for her with sore mourning, and questioned not of her case nor of what caused her condition. And I beg thee in Allah's name (continued the damsel) to let me know the day of the coming of Ali bin Bakkar's funeral procession that I may be present at his burial." Quoth I, "For myself, where thou wilt thou canst find me; but thou, where art thou to be found, and who can come at thee where thou art?" She replied, "On the day of Shams al-Nahar's death, the Commander of the Faithful freed all her women, myself among the rest;[218] and I am one of those now abiding at the tomb in such a place." So I rose and accompanied her to the burial-ground and piously visited Shams al-Nahar's tomb; after which I went my way and ceased not to await the coming of Ali bin Bakkar's funeral. When it arrived, the people of Baghdad went forth to meet it and I went forth with them; and I saw the damsel among the women and she the loudest of them in lamentation, crying out and wailing with a voice that rent the vitals and made the heart ache. Never was seen in Baghdad a finer funeral than his; and we ceased not to follow in crowds till we reached the cemetery and buried him to the mercy of Almighty Allah; nor from that time to this have I ceased to visit the tombs of Ali son of Bakkar and of Shams al-Nahar. This, then, is their story, and Allah Almighty have mercy upon them!"[219] And yet is not their tale (continued Shahrazad) more wonderful than that of King Shahrimán. The King asked her "And what was his tale?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, as regards the

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11- TALE OF KAMAR AL-ZAMAN,

That there was in times of yore and in ages long gone before a King called Shahrimán,[220] who was lord of many troops and guards, and officers, and who reigned over certain islands, known as the Khálidán Islands,[221] on the borders of the land of the Persians. But he was stricken in years and his bones were wasted, without having been blessed with a son, albeit he had four wives, daughters of Kings, and threescore concubines, with each of whom he was wont to lie one night in turn.[222] This 213 preyed upon his mind and disquieted him, so that he complained thereof to one of his Wazirs, saying, "Verily I fear lest my kingdom be lost when I die, for that I have no son to succeed me." The Minister answered, "O King, peradventure Allah shall yet bring something to pass; so rely upon the Almighty and be instant in prayer. It is also my counsel that thou spread a banquet and invite to it the poor and needy, and let them eat of thy food; and supplicate the Lord to vouchsafe thee a son; for perchance there may be among thy guests a righteous soul whose prayers find acceptance; and thereby thou shalt win thy wish." So the King rose, made the lesser ablution, and prayed a two-bow prayer,[223] then he cried upon Allah with pure intention; after which he called his chief wife to bed and lay with her forthright. By grace of God she conceived and, when her months were accomplished, she bore a male child, like the moon on the night of fulness. The King named him Kamar al-Zamán,[224] and rejoiced in him with extreme joy and bade the city be dressed out in his honour; so they decorated the streets seven days, whilst the drums beat and the messengers bore the glad tidings abroad. Then wet and dry nurses were provided for the boy and he was reared in splendour and delight, until he reached the age of fifteen. He grew up of surpassing beauty and seemlihead and symmetry, and his father loved him so dear that he could not brook to be parted from him day or night. One day he complained to a certain of his Ministers anent the excess of his love for his only child, saying, "O thou the Wazir, of a truth I fear for my son, Kamar al-Zaman, the shifts and accidents which befal man and fain would I marry him in my lifetime." Answered the Wazir, "O King, know thou that marriage is one of the most honourable 214 of moral actions, and thou wouldst indeed do well and right to marry thy son in thy lifetime, ere thou make him Sultan." On this quoth the King, "Hither with my son Kamar al-Zaman;" so he came and bowed his head to the ground in modesty before his sire. "O Kamar al-Zaman," said King Shahriman, "of a truth I desire to marry thee and rejoice in thee during my lifetime." Replied he, "O my father, know that I have no lust to marry nor doth my

soul incline to women; for that concerning their craft and perfidy I have read many books and heard much talk, even as saith the poet:—

Now, an of women ask ye, I reply:— ✿ In their affairs I'm versed a doctor rare!

When man's head grizzles and his money dwindles, ✿ In their affections he hath naught for share."

And another said:—

Rebel against women and so shalt thou serve Allah the more; ✿ The youth who gives women the rein must forfeit all hope to soar.

They'll baulk him when seeking the strange device, Excelsior, ✿ Tho' waste he a thousand of years in the study of science and lore.

And when he had ended his verses he continued, "O my father, wedlock is a thing whereto I will never consent; no, not though I drink the cup of death." When Sultan Shahriman heard these words from his son, light became darkness in his sight and he grieved thereat with great grief.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Shahriman heard these words from his son, the light became darkness in his sight and he grieved over his son's lack of obedience to his directions in the matter of marriage; yet, for the great love he bore him, he was unwilling to repeat his wishes and was not wroth with him, but caressed him and spake him fair and showed him all manner of kindness such as tendeth to induce affection. All this, and Kamar al-Zaman Increased daily in beauty and loveliness and amorous grace; and the King bore with him for a whole year till he became perfect in eloquence and elegant wit. All men were ravished with his charms; and every breeze 215 that blew bore the tidings of his gracious favour; his fair sight was a seduction to the loving and a garden of delight to the longing, for he was honey-sweet of speech and the sheen of his face shamed the full moon; he was a model of symmetry and blandishment and engaging ways; his shape was as the willow-wand or the rattan-cane and his cheeks might take the place of rose or red anemone. He was, in fine the pink of perfection, even as the poet hath said of him:—

He came and cried they, "Now be Allah blest! ✿ Praise Him that clad that soul in so fair vest!"

He's King of Beauty where the beauteous be; ✿ All are his Ryots,[225] all obey his hest:

His lip-dew's sweeter than the virgin honey; ✿ His teeth are pearls in double row close prest:

All charms are congregate in him alone, ✿ And deals his loveliness to man unrest.

Beauty wrote on those cheeks for worlds to see ✿ "I testify there is none good but He."[226]

When the year came to an end, the King called his son to him and said, "O my son, wilt thou not hearken to me?" Whereupon Kamar al-Zaman fell down for respect and shame before his sire and replied, "O my father, how should I not hearken to thee, seeing that Allah commandeth me to obey thee and not gainsay thee?" Rejoined King Shahriman, "O my son, know that I desire to marry thee and rejoice in thee whilst yet

I live, and make thee King over my realm, before my death." When the Prince heard his sire pronounce these words he bowed his head awhile, then raised it and said, "O my father, this is a thing which I will never do; no, not though I drink the cup of death! I know of a surety that the Almighty hath made obedience to thee a duty in religion; but, Allah upon thee! press me not in this matter of marriage, nor fancy that I will ever marry my life long; for that I have read the books both of the ancients and the moderns, and have come to know all the mischiefs and miseries which have befallen them through women and their endless artifices. And how excellent is the saying of the poet:—

He whom the randy motts entrap ✿ Shall never see deliverance!
Though build he forts a thousand-fold, ✿ Whose mighty strength lead-plates enhance,[227]
Their force shall be of no avail; ✿ These fortresses have not a chance!
Women aye deal in treachery ✿ To far and near o'er earth's expanse;
With fingers dipt in Henna-blood ✿ And locks in braids that mad the glance;
And eyelids painted o'er with Kohl ✿ They gar us drink of dire mischance.

And how excellently saith another:—

Women, for all the chastity they claim, ✿ Are offal cast by kites where'er they list:
This night their talk and secret charms are thine; ✿ That night another joyeth calf and wrist:
Like inn, whence after night thou far'st at dawn, ✿ And lodges other wight thou hast not wist."[228]

Now when King Shahriman heard these his son's words and learnt the import of his verses and poetical quotations, he made no answer, of his excessive love for him, but redoubled in graciousness and kindness to him. He at once broke up the audience and, as soon as the seance was over, he summoned his Minister and taking him apart, said to him, "O thou the Wazir! tell me how I shall deal with my son in the matter of marriage."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King summoned his Minister; and, taking him apart, said to him, "O thou the Wazir, tell me what I shall do with my son in the matter of marriage. Of a truth I took counsel with thee thereon and thou didst counsel me to marry him, before making him King. I have spoken with him of wedlock time after time and he still gainsaid me; so do thou, O Wazir, forthright advise me what to do." Answered the Minister, "O King, wait another year and, if after that thou be minded to speak to him on the matter of marriage, speak not to him privily, but address him on a day of 217 state, when all the Emirs and Wazirs are present with the whole of the army standing before thee. And when all are in crowd then send for thy son, Kamar al-Zaman, and summon him; and, when he cometh, broach to him the matter of marriage before the Wazirs and Grandees and Officers of state and Captains; for he will surely be bashful and daunted by their presence and

will not dare to oppose thy will." Now when King Shahriman heard his Wazir's words, he rejoiced with exceeding joy, seeing success in the project, and bestowed on him a splendid robe of honour. Then he took patience with his son another year, whilst, with every day that passed over him, Kamar al-Zaman increased in beauty and loveliness, and elegance and perfect grace, till he was nigh twenty years old. Indeed Allah had clad him in the cloak of comeliness and had crowned him with the crown of completion: his eye-glance was more bewitching than Hárút and Marút[229] and the play of his luring looks more misleading than Tághút;[230] and his cheeks shone like the dawn rosy-red and his eyelashes stormed the keen-edged blade: the whiteness of his brow resembled the moon shining bright, and the blackness of his locks was as the murky night; and his waist was more slender than the gossamer[231] and his back parts than two sand-heaps bulkier, making a Babel of the heart with their softness; but his waist complained of the weight of his hips and loins; and his charms ravished all mankind, even as one of the poets saith in these couplets:—

"By his eyelash tendril curled, by his slender waist I swear,
By the dart his witchery feathers, fatal hurtling through the air;
By the just roundness of his shape, by his glances bright and keen,
By the swart limning of his locks, and his fair forehead shining sheen;
By his eyebrows which deny that she who looks on them should sleep,
Which now commanding, now forbidding, o'er me high dominion keep;
By the roses of his cheek, his face as fresh as myrtle wreath,
His tulip lips, and those pure pearls that hold the places of his teeth;
By his noble form, which rises featly turned in even swell
To where upon his jutting chest two young pomegranates seem to dwell;
By his supple moving hips, his taper waist, and silky skin,
By all he robbed Perfection of, and holds enchained his form within;
By his tongue of steadfastness, his nature true, and excellent,
By the greatness of his rank, his noble birth, and high descent,
Musk from my love her savour steals, who musk exhales from every limb
And all the airs ambergris breathes are but the Zephyr's blow o'er him.
The sun, methinks, the broad bright sun, as low before my love should quail
As would my love himself transcend the paltry paring of his nail!"[232]

So King Shahriman, having accepted the counsel of his Wazir, waited for another year and a great festival,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shahriman having accepted the counsel of his Wazir, waited for another year and a great festival, a day of state when the audience hall was filled with his Emirs and Wazirs and Grandees of his reign and Officers of State and Captains of might and main. Thereupon he sent for his son

Kamar al-Zaman who came, and kissing the ground before him three times, stood in presence of his sire with his hands behind his back the right grasping the left.[233] Then said the King to him, "Know O my son, that I have not sent for thee on this occasion and summoned thee to appear before this assembly and all these officers of estate here awaiting our orders save and except that I may lay a commandment on thee, wherein do thou not disobey me; and my commandment is that thou marry, for I am minded to wed thee to a King's daughter and rejoice in thee ere I die." When the Prince heard this much from his royal sire, he bowed his head groundwards awhile, then raising it towards his father and being moved thereto at that time by youthful folly and boyish ignorance, replied, "But for myself I will never marry; no, not though I drink the cup of death! As for thee, thou art 219 great in age and small of wit: hast thou not, twice ere this day and before this occasion, questioned me of the matter of marriage, and I refused my consent? Indeed thou dotest and are not fit to govern a flock of sheep!" So saying Kamar al-Zaman unclasped his hands from behind his back and tucked up his sleeves above his elbows before his father, being in a fit of fury; moreover, he added many words to his sire, knowing not what he said in the trouble of his spirits. The King was confounded and ashamed, for that this befel in the presence of his grandees and soldier-officers assembled on a high festival and a state occasion; but presently the majesty of Kingship took him, and he cried out at his son and made him tremble. Then he called to the guards standing before him and said, "Seize him!" So they came forward and laid hands on him and, binding him, brought him before his sire, who bade them pinion his elbows behind his back and in this guise make him stand before the presence. And the Prince bowed down his head for fear and apprehension, and his brow and face were beaded and spangled with sweat; and shame and confusion troubled him sorely. Thereupon his father abused him and reviled him and cried, "Woe to thee, thou son of adultery and nursling of abomination![234] How durst thou answer me on this wise before my captains and soldiers? But hitherto none hath chastised thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Shahriman cried out to his son Kamar al-Zaman, "How durst thou answer me on this wise before my captains and soldiers? But hitherto none hath chastised thee. Knowest thou not that this deed thou hast done were a disgrace to him had it been done by the meanest of my subjects?" And the King commanded his Mamelukes to loose his elbow bonds and imprison him in one of the bastions of the citadel. So they took the Prince and thrust him into an old tower, wherein there was a dilapidated saloon and in its middle a ruined well, after having first swept it and cleansed 220 its floor-flags and set therein a couch on which they laid a mattress, a leathern rug and a cushion; and then they brought a great lanthorn and a wax candle, for that place was dark, even by day. And

lastly the Mamelukes led Kamar al-Zaman thither, and stationed an eunuch at the door. And when all this was done, the Prince threw himself on the couch, sad-spirited, and heavy-hearted; blaming himself and repenting of his injurious conduct to his father, whenas repentance availed him naught, and saying, "Allah curse marriage and marriageables and married women, the traitresses all! Would I had hearkened to my father and accepted a wife! Had I so done it had been better for me than this jail." This is how it fared with him; but as regards King Shahriman, he remained seated on his throne all through the day until sundown; then he took the Minister apart and said to him, "Know thou, O Wazir, that thou and thou only wast the cause of all this that hath come to pass between me and my son by the advice thou wast pleased to devise; and so what dost thou counsel me to do now?" Answered he, "O King, leave thy son in limbo for the space of fifteen days: then summon him to thy presence and bid him wed; and assuredly he shall not gainsay thee again."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir said to King Shahriman, "Leave thy son in limbo for the space of fifteen days; then summon him to thy presence and bid him wed; and assuredly he shall not gainsay thee again." The King accepted the Wazir's opinion and lay down to sleep that night troubled at heart concerning his son; for he loved him with dearest love because he had no other child but this; and it was his wont every night not to sleep, save after placing his arm under his son's neck. So he passed that night in trouble and unease on the Prince's account, tossing from side to side, as he were laid on coals of Artemisia-wood[235]; for he was overcome with doubts and fears 221 and sleep visited him not all that livelong night; but his eyes ran over with tears and he began repeating:

While slanderers slumber, longsome is my night; ✿ Suffice thee a heart so sad in parting-plight;
I say, while night in care slow moments by, ✿ "What! no return for thee, fair morning light?"

And the saying of another:—

When saw I Pleiad-stars his glance escape ✿ And Pole-star draught of sleep upon him pour;
And the Bier-daughters[236] wend in mourning dight, ✿ I knew that morning was for him no more!

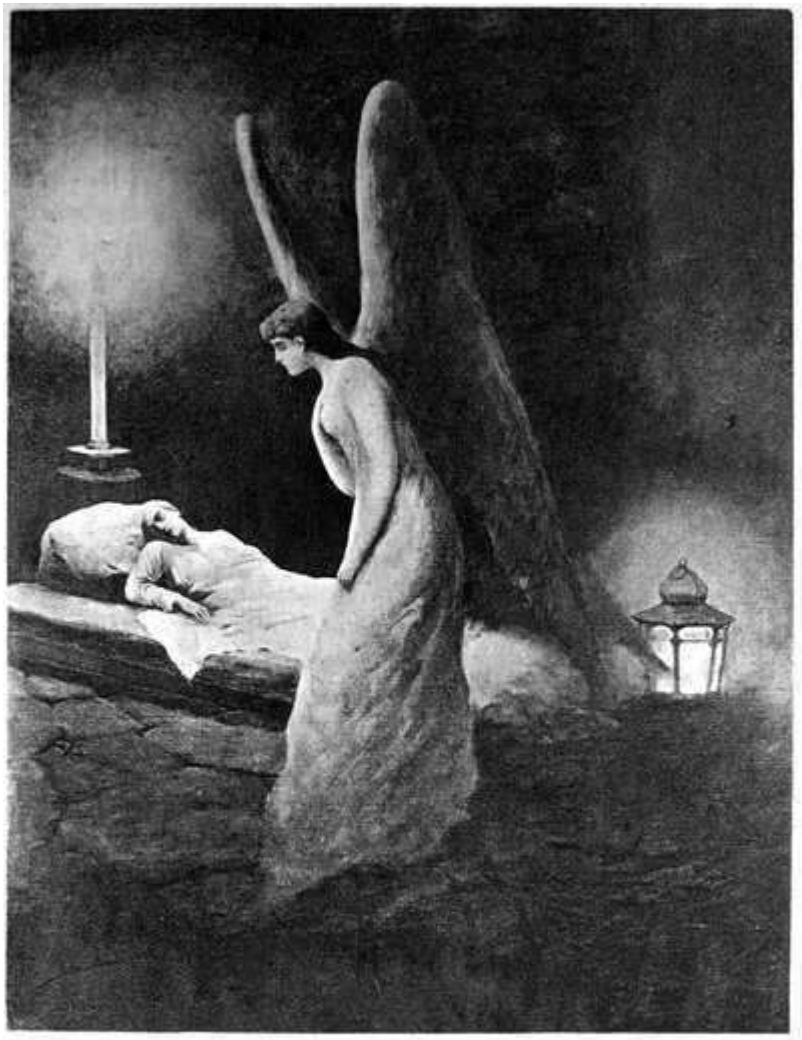
Such was the case with King Shahriman; but as regards Kamar al-Zaman, when the night came upon him the eunuch set the lanthorn before him and lighting the wax-candle, placed it in the candlestick; then brought him somewhat of food. The Prince ate a little and continually reproached himself for his unseemly treatment of his father, saying to himself, "O my soul, knowest thou not that a son of Adam is the hostage of his tongue, and that a man's tongue is what casteth him into deadly perils?" Then his eyes ran over with tears and he bewailed that which he had done, from anguished vitals and aching heart, repenting him with exceeding repentance of the wrong wherewith he had wronged his father and repeating:—

Fair youth shall die by stumbling of the tongue: ✿ Stumble of foot works not man's life such wrong:
The slip of lip shall oft smite off the head, ✿ While slip of foot shall never harm one long.

Now when he had made an end of eating, he asked for the wherewithal to wash his hands and when the Mameluke had washed them clean of the remnants of food, he arose and made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed the prayers of sundown and nightfall, conjoining 222 them in one; after which he sat down.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Prince Kamar al-Zaman had prayed (conjoining them in one) the prayers of sundown and nightfall, he sat down on the well and began reciting the Koran, and he repeated "The Cow," the "House of Imrán," and "Y. S.;" The "Compassionate," "Blessed be the King," "Unity" and "The two Talismans"[237]; and he ended with blessing and supplication and with saying, "I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the stoned."[238] Then he lay down upon his couch which was covered with a mattress of satin from al-Ma'adin town, the same on both sides and stuffed with the raw silk of Irak; and under his head was a pillow filled with ostrich-down. And when ready for sleep, he doffed his outer clothes and drew off his bag-trousers and lay down in a shirt of delicate stuff smooth as wax; and he donned a head-kerchief of azure Marázi[239] cloth; and at such time and on this guise Kamar al-Zaman was like the full-orbed moon, when it riseth on its fourteenth night. Then, 223 drawing over his head a coverlet of silk, he fell asleep with the lanthorn burning at his feet and the wax-candle over his head, and he ceased not sleeping through the first third of the night, not knowing what lurked for him in the womb of the Future, and what the Omniscient had decreed for him. Now, as Fate and Fortune would have it, both tower and saloon were old and had been many years deserted; and there was therein a Roman well inhabited by a Jinníyah of the seed of Iblis[240] the Accursed, by name Maymúnah, daughter of Al-Dimiryát, a renowned King of the Jánn.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the name of the Jinniyah in question was Maymunah, daughter of Al-Dimiryat; a renowned King of the Jann. And as Kamar al-Zaman continued sleeping till the first third of the night, Maymunah came up out of the Roman well and made for the firmament, thinking to listen by stealth to the converse of the angels; but when she reached the mouth of the well, she saw a light shining in the tower, contrary to custom; and having dwelt there many years without seeing the like, she said to herself "Never have I witnessed aught like this"; and, marvelling much at the matter, determined that there must be some cause therefor. So she made for the light and found the eunuch sleeping within the door; and inside she saw a couch spread, whereon was a human form with the wax-candle

burning at his head and the lanthorn at his feet, and she wondered to see the light and stole towards it little by little. Then she folded her wings and stood by the bed and, drawing back the coverlid, discovered Kamar al-Zaman's face. She was motionless for a full hour in admiration and wonderment; for the lustre of his visage outshone that of the candle; his face beamed like a pearl with light; his eyelids were languorous like those of the gazelle; the pupils of his eyes were 224intensely black and brilliant[241]; his cheeks were rosy red; his eyebrows were arched like bows and his breath exhaled a scent of musk, even as saith of him the poet:—

I kissed him: darker grew those pupils,[242] which ✿ Seduce my soul, and cheeks flushed rosier hue;

O heart, if slanderers dare to deem there be ✿ His like in charms; Say "Bring him hither, you!"

Now when Maymunah saw him, she pronounced the formula of praise,[243] and said, "Blessed be Allah, the best of Creators!"; for she was of the true-believing Jinn; and she stood awhile gazing on his face, exclaiming and envying the youth his beauty and loveliness. And she said in herself, "By Allah! I will do no hurt to him nor let any harm him; nay, from all of evil will I ransom him, for this fair face deserveth not but that folk should gaze upon it and for it praise the Lord. Yet how could his family find it in their hearts to leave him in such desert place where, if one of our Márids came upon him at this hour, he would assuredly slay him." Then the Ifritah Maymunah bent over him and kissed him between the eyes, and presently drew back the sheet over his face which she covered up; and after this she spread her wings and soaring into the air, flew upwards. And after rising high from the circle of the saloon she ceased not winging her way through air and ascending skywards till she drew near the heaven of this world, the lowest of the heavens. And behold, she heard the noisy flapping of wings cleaving the welkin and, directing herself by the sound, she found when she drew near it that the noise came from an Ifrit called Dahnash. So she swooped down on him like a sparrow-hawk and, when he was aware of her and knew her to be Maymunah, the daughter of the King of the Jinn, he feared her and his side-muscles quivered; and he implored her forbearance, saying, "I conjure thee by the Most Great and August Name and by the most noble talisman graven upon the seal-ring of Solomon, entreat me kindly and harm me not!" When she heard these 225words her heart inclined to him and she said, "Verily, thou conjurest me, O accursed, with a mighty conjuration. Nevertheless, I will not let thee go, till thou tell me whence thou comest at this hour." He replied, "O Princess, Know that I come from the uttermost end of China-land and from among the Islands, and I will tell thee of a wonderful thing I have seen this night. If thou find my words true, let me wend my way and write me a patent under thy hand and with thy sign manual that I am thy freedman, so none of the Jinn-hosts, whether of the upper who fly or of the lower who walk the earth or of those who dive beneath the waters, do me let or hindrance." Rejoined Maymunah, "And what is it thou hast seen this night, O liar, O accursed! Tell me without leasing and think not to escape from my hand with falses, for I swear to thee

by the letters graven upon the bezel of the seal-ring of Solomon David-son (on both of whom be peace!), except thy speech be true, I will pluck out thy feathers with mine own hand and strip off thy skin and break thy bones!" Quoth the Ifrit Dahnash son of Shamhúrish[244] the Flyer, "I accept, O my lady, these conditions."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Dahnash spoke thus to Maymunah, "I accept, O my lady, these conditions." Then he resumed, "Know, O my mistress, that I come to-night from the Islands of the Inland Sea in the parts of China, which 226 are the realms of King Ghayúr, lord of the Islands and the Seas and the Seven Palaces. There I saw a daughter of his, than whom Allah hath made none fairer in her time: I cannot picture her to thee, for my tongue would fail to describe her with her due of praise; but I will name to thee a somewhat of her charms by way of approach. Now her hair is like the nights of disunion and separation and her face like the days of union and delectation; and right well hath the poet said when picturing her:—

She dispread the locks from her head one night, ✿ Showing four-fold nights into one night run;

And she turned her visage towards the moon, ✿ And two moons showèd at moment one.

She hath a nose like the edge of the burnished blade and cheeks like purple wine or anemones blood-red: her lips as coral and cornelian shine and the water of her mouth is sweeter than old wine; its taste would quench Hell's fiery pain. Her tongue is moved by wit of high degree and ready repartee: her breast is a seduction to all that see it (glory be to Him who fashioned it and finished it!); and joined thereto are two upper arms smooth and rounded; even as saith of her the poet Al-Walahán:[245]—

She hath wrists which, did her bangles not contain, ✿ Would run from out her sleeves in silvern rain.

She hath breasts like two globes of ivory, from whose brightness the moons borrow light, and a stomach with little waves as it were a figured cloth of the finest Egyptian linen made by the Copts, with creases like folded scrolls, ending in a waist slender past all power of imagination; based upon back parts like a hillock of blown sand, that force her to sit when she would lief stand, and awaken her, when she fain would sleep, even as saith of her and describeth her the poet:—

She hath those hips conjoined by thread of waist, ✿ Hips that o'er me and her too tyrannise;

My thoughts they daze whene'er I think of them, ✿ And weigh her down whene'er she would uprise.[246]

227 And those back parts are upborne by thighs smooth and round and by a calf like a column of pearl, and all this reposeth upon two feet, narrow, slender and pointed like spear-blades,[247] the handiwork of the Protector and Requiter, I wonder how, of their littleness, they can sustain what is above them. But I cut short my praises of her charms fearing lest I be tedious."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Ifrit Dahnash bin Shamhurish said to the Ifritah Maymunah, "Of a truth I cut short my praises fearing lest I be tedious." Now when Maymunah heard the description of that Princess and her beauty and loveliness, she stood silent in astonishment; whereupon Dahnash resumed, "The father of this fair maiden is a mighty King, a fierce knight, immersed night and day in fray and fight; for whom death hath no fright and the escape of his foe no dread, for that he is a tyrant masterful and a conqueror irresistible, lord of troops and armies and continents and islands, and cities and villages, and his name is King Ghayur, Lord of the Islands and of the Seas and of the Seven Palaces. Now he loveth his daughter, the young maiden whom I have described to thee, with dearest love and, for affection of her, he hath heaped together the treasures of all the kings and built her therewith seven palaces, each of a different fashion; the first of crystal, the second of marble, the third of China steel, the fourth of precious stones and gems of price, the fifth of porcelain and many-hued onyxes and ring-bezels, the sixth of silver and the seventh of gold. And he hath filled the seven palaces with all sorts of sumptuous furniture, rich silken carpets and hangings and vessels of gold and silver and all manner of gear that kings require; and hath bidden his daughter to abide in each by turns for a certain season of the year; and her name is the Princess 228Budur.[248] Now when her beauty became known and her name and fame were bruited abroad in the neighbouring countries, all the kings sent to her father to demand her of him in marriage, and he consulted her on the matter, but she disliked the very word wedlock with a manner of abhorrence and said, O my father, I have no mind to marry; no, not at all; for I am a sovereign Lady and a Queen suzerain ruling over men, and I have no desire for a man who shall rule over me. And the more suits she refused, the more her suitors' eagerness increased and all the Royalties of the Inner Islands of China sent presents and rarities to her father with letters asking her in marriage. So he pressed her again and again with advice on the matter of espousals; but she ever opposed to him refusals, till at last she turned upon him angrily and cried, O my father, if thou name matrimony to me once more, I will go into my chamber and take a sword and, fixing its hilt in the ground, will set its point to my waist; then will I press upon it, till it come forth from my back, and so slay myself. Now when the King heard these her words, the light became darkness in his sight and his heart burned for her as with a flame of fire, because he feared lest she should kill herself; and he was filled with perplexity concerning her affair and the kings her suitors. So he said to her, If thou be determined not to marry and there be no help for it: abstain from going and coming in and out. Then he placed her in a house and shut her up in a chamber, appointing ten old women as duennas to guard her, and forbade her to go forth to the Seven Palaces; moreover, he made it appear that he was incensed against her, and sent letters to all the kings, giving them to know that she had been stricken with madness

by the Jinns; and it is now a year since she hath thus been secluded." Then continued the Ifrit Dahnash, addressing the Ifritah Maymunah, "And I, O my lady, go to her every night and take my fill of feeding my sight on her face and I kiss her between the eyes: yet, of my love to her, I do her no hurt neither mount her, for that her youth is fair and her grace surpassing: every one who seeth her jealouseth himself for her. I conjure thee, therefore, O my lady, to go back with me and look on her beauty and loveliness and stature and perfection of proportion; and after, if thou wilt, chastise me or enslave me; and win to thy will, for it is thine to bid and to forbid." So saying, 229 the Ifrit Dahnash bowed his head towards the earth and drooped his wings downwards; but Maymunah laughed at his words and spat in his face and answered, "What is this girl of whom thou pratest but a potsherd wherewith to wipe after making water?[249] Faugh! Faugh! By Allah, O accursed, I thought thou hadst some wondrous tale to tell me or some marvellous news to give me. How would it be if thou were to sight my beloved? Verily, this night I have seen a young man, whom if thou saw though but in a dream, thou wouldst be palsied with admiration and spittle would flow from thy mouth." Asked the Ifrit, "And who and what is this youth?"; and she answered, "Know, O Dahnash, that there hath befallen the young man the like of what thou tellest me befel thy mistress; for his father pressed him again and again to marry, but he refused, till at length his sire waxed wroth at being opposed and imprisoned him in the tower where I dwell: and I came up to-night and saw him." Said Dahnash, "O my lady, shew me this youth, that I may see if he be indeed handsomer than my mistress, the Princess Budur, or not; for I cannot believe that the like of her liveth in this our age." Rejoined Maymunah, "Thou liest, O accursed, O most ill-omened of Marids and vilest of Satans![250] Sure am I that the like of my beloved is not in this world."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Ifritah Maymunah spake thus to the Ifrit Dahnash, "Sure am I that the 230 like of my beloved is not in this world! Art thou mad to fellow thy beloved with my beloved?" He said, "Allah upon thee, O my lady, go back with me and look upon my mistress, and after I will return with thee and look upon thy beloved." She answered, "It must needs be so, O accursed, for thou art a knavish devil; but I will not go with thee nor shalt thou come with me, save upon condition of a wager which is this. If the lover thou lovest and of whom thou boastest so bravely, prove handsomer than mine whom I mentioned and whom I love and of whom I boast, the bet shall be thine against me; but if my beloved prove the handsomer the bet shall be mine against thee." Quoth Dahnash the Ifrit, "O my lady, I accept this thy wager and am satisfied thereat; so come with me to the Islands." Quoth Maymunah; "No! for the abode of my beloved is nearer than the abode of thine: here it is under us; so come down with me to see my beloved and after

we will go look upon thy mistress." "I hear and I obey," said Dahnash. So they descended to earth and alighted in the saloon which the tower contained; then Maymunah stationed Dahnash beside the bed and, putting out her hand, drew back the silken coverlet from Kamar al-Zaman's face, when it glittered and glistened and shimmered and shone like the rising sun. She gazed at him for a moment, then turning sharply round upon Dahnash said, "Look, O accursed, and be not the basest of madmen; I am a maid, yet my heart he hath waylaid." So Dahnash looked at the Prince and long continued gazing steadfastly on him then, shaking his head, said to Maymunah, "By Allah, O my lady, thou art excusable; but there is yet another thing to be considered, and this is, that the estate female differeth from the male. By Allah's might, this thy beloved is the likest of all created things to my mistress in beauty and loveliness and grace and perfection; and it is as though they were both cast alike in the mould of seemlihead." Now when Maymunah heard these words, the light became darkness in her sight and she dealt him with her wing so fierce a buffet on the head as well-nigh made an end of him. Then quoth she to him, "I conjure thee, by the light of his glorious countenance, go at once, O accursed, and bring hither thy mistress whom thou lovest so fondly and foolishly, and return in haste that we may lay the twain together and look on them both as they lie asleep side by side; so shall it appear to us which be the goodlier and more beautiful of the two. Except thou obey me this very moment, O accursed, I will dart my sparks at thee with my fire and consume 231 thee; yea, in pieces I will rend thee and into the deserts cast thee, that to stay-at-home and wayfarer an example thou be!" Quoth Dahnash, "O my lady, I will do thy behests, for I know forsure that my mistress is the fairer and the sweeter." So saying the Ifrit flew away and Maymunah flew with him to guard him. They were absent awhile and presently returned, bearing the young lady, who was clad in a shift of fine Venetian silk, with a double edging of gold and purfled with the most exquisite of embroidery having these couplets worked upon the ends of the sleeves:—

Three matters hinder her from visiting us, in fear ✿ Of hate-full, slandering envier and his hirèd spies:

The shining light of brow, the trinkets' tinkling voice, ✿ And scent of essences that tell whene'er she hies:

Gi'en that she hide her brow with edge of sleeve, and leave ✿ At home her trinketry, how shall her scent disguise?[251]

And Dahnash and Maymunah stinted not bearing that young lady till they had carried her into the saloon and had laid her beside the youth Kamar al-Zaman.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Ifrit Dahnash and the Ifritah Maymunah stinted not bearing Princess Budur till they descended and laid her on the couch beside Kamar al-Zaman. Then they uncovered both their faces, and they were the likest of all folk, each to other, as they were twins or an only brother and sister;

and indeed they were a seduction to the pious, even as saith of them the poet Al-Mubín:—

O heart! be not thy love confined to one, ✿ Lest thou by doting or disdain be undone:
Love all the fair, and thou shalt find with them ✿ If this be lost, to thee that shall be won.

And quoth another:—

Mine eyes beheld two lying on the ground; ✿ Both had I loved if on these eyne they lay!

So Dahnash and Maymunah gazed on them awhile, and he said, "By Allah, O my lady, it is good! My mistress is assuredly the fairer." She replied, "Not so, my beloved is the fairer; woe to thee, O Dahnash! Art blind of eye and heart that lean from fat thou canst not depart? Wilt thou hide the truth? Dost thou not see his beauty and loveliness and fine stature and symmetry? Out on thee, hear what I purpose to say in praise of my beloved and, if thou be a lover true to her thou dost love, do thou the like for her thou lovest." Then she kissed Kamar al-Zaman again and again between the eyes and improvised this ode:—

How is this? Why should the blamer abuse thee in his pride?
What shall console my heart for thee, that art but slender bough?
A Nature-Kohl'd[252] eye thou hast that witcheth far and wide;
From pure platonic love[253] of it deliverance none I trow!
Those glances, fell as plundering Turk, to heart such havoc deal
As never havocked scymitar made keenest at the curve.
On me thou layest load of love the heaviest while I feel
So feeble grown that under weight of chemisette I swerve.
My love for thee as wottest well is habit, and my lowe
Is nature; to all others false is all the love I tender:
Now were my heart but like to thine I never would say No;
Only my wasted form is like thy waist so gracious-slender:
Out on him who in Beauty's robe for moon-like charms hath fame,
And who is claimed by mouth of men as marvel of his tribe!
"Of man what manner may he be" (ask they who flyte and blame)
"For whom thy heart is so distressed?" I only cry "Describe!"
Oh stone-entempered heart of him! learn of his yielding grace
And bending form to show me grace and yielding to consent.
Oh my Prince Beautiful, thou hast an Overseer in place[254]
Who irketh me; and eke a Groom whose wrong doth ne'er relent.
Indeed he lieth who hath said that all of loveliness
Was pent in Joseph: in thy charms there's many and many a Joe!
The Genii dread me when I stand and face to face address;
But meeting thee my fluttering heart its shame and terror show.
I take aversion semblance and I turn from thee in fright,
But more aversion I assume, more love from me dost claim;
That hair of jetty black! That brow e'er raying radiant light!

Those eyne wherein white jostles black![255] That dearling dainty frame!

When Dahnash heard the poesy which Maymunah spake in praise of her beloved, he joyed with exceeding joy and marvelled with excessive wonderment.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Ifrit Dahnash heard the poesy which Maymunah spake in praise of her beloved, he shook for exceeding joy and said, "Thou hast celebrated thy beloved in song and thou hast indeed done well in praise of him whom thou lovest! And there is no help for it but that I also in my turn do my best to enfame my mistress, and recite somewhat in her honour." Then the Ifrit went up to the lady Budur; and, kissing her between the eyes, looked at Maymunah and at his beloved Princess and recited the following verses, albeit he had no skill in poesy:—

Love for my fair they chide in angry way; ✿ Unjust for ignorance, yea unjustest they!

Ah lavish favours on the love-mad, whom ✿ Taste of thy wrath and parting woe shall slay:

234 In sooth for love I'm wet with railing tears, ✿ That rail mine eyelids blood thou mightest say:

No marvel what I bear for love, 'tis marvel ✿ That any know my "me" while thou'rt away:

Unlawful were our union did I doubt ✿ Thy love, or heart incline to other May.

And eke these words:—

I feed eyes on their stead by the valley's side, ✿ And I'm slain and my slayer[256] aside hath hied:

Grief-wine have I drunken, and down my cheeks ✿ Dance tears to the song of the camel-guide:

For union-blessing I strive though sure, ✿ In Budur and Su'ád all my bliss shall bide:[257]

Wot I not which of three gave me most to 'plain, ✿ So hear them numbered ere thou decide:

Those Sworders her eyne, that Lancer her fig- ✿ ure, or ring-mail'd Locks which her forehead hide.

Quoth she (and I ask of her what so wights ✿ Or abide in towns or in desert ride[258])

To me, "In thy heart I dwell; look there!" ✿ Quoth I, "Where's my heart, ah where? ah where?"

When Maymunah heard these lines from the Ifrit, she said, "Thou hast done well, O Dahnash! But say thou which of the two is the handsomer?" And he answered, "My mistress Budur is handsomer than thy beloved!" Cried Maymunah, "Thou liest, O accursed. Nay, my beloved is more beautiful than thine!" But Dahnash persisted, "Mine is the fairer." And they ceased not to wrangle and challenge each other's words till Maymunah cried out at Dahnash and would have laid violent hands on him; but he humbled himself to her and, softening his speech, said, "Let not the truth be a grief to thee, and cease we this talk, for all we say is to testify in favour of our lovers; rather let each of us withdraw 235 the claim and seek we one who shall judge fairly between us which of the two be fairer; and by his sentence we will abide." "I agree to this," answered she and smote the earth with her foot, whereupon there came out of it an Ifrit blind of an eye, humpbacked and scurvy-skinned, with eye-orbits slit up and

down his face.[259] On his head were seven horns and four locks of hair fell to his heels; his hands were pitchfork-like and his legs mast-like and he had nails as the claws of a lion, and feet as the hoofs of the wild ass.[260] When that Ifrit rose out of the earth and sighted Maymunah, he kissed the ground before her and, standing with his hands clasped behind him, said, "What is thy will, O my mistress, O daughter of my King?"[261] She replied, "O Kashkash, I would have thee judge between me and this accursed Dahnash." And she made known to him the matter, from first to last, whereupon the Ifrit Kashkash looked at the face of the youth and then at the face of the girl; and saw them lying asleep, embraced, each with an arm under the other's neck, alike in beauty and loveliness and equal in grace and goodliness. The Marid gazed long upon them, marvelling at their seemlihead; and, after carefully observing the twain, he turned to Maymunah and Dahnash, and repeated these couplets:—

Go, visit her thou lovest, and regard not
The words detractors utter; envious churls
Can never favour love. Oh! sure the Merciful
Ne'er made a thing more fair to look upon,
Than two fond lovers in each others' arms,
Speaking their passion in a mute embrace.
When heart has turned to heart, the fools would part them
Strike idly on cold steel. So when thou 'st found
One purely, wholly thine, accept her true heart,
And live for her alone. Oh! thou that blamest
The love-struck for their love, give o'er thy talk,
How canst thou minister to a mind diseased?[262]

236 Then he turned again to Maymunah and Dahnash and said to them, "By Allah, if you will have the truth, I tell you fairly the twain be equal in beauty, and loveliness and perfect grace and goodliness, nor can I make any difference between them on account of their being man and woman. But I have another thought which is that we wake each of them in turn, without the knowledge of the other, and whichever is the more enamoured shall be held inferior in seemlihead and comeliness." Quoth Maymunah, "Right is this recking," and quoth Dahnash, "I consent to this." Then Dahnash changed himself to the form of a flea and bit Kamar al-Zaman, whereupon he started from sleep in a fright——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Dahnash changed himself to the form of a flea and bit Kamar al-Zaman who started from sleep in a fright and rubbed the bitten part, his neck, and scratched it hard because of the smart. Then turning sideways, he found lying by him something whose breath was sweeter than musk and whose skin was softer than cream. Hereat marvelled he with great marvel and he sat

up and looked at what lay beside him; when he saw it to be a young lady like an union pearl, or a shining sun, or a dome seen from afar on a well-built wall; for she was five feet tall, with a shape like the letter[263] ا, bosomed high and rosy-cheeked; even as saith of her the poet:—

237 Four things which ne'er conjoin, unless it be ✿ To storm my vitals and to shed my blood:

Brow white as day and tresses black as night ✿ Cheeks rosy red and lips which smiles o'erflood.

And also quoth another:—

A Moon she rises, Willow-wand she waves, ✿ Breathes Ambergris, and gazes, a Gazelle:

Meseems that sorrow wooes my heart and wins ✿ And, when she wendeth hastes therein to dwell!

And when Kamar al-Zaman saw the lady Budur, daughter of King Ghayur, and her beauty and comeliness, she was sleeping clad in a shift of Venetian silk, without her petticoat-trousers, and wore on her head a kerchief embroidered with gold and set with stones of price: her ears were hung with twin earrings which shone like constellations and round her neck was a collar of union pearls, of size unique, past the competence of any King. When he saw this, his reason was confounded and natural heat began to stir in him; Allah awoke in him the desire of coition and he said to himself, "Whatso Allah willeth, that shall be, and what He willeth not shall never be!" So saying, he put out his hand and, turning her over, loosed the collar of her chemise; then arose before his sight her bosom, with its breasts like double globes of ivory; whereat his inclination for her redoubled and he desired her with exceeding hot desire. He would have awakened her but she would not awake, for Dahnash had made her sleep heavy; so he shook her and moved her, saying, "O my beloved, awake and look on me; I am Kamar al-Zaman." But she awoke not, neither moved her head; whereupon he considered her case for a long hour and said to himself, "If I guess aright, this is the damsel to whom my father would have married me and these three years past I have refused her; but Inshallah!—God willing—as soon as it is dawn, I will say to him:—Marry me to her, that I may enjoy her."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say,

Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman said to himself, "By Allah, when I see dawn I will say to my sire:—Marry me to her that I may enjoy her; nor will I let 238 half the day pass ere I possess her and take my fill of her beauty and loveliness." Then he bent over Budur to buss her, whereat the Jinniyah Maymunah trembled and was abashed and Dahnash, the Ifrit, was like to fly for joy. But, as Kamar al-Zaman was about to kiss her upon the mouth, he was ashamed before Allah and turned away his head and averted his face, saying to his heart, "Have patience." Then he took thought awhile and said, "I will be patient; haply my father when he was wroth with me and sent me to this jail, may have brought my young lady and made her lie by my side to try me with her, and may have charged her not to be

readily awakened when I would arouse her, and may have said to her:—Whatever thing Kamar al-Zaman do to thee, make me ware thereof; or belike my sire standeth hidden in some stead whence (being himself unseen) he can see all I do with this young lady; and to-morrow he will scold me and cry:—How cometh it that thou sayest, I have no mind to marry; and yet thou didst kiss and embrace yonder damsel? So I will withhold myself lest I be ashamed before my sire; and the right and proper thing to do is not to touch her at this present, nor even to look upon her, except to take from her somewhat which shall serve as a token to me and a memorial of her; that some sign endure between me and her." Then Kamar al-Zaman raised the young lady's hand and took from her little finger a seal-ring worth an immense amount of money, for that its bezel was a precious jewel and around it were graven these couplets:—

Count not that I your promises forgot, ✿ Despite the length of your delinquencies:

Be generous, O my lord, to me inclining; ✿ Haply your mouth and cheeks these lips may kiss:

By Allah, ne'er will I relinquish you ✿ Albe you *will* transgress love's boundaries.

Then Kamar al-Zaman took the seal-ring from the little finger of Queen Budur and set it on his own; then, turning his back to her, went to sleep.[264] When Maymunah the Jinniyah saw this, she was glad and said to Dahnash and Kashkash, "Saw ye how my beloved Kamar al-Zaman bore himself chastely towards this young lady? Verily, this was of the perfection of his good gifts; for observe you twain how he looked on her and noted her beauty and loveliness, 239 and yet embraced her not neither kissed her nor put his hand to her, but turned his back and slept." Answered they, "Even so!" Thereupon Maymunah changed herself into a flea and entering into the raiment of Budur, the loved of Dahnash, crept up her calf and came upon her thigh and, reaching a place some four carats[265] below her navel, there bit her. Thereupon she opened her eyes and sitting up in bed, saw a youth lying beside her and breathing heavily in his sleep, the loveliest of Almighty Allah's creatures, with eyes that put to shame the fairest Houris of Heaven; and a mouth like Solomon's seal, whose water was sweeter to the taste and more efficacious than a theriack, and lips the colour of coral-stone, and cheeks like the blood-red anemone, even as saith one, describing him in these couplets:—

My mind's withdrawn from Zaynab and Nawár[266] ✿ By rosy cheeks that growth of myrtle bear;

I love a fawn, a tunic-vested boy, ✿ And leave the love of bracelet-wearing Fair:

My mate in hall and closet is unlike ✿ Her that I play with, as at home we pair.

Oh thou, who blam'st my flight from Hind and Zaynab, ✿ The cause is clear as dawn uplighting air!

Would'st have me fare[267] a slave, the thrall of thrall, ✿ Cribbed, pent, confined behind the bar and wall?

Now when Princess Budur saw him, she was seized by a transport of passion and yearning and love-longing,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Princess Budur saw Kamar al-Zaman she was forthwith seized with a transport of passion and yearning and love-longing, and she said to herself, "Alas, my shame! This is a strange youth 240 and I know him not. How cometh he to be lying by my side on one bed?" Then she looked at him a second time and noting his beauty and loveliness, said, "By Allah, he is indeed a comely youth and my heart[268] is well-nigh torn in sunder with longing for him! But alas, how am I shamed by him! By the Almighty, had I known it was this youth who sought me in marriage of my father, I had not rejected him, but had wived with him and enjoyed his loveliness!" Then she gazed in his face and said, "O my lord and light of mine eyes, awake from sleep and take thy pleasure in my beauty and grace." And she moved him with her hand; but Maymunah the Jinniyah let down sleep upon him as it were a curtain, and pressed heavily on his head with her wings so that Kamar al-Zaman awoke not. Then Princess Budur shook him with her hands and said, "My life on thee, hearken to me; awake and up from thy sleep and look on the narcissus and the tender down thereon, and enjoy the sight of naked waist and navel; and touzle me and tumble me from this moment till break of day! Allah upon thee, O my lord, sit up and prop thee against the pillow and slumber not!" Still Kamar al-Zaman made her no reply but breathed hard in his sleep. Continued she, "Alas! Alas! thou art insolent in thy beauty and comeliness and grace and loving looks! But if thou art handsome, so am I handsome; what then is this thou dost? Have they taught thee to flout me or hath my father, the wretched old fellow,[269] made thee swear not to speak to me to-night?" But Kamar al-Zaman opened not his mouth neither awoke, whereat her passion for him redoubled and Allah inflamed her heart with love of him. She stole one glance of eyes that cost her a thousand sighs: her heart fluttered, and her vitals throbbed and her hands and feet quivered; and she said to Kamar al-Zaman "Talk to me, O my lord! Speak to me, O my friend! 241 Answer me, O my beloved, and tell me thy name, for indeed thou hast ravished my wit!" And during all this time he abode drowned in sleep and answered her not a word, and Princess Budur sighed and said, "Alas! Alas! why art thou so proud and self-satisfied?" Then she shook him and turning his hand over, saw her seal-ring on his little finger, whereat she cried a loud cry, and followed it with a sigh of passion and said, "Alack! Alack! By Allah, thou art my beloved and thou lovest me! Yet thou seemest to turn thee away from me out of coquetry, for all, O my darling, thou camest to me, whilst I was asleep and knew not what thou didst with me, and tookest my seal-ring; and yet I will not pull it off thy finger." So saying, she opened the bosom of his shirt and bent over him and kissed him and put forth her hand to him, seeking somewhat that she might take as a token, but found nothing. Then she thrust her hand into his breast and, because of the smoothness of his body, it slipped down to his waist and thence to his navel and thence to his yard, whereupon her heart ached and

her vitals quivered and lust was sore upon her, for that the desire of women is fiercer than the desire of men,[270] and she was ashamed of her own shamelessness. Then she plucked his seal-ring from his finger, and put it on her own instead of the ring he had taken, and bussed his inner lips and hands, nor did she leave any part of him unkissed; after which she took him to her breast and embraced him and, laying one of her hands under his neck and the other under his armpit, nestled close to him and fell asleep by his side——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Princess Budur fell asleep by the side of Kamar al-Zaman, after doing that which she did, quoth Maymunah to Dahnash, "Sawst thou, O accursed, how proudly and coquettishly my beloved bore himself, and how hotly and passionately thy mistress showed herself to my dearling? There can be no doubt that my beloved is handsomer than thine; nevertheless I pardon thee." Then she wrote him a document of manumission and turned to Kashkash and said, "Go, help Dahnash to take up his mistress and aid him to carry her back to her own place, for the night waneth apace and there is but little left of it." "I hear and I obey;" answered Kashkash. So the two Ifrits went forward to Princess Budur and upraising her flew away with her; then, bearing her back to her own place, they laid her on her bed, whilst Maymunah abode alone with Kamar al-Zaman, gazing upon him as he slept, till the night was all but spent, when she went her way. As soon as morning morrowed, the Prince awoke from sleep and turned right and left, but found not the maiden by him and said in his mind, "What is this business? It is as if my father would incline me to marriage with the damsel who was with me and have now taken her away by stealth, to the intent that my desire for wedlock may redouble." Then he called out to the eunuch who slept at the door, saying, "Woe to thee, O damned one, arise at once!" So the eunuch rose, bemused with sleep, and brought him basin and ewer, whereupon Kamar al-Zaman entered the water-closet and did his need;[271] then, coming out made the Wuzu-ablution and 243 prayed the dawn-prayer, after which he sat telling on his beads the ninety-and-nine names of Almighty Allah. Then he looked up and, seeing the eunuch standing in service upon him, said, "Out on thee, O Sawáb! Who was it came hither and took away the young lady from my side and I still sleeping?" Asked the eunuch, "O my lord, what manner of young lady?" "The young lady who lay with me last night," replied Kamar al-Zaman. The eunuch was startled at his words and said to him, "By Allah, there hath been with thee neither young lady nor other! How should young lady have come in to thee, when I was sleeping in the doorway and the door was locked? By Allah, O my lord, neither male nor female hath come in to thee!" Exclaimed the Prince, "Thou liest, O pestilent slave!: is it of thy competence also to hoodwink me and refuse to tell me what is

become of the young lady who lay with me last night and decline to inform me who took her away?" Replied the eunuch (and he was affrighted at him), "By Allah, O my lord, I have seen neither young lady nor young lord!" His words only angered Kamar al-Zaman the more and he said to him, "O accursed one, my father hath indeed taught thee deceit! Come hither." So the eunuch came up to him, and the Prince took him by the collar and dashed him to the ground; whereupon he let fly a loud fart[272] and Kamar al-Zaman, kneeling upon him, kicked him and throttled him till he fainted away. Then he dragged him forth and tied him to the well-rope, and let him down like a bucket into the well and plunged him into the water, then drew him up and lowered him down again. Now it was hard winter weather, and Kamar al-Zaman ceased not to plunge the eunuch into the water and pull him up again and douse him and haul him whilst he screamed and called for help; and the Prince kept on saying "By Allah, O damned one, I will not draw thee up out of this well till thou tell me and fully acquaint me with the story of the young lady and who it was took her away, whilst I slept."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She said it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman said to the eunuch, "By Allah! I will not draw thee up out of this well until thou tell me the story of the young lady and who it was took her away whilst I slept." Answered the eunuch, after he had seen death staring him in the face; "O my lord, let me go and I will relate to thee the truth and the whole tale." So Kamar al-Zaman pulled him up out of the well, all but dead for suffering, what with cold and the pain of dipping and dousing, drubbing and dread of drowning. He shook like cane in hurricane, his teeth were clenched as by cramp and his clothes were drenched and his body befouled and torn by the rough sides of the well: briefly he was in a sad pickle. Now when Kamar al-Zaman saw him in this sorry plight, he was concerned for him; but, as soon as the eunuch found himself on the floor, he said to him,"O my lord, let me go and doff my clothes and wring them out and spread them in the sun to dry, and don others; after which I will return to thee forthwith and tell thee the truth of the matter." Answered the Prince, "O rascal slave! hadst thou not seen death face to face, never hadst thou confessed to fact nor told me a word; but go now and do thy will, and then come back to me at once and tell me the truth." Thereupon the eunuch went out, hardly crediting his escape, and ceased not running, stumbling and rising in his haste, till he came in to King Shahriman, whom he found sitting at talk with his Wazir of Kamar al-Zaman's case. The King was saying to the Minister, "I slept not last night, for anxiety concerning my son, Kamar al-Zaman, and indeed I fear lest some harm befal him in that old tower. What good was there in imprisoning him?" Answered the Wazir, "Have no care for him. By Allah, no harm will befal him! None at all! Leave him in prison for a month till his temper yield and his spirit be broken and he return to his

senses." As the two spoke behold, up rushed the eunuch, in the aforesaid plight, making the King who was troubled at sight of him; and he cried "O our lord the Sultan! Verily, thy son's wits are fled and he hath gone mad; he hath dealt with me thus and thus, so that I am become as thou seest me, and he kept saying:—A young lady lay with me this night and stole away secretly whilst I slept. Where is she? And he insisteth on my letting him know where [245] she is and on my telling him who took her away. But I have seen neither girl nor boy: the door was locked all through the night, for I slept before it with the key under my head, and I opened to him in the morning with my own hand." When King Shahriman heard this, he cried out, saying, "Alas, my son!;" and he was enraged with sore rage against the Wazir, who had been the cause of all this case and said to him, "Go up, bring me news of my son and see what hath befallen his mind." So the Wazir rose and, stumbling over his long skirts, in his fear of the King's wrath, hastened with the slave to the tower. Now the sun had risen and when the Minister came in to Kamar al-Zaman, he found him sitting on the couch reciting the Koran; so he saluted him and seated himself by his side, and said to him, "O my lord, this wretched eunuch brought us tidings which troubled and alarmed us and which incensed the King." Asked Kamar al-Zaman, "And what hath he told you of me to trouble my father? In good sooth he hath troubled none but me." Answered the Wazir, "He came to us in fulsome state and told us of thee a thing which Heaven forfend; and the slave added a lie which it befitteth not to repeat, Allah preserve thy youth and sound sense and tongue of eloquence, and forbid to come from thee aught of offence!" Quoth the Prince,"O Wazir, and what thing did this pestilent slave say of me?" The Minister replied, "He told us that thy wits had taken leave of thee and thou wouldst have it that a young lady lay with thee last night, and thou wast instant with him to tell thee whither she went and thou diddest torture him to that end." But when Kamar al-Zaman heard these words, he was enraged with sore rage and he said to the Wazir, "'Tis manifest to me in very deed that you people taught the eunuch to do as he did"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kamar al-Zaman heard the words of the Wazir he was enraged with sore rage and said to him, "'Tis manifest to me in very deed that you people taught the eunuch to do as he did and forbade him to tell me what became of the young lady who lay with me last night. But thou, O Wazir, art cleverer than the eunuch; so do thou tell me without stay or delay, whither went the young lady who slept on my [246] bosom last night; for it was you who sent her and bade her sleep in my embrace and we lay together till dawn; but, when I awoke, I found her not. So where is she now?" Said the Wazir, "O my lord Kamar al-Zaman, Allah's name encompass thee about! By the Almighty, we sent none to thee last night, but thou layest alone, with the door locked on thee and the eunuch sleeping

behind it, nor did there come to thee young lady or any other. Regain thy reason, O my lord, and stablish thy senses and occupy not thy mind with vanities." Rejoined Kamar al-Zaman who was incensed at his words, "O Wazir, the young lady in question is my beloved, the fair one with the black eyes and rosy cheeks, whom I held in my arms all last night." So the Minister wondered at his words and asked him, "Didst thou see this damsel last night with thine own eyes on wake or in sleep?" Answered Kamar al-Zaman, "O ill-omened old man, dost thou fancy I saw her with my ears? Indeed, I saw her with my very eyes and awake, and I touched her with my hand, and I watched by her full half the night, feeding my vision on her beauty and loveliness and grace and tempting looks. But you had schooled her and charged her to speak no word to me; so she feigned sleep and I lay by her side till dawn, when I awoke and found her gone." Rejoined the Wazir, "O my lord Kamar al-Zaman, haply thou sawest this in thy sleep; it must have been a delusion of dreams or a deception caused by eating various kinds of food, or a suggestion of the accursed devils." Cried the Prince, "O pestilent old man! wilt thou too make a mock of me and tell me this was haply a delusion of dreams, when that eunuch confessed to the young lady, saying:—At once I will return to thee and tell thee all about her?" With these words, he sprang up and rushed at the Wazir and gripped hold of his beard (which was long[273]) and, after gripping it, he 247 twisted his hand in it and haling him off the couch, threw him on the floor. It seemed to the Minister as though his soul departed his body for the violent plucking at his beard; and Kamar al-Zaman ceased not kicking the Wazir and basting his breast and ribs and cuffing him with open hand on the nape of his neck till he had well-nigh beaten him to death. Then said the old man in his mind, "Just as the eunuch-slave saved his life from this lunatic youth by telling him a lie, thus it is even fitter that I do likewise; else he will destroy me. So now for my lie to save myself, he being mad beyond a doubt." Then he turned to Kamar al-Zaman and said, "O my lord, pardon me; for indeed thy father charged me to conceal from thee this affair of the young lady; but now I am weak and weary and wounded with tunding; for I am an old man and lack strength and bottom to endure blows. Have, therefore, a little patience with me and I will tell thee all and acquaint thee with the story of the young woman." When the Prince heard this, he left off drubbing him and said, "Wherefore couldst thou not tell me the tale until after shame and blows? Rise now, unlucky old man that thou art, and tell me her story." Quoth the Wazir, "Say, dost thou ask of the young lady with the fair face and perfect form?" Quoth Kamar al-Zaman, "Even so! Tell me, O Wazir, who it was that led her to me and laid her by my side, and who was it that took her away from me by night; and let me know forthright whither she is gone, that I myself may go to her at once. If my father did this deed to me that he might try me by means of that beautiful girl, with a view to our marriage, I consent to wed her and free myself of this trouble; for he did all these dealings with me only because I refused wedlock. But now I consent and I say again, I consent to matrimony: so tell this to my father, O Wazir, and advise him to marry

me to that young lady; for I will have none other and my heart loveth none save her alone. Now rise up at once and haste thee to my 248 father and counsel him to hurry on our wedding and bring me his answer within this very hour." Rejoined the Wazir, "'Tis well!" and went forth from him, hardly believing himself out of his hands. Then he set off from the tower, walking and tripping up as he went, for excess of fright and agitation, and he ceased not hurrying till he came in to King Shahriman.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir fared forth from the tower, and ceased not running till he came in to King Shahriman, who said to him as he sighted him, "O thou Wazir, what man hath brought thee to grief and whose mischief hath treated thee in way unlief; how happeneth it that I see thee dumb-foundered and coming to me thus astounded?" Replied the Wazir, "O King! I bring thee good news." "And what is it?" quoth Shariman, and quoth the Wazir, "Know that thy son Kamar al-Zaman's wits are clean gone and that he hath become stark mad." Now when the King heard these words of the Minister, light became darkness in his sight and he said, "O Wazir, make clear to me the nature of his madness." Answered the Wazir, "O my lord, I hear and I obey." Then he told him that such and such had passed and acquainted him with all that his son had done; whereupon the King said to him, "Hear, O Wazir, the good tidings which I give thee in return for this thy fair news of my son's insanity; and it shall be the cutting off of thy head and the forfeiture of my favour, O most ill-omened of Wazirs and foulest of Emirs! for I feel that thou hast caused my son's disorder by the wicked advice and the sinister counsel thou hast given me first and last. By Allah, if aught of mischief or madness have befallen my son I will most assuredly nail thee upon the palace-dome and make thee drain the bitterest draught of death!" Then he sprang up and, taking the Wazir with him, fared straight for the tower and entered it. And when Kamar al-Zaman saw the two, he rose to his father in haste from the couch whereon he sat and kissing his hands drew back and hung down his head and stood before him with his arms behind him, and thus remained for a full hour. Then he raised his head towards his sire; the tears gushed from his eyes and streamed down his cheeks and he began repeating:—

249 "Forgive the sin 'neath which my limbs are trembling,
For the slave seeks for mercy from his master;
I've done a fault, which calls for free confession,
Where shall it call for mercy, and forgiveness?"[274]

When the King heard this, he arose and embraced his son, and kissing him between the eyes, made him sit by his side on the couch; then he turned to the Wazir and, looking on him with eyes of wrath, said, "O dog of Wazirs, how didst thou say of my son such and such things and make my heart quake for him?" Then he turned to the Prince and said, "O my son, what is to-day called?" He answered, "O my father, this

day is the Sabbath, and to-morrow is First day: then come Second day, Third, Fourth, Fifth day and lastly Friday."[275] Exclaimed the King, "O my son, O Kamar al-Zaman, praised be Allah for the preservation of thy reason! What is the present month called in our Arabic?" "Zú'l-Ka'adah," answered Kamar al-Zaman, "and it is followed by Zú'l-hijjah; then cometh Muharram, then Safar, then Rabí'a the First and Rabí'a the Second, the two Jamádás, Rajab, Sha aban, Ramazán and Shawwál." At this the King rejoiced exceedingly and spat in the Wazir's face, saying, "O wicked old man, how canst thou say that my son is mad? And now none is mad but thou." Hereupon the Minister shook his head and would have spoken, but bethought himself to wait awhile and see what might next befal. Then the King said to his child, "O my son, what words be these thou saidest to the eunuch and the Wazir, declaring:—I was sleeping with a fair damsel this night?[276] What damsel is this of whom thou speakest?" Then Kamar al-Zaman laughed at his father's words and replied, "O my father, know that I can bear no more jesting; so add me not another mock or even a single word on the matter, for my temper hath waxed short by that you have done with me. And know, O my father, with assured knowledge, that I consent to marry, but on condition that thou give me to wife her who lay by my side this night; for I am certain it was thou sentest her to me and 250 madest me in love with her and then despatchedst a message to her before the dawn and tookest her away from beside me." Rejoined the King, "The name of Allah encompass thee about, O my son, and be thy wit preserved from witlessness!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth King Shahriman to his son Kamar al-Zaman, "The name of Allah encompass thee about, O my son, and be thy wit preserved from witlessness! What thing be this young lady whom thou fanciest I sent to thee last night and then again that I sent to withdraw her from thee before dawn? By the Lord, O my son, I know nothing of this affair, and Allah upon thee, tell me if it be a delusion of dreaming or a deception caused by indisposition. For verily thou layest down to sleep last night with thy mind occupied anent marriage and troubled with the talk of it (Allah damn marriage and the hour when I spake of it and curse him who counselled it!); and without doubt or diffidence I can say that being moved in mind by the mention of wedlock thou dreamedst that a handsome young lady embraced thee and didst fancy thou sawest her when awake. But all this, O my son, is but an imbroglio of dreams." Replied Kamar al-Zaman, "Leave this talk and swear to me by Allah, the All-creator, the Omniscient; the Humbler of the tyrant Cæsars and the Destroyer of the Chosroes, that thou knowest naught of the young lady nor of her woning-place." Quoth the King, "By the Might of Allah Almighty, the God of Moses and Abraham, I know naught of all this and never even heard of it; it is assuredly a delusion of dreams thou hast seen in sleep." Then the Prince replied to his

sire, "I will give thee a self-evident proof that it happened to me when on wake."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman said to his sire, "I will give thee a self-evident proof that this happened to me when on wake. Now let me ask thee, did it ever befal any man to dream that he was battling a sore battle and 251 after to awake from sleep and find in his hand a sword-blade besmeared with blood? Answered the King, "No, by Allah, O my son, this hath never been." Rejoined Kamar al-Zaman, "I will tell thee what happened to me and it was this. Meseemed I awoke from sleep in the middle of the past night and found a girl lying by my side, whose form was like mine and whose favour was as mine. I embraced her and turned her about with my hand and took her seal-ring, which I put on my finger, and she pulled off my ring and put it on hers. Then I went to sleep by her side, but refrained from her for shame of thee, deeming that thou hadst sent her to me, intending to tempt me with her and incline me to marriage, and suspecting thee to be hidden somewhere whence thou couldst see what I did with her. And I was ashamed even to kiss her on the mouth for thy account, thinking over this temptation to wedlock; and, when I awoke at point of day, I found no trace of her, nor could I come at any news of her, and there befel me what thou knowest of with the eunuch and with the Wazir. How then can this case have been a dream and a delusion, when the ring is a reality? Save for her ring on my finger I should indeed have deemed it a dream; but here is the ring on my little finger: look at it, O King, and see what is its worth." So saying, he handed the ring to his father, who examined it and turned it over, then looked to his son and said, "Verily, there is in this ring some mighty mystery and some strange secret. What befel thee last night with the girl is indeed a hard nut to crack, and I know not how intruded upon us this intruder. None is the cause of all this pother save the Wazir; but, Allah upon thee, O my son, take patience, so haply the Lord may turn to gladness this thy grief and to thy sadness bring complete relief: as quoth one of the poets:—

Haply shall Fortune draw her rein, and bring ✿ Fair chance, for she is changeful, jealous, vain:
Still I may woo my want and wishes win, ✿ And see on heels of care unfain, the fain.

And now, O my son, I am certified at this hour that thou art not mad; but thy case is a strange one which none can clear up for thee save the Almighty." Cried the Prince, "By Allah, O my father, deal kindly with me and seek out this young lady and hasten her coming to me; else I shall die of woe and of my death shall no one know." Then he betrayed the ardour of his passion; and turned towards his father and repeated these two couplets:—

252 If your promise of personal call prove untrue, ✿ Deign in vision to grant me an interview:
Quoth they, "How can phantom[277] appear to the sight ✿ Of a youth, whose sight is fordone, perdue?"

Then, after ending his poetry, Kamar al-Zaman again turned to his father, with submission and despondency, and shedding tears in flood, began repeating these lines——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kamar al-Zaman had repeated to his father these verses, he wept and complained and groaned from a wounded heart; and added these lines:—

Beware that eye-glance which hath magic might; ✿ Wherever turn those orbs it bars our flight:
Nor be deceived by low sweet voice, that breeds ✿ A fever festering in the heart and sprite:
So soft that silky skin, were rose to touch it ✿ She'd cry and tear-drops rain for pain and fright:
Did Zephyr e'en in sleep pass o'er her land, ✿ Scented he'd choose to dwell in scented site:
Her necklets vie with tinkling of her belt; ✿ Her wrists strike either wristlet dumb with spite:
When would her bangles buss those rings in ear, ✿ Upon the lover's eyne high mysteries 'light:
I'm blamed for love of her, nor pardon claim; ✿ Eyes are not profiting which lack foresight:
Heaven strip thee, blamer mine! unjust art thou; ✿ Before this fawn must every eye low bow.[278]

253 After which he said, "By Allah, O my father, I cannot endure to be parted from her even for an hour." The King smote hand upon hand and exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! No cunning contrivance can profit us in this affair." Then he took his son by the hand and carried him to the palace, where Kamar al-Zaman lay down on the bed of languor and the King sat at his head, weeping and mourning over him and leaving him not, night or day, till at last the Wazir came in to him and said, "O King of the age and the time, how long wilt thou remain shut up with thy son and hide thyself from thy troops? Haply, the order of thy realm may be deranged, by reason of thine absence from thy Grandees and Officers of State. It behoveth the man of understanding, if he have various wounds in his body, to apply him first to medicine the most dangerous; so it is my counsel to thee that thou remove thy son from this place to the pavilion which is in the palace overlooking the sea; and shut thyself up with him there, setting apart in every week two days, Thursday and Monday, for state receptions and progresses and reviews. On these days let thine Emirs and Wazirs and Chamberlains and Viceroys and high Officials and Grandees of the realm and the rest of the levies and the lieges have access to thee and submit their affairs to thee; and do thou their needs and judge among them and give and take with them and bid and forbid. And the rest of the week thou shalt pass with thy son, Kamar al-Zaman, and cease not thus doing till Allah shall vouchsafe relief to you twain. Think not, O King, that thou art safe from the shifts of Time and the strokes of Change which come like a traveller in the night; for the wise man is ever on his guard and how well saith the poet:—

Thou deemedst well of Time when days went well, ✿ And fearedst not what ills might bring thee Fate:

The Nights so fair and restful cozened thee, ✿ For peaceful Nights bring woes of heavy weight.
Oh children of mankind whom Time befriends, ✿ Beware of Time's deceits or soon or late!"[279]

When the Sultan heard his Wazir's words he saw that they were right and deemed his counsel wise, and it had effect upon him for he feared lest the order of the state be deranged; so he rose at 254once and bade transport his son from his sick room to the pavilion in the palace overlooking the sea. Now this palace was girt round by the waters and was approached by a causeway twenty cubits wide. It had windows on all sides commanding an ocean-view; its floor was paved with parti-coloured marbles and its ceiling was painted in the richest pigments and figured with gold and lapis-lazuli. They furnished it for Kamar al-Zaman with splendid upholstery, embroidered rugs and carpets of the richest silk; and they clothed the walls with choice brocades and hung curtains bespangled with gems of price. In the midst they set him a couch of juniper[280]-wood inlaid with pearls and jewels, and Kamar al-Zaman sat down thereon, but the excess of his concern and passion for the young lady had wasted his charms and emaciated his body; he could neither eat nor drink nor sleep; and he was like a man who had been sick twenty years of sore sickness. His father seated himself at his head, grieving for him with the deepest grief, and every Monday and Thursday he gave his Wazirs and Emirs and Chamberlains and Viceroys and Lords of the realm and levies and the rest of his lieges leave to come up to him in that pavilion. So they entered and did their several service and duties and abode with him till the end of the day, when they went their ways and the King returned to his son in the pavilion whom he left not night nor day; and he ceased not doing on this wise for many days and nights. Such was the case with Kamar al-Zaman, son of King Shahriman; but as regards Princess Budur, daughter of King Ghayur, Lord of the Isles and the Seven Palaces, when the two Jinns bore her up and laid her on her bed, she slept till daybreak, when she awoke and sitting upright looked right and left, but saw not the youth who had lain in her bosom. At this her vitals fluttered, her reason fled and she shrieked a loud shriek which awoke all her slave-girls and nurses and duennas. They flocked in to her; and the chief of them came forward and asked, "What aileth thee, O my lady?" Answered the Princess, "O wretched old woman, where is my beloved, the handsome youth who lay last night in my bosom? Tell me whither he is gone." Now when the duenna heard this, the light starkened in her sight and she feared from her mischief with sore affright, and said to her, "O my Lady Budur, what 255unseemly words are these?" Cried the Princess, "Woe to thee, pestilent crone that thou art! I ask thee again where is my beloved, the goodly youth with the shining face and the slender form, the jetty eyes and the joined eyebrows, who lay with me last night from supper-tide until near daybreak?" She rejoined, "By Allah, O my lady, I have seen no young man nor any other. I conjure thee, carry not this unseemly jest too far lest we all lose our lives; for perhaps the joke may come to thy father's ears and who shall

then deliver us from his hand?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She said, "It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the duenna bespake the Lady Budur in these words, 'Allah upon thee, O my lady! carry not this unseemly jest too far; for perhaps it may come to thy father's ears, and who shall then deliver us from his hand?'" The Princess rejoined, "In very sooth a youth lay with me last night, one of the fairest-faced of men." Exclaimed the duenna, "Heaven preserve thy reason! indeed no one lay with thee last night." Thereupon the Princess looked at her hand and, finding Kamar al-Zaman's seal-ring on her finger in stead of her own, said to her, "Woe to thee, thou accursed! thou traitress! wilt thou lie to me and tell me that none lay with me last night and swear to me a falsehood in the name of the Lord?" Replied the duenna, "By Allah, I do not lie to thee nor have I sworn falsely." Then the Princess was incensed by her words and, drawing a sword she had by her, she smote the old woman with it and slew her;[281] whereupon the eunuch and the waiting-women and the concubines cried out at her, and ran to her father and, without stay or delay, acquainted him with her case. So the King went to her, and asked her, "O my daughter, what aileth thee?"; and she answered, "O my father, where is the youth who lay with me last night?" Then her reason fled from her head and she cast her eyes right and left and rent her raiment even to the skirt. When her sire saw this, he bade the women lay hands on her; so they seized her and manacled her, then putting a chain of iron about her 256 neck, made her fast to one of the palace-windows and there left her.[282] Thus far concerning Princess Budur; but as regards her father, King Ghayur, the world was straitened upon him when he saw what had befallen his daughter, for that he loved her and her case was not a little grievous to him. So he summoned on it the doctors and astrologers and men skilled in talisman-writing and said to them, "Whoso healeth my daughter of what ill she hath, I will marry him to her and give him half of my kingdom; but whoso cometh to her and cureth her not, I will strike off his head and hang it over her palace-gate." Accordingly, all who went in to her, but failed to heal her, he beheaded and hung their heads over the palace-gates, till he had beheaded on her account forty doctors and crucified forty astrologers; wherefor the general held aloof from her, all the physicians having failed to medicine her malady; and her case was a puzzle to the men of science and the adepts in cabalistic characters. And as her longing and passion redoubled and love and distraction were sore upon her, she poured forth tears and repeated these couplets:—

My fondness, O my moon, for thee my foeman is, ✿ And to thy comradeship the nights my thought compel:
In gloom I bide with fire that flames below my ribs, ✿ Whose lowe I make comparison with heat of Hell:
I'm plagued with sorest stress of pine and ecstasy; ✿ Nor clearest noontide can that horrid pain dispel.

Then she sighed and repeated these also:—

Salams fro' me to friends in every stead; ✿ Indeed to all dear friends do I incline:
Salams, but not salams that bid adieu; ✿ Salams that growth of good for you design:
I love you dear, indeed, nor less your land, ✿ But bide I far from every need of mine!

And when the lady Budur ceased repeating her poetry, she wept till her eyes waxed sore and her cheeks changed form and hue, and in this condition she continued three years. Now she had a foster-brother, by name Marzawán,[283] who was travelling in far 257lands and absent from her the whole of this time. He loved her with an exceeding love, passing the love of brothers; so when he came back he went in to his mother and asked for his sister, the Princess Budur. She answered him, "O my son, thy sister hath been smitten with madness and hath passed these three years with a chain of iron about her neck; and all the physicians and men of science have failed of healing her." When Marzawan heard these words he said, "I must needs go in to her; peradventure I may discover what she hath, and be able to medicine her;" and his mother replied, "Needs must thou visit her, but wait till to-morrow, that I may contrive some thing to suit thy case." Then she went a-foot to the palace of the Lady Budur and, accosting the eunuch in charge of the gates, made him a present and said to him, "I have a daughter, who was brought up with thy mistress and since then I married her; and, when that befel the Princess which befel her, she became troubled and sore concerned, and I desire of thy favour that my daughter may go in to her for an hour and look on her; and then return whence she came, so shall none know of it." Quoth the eunuch, "This may not be except by night, after the King hath visited his child and gone away; then come thou and thy daughter." So she kissed the eunuch's hand and, returning home, waited till the morrow at nightfall; and when it was time she arose and sought her son Marzawan and attired him in woman's apparel; then, taking his hand in hers, led him towards the palace, and ceased not walking with him till she came upon the eunuch after the Sultan had ended his visit to the Princess. Now when the eunuch saw her, he rose to her, and said, "Enter, but do not prolong thy stay!" So they went in and when Marzawan beheld the Lady Budur in the aforesaid plight, he saluted her, after his mother had doffed his woman's garb: then he took out of their satchel books he had brought with him; and, lighting a wax-candle, he began to recite certain conjurations. Thereupon the Princess looked at him and recognising him, said, "O my brother, thou hast been absent on thy travels, and thy news have been cut off from us." He replied, "True! but Allah hath brought me back safe and sound, I am now minded to set out again nor hath aught delayed me but the news I hear of thee; wherefore my heart burned for thee and I came to thee, so haply I may free thee of thy malady." She rejoined, "O my brother, thinkest thou it is madness aileth me?" "Yes," 258answered he, and she said, "Not so, by Allah! 'tis even as saith the poet:—

Quoth they "Thou rav'st on him thou lov'st:" quoth I, ✿ "The sweets of love are only for th' insane!"
Love never maketh Time his friend befriend; ✿ Only the Jinn-struck wight such boon can gain:

Well! yes, I'm mad: bring him who madded me ✿ And, if he cure my madness, blame restrain!"

Then she let Marzawan know that she was love-daft and he said, "Tell me concerning thy tale and what befel thee: haply there may be in my hand something which shall be a means of deliverance for thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Marzawan thus addressed Princess Budur, "Tell me concerning thy tale and what befel thee: haply Allah may inspire me with a means of deliverance for thee." Quoth she, "O my brother, hear my story which is this. One night I awoke from sleep, in the last third of the night[284] and, sitting up, saw by my side the handsomest of youths that be, and tongue faileth to describe him, for he was as a willow-wand or an Indian rattan-cane. So methought it was my father who had done on this wise in order thereby to try me, for that he had consulted me concerning wedlock, when the Kings sought me of him to wife, and I had refused. It was this thought withheld me from arousing him, for I feared that, if I did aught or embraced him, he would peradventure inform my father of my doings. But in the morning, I found on my finger his seal-ring, in place of my own which he had taken. And, O my brother, my heart was seized with love of him at first sight; and, for the violence of my passion and longing, I have never savoured the taste of sleep and have no occupation save weeping alway and repeating verses night and day. And this, O my brother, is my 259 story and the cause of my madness." Then she poured forth tears and repeated these couplets:—

"Now Love hast banished all that bred delight; ✿ With that heart-nibbling fawn my joys took flight:

Lightest of trifles lover's blood to him ✿ Who wastes the vitals of the hapless wight!

For him I'm jealous of my sight and thought; ✿ My heart acts spy upon my thought and sight:

Those long-lashed eyelids rain on me their shafts ✿ Guileful, destroying hearts where'er they light:

Now, while my portion in the world endures, ✿ Shall I behold him ere I quit world-site?

What bear I for his sake I'd hide, but tears ✿ Betray my feelings to the spy's despight.

When near, our union seemeth ever far; ✿ When far, my thoughts to him aye nearest are."

And presently she continued, "See then, O my brother, how thou mayest aid me in mine affliction." So Marzawan bowed his head groundwards awhile, wondering and not knowing what to do, then he raised it and said to her, "All thou hast spoken to me I hold to be true, though the case of the young man pass my understanding: but I will go round about all lands and will seek for what may heal thee; haply Allah shall appoint thy healing to be at my hand. Meanwhile, take patience and be not disquieted." Thereupon Marzawan farewelled her, praying that she might be constant and left her repeating these couplets:—

Thine image ever companies my sprite, ✿ For all thou'rt distant from then pilgrim's sight;

But my heart-wishes e'er attract thee near: ✿ What is the lightning's speed to Thought's swift flight?

Then go not thou, my very light of eyes ✿ Which, when thou'rt gone, lack all the Kohl of light.

Then Marzawan returned to his mother's house, where he passed the night. And when the morrow dawned, having equipped himself for his journey, he fared forth and ceased not faring from city to city and from island to island for a whole month, till he came to a town named Al-Tayrab.[285] Here he went about scenting news of the townsfolk, so haply he might light on a cure for the Princess's malady, for in every capital he entered or passed by, it was reported 260 that Queen Budur, daughter of King Ghayur, had lost her wits. But arriving at Al-Tayrab city, he heard that Kamar al-Zaman, son of King Shahriman, was fallen sick and afflicted with melancholy madness. So Marzawan asked the name of the Prince's capital and they said to him, "It is on the Islands of Khalidan and it lieth distant from our city a whole month's journey by sea, but by land it is six months' march." So he went down to the sea in a ship which was bound for the Khalidan Isles, and she sailed with a favouring breeze for a whole month, till they came in sight of the capital; and there remained for them but to make the land when, behold, there came out on them a tempestuous wind which carried away the masts and rent the canvas, so that the sails fell into the sea and the ship capsized, with all on board,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the ship capsized with all on board, each sought his own safety; and as for Marzawan the set of the sea carried him under the King's palace, wherein was Kamar al-Zaman. And by the decree of destiny it so happened that this was the day on which King Shahriman gave audience to his Grandees and high officers, and he was sitting, with his son's head on his lap, whilst an eunuch fanned away the flies; and the Prince had not spoken neither had he eaten nor drunk for two days, and he was grown thinner than a spindle.[286] Now the Wazir was standing respectfully a-foot near the latticed window giving on the sea and, raising his eyes, saw Marzawan being beaten by the billows and at his last gasp; whereupon his heart was moved to pity for him, so he drew near to the King and moving his head towards him said, "I crave thy leave, O King, to go down to the court of the pavilion and open the water-gate that I may rescue a man who is at the point of drowning in the sea and bring him forth of danger into deliverance; peradventure, on this account Allah may free thy son from what he hath!" The King replied, "O thou Wazir, enough is 261 that which hath befallen my son through thee and on thine account. Haply, if thou rescue this drowning man, he will come to know our affairs, and look on my son who is in this state and exult over me; but I swear by Allah, that if this half-drowned wretch come hither and learn our condition and look upon my son and then fare forth and speak of our secrets to any, I will assuredly strike off thy head before his; for thou, O my Minister, art the cause of all that hath betided us, first and last. Now do as thou wilt." Thereupon the Wazir sprang up and, opening the private

postern which gave upon the sea, descended to the causeway; then walked on twenty steps and came to the water where he saw Marzawan nigh unto death. So he put out his hand to him and, catching him by his hair, drew him ashore in a state of insensibility, with belly full of water and eyes half out of his head. The Wazir waited till he came to himself, when he pulled off his wet clothes and clad him in a fresh suit, covering his head with one of his servants' turbands; after which he said to him, "Know that I have been the means of saving thee from drowning: do not thou requite me by causing my death and thine own."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir did to Marzawan what he did, he thus addressed him, "Know that I have been the cause of saving thee from drowning, so requite me not by causing my death and thine own." Asked Marzawan, "And how so?"; and the Wazir answered, "Thou art at this hour about to go up and pass among Emirs and Wazirs, all of them silent and none speaking, because of Kamar al-Zaman, the son of the Sultan." Now when Marzawan heard the name of Kamar al-Zaman, he knew that this was he whom he had heard spoken of in sundry cities and of whom he came in search, but he feigned ignorance and asked the Wazir, "And who is Kamar al-Zaman?" Answered the Minister, "He is the son of Sultan Shahriman and he is sore sick and lieth strown on his couch restless alway, eating not nor drinking neither sleeping night or day; indeed he is nigh upon death and we have lost hope of his living and are certain that he is dying. Beware lest thou look too long 262 on him, or thou look on any place other than that where thou settest thy feet: else thou art a lost man, and I also." He replied, "Allah upon thee, O Wazir, I implore thee, of thy favour, acquaint me touching this youth thou describest, what is the cause of the condition in which he is." The Wazir replied, "I know none, save that, three years ago, his father required him to wed, but he refused; whereat the King was wroth and imprisoned him. And when he awoke on the morrow, he fancied that during the night he had been roused from sleep and had seen by his side a young lady of passing loveliness, whose charms tongue can never express; and he assured us that he had plucked off her seal-ring from her finger and had put it on his own and that she had done likewise; but we know not the secret of all this business. So by Allah, O my son, when thou comest up with me into the palace, look not on the Prince, but go thy way; for the Sultan's heart is full of wrath against me." So said Marzawan to himself, "By Allah; this is the one I sought!" Then he followed the Wazir up to the palace, where the Minister seated himself at the Prince's feet; but Marzawan found forsooth nothing to do but go up to Kamar al-Zaman and stand before him at gaze. Upon this the Wazir died of affright in his skin, and kept looking at Marzawan and signalling him to wend his way; but he feigned not to see him and gave not over gazing upon Kamar al-Zaman, till he was well assured that it was

indeed he whom he was seeking,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Marzawan looked upon Kamar al-Zaman and knew that it was indeed he whom he was seeking, he cried, "Exalted be Allah, Who hath made his shape even as her shape and his complexion as her complexion and his cheek as her cheek!" Upon this Kamar al-Zaman opened his eyes and gave earnest ear to his speech; and, when Marzawan saw him inclining to hear, he repeated these couplets[287]:—

263 I see thee full of song and plaint and love's own ecstasy;
Delighting in describing all the charms of loveliness:
Art smit by stroke of Love or hath shaft-shot wounded thee?
None save the wounded ever show such signals of distress!
Ho thou! crown the wine-cup and sing me singular
Praises to Sulaymá, Al-Rabáb, Tan'oum addrest;[288]
Go round the grape-vine sun[289] which for mansion hath a jar;
Whose East the cup-boy is, and here my mouth that opes for West.
I'm jealous of the very clothes that dare her sides enroll
When she veils her dainty body of the delicatest grace:
I envy every goblet of her lips that taketh toll,
When she sets the kissing-cup on that sweetest kissing-place.
But deem not by the keen-edged scymitar I'm slain—
The hurts and harms I dree are from arrows of her eyes.
I found her finger-tips, as I met her once again,
Deep-reddened with the juice of the wood that ruddy dyes;[290]
And cried, "Thy palms thou stainedst when far away was I
And this is how thou payest one distracted by his pine!"
Quoth she (enkindling in my heart a flame that burnèd high
Speaking as one who cannot hide of longing love the sign),
"By thy life, this is no dye used for dyeing; so forbear
Thy blame, nor in charging me with falsing Love persist!"
"But when upon our parting-day I saw thee haste to fare,
The while were bared my hand and my elbow and my wrist;"
"I shed a flood of blood-red tears and with fingers brushed away;
Hence blood-reddened were the tips and still blood-red they remain."
Had I wept before she wept, to my longing-love a prey,
Before repentance came, I had quit my soul of pain;
264 But she wept before I wept and I wept to see her care
And I said, "All the merit appertains to precedent;"[291]
Blame me not for loving her; now on self of Love I swear
For her sake, for her only, these pains my soul torment.

She hath all the lere of Lukmán[292] and Yúsuf's beauty lief;
Sweet singer David's voice and Maryam's chastity:
While I've all Jacob's mourning and Jonah's prison-grief,
And the sufferings of Job and old Adam's history:
Yet kill her not, albeit of my love for her I die;
But ask her why my blood to her was lawful, ask her why?

When Marzawan recited this ode, the words fell upon Kamar al-Zaman's heart as freshness after fever and returning health; and he sighed and, turning his tongue in his mouth, said to his sire, "O my father, let this youth come and sit by my side."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman said to his sire, "O my father, allow this youth to come and sit by my side." Now when the King heard these words from his son, he rejoiced with exceeding joy, though at the first his heart had been set against Marzawan and he had determined that the stranger's head needs must be stricken off: but when he heard Kamar al-Zaman speak, his anger left him and he arose and drawing Marzawan to him, seated him by his son and turning to him said, "Praised be Allah for thy safety!" He replied, "Allah preserve thee! and preserve thy son to thee!" and called down blessings on the King. Then the King asked, "From what country art thou?"; and he answered, "From the Islands of the Inland Sea, the kingdom of King Ghayur, Lord of the Isles and the Seas and the Seven Palaces." Quoth King Shahriman, 265"Maybe thy coming shall be blessed to my son and Allah vouchsafe to heal what is in him." Quoth Marzawan, "Inshallah, naught shall be save what shall be well!" Then turning to Kamar al-Zaman, he said to him in his ear unheard of the King and his court, "O my lord! be of good cheer, and hearten thy heart and let thine eyes be cool and clear and, with respect to her for whose sake thou art thus, ask not of her case on thine account. But thou keptest thy secret and fellest sick, while she told her secret and they said she had gone mad; so she is now in prison, with an iron chain about her neck, in most piteous plight; but, Allah willing, the healing of both of you shall come from my hand." Now when Kamar al-Zaman heard these words, his life returned to him and he took heart and felt a thrill of joy and signed to his father to help him sit up; and the King was like to fly for gladness and rose hastily and lifted him up. Presently, of his fear for his son, he shook the kerchief of dismissal[293]; and all the Emirs and Wazirs withdrew; then he set two pillows for his son to lean upon, after which he bade them perfume the palace with saffron and decorate the city, saying to Marzawan, "By Allah, O my son, of a truth thine aspect be a lucky and a blessed!" And he made as much of him as he might and called for food, and when they brought it, Marzawan came up to the Prince and said, "Rise, eat with me." So he obeyed him and ate with him, and all the while the King invoked blessings on Marzawan and said, "How auspicious is thy coming, O my son!" And when the

father saw his boy eat, his joy and gladness redoubled, and he went out and told the Prince's mother and all the household. Then he spread throughout the palace the good news of the Prince's recovery and the King commanded the decoration of the city and it was a day of high festival. Marzawan passed that night with Kamar al-Zaman, and the King also slept with them in joy and delight for his son's recovery.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Shahriman also passed that night with them in the excess of his joy for 266his son's recovery. And when the next morning dawned, and the King had gone away and the two young men were left alone, Kamar al-Zaman told his story from beginning to end to Marzawan who said, "In very sooth I know her with whom thou didst foregather; her name is the Princess Budur and she is daughter to King Ghayur." Then he related to him all that had passed with the Princess from first to last and acquainted him with the excessive love she bore him, saying, "All that befel thee with thy father hath befallen her with hers, and thou art without doubt her beloved, even as she is thine; so brace up thy resolution and take heart, for I will bring thee to her and unite you both anon and deal with you even as saith the poet:—

Albe to lover adverse be his love, ✿ And show aversion howso may he care;

Yet will I manage that their persons[294] meet, ✿ E'en as the pivot of a scissor-pair."

And he ceased not to comfort and solace and encourage Kamar al-Zaman and urge him to eat and drink till he ate food and drank wine, and life returned to him and he was saved from his ill case; and Marzawan cheered him and diverted him with talk and songs and stories, and in good time he became free of his disorder and stood up and sought to go to the Hammam.[295] So Marzawan took him by the hand and both went to the bath, where they washed their bodies and made them clean.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundredth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kamar al-Zaman, son of King Shahriman, went to the Hammam, his father in his joy at this event freed the prisoners, and presented splendid dresses to his grandees and bestowed large alm-gifts upon the poor and bade decorate the city seven days. Then quoth Marzawan to Kamar al-Zaman, "Know, O my lord, that I came not from the Lady Budur save for this purpose, and the 267object of my journey was to deliver her from her present case; and it remaineth for us only to devise how we may get to her, since thy father cannot brook the thought of parting from thee. So it is my counsel that to-morrow thou ask his leave to go abroad hunting. Then do thou take with thee a pair of saddle-bags full of money and mount a swift steed, and lead a spare horse, and I will do the like, and say to thy sire:—I have a mind to divert myself with hunting the desert and to see the

open country and there to pass one night. Suffer not any servant to follow us, for as soon as we reach the open country, we will go our ways." Kamar al-Zaman rejoiced in this plan with great joy and cried, "It is good." Then he stiffened his back and, going in to his father, sought his leave and spoke as he had been taught, and the King consented to his going forth a-hunting and said, "O my son, blessed be the day that restoreth thee to health! I will not gainsay thee in this; but pass not more than one night in the desert and return to me on the morrow; for thou knowest that life is not good to me without thee, and indeed I can hardly believe thee to be wholly recovered from what thou hadst,[296] because thou art to me as he of whom quoth the poet:—

Albe by me I had through day and night ✿ Solomon's carpet and the Chosroes' might,

Both were in value less than wing of gnat, ✿ Unless these eyne could hold thee aye in sight."[297]

Then the King equipped his son Kamar al-Zaman and Marzawan for the excursion, bidding make ready for them four horses, together with a dromedary to carry the money and a camel to bear the water and belly-timber; and Kamar al-Zaman forbade any of his attendants to follow him. His father farewelled him and pressed him to his breast and kissed him, saying, "I ask thee in the name of Allah, be not absent from me more than one night, wherein sleep will be unlawful to me, for I am even as saith the poet:—

268 Thou present, in the Heaven of heavens I dwell; ✿ Bearing thine absence is of hells my Hell:

Pledged be for thee my soul! If love for thee ✿ Be crime, my crime is of the fellest fell.

Does love-lowe burn thy heart as burns it mine, ✿ Doomed night and day Gehenna-fire to smell?"

Answered Kamar al-Zaman, "O my father, Inshallah, I will lie abroad but one night!" Then he took leave of him, and he and Marzawan mounted and leading the spare horses, the dromedary with the money and the camel with the water and victual, turned their faces towards the open country;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawning day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and First Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman and Marzawan fared forth and turned their faces towards the open country; and they travelled from the first of the day till nightfall, when they halted and ate and drank and fed their beasts and rested awhile; after which they again took horse and ceased not journeying for three days, and on the fourth they came to a spacious tract wherein was a thicket. They alighted in it and Marzawan, taking the camel and one of the horses, slaughtered them and cut off their flesh and stripped their bones. Then he doffed from Kamar al-Zaman his shirt and trousers which he smeared with the horse's blood and he took the Prince's coat which he tore to shreds and befouled with gore; and he cast them down in the fork of the road. Then they ate and drank and mounting set forward again; and, when Kamar al-Zaman asked why this was done, and said, "What is this O my brother, and how shall it profit us?"; Marzawan replied, "Know that thy father, when

we have outstayed the second night after the night for which we had his leave, and yet we return not, will mount and follow in our track till he come hither; and, when he happeneth upon this blood which I have spilt and he seeth thy shirt and trousers rent and gore-fouled, he will fancy that some accident befel thee from bandits or wild-beasts; so he will give up hope of thee and return to his city, and by this device we shall win our wishes." Quoth Kamar al-Zaman, "By Allah, this be indeed a 269 rare device! Thou hast done right well."[298] Then the two fared on days and nights and all that while Kamar al-Zaman did naught but complain when he found himself alone, and he ceased not weeping till they drew near their journey's end, when he rejoiced and repeated these verses:—

Wilt tyrant play with truest friend who thinks of thee each hour, ✿ And after showing love-desire betray indifference?

May I forfeit every favour if in love I falsed thee, ✿ If thee I left, abandon me by way of recompense:

But I've been guilty of no crime such harshness to deserve, ✿ And if I aught offended thee I bring my penitence;

Of Fortune's wonders one it is thou hast abandoned me; ✿ But Fortune never wearieth of showing wonderments.

When he had made an end of his verses, Marzawan said to him, "Look! these be King Ghayur's Islands;" whereat Kamar al-Zaman joyed with exceeding joy and thanked him for what he had done, and kissed him between the eyes and strained him——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Marzawan said "Look! these be the Islands of King Ghayur;" Kamar al-Zaman joyed with exceeding joy and thanked him for what he had done and kissed him between the eyes and strained him to his bosom. And after reaching the Islands and entering the city they took up their lodging in a khan, where they rested three days from the fatigues of their wayfare; after which Marzawan carried Kamar al-Zaman to the bath and, clothing him in merchant's gear, provided him with a geomantic tablet of gold,[299] 270 with a set of astrological instruments and with an astrolabe of silver, plated with gold. Then he said to him, "Arise, O my lord, and take thy stand under the walls of the King's palace and cry out:—I am the ready Reckoner; I am the Scrivener; I am he who weeteth the Sought and the Seeker; I am the finished man of Science; I am the Astrologer accomplished in experience! Where then is he that seeketh? As soon as the King heareth this, he will send after thee and carry thee in to his daughter the Princess Budur, thy lover; but when about going in to her do thou say to him:—Grant me three days' delay, and if she recover, give her to me to wife; and if not, deal with me as thou dealtest with those who forewent me. He will assuredly agree to this, so as soon as thou art alone with her, discover thyself to her; and when she seeth thee, she will recover strength and her madness will cease from her and she will be made whole in one night. Then do thou give her to eat and drink, and her father, rejoicing in her

recovery, will marry thee to her and share his kingdom with thee; for he hath imposed on himself this condition and so peace be upon thee." Now when Kamar al-Zaman heard these words he exclaimed, "May I never lack thy benefits!", and, taking the set of instruments aforesaid, sallied forth from the caravanserai in the dress of his order. He walked on till he stood under the walls of King Ghayur's palace, where he began to cry out, saying, "I am the Scribe, I am the ready Reckoner, I am he who knoweth the Sought and the Seeker; I am he who openeth the Volume and summeth up the Sums;[300] who Dreams can expound whereby the sought is found! Where then is the seeker?" Now when the city people heard this, they flocked to him, for it was long since they had seen Scribe or Astrologer, and they stood round him and, looking upon him, 271 they saw one in the prime of beauty and grace and perfect elegance, and they marvelled at his loveliness, and his fine stature and symmetry. Presently one of them accosted him and said, "Allah upon thee, O thou fair and young, with the eloquent tongue! incur not this affray; nor throw thy life away in thine ambition to marry the Princess Budur. Only cast thine eyes upon yonder heads hung up; all their owners have lost their lives in this same venture." Yet Kamar al-Zaman paid no heed to them, but cried out at the top of his voice, saying, "I am the Doctor, the Scrivener! I am the Astrologer, the Calculator!" And all the townsfolk forbade him from this, but he regarded them not at all, saying in his mind, "None knoweth desire save whoso suffereth it." Then he began again to cry his loudest, shouting, "I am the Scrivener, I am the Astrologer!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman in no wise heeded the words of the citizens, but continued to cry out, "I am the Calculator! I am the Astrologer!" Thereupon all the townsfolk were wroth with him and said to him, "Thou art nothing but an imbecile, silly, self-willed lad! Have pity on thine own youth and tender years and beauty and loveliness." But he cried all the more, "I am the Astrologer, I am the Calculator! Is there any one that seeketh?" As he was thus crying and the people forbidding him, behold, King Ghayur heard his voice and the clamour of the lieges and said to his Wazir, "Go down and bring me yon Astrologer." So the Wazir went down in haste, and taking Kamar al-Zaman from the midst of the crowd led him up to the King; and when in the presence he kissed the ground and began versifying:—

Eight glories meet, all, all conjoined in thee, ✿ Whereby may Fortune aye thy servant be:

Lere, lordliness, grace, generosity; ✿ Plain words, deep meaning, honour, victory!

When the King looked upon him, he seated him by his side and said to him, "By Allah, O my son, an thou be not an astrologer, 272 venture not thy life nor comply with my condition; for I have bound myself that whoso goeth in to my daughter and

healeth her not of that which hath befallen her I will strike off his head; but whoso healeth her him I will marry to her. So let not thy beauty and loveliness delude thee: for, by Allah! and again, by Allah! if thou cure her not, I will assuredly cut off thy head." And Kamar al-Zaman replied, "This is thy right; and I consent, for I wot of this ere came I hither." Then King Ghayur took the Kazis to witness against him and delivered him to the eunuch, saying, "Carry this one to the Lady Budur." So the eunuch took him by the hand and led him along the passage; but Kamar al-Zaman outstripped him and pushed on before, whilst the eunuch ran after him, saying, "Woe to thee! Hasten not to thine own ruin: never yet saw I astrologer so eager for his proper destruction; but thou weetest not what calamities are before thee." Thereupon Kamar al-Zaman turned away his face from the eunuch——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the eunuch thus addressed Kamar al-Zaman, "Patience, and no indecent hurry!"; the Prince turned away his face and began repeating these couplets:—

A Sage, I feel a fool before thy charms; ✿ Distraught, I wot not what the words I say:

If say I "Sun," away thou dost not pass ✿ From eyes of me, while suns go down with day:

Thou hast completed Beauty, in whose praise ✿ Speech-makers fail, and talkers lose their way.

Then the eunuch stationed Kamar al-Zaman behind the curtain of the Princess's door and the Prince said to him, "Which of the two ways will please thee more; treat and cure thy lady from here or go in and heal her within the curtain?" The eunuch marvelled at his words and answered, "An thou heal her from here it were better proof of thy skill." Upon this Kamar al-Zaman sat down behind the curtain and, taking out ink-case, pen and paper, wrote the following: "This is the writ of one whom passion swayeth. ✿ 273 and whom longing waylayeth ✿ and wakeful misery slayeth ✿ one who despaireth of living ✿ and looketh for naught but dying ✿ with whose mourning heart ✿ nor comforter nor helper taketh part ✿ One whose sleepless eyes ✿ none succoureth from anxieties ✿ whose day is passed in fire ✿ and his night in torturing desire ✿ whose body is wasted for much emaciation ✿ and no messenger from his beloved bringeth him consolation." And after this he indited the following couplets:—

I write with heart devoted to thy thought, ✿ And eyelids chafed by tears of blood they bled;

And body clad, by loving pine and pain, ✿ In shirt of leanness, and worn down to thread,

To thee complain I of Love's tormentry, ✿ Which ousted hapless Patience from her stead:

A toi! show favour and some mercy deign, ✿ For Passion's cruel hands my vitals shred.

And beneath his lines he wrote these cadenced sentences, "The heart's pain is removed ✿ by union with the beloved ✿ and whomso his lover paineth ✿ only Allah assaineth! ✿ If we or you have wrought deceit ✿ may the deceiver win defeat!

✿ There is naught goodlier than a lover who keeps faith ✿ with the beloved who works him scathe." Then, by way of subscription, he wrote, "From the distracted and despairing man ✿ whom love and longing trepan ✿ from the lover under passion's ban ✿ the prisoner of transport and distraction ✿ from this Kamar al-Zaman ✿ son of Shahriman ✿ to the peerless one ✿ of the fair Houris the pearl-union ✿ to the Lady Budur ✿ daughter of King Al-Ghayur ✿ Know thou that by night I am sleepless ✿ and by day in distress ✿ consumed with increasing wasting and pain ✿ and longing and love unfain ✿ abounding in sighs ✿ with tear-flooded eyes ✿ by passion captive ta'en ✿ of Desire the slain ✿ with heart seared by the parting of us twain ✿ the debtor of longing-bane, of sickness cup-companion ✿ I am the sleepless one, who never closeth eye ✿ the slave of love, whose tears run never dry ✿ for the fire of my heart is still burning ✿ and never hidden is the flame of my yearning." Then on the margin Kamar al-Zaman wrote this admired verse:—

Salam from graces hoarded by my Lord ✿ To her, who holds my heart and soul in hoard!

274 And also these:—

Pray'ee grant me some words from your lips, belike ✿ Such mercy may comfort and cool these eyne:

From the stress of my love and my pine for you, ✿ I make light of what makes me despised, indign:

Allah guard a folk whose abode was far, ✿ And whose secret I kept in the holiest shrine:

Now Fortune in kindness hath favoured me ✿ Thrown on threshold dust of this love o' mine:

By me bedded I looked on Budúr, whose sun ✿ The moon of my fortunes hath made to shine.

Then, having affixed his seal-ring to the missive, he wrote these couplets in the place of address:—

Ask of my writ what wrote my pen in dole, ✿ And hear my tale of misery from this scroll;

My hand is writing while my tears down flow, ✿ And to the paper 'plains my longing soul:

My tears cease not to roll upon this sheet, ✿ And if they stopped I'd cause blood-gouts to roll.

And at the end he added this other verse:—

I've sent the ring from off thy finger bore ✿ I when we met, now deign my ring restore!

Then Kamar al-Zaman set the Lady Budur's ring inside the letter and sealed it and gave it to the eunuch, who took it and went in with it to his mistress.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman, after setting the seal-ring inside the epistle, gave it to the eunuch who took it and went in with it to his mistress; and, when the Lady Budur opened it, she found therein her own very ring. Then she read the paper and when she understood its purport and knew that it was from her beloved, and that he in person stood behind the curtain, her reason

began to fly and her breast swelled for joy and rose high; and she repeated these couplets:—

275 Long, long have I bewailed the sev'rance of our loves, ✿ With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain;

And vowed that, if the days deign reunite us two, ✿ My lips should never speak of severance again:

Joy hath o'erwhelmed me so that, for the very stress ✿ Of that which gladdens me to weeping I am fain.

Tears are become to you a habit, O my eyes, ✿ So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.[301]

And having finished her verse, the Lady Budur stood up forthwith and, firmly setting her feet to the wall, strained with all her might upon the collar of iron, till she brake it from her neck and snapped the chains. Then going forth from behind the curtain she threw herself on Kamar al-Zaman and kissed him on the mouth, like a pigeon feeding its young.[302] And she embraced him with all the stress of her love and longing and said to him, "O my lord, do I wake or sleep and hath the Almighty indeed vouchsafed us reunion after disunion? Laud be to Allah who hath our loves repaired, even after we despaired!" Now when the eunuch saw her in this case, he went off running to King Ghayur and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O my lord, know that this Astrologer is indeed the Shaykh of all astrologers, who are fools to him, all of them; for verily he hath cured thy daughter while standing behind the curtain and without going in to her." Quoth the King, "Look well to it, is this news true?" Answered the Eunuch, "O my lord, rise and come and see for thyself how she hath found strength to break the iron chains and is come forth to the Astrologer, kissing and embracing him." Thereupon the King arose and went in to his daughter who, when she saw him, stood up in haste and covered her head,[303] and recited these two couplets:—

The tooth-stick love I not; for when I say, ✿ "Siwák,"[304] I miss thee, for it sounds "Siwá-ka":

The caper-tree I love; for when I say, ✿ "Arák"[305] it sounds I look on thee, "Ará-ka."

276 Thereupon the King was so transported for joy at her recovery that he felt like to fly and kissed her between the eyes, for he loved her with dearest love; then, turning to Kamar al-Zaman, he asked him who he was, and said, "What countryman art thou?" So the Prince told him his name and rank, and informed him that he was the son of King Shahriman, and presently related to him the whole story from beginning to end; and acquainted him with what happened between himself and the Lady Budur; and how he had taken her seal-ring from her finger and had placed it on his own; whereat Ghayur marvelled and said, "Verily your story deserveth in books to be chronicled, and when you are dead and gone age after age be read." Then he summoned Kazis and witnesses forthright and married the Lady Budur to Prince Kamar al-Zaman; after which he bade decorate the city seven days long. So they spread the tables with all manner of meats, whilst the drums beat and the criers announced the glad tidings, and all the troops donned their richest clothes; and they illuminated the city and held high festival. Then Kamar al-Zaman went in to the Lady Budur and the King rejoiced in her recovery and in her marriage; and praised Allah

for that He had made her to fall in love with a goodly youth of the sons of Kings. So they unveiled her and displayed the bride before the bridegroom; and both were the living likeness of each other in beauty and comeliness and grace and love-allurement. Then Kamar al-Zaman lay with her that night and took his will of her, whilst she in like manner fulfilled her desire of him and enjoyed his charms and grace; and they slept in each other's arms till the morning. On the morrow, the King made a wedding-feast to which he gathered all comers from the Islands of the Inner and Outer Seas, and he spread the tables with choicest viands nor 277 ceased the banquetting for a whole month. Now when Kamar al-Zaman had thus fulfilled his will and attained his inmost desire, and whenas he had tarried awhile with the Princess Budur, he bethought him of his father, King Shahriman, and saw him in a dream, saying, "O my son, is it thus thou dealest with me?" and reciting in the vision these two couplets:—

Indeed to watch the darkness-moon he blighted me, ✿ And to star-gaze through longsome night he plighted me:
Easy, my heart! for haply he'll unite with thee; ✿ And patience, Sprite! with whatso ills he dight to thee.

Now after seeing his father in the dream and hearing his reproaches, Kamar al-Zaman awoke in the morning, afflicted and troubled, whereupon the Lady Budur questioned him and he told her what he had seen——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kamar al-Zaman acquainted the Lady Budur with what he had seen in his dream, she and he went in to her sire and, telling him what had passed, besought his leave to travel. He gave the Prince the permission he sought; but the Princess said, "O my father, I cannot bear to be parted from him." Quoth Ghayur, her sire, "Then go thou with him," and gave her leave to be absent a whole twelvemonth and afterwards to visit him in every year once; so she kissed his hand and Kamar al-Zaman did the like. Thereupon King Ghayur proceeded to equip his daughter and her bridegroom for the journey, and furnished them with outfit and appointments for the march; and brought out of his stables horses marked with his own brand, blood-dromedaries[306] which can journey ten days without water, and prepared a litter for his daughter, besides loading mules and camels with victual; moreover, he gave them slaves and eunuchs to serve them and all 278 manner of travelling gear; and on the day of departure, when King Ghayur took leave of Kamar al-Zaman, he bestowed on him ten splendid suits of cloth of gold embroidered with stones of price, together with ten riding horses and ten she-camels, and a treasury of money;[307] and he charged him to love and cherish his daughter the Lady Budur. Then the King accompanied them to the farthest limits of his Islands where, going in to his daughter Budur in the litter, he kissed her and strained her to his bosom, weeping and repeating:—

O thou who wooest Severance, easy fare! ✿ For love-embrace belongs to lover-friend:

Fare softly! Fortune's nature falsehood is, ✿ And parting shall love's every meeting end.

Then leaving his daughter, he went to her husband and bade him farewell and kissed him; after which he parted from them and, giving the order for the march he returned to his capital with his troops. The Prince and Princess and their suite fared on without stopping through the first day and the second and the third and the fourth; nor did they cease faring for a whole month till they came to a spacious champaign, abounding in pasturage, where they pitched their tents; and they ate and drank and rested, and the Princess Budur lay down to sleep. Presently, Kamar al-Zaman went in to her and found her lying asleep clad in a shift of apricot-coloured silk that showed all and everything; and on her head was a coif of gold-cloth embroidered with pearls and jewels. The breeze raised her shift which laid bare her navel and showed her breasts and displayed a stomach whiter than snow, each one of whose dimples would contain an ounce of benzoin-oinment.[308] At this 279 sight, his love and longing redoubled, and he began reciting:—

An were it asked me when by hell-fire burnt, ✿ When flames of heart my vitals hold and hem,

"Which wouldst thou chose, say wouldst thou rather them, ✿ Or drink sweet cooling draught?" I'd answer, "Them!"

Then he put his hand to the band of her petticoat-trousers and drew it and loosed it, for his soul lusted after her, when he saw a jewel, red as dye-wood, made fast to the band. He untied it and examined it and, seeing two lines of writing graven thereon, in a character not to be read, marvelled and said in his mind, "Were not this bezel something to her very dear she had not bound it to her trousers-band nor hidden it in the most privy and precious place about her person, that she might not be parted from it. Would I knew what she doth with this and what is the secret that is in it." So saying, he took it and went outside the tent to look at it in the light,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day, and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when he took the bezel to look at it in the light, the while he was holding it behold, a bird swooped down on him and, snatching the same from his hand, flew off with it and then lighted on the ground. Thereupon Kamar al-Zaman fearing to lose the jewel, ran after the bird; but it flew on before him, keeping just out of his reach, and ceased not to draw him on from dale to dale and from hill to hill, till the night starkened and the firmament darkened, when it roosted on a high tree. So Kamar al-Zaman stopped under the tree confounded in thought and faint for famine and fatigue, and giving himself up for lost, would have turned back, but knew not the way whereby he came, for that darkness had overtaken him. Then he exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"; and laying him down under the tree (whereon was the bird) slept till the morning, when he awoke and saw the bird also wake up and fly away. He arose and walked after it, and it flew on little by little before him, after the measure of

his faring; at which he smiled and said, "By Allah, a strange thing! Yesterday, this bird flew before me as 280 fast as I could run, and to-day, knowing that I have awoke tired and cannot run, he flieth after the measure of my faring. By Allah, this is wonderful! But I must needs follow this bird whether it lead me to death or to life; and I will go wherever it goeth, for at all events it will not abide save in some inhabited land."[309] So he continued to follow the bird which roosted every night upon a tree; and he ceased not pursuing it for a space of ten days, feeding on the fruits of the earth and drinking of its waters. At the end of this time, he came in sight of an inhabited city, whereupon the bird darted off like the glance of the eye and, entering the town, disappeared from Kamar al-Zaman, who knew not what it meant or whither it was gone; so he marvelled at this and exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah who hath brought me in safety to this city!" Then he sat down by a stream and washed his hands and feet and face and rested awhile; and, recalling his late easy and pleasant life of union with his beloved and contrasting it with his present plight of trouble and fatigue and distress and strangerhood and famine and severance, the tears streamed from his eyes and he began repeating these cinquains:—

Fain had I hid thy handwork, but it showed, ✿ Changed sleep for wake, and wake with me abode:
When thou didst spurn my heart I cried aloud ✿ Fate, hold thy hand and cease to gird and goad:
In dole and danger aye my sprite I spy!
An but the Lord of Love were just to me, ✿ Sleep fro' my eyelids ne'er were forced to flee.
Pity, my lady, one for love o' thee ✿ From his tribe's darling brought to low degree:
Love came and doomed Wealth beggar-death to die.
The railers chide at thee: I ne'er gainsay, ✿ But stop my ears and dumbly sign them Nay:
"Thou lov'st a slender may," say they; I say, ✿ "I've picked her out and cast the rest away:"
Enough; when Fate descends she blinds man's eye![310]

281 And as soon as he had finished his poetry and had taken his rest, he rose and walked on little by little, till he entered the city——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that as soon as Kamar al-Zaman had finished his poetry and had taken his rest, he arose and entered the city-gate[311] not knowing whither he should wend. He crossed the city from end to end, entering by the land-gate, and ceased not faring on till he came out at the sea-gate, for the city stood on the sea-shore. Yet he met not a single one of its citizens. And after issuing from the land-gate he fared forwards and ceased not faring till he found himself among the orchards and gardens of the place; and, passing among the trees presently came to a garden and stopped before its door; whereupon the keeper came out to him and saluted him. The Prince returned his greeting and the gardener bade him welcome, saying, "Praised be Allah that thou hast come off safe from the dwellers of this city!

Quick, come into the garth, ere any of the townfolk see thee." Thereupon Kamar al-Zaman entered that garden, wondering in mind, and asked the keeper, "What may be the history of the people of this city and who may they be?" The other answered, "Know that the people of this city are all Magians: but Allah upon thee, tell me how thou camest to this city and what caused thy coming to our capital." Accordingly Kamar al-Zaman told the gardener all that had befallen him from beginning to end, whereat he marvelled with great marvel and said, "Know, O my son, that the cities of Al-Islam lie far from us; and between us and them is a four months' voyage by sea and a whole twelve months' journey by land. We have a ship which saileth every year with merchandise to the nearest Moslem country and which entereth the seas of the Ebony Islands and thence maketh the Khalidan Islands, the dominions of King Shahriman." Thereupon Kamar al-Zaman considered awhile and concluded that he could [282]not do better than abide in the garden with the gardener and become his assistant, receiving for pay one fourth of the produce. So he said to him, "Wilt thou take me into thy service, to help thee in this garden?" Answered the gardener, "To hear is to consent;" and began teaching him to lead the water to the roots of the trees. So Kamar al-Zaman abode with him, watering the trees and hoeing up the weeds and wearing a short blue frock which reached to his knees. And he wept floods of tears; for he had no rest day or night, by reason of his strangerhood and he ceased not to repeat verses upon his beloved, amongst others the following couplets:—

Ye promised us and will ye not keep plight? ✿ Ye said a say and shall not deed be dight?
We wake for passion while ye slumber and sleep; ✿ Watchers and wakers claim not equal right:
We vowed to keep our loves in secrecy, ✿ But spake the meddler and you spoke forthright:
O friend in pain and pleasure, joy and grief, ✿ In all case you, you only, claim my sprite!
'Mid folk is one who holds my prisoned heart; ✿ Would he but show some ruth for me to sight.
Not every eye like mine is wounded sore, ✿ Not every heart like mine love-pinings blight:
Ye wronged me saying, Love is wrongous aye ✿ Yea! ye were right, events have proved that quite.
Forget they one love-thralled, whose faith the world ✿ Robs not, though burn the fires in heart alight:
If an my foeman shall become my judge, ✿ Whom shall I sue to remedy his despight?
Had not I need of love nor love had sought, ✿ My heart forsure were not thus love-distraught.

Such was the case with Kamar al-Zaman; but as regards his wife, the Lady Budur, when she awoke she sought her husband and found him not: then she saw her petticoat-trousers undone, for the band had been loosed and the bezel lost, whereupon she said to herself, "By Allah, this is strange! Where is my husband? It would seem as if he had taken the talisman and gone away, knowing not the secret which is in it. Would to Heaven I knew whither can he have wended! But it must needs have been some extraordinary matter that drew him away, for he cannot brook to leave me a moment. Allah curse the stone and damn its hour!" Then she considered awhile and said in her mind, "If I go out [283]and tell the varlets and let them learn that my

husband is lost, they will lust after me: there is no help for it but that I use a stratagem." So she rose and donned some of her husband's clothes and riding-boots, and a turband like his, drawing one corner of it across her face for a mouth-veil.[312] Then, setting a slave-girl in her litter, she went forth from the tent and called to the pages who brought her Kamar al-Zaman's steed; and she mounted and bade them load the beasts and resume the march. So they bound on the burdens and departed; and she concealed her trick, none doubting but she was Kamar al-Zaman, for she favoured him in face and form; nor did she cease journeying, she and her suite, days and nights, till they came in sight of a city overlooking the Salt Sea, where they pitched their tents without the walls and halted to rest. The Princess asked the name of the town and was told, "It is called the City of Ebony; its King is named Armanús, and he hath a daughter Hayát al-Nufús[313] hight,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Lady Budur halted within sight of the Ebony City to take her rest, King Armanus sent a messenger, to learn what King it was who had encamped without his capital; so the messenger, coming to the tents, made enquiry anent their King, and was told that she was a King's son who had lost the way being bound for the Khalidan Islands; whereupon he returned to King Armanus with the tidings; and, when the King heard them, he straightway rode out with the lords of his land to greet the stranger on arrival. As he drew near the tents the Lady Budur came to meet him on foot, whereupon the King alighted and they saluted each other. Then he took her to the city and, bringing her up to the palace, bade them spread the tables and trays of food and commanded them to transport her company and baggage to the guest-house. So they abode there three days; at the end of which time the King came in to the Lady Budur. Now she had that day gone to the Hammam and her face shone as the moon 284 at its full, a seduction to the world and a rending of the veil of shame to mankind; and Armanus found her clad in a suit of silk, embroidered with gold and jewels; so he said to her, "O my son, know that I am a very old man, decrepit withal, and Allah hath blessed me with no child save one daughter, who resembleth thee in beauty and grace; and I am now waxed unfit for the conduct of the state. She is thine, O my son; and, if this my land please thee and thou be willing to abide and make thy home here, I will marry thee to her and give thee my kingdom and so be at rest." When Princess Budur heard this, she bowed her head and her forehead sweated for shame, and she said to herself, "How shall I do, and I a woman? If I refuse and depart from him, I cannot be safe but that haply he send after me troops to slay me; and if I consent, belike I shall be put to shame. I have lost my beloved Kamar al-Zaman and know not what is become of him; nor can I escape from this scrape save by holding my peace and consenting and abiding here, till Allah bring about what is to be." So she raised her head and made

submission to King Armanus, saying, "Hearkening and obedience!"; whereat he rejoiced and bade the herald make proclamation throughout the Ebony Islands to hold high festival and decorate the houses. Then he assembled his Chamberlains and Nabobs, and Emirs and Wazirs and his officers of state and the Kazis of the city; and, formally abdicating his Sultanate, endowed Budur therewith and invested her in all the vestments of royalty. The Emirs and Grandees went in to her and did her homage, nothing doubting but that she was a young man, and all who looked on her bepissed their bag-trousers, for the excess of her beauty and loveliness. Then, after the lady Budur had been made Sultan and the drums had been beaten in announcement of the glad event, and she had been ceremoniously enthroned, King Armanus proceeded to equip his daughter Hayat al-Nufus for marriage, and in a few days, they brought the Lady Budur in to her, when they seemed as it were two moons risen at one time or two suns in conjunction. So they entered the bridal-chamber and the doors were shut and the curtains let down upon them, after the attendants had lighted the wax-candles and spread for them the carpet-bed. When Budur found herself alone with the Princess Hayat al-Nufus, she called to mind her beloved Kamar al-Zaman and grief was sore upon her. So she wept for his absence, and estrangement and she began repeating:—

O ye who fled and left my heart in pain low li'en, ✿ No breath of life is found within this frame of mine:
I have an eye which e'er complains of wake, but lo! ✿ Tears occupy it; would that wake content these eyne!
After ye marchèd forth the lover 'bode behind; ✿ Question of him what pains your absence could design!
But for the floods of tears mine eyelids rail and rain, ✿ My fires would flame on high and every land calcine.
To Allah make I moan of loved ones lost for aye, ✿ Who for my pine and pain no more shall pain and pine:
I never wronged them save that over-love I nurst: ✿ But Love departs us lovers into blest and curst.

And when she had finished her repeating, the Lady Budur sat down beside the Princess Hayat al-Nufus and kissed her on the mouth; after which rising abruptly, she made the minor ablution and betook herself to her devotions; nor did she leave praying till Hayat al-Nufus fell asleep, when she slipt into bed and lay with her back to her till morning. And when day had broke the King and Queen came in to their daughter and asked her how she did, whereupon she told them what she had seen, and repeated to them the verses she had heard. Thus far concerning Hayat al-Nufus and her father; but as regards Queen Budur she went forth and seated herself upon the royal throne and all the Emirs and Captains and Officers of state came up to her and wished her joy of the kingship, kissing the earth before her and calling down blessings upon her. And she accosted them with smiling face and clad them in robes of honour, augmenting the fiefs of the high officials and giving largesse to the levies; wherefore all the people loved her and offered up prayers for the long endurance of her reign, doubting not but that she was a man. And she ceased not sitting all day in the hall of audience, bidding and forbidding; dispensing justice, releasing prisoners and remitting the customs-dues, till nightfall, when she withdrew to the apartment prepared for her. Here she found Hayat al-Nufus seated; so she sat down by her side and, clapping her

on the back, coaxed and caressed her and kissed her between the eyes, and fell to versifying in these couplets:—

What secret kept I these my tears have told, ✿ And my waste body must my love unfold:
Though hid my pine, my plight on parting-day ✿ To every envious eye my secret sold:
286 O ye who broke up camp, you've left behind ✿ My spirit wearied and my heart a-cold:
In my heart's core ye dwell, and now these eyne ✿ Roll blood-drops with the tears they whilome rolled:
The absent will I ransom with my soul; ✿ All can my yearning for their sight behold:
I have an eye whose babe,[314] for love of thee, ✿ Rejected sleep nor hath its tears controlled.
The foeman bids me patient bear his loss, ✿ Ne'er may mine ears accept the ruth he doled!
I trickt their deme of me, and won my wish ✿ Of Kamar al-Zaman's joys manifold:
He joins all perfect gifts like none before; ✿ Boasted such might and main no King of old:
Seeing his gifts, Bin Zá'ïdah's[315] largesse ✿ Forget we, and Mu'áwiyah mildest-soul'd:[316]
Were verse not feeble and o'er short the time ✿ I had in laud of him used all of rhyme.

Then Queen Budur stood up and wiped away her tears and, making the lesser ablution,[317] applied her to pray: nor did she give over praying till drowsiness overcame the Lady Hayat al-Nufus and she slept, whereupon the Lady Budur came and lay by her till the morning. At daybreak, she arose and prayed the dawn-prayer; and presently seated herself on the royal throne and passed the day in ordering and counterordering and giving laws and administering justice. This is how it fared with her; but as regards King Armanus he went in to his daughter and asked her how she did; so she told him all that had befallen her and repeated to him the verses which Queen Budur had recited, adding, "O my father, never saw I one more abounding in sound sense and modesty than my husband, save that he doth nothing but weep and sigh." He answered, "O my daughter, have patience with 287 him yet this third night, and if he go not in unto thee and do away thy maidenhead, we shall know how to proceed with him and oust him from the throne and banish him the country." And on this wise he agreed with his daughter what course he would take——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Tenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Armanus had agreed with his daughter on this wise and had determined what course he would take and night came on, Queen Budur arose from the throne of her kingdom and betaking herself to the palace, entered the apartment prepared for her. There she found the wax-candles lighted and the Princess Hayat al-Nufus seated and awaiting her; whereupon she bethought her of her husband and what had betided them both of sorrow and severance in so short a space; she wept and sighed and groaned groan upon groan, and began improvising these couplets:—

News of my love fill all the land, I swear, ✿ As suns on Ghazá[318]-wold rain heat and glare:

Speaketh his geste but hard its sense to say; ✿ Thus never cease to grow my cark and care:
I hate fair Patience since I lovèd thee; ✿ E'er sawest lover hate for love to bear?
A glance that dealt love-sickness dealt me death, ✿ Glances are deadliest things with torments rare:
He shook his love-locks down and bared his chin, ✿ Whereby I spied his beauties dark and fair:
My care, my cure are in his hands; and he ✿ Who caused their dolour can their dole repair:
His belt went daft for softness of his waist; ✿ His hips, for envy, to uprise forbear:
His brow curl-diademed is murky night; ✿ Unveil't and lo! bright Morn shows brightest light.

When she had finished her versifying, she would have risen to pray, but, lo and behold! Hayat al-Nufus caught her by the skirt and clung to her saying, "O my lord, art thou not ashamed before 288 my father, after all his favour, to neglect me at such a time as this?" When Queen Budur heard her words, she sat down in the same place and said, "O my beloved, what is this thou sayest?" She replied, "What I say is that I never saw any so proud of himself as thou. Is every fair one so disdainful? I say not this to incline thee to me; I say it only of my fear for thee from King Armanus; because he purposeth, unless thou go in unto me this very night, and do away my maidenhead, to strip thee of the kingship on the morrow and banish thee his kingdom; and peradventure his excessive anger may lead him to slay thee. But I, O my lord, have ruth on thee and give thee fair warning; and it is thy right to reck."[319] Now when Queen Budur heard her speak these words, she bowed her head groundwards awhile in sore perplexity and said in herself, "If I refuse I'm lost; and if I obey I'm shamed. But I am now Queen of all the Ebony Islands and they are under my rule, nor shall I ever again meet my Kamar al-Zaman save in this place; for there is no way for him to his native land but through the Ebony Islands. Verily, I know not what to do in my present case, but I commit my care to Allah who directeth all for the best, for I am no man that I should arise and open this virgin girl." Then quoth Queen Budur to Hayat al-Nufus, "O my beloved, that I have neglected thee and abstained from thee is in my own despite." And she told her her whole story from beginning to end and showed her person to her, saying, "I conjure thee by Allah to keep my counsel, for I have concealed my case only that Allah may reunite me with my beloved Kamar al-Zaman and then come what may."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Lady Budur acquainted Hayat al-Nufus with her history and bade her keep it secret, the Princess heard her with extreme wonderment and was moved to pity and prayed Allah to reunite her with her beloved, saying, "Fear nothing, O my sister; but have patience 289 till Allah bring to pass that which must come to pass:" and she began repeating:—

None but the men of worth a secret keep;

With worthy men a secret's hidden deep;
As in a room, so secrets lie with me,
Whose door is sealed, lock shot and lost the key.[320]

And when Hayat al-Nufus had ended her verses, she said, "O my sister, verily the breasts of the noble and brave are of secrets the grave; and I will not discover thine." Then they toyed and embraced and kissed and slept till near the Mu'ezzin's call to dawn-prayer, when Hayat al-Nufus arose and took a pigeon-poult,[321] and cut its throat over her smock and besmeared herself with its blood. Then she pulled off her petticoat-trousers and cried aloud, whereupon her people hastened to her and raised the usual lullilooing and outcries of joy and gladness. Presently her mother came in to her and asked her how she did and busied herself about her and abode with her till evening; whilst the Lady Budur arose with the dawn, and repaired to the bath and, after washing herself pure, proceeded to the hall of audience, where she sat down on her throne and dispensed justice among the folk. Now when King Armanus heard the loud cries of joy, he asked what was the matter and was informed of the consummation of his daughter's marriage; whereat he rejoiced and his breast swelled with gladness and he made a great marriage-feast whereof the merry-making lasted a long time. Such was their case: but as regards King Shahriman it was on this wise. After his son had fared forth to the chase accompanied by Marzawan, as before related, he tarried patiently awaiting their return at nightfall; but when his son did not appear, he passed a sleepless night and the dark hours were longsome 290 upon him; his restlessness was excessive, his excitement grew upon him and he thought the morning would never dawn. And when day broke he sat expecting his son and waited till noon, but he came not; whereat his heart forebode separation and was fired with fears for Kamar al-Zaman; and he cried, "Alas! my son!" and he wept till his clothes were drenched with tears, and repeated with a beating heart:—

Love's votaries I ceased not to oppose, ✿ Till doomed to taste Love's bitter and Love's sweet:
I drained his rigour-cup to very dregs, ✿ Self-humbled at its slaves' and freemen's feet:
Fortune had sworn to part the loves of us; ✿ She kept her word how truly, well I weet!

And when he ended his verse, he wiped away his tears and bade his troops make ready for a march and prepare for a long expedition. So they all mounted and set forth, headed by the Sultan, whose heart burnt with grief and was fired with anxiety for his son Kamar al-Zaman; and they advanced by forced marches. Now the King divided his host into six divisions, a right wing and a left wing, a vanguard and a rear-guard;[322] and bade them rendezvous for the morrow at the cross-roads. Accordingly they separated and scoured the country all the rest of that day till night, and they marched through the night and at noon of the ensuing day they joined company at the place where four roads met. But they knew not which the Prince followed, till they saw the sign of torn clothes and sighted shreds of flesh and beheld blood still sprinkled by the way and they noted every piece of the clothes and fragment of

mangled flesh scattered on all sides. Now when King Shahriman saw this, he cried from his heart-core a loud cry, saying, "Alas, my son!"; and buffetted his face and pluckt his beard and rent his raiment, doubting not but his son was dead. Then he gave himself up to excessive weeping and wailing, and the troops also wept for his weeping, all being assured that Prince Kamar al-Zaman had perished. They threw dust on their heads, and the night surprised them shedding tears and lamenting till they were like to die. Then the King with a heart on fire and with burning sighs spake these couplets:—

291 Chide not the mourner for bemourning woe; ✿ Enough is yearning every Ill to show:

He weeps for stress of sorrow and of pain, ✿ And these to thee best evidence his lowe:

Happy![323] of whom Love-sickness swore that ne'er ✿ Should cease his eyelids loving tears to flow:

He mourns the loss of fairest, fullest Moon, ✿ Shining o'er all his peers in glorious glow:

But death made drink a brimming cup, what day ✿ He fared from natal country fain to go:

His home left he and went from us to grief; ✿ Nor to his brethren could he say adieu:

Yea, his loss wounded me with parting pangs, ✿ And separation cost me many a throe:

He fared farewelling, as he fared, our eyes; ✿ Whenas his Lord vouchsafed him Paradise.

And when King Shahriman had ended his verses, he returned with the troops to his capital,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Shahriman had ended his verses, he returned with the troops to his capital, giving up his son for lost, and deeming that wild beasts or banditti had set upon him and torn him to pieces; and made proclamation that all in the Khalidan Islands should don black in mourning for him. Moreover, he built, in his memory, a pavilion, naming it House of Lamentations; and on Mondays and Thursdays he devoted himself to the business of the state and ordering the affairs of his levies and lieges; and the rest of the week he was wont to spend in the House of Lamentations, mourning for his son and bewailing him with elegiac verses,[324] of which the following are some:—

My day of bliss is that when thou appearest; ✿ My day of bale[325] is that whereon thou farest:

Though through the night I quake in dread of death; ✿ Union wi' thee is of all bliss the dearest.

292 And again he said:—

My soul be sacrifice for one, whose going ✿ Afflicted hearts with sufferings sore and dread:

Let joy her widowed term[326] fulfil, for I ✿ Divorcèd joy with the divorce thrice-said.[327]

Such was the case with King Shahriman; but as regards Queen Budur daughter of King Ghayur, she abode as ruler in the Ebony Islands, whilst the folk would point to her with their fingers, and say, "Yonder is the son-in-law of King Armanus." And every night she lay with Hayat al-Nufus, to whom she lamented her desolate state and

longing for her husband Kamar al-Zaman, weeping and describing to her his beauty and loveliness, and yearning to enjoy him though but in a dream: And at times she would repeat:—

Well Allah wots that since my severance from thee, ✿ I wept till forced to borrow tears at usury:

"Patience!" my blamer cried, "Heartsease right soon shalt see!" ✿ Quoth I, "Say, blamer, where may home of Patience be?"

This is how it fared with Queen Budur; but as regards Kamar al-Zaman, he abode with the gardener in the garden for no short time, weeping night and day and repeating verses bewailing the past time of enjoyment and delight; whilst the gardener kept comforting him and assuring him that the ship would set sail for the land of the Moslems at the end of the year. And in this condition he continued till one day he saw the folk crowding together and wondered at this; but the gardener came in to him and said, "O my son, give over work for this day nor lead water to the trees; for it is a festival day, whereon folk visit one another. So take thy rest and only keep thine eye on the garden, whilst I go look after the ship for thee; for yet but a little while and I send thee to the land of the Moslems." Upon this, he went forth from the garden leaving to himself Kamar al-Zaman, who fell to musing upon his case till his heart was like to break and the tears streamed from his eyes. So he wept with excessive weeping till 293 he swooned away and, when he recovered, he rose and walked about the garden, pondering what Time had done with him and bewailing the long endurance of his estrangement and separation from those he loved. As he was thus absorbed in melancholy thought, his foot stumbled and he fell on his face, his forehead striking against the projecting root of a tree; and the blow cut it open and his blood ran down and mingled with his tears. Then he rose and, wiping away the blood, dried his tears and bound his brow with a piece of rag; then continued his walk about the garden engrossed by sad reverie. Presently, he looked up at a tree and saw two birds quarrelling thereon, and one of them rose up and smote the other with its beak on the neck and severed from its body its head, wherewith it flew away, whilst the slain bird fell to the ground before Kamar al-Zaman. As it lay, behold, two great birds swooped down upon it alighting, one at the head and the other at the tail, and both drooped their wings and bowed their bills over it and, extending their necks towards it, wept. Kamar al-Zaman also wept when seeing the birds thus bewail their mate, and called to mind his wife and father,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to day her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman wept and lamented his separation from spouse and sire, when he beheld those two birds weeping over their mate. Then he looked at the twain and saw them dig a grave and therein bury the slain bird; after which they flew away far into the firmament and disappeared for a while; but presently they returned with the murtherer-bird and,

alighting on the grave of the murthered, stamped on the slayer till they had done him to death. Then they rent his belly and tearing out his entrails, poured the blood on the grave of the slain[328]: moreover, they stripped off his skin 294 and tare his flesh in pieces and, pulling out the rest of the bowels, scattered them hither and thither. All this while Kamar al-Zaman was watching them wonderingly; but presently, chancing to look at the place where the two birds had slain the third, he saw therein something gleaming. So he drew near to it and noted that it was the crop of the dead bird. Whereupon he took it and opened it and found the talisman which had been the cause of his separation from his wife. But when he saw it and knew it, he fell to the ground a-fainting for joy; and, when he revived, he said, "Praised be Allah! This is a foretaste of good and a presage of reunion with my beloved." Then he examined the jewel and passed it over his eyes[329]; after which he bound it to his forearm, rejoicing in coming weal, and walked about till nightfall awaiting the gardener's return; and when he came not, he lay down and slept in his wonted place. At daybreak he rose to his work and, girding his middle with a cord of palm-fibre, took hatchet and basket and walked down the length of the garden, till he came to a carob-tree and struck the axe into its roots. The blow rang and resounded; so he cleared away the soil from the place and discovered a trap-door and raised it.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kamar al-Zaman raised the trap-door, he found a winding stair, which he descended and came to an ancient vault of the time of Ad and Thamúd,[330] hewn out of the rock. Round the vault stood many brazen vessels of the bigness of a great oil-jar which he found full of gleaming red gold: whereupon he said to himself, "Verily sorrow is gone and solace is come!" Then he mounted from the souterrain to the garden and, replacing the trap-door as it was before, busied himself in conducting water to the trees till the last of the day, when the gardener came back and said to him, "O my son, rejoice at the good tidings of a speedy return to thy native land: the merchants are ready equipped for the voyage and the 295 ship in three days' time will set sail for the City of Ebony, which is the first of the cities of the Moslems; and after making it, thou must travel by land a six months' march till thou come to the Islands of Khalidan, the dominions of King Shahriman." At this Kamar al-Zaman rejoiced and began repeating:—

Part not from one whose wont is not to part from you; ✿ Nor with your cruel taunts an innocent mortify:

Another so long-parted had ta'en heart from you, ✿ And had his whole condition changed,—but not so I.

Then he kissed the gardener's hand and said, "O my father, even as thou hast brought me glad tidings, so I also have great good news for thee," and told him anent his discovery of the vault; whereat the gardener rejoiced and said, "O my son, fourscore years have I dwelt in this garden and have never hit on aught; whilst thou, who hast

not sojourned with me a year, hast discovered this thing; wherefore it is Heaven's gift to thee, which shall end thy crosses and aid thee to rejoin thy folk and foregather with her thou lovest." Quoth Kamar al-Zaman, "There is no help but it must be shared between me and thee." Then he carried him to the underground-chamber and showed him the gold, which was in twenty jars: he took ten and the gardener ten, and the old man said to him, "O my son, fill thyself leather bottles[331] with the sparrow-olives[332] which grow in this garden, for they are not found except in our land; and the merchants carry them to all parts. Lay the gold in the bottles and strew it over with olives: then stop them and cover them and take them with thee in the ship." So Kamar al-Zaman arose without stay or delay and took fifty leather bottles and stored in each somewhat of the gold, and closed each one after placing a layer of olives over the gold; and at the bottom of one of the bottles he laid the talisman. Then sat he down to talk with the gardener, confident of speedy reunion with his own people and saying to himself, "When I come to the Ebony Islands 296 I will journey thence to my father's country and enquire for my beloved Budur. Would to Heaven I knew whether she returned to her own land or journeyed on to my father's country or whether there befel her any accident by the way." And he began versifying:—

Love in my breast they lit and fared away, ✿ And far the land wherein my love is pent:
Far lies the camp and those who camp therein; ✿ Far is her tent-shrine, where I ne'er shall tent.
Patience far fled me when from me they fled; ✿ Sleep failed mine eyes, endurance was forspent:
They left and with them left my every joy, ✿ Wending with them, nor find I peace that went:
They made these eyes roll down love-tears in flood, ✿ And lacking them these eyne with tears are drent.
When my triste spirit once again would see them, ✿ When pine and expectation but augment,
In my heart's core their counterfeits I trace, ✿ With love and yearning to behold their grace.

Then, while he awaited the end of the term of days, he told the gardener the tale of the birds and what had passed between them; whereat the hearer wondered; and they both lay down and slept till the morning. The gardener awoke sick and abode thus two days; but on the third day, his sickness increased on him, till they despaired of his life and Kamar al-Zaman grieved with sore grief for him. Meanwhile behold, the Master and his crew came and enquired for the gardener; and, when Kamar al-Zaman told them that he was sick, they asked, "Where be the youth who is minded to go with us to the Ebony Islands?" "He is your servant and he standeth before you!" answered the Prince and bade them carry the bottles of olives to the ship; so they transported them, saying, "Make haste, thou, for the wind is fair;" and he replied, "I hear and obey." Then he carried his provaunt on board and, returning to bid the gardener farewell, found him in the agonies of death; so he sat down at his head and closed his eyes, and his soul departed his body; whereupon he laid him out and committed him to the earth unto the mercy of Allah Almighty. Then he made for the ship but found that she had already weighed anchor and set sail; nor did she cease to cleave the seas till she disappeared from his sight. So he went back to whence he came heavy-hearted with

whirling head; and neither would he address [297] a soul nor return a reply; and reaching the garden and sitting down in cark and care he threw dust on his head and buffeted his cheeks.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the ship sped on her course, Kamar al-Zaman returned to the garden in cark and care; but anon he rented the place of its owner and hired a man to help him in irrigating the trees. Moreover, he repaired the trap-door and he went to the underground chamber and bringing the rest of the gold to grass, stowed it in other fifty bottles which he filled up with a layer of olives. Then he enquired of the ship and they told him that it sailed but once a year; at which his trouble of mind redoubled and he cried sore for that which had betided him, above all for the loss of the Princess Budur's talisman, and spent his nights and days weeping and repeating verses. Such was his case; but as regards the ship she sailed with a favouring wind till she reached the Ebony Islands. Now by decree of destiny, Queen Budur was sitting at a lattice-window overlooking the sea and saw the galley cast anchor upon the strand. At this sight, her heart throbbed and she took horse with the Chamberlains and Nabobs and, riding down to the shore, halted by the ship, whilst the sailors broke bulk and bore the bales to the storehouses; after which she called the captain to her presence and asked what he had with him. He answered "O King, I have with me in this ship aromatic drugs and cosmetics and healing powders and ointments and plasters and precious metals and rich stuffs and rugs of Yemen leather, not to be borne of mule or camel, and all manner of ottars and spices and perfumes, civet and ambergris and camphor and Sumatra aloes-wood, and tamarinds[333] and sparrow-olives to boot, such as are rare to find in this country." When she heard talk of sparrow-olives her heart longed [298] for them and she said to the ship-master, "How much of olives hast thou?" He replied, "Fifty bottles full, but their owner is not with us; so the King shall take what he will of them." Quoth she, "Bring them ashore, that I may see them." Thereupon he called to the sailors, who brought her the fifty bottles; and she opened one and, looking at the olives, said to the captain, "I will take the whole fifty and pay you their value, whatso it be." He answered, "By Allah, O my lord, they have no value in our country; moreover their shipper tarried behind us, and he is a poor man." Asked she, "And what are they worth here?" and he answered "A thousand dirhams." "I will take them at a thousand," she said and bade them carry the fifty bottles to the palace. When it was night, she called for a bottle of olives and opened it, there being none in the room but herself and the Princess Hayat al-Nufus. Then, placing a dish before her she turned into it the contents of the jar, when there fell out into the dish with the olives a heap of red gold; and she said to the Lady Hayat al-Nufus, "This is naught but gold!" So she sent for the rest of the bottles and found them all full of precious metal and scarce enough olives to fill a single jar. Moreover,

she sought among the gold and found therein the talisman, which she took and examined and behold, it was that which Kamar al-Zaman had taken from off the band of her petticoat trousers. Thereupon she cried out for joy and slipped down in a swoon;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Budur saw the talisman she cried out for joy and slipped down in a swoon; and when she recovered she said to herself, "Verily, this talisman was the cause of my separation from my beloved Kamar al-Zaman; but now it is an omen of good." Then she showed it to Hayat al-Nufus and said to her, "This was the cause of disunion and now, please Allah, it shall be the cause of reunion." As soon as day dawned she seated herself on the royal throne and sent for the ship-master, who came into the presence and kissed the ground before her. Quoth she, "Where didst thou leave the owner of these olives?" Quoth he, "O King of the age, we left him in the land of the Magians and he is a gardener there." She 299 rejoined, "Except thou bring him to me, thou knowest not the harm which awaiteth thee and thy ship." Then she bade them seal up the magazines of the merchants and said to them, "Verily the owner of these olives hath borrowed of me and I have a claim upon him for debt and, unless ye bring him to me, I will without fail do you all die and seize your goods." So they went to the captain and promised him the hire of the ship, if he would go and return a second time, saying, "Deliver us from this masterful tyrant." Accordingly the skipper embarked and set sail and Allah decreed him a prosperous voyage, till he came to the Island of the Magians and, landing by night, went up to the garden. Now the night was long upon Kamar al-Zaman, and he sat, bethinking him of his beloved, and bewailing what had befallen him and versifying:—

A night whose stars refused to run their course, ✿ A night of those which never seem outworn:

Like Resurrection-day, of longsome length[334] ✿ To him that watched and waited for the morn.

Now at this moment, the captain knocked at the garden-gate, and Kamar al-Zaman opened and went out to him, whereupon the crew seized him and went down with him on board the ship and set sail forthright; and they ceased not voyaging days and nights, whilst Kamar al-Zaman knew not why they dealt thus with him; but when he questioned them they replied, "Thou hast offended against the Lord of the Ebony Islands, the son-in-law of King Armanus, and thou hast stolen his monies, miserable that thou art!" Said he, "By Allah! I never entered that country nor do I know where it is!" However, they fared on with him, till they made the Ebony Islands and landing, carried him up to the Lady Budur, who knew him at sight and said, "Leave him with the eunuchs, that they may take him to the bath." Then she relieved the merchants of the embargo and gave the captain a robe of honour worth ten thousand pieces of gold;

and, after returning to 300 the palace, she went in that night to the Princess Hayat al-Nufus and told her what had passed, saying, "Keep thou my counsel, till I accomplish my purpose, and do a deed which shall be recorded and shall be read by Kings and commoners after we be dead and gone." And when she gave orders that they bear Kamar al-Zaman to the bath, they did so and clad him in a royal habit so that, when he came forth, he resembled a willow-bough or a star which shamed the greater and lesser light[335] and its glow, and his life and soul returned to his frame. Then he repaired to the palace and went in to the Princess Budur; and when she saw him she schooled her heart to patience, till she should have accomplished her purpose; and she bestowed on him Mamelukes and eunuchs, camels and mules. Moreover, she gave him a treasury of money and she ceased not advancing him from dignity to dignity, till she made him Lord High Treasurer and committed to his charge all the treasures of the state; and she admitted him to familiar favour and acquainted the Emirs with his rank and dignity. And all loved him, for Queen Budur did not cease day by day to increase his allowances. As for Kamar al-Zaman, he was at a loss anent the reason of her thus honouring him; and he gave gifts and largesse out of the abundance of the wealth; and he devoted himself to the service of King Armanus; so that the King and all the Emirs and people, great and small, adored him and were wont to swear by his life. Nevertheless, he ever marvelled at the honour and favour shown him by Queen Budur and said to himself, "By Allah, there needs must be a reason for this affection! Peradventure, this King favoureth me not with these immoderate favours save for some ill purpose and, therefore, there is no help but that I crave leave of him to depart his realm." So he went in to Queen Budur and said to her, "O King, thou hast overwhelmed me with favours, but it will fulfil the measure of thy bounties if thou take from me all thou hast been pleased to bestow upon me, and permit me to depart." She smiled and asked, "What maketh thee seek to depart and plunge into new perils, whenas thou art in the enjoyment of the highest favour and greatest prosperity?" Answered Kamar al-Zaman, 301 "O King, verily this favour, if there be no reason for it, is indeed a wonder of wonders, more by token that thou hast advanced me to dignities such as befit men of age and experience, albeit I am as it were a young child." And Queen Budur rejoined, "The reason is that I love thee for thine exceeding loveliness and thy surpassing beauty; and if thou wilt but grant me my desire of thy body, I will advance thee yet farther in honour and favour and largesse; and I will make thee Wazir, for all thy tender age, even as the folk made me Sultan over them and I no older than thou; so that nowadays there is nothing strange when children take the head and by Allah, he was a gifted man who said:—

It seems as though of Lot's tribe were our days, ✿ And crave with love to advance the young in years."[336]

When Kamar al-Zaman heard these words, he was abashed and his cheeks flushed till they seemed a-flame; and he said, "I need not these favours which lead to the commission of sin; I will live poor in wealth but wealthy in virtue and honour." Quoth

she, "I am not to be duped by thy scruples, arising from prudery and coquettish ways; and Allah bless him who saith:—

To him I spake of coupling, but he said to me, ✿ 'How long this noyous long persistency?'

But when gold piece I showèd him, he cried, ✿ 'Who from the Almighty Sovereign e'er shall flee?'"

Now when Kamar al-Zaman, heard these words and understood her verses and their import, he said, "O King, I have not the habit of these doings, nor have I strength to bear these heavy burthens for which elder than I have proved unable; then how will it be with my tender age?" But she smiled at his speech and retorted, "Indeed, it is a matter right marvellous how error springeth from the disorder of man's intendiment! Since thou art a boy, why standest thou in fear of sin or the doing of things forbidden, seeing that thou art not yet come to years of canonical responsibility; and the offences of a child incur neither punishment nor reproof? Verily, thou hast committed thyself to a quibble for the sake of contention, and it is thy duty to bow 302 before a proposal of fruition, so henceforward cease from denial and coyness, for the commandment of Allah is a decree foreordained:[337] indeed, I have more reason than thou to fear falling and by sin to be misled; and well-inspired was he who said:—

My prickle is big and the little one said, ✿ Thrust boldly in vitals with lion-like stroke!

Then I, 'Tis a sin!; and he, No sin to me! ✿ So I had him at once with a counterfeit poke."[338]

When Kamar al-Zaman heard these words, the light became darkness in his sight and he said, "O King, thou hast in thy household fair women and female slaves, who have not their like in this age: shall not these suffice thee without me? Do thy will with them and let me go!" She replied, "Thou sayest sooth, but it is not with them that one who loveth thee can heal himself of torment and can abate his fever; for, when tastes and inclinations are corrupted by vice, they hear and obey other than good advice. So leave arguing and listen to what the poet saith:—

Seest not the bazar with its fruit in rows? ✿ These men are for figs and for sycomore[339] those!"

And what another saith:—

Many whose anklet-rings are dumb have tinkling belts, ✿ And this hath all content while that for want must wail:

Thou bidd'st me be a fool and quit thee for her charms; ✿ Allah forfend I leave The Faith, turn Infidel!

Nay, by thy rights of side-beard mocking all her curls, ✿ Nor mott nor maid[340] from thee my heart shall spell.

303 And yet another:—

O beauty's Union! love for thee's my creed; ✿ Free choice of Faith and eke my best desire:

Women I have forsworn for thee; so may ✿ Deem me all men this day a shaveling friar.[341]

And yet another:—

Even not beardless one with girl, nor heed ✿ The spy who saith to thee "'Tis an amiss!"

Far different is the girl whose feet one kisses ✿ And that gazelle whose feet the earth must kiss.

And yet another:—

A boy of twice ten is fit for a King!

And yet another:—

The penis smooth and round was made with anus best to match it; ✿ Had it been made for cunnus' sake it had been formed like hatchet!

And yet another said:—

My soul thy sacrifice! I chose thee out ✿ Who art not menstruous nor oviparous:

Did I with woman mell, I should beget ✿ Brats till the wide wide world grew strait for us.

And yet another:—

She saith (sore hurt in sense the most acute ✿ For she had proffered what did not besuit):—

"Unless thou stroke as man should swive his wife ✿ Blame not when horns thy brow shall incornùte!"

"Thy wand seems waxen, to a limpo grown, ✿ And more I palm it, softer grows the brute!"

And yet another:—

Quoth she (for I to lie with her forbore), ✿ "O folly-following fool, O fool to core:

304 If thou my coynte for Kiblah[342] to thy coigne ✿ Reject, we'll show thee what shall please thee more."[343]

And yet another:—

She proffered me a tender coynte ✿ Quoth I "I will not roger thee!"

She drew back, saying, "From the Faith ✿ He turns, who's turned by Heaven's decree!"[344]

And front-wise futtering, in one day, ✿ "Is obsolete persistency!"

Then swung she round and shining rump ✿ Like silvern lump she showèd me!

I cried: "Well done, O mistress mine! ✿ No more am I in pain for thee;

O thou of all that Allah oped[345] ✿ Showest me fairest victory!"

And yet another:—

Men craving pardon will uplift their hands; ✿ Women pray pardon with their legs on high:

Out on it for a pious, prayerful work! ✿ The Lord shall raise it in the depths to lie.[346]

When Kamar al-Zaman heard her quote this poetry, and was certified that there was no escaping compliance with what willed she, he said, "O King of the age, if thou must needs have it so, make covenant with me that thou wilt do this thing with me but 305 once, though it avail not to correct thy depraved appetite; and that thou wilt never again require this thing of me to the end of time; so perchance shall Allah purge me of the sin." She replied, "I promise thee this same, hoping that Allah of His favour will relent towards us and blot out our mortal offence; for the girdle of heaven's forgiveness is not indeed so strait, but it may compass us around and absolve us of the excess of our heinous sins and bring us to the light of salvation out of the darkness of error; and indeed excellently well saith the poet:—

Of evil thing the folk suspect us twain; ✿ And to this thought their hearts and souls are bent:

Come, dear! let's justify and free their souls ✿ That wrong us; one good bout and then—repent!"[347]

Thereupon she made with him an agreement and a covenant and swore a solemn oath by Him who is Self-existent, that this thing should befal betwixt them but once and never again for all time, and that the desire of him was driving her to death and

perdition. So he rose up with her, on this condition, and went with her to her own boudoir, that she might quench the lowe of her lust, saying, "There is no Majesty, and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! This is the fated decree of the All-powerful, the All-wise!"; and he doffed his bag-trousers, shamefull and abashed, with the tears running from his eyes for stress of affright. Thereat she smiled and making him mount upon a couch with her, said to him, "After this night, thou shalt see naught that will offend thee." Then she turned to him bussing and bosoming him and bending calf over calf, and said to him, "Put thy hand between my thighs to the accustomed place; so haply it may stand up to prayer after prostration." He wept and cried, "I am not good at aught of this," but she said, "By my life, an thou do as I bid thee, it shall profit thee!" So he put out his hand, with vitals 306 a-fire for confusion, and found her thighs cooler than cream and softer than silk. The touching of them pleasured him and he moved his hand hither and thither, till it came to a dome abounding in good gifts and movements and shifts, and said in himself, "Perhaps this King is an hermaphrodite,[348] neither man nor woman quite;" so he said to her, "O King, I cannot find that thou hast a tool like the tools of men; what then moved thee to do this deed?" Then loudly laughed Queen Budur till she fell on her back,[349] and said, "O my dearling, how quickly thou hast forgotten the nights we have lain together!" Then she made herself known to him, and he knew her for his wife, the Lady Budur, daughter of King al-Ghayur, Lord of the Isles and the Seas. So he embraced her and she embraced him, and he kissed her and she kissed him; then they lay down on the bed of pleasure voluptuous, repeating the words of the poet:—

When his softly bending shape bid him close to my embrace ✿ Which clipt him all about like the tendrils of the vine,

And shed a flood of softness on the hardness of his heart, ✿ He yielded; though at first he was minded to decline;

And dreading lest the railer's eye should light upon his form, ✿ Came armourèd with caution to baffle his design:

His waist makes moan of hinder cheeks that weigh upon his feet ✿ Like heavy load of merchandise upon young camel li'en;

Girt with his glances' scymitar which seemed athirst for blood, ✿ And clad in mail of dusky curls that show the sheeniest shine,

307 His fragrance wafted happy news of footstep coming nigh, ✿ And to him like a bird uncaged I flew in straightest line:

I spread my cheek upon his path, beneath his sandal-shoon, ✿ And lo! the stibium[350] of their dust healed all my hurt of eyne.

With one embrace again I bound the banner of our loves,[351] ✿ And loosed the knot of my delight that bound in bonds malign:

Then bade I make high festival, and straight came flocking in ✿ Pure joys that know not grizzled age[352] nor aught of pain and pine:

The full moon dotted with the stars the lips and pearly teeth ✿ That dance right joyously upon the bubbling face of wine:

So in the prayer-niche of their joys I yielded me to what ✿ Would make the humblest penitent of sinner most indign.

I swear by all the signs[353] of those glories in his face ✿ I'll ne'er forget the Chapter entituled Al-Ikhlas.[354]

Then Queen Budur told Kamar al-Zaman all that had befallen her from beginning to end and he did likewise; after which he began to upbraid her, saying, "What moved thee to deal with me as thou hast done this night?" She replied, "Pardon me! for I did this by way of jest, and that pleasure and gladness might be increased." And when dawned the morn and day arose with its sheen and shone, she sent to King Armanus, sire of the Lady Hayat al-Nufus, and acquainted him with the truth of the case and that she was wife to Kamar al-Zaman. Moreover, she told him their tale and the cause of their separation, and how his daughter was a virgin, pure as when she was born. He marvelled at their story with exceeding marvel and bade them chronicle it in letters of gold. Then he turned to Kamar al-Zaman and said, "O King's son, art thou minded to become my son-in-law by marrying my daughter?" Replied he, "I must consult the 308 Queen Budur, as she hath a claim upon me for benefits without stint." And when he took counsel with her, she said, "Right is thy recking; marry her and I will be her handmaid; for I am her debtor for kindness and favour and good offices, and obligations manifold, especially as we are here in her place and as the King her father hath whelmed us with benefits."[355] Now when he saw that she inclined to this and was not jealous of Hayat al-Nufus, he agreed with her upon this matter——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventeenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman agreed with his wife, Queen Budur, upon this matter and told King Armanus what she had said; whereat he rejoiced with great joy. Then he went out and, seating himself upon his chair of estate, assembled all the Wazirs, Emirs, Chamberlains and Grandees, to whom he related the whole story of Kamar al-Zaman and his wife, Queen Budur, from first to last; and acquainted them with his desire to marry his daughter Hayat al-Nufus to the Prince and make him King in the stead of Queen Budur. Whereupon said they all, "Since he is the husband of Queen Budur, who hath been our King till now, whilst we deemed her son-in-law to King Armanus, we are all content to have him to Sultan over us; and we will be his servants, nor will we swerve from his allegiance." So Armanus rejoiced hereat and, summoning Kazis and witnesses and the chief officers of state, bade draw up the contract of marriage between Kamar al-Zaman and his daughter, the Princess Hayat al-Nufus. Then he held high festival, giving sumptuous marriage-feasts and bestowing costly dresses of honour upon all the Emirs and Captains of the host; moreover he distributed alms to the poor and needy and set free all the prisoners. The whole world rejoiced in the coming of Kamar al-Zaman to the throne, blessing him and wishing him endurance of glory and prosperity, renown and felicity; and, as 309 soon as he became King, he remitted the customs-dues and

released all men who remained in gaol. Thus he abode a long while, ordering himself worthily towards his lieges; and he lived with his two wives in peace, happiness, constancy and content, lying the night with each of them in turn. He ceased not after this fashion during many years, for indeed all his troubles and afflictions were blotted out from him and he forgot his father King Shahriman and his former estate of honour and favour with him. After a while Almighty Allah blessed him with two boy children, as they were two shining moons, through his two wives; the elder whose name was Prince Amjad,[356] by Queen Budur, and the younger whose name was Prince As'ad by Queen Hayat al-Nufus; and this one was comelier than his brother. They were reared in splendour and tender affection, in respectful bearing and in the perfection of training; and they were instructed in penmanship and science and the arts of government and horsemanship, till they attained the extreme of accomplishments and the utmost limit of beauty and loveliness; both men and women being ravished by their charms. They grew up side by side till they reached the age of seventeen, eating and drinking together and sleeping in one bed, nor ever parting at any time or tide; wherefore all the people envied them. Now when they came to man's estate and were endowed with every perfection, their father was wont, as often as he went on a journey, to make them sit in his stead by turns in the hall of judgement; and each did justice among the folk one day at a time. But it came to pass, by confirmed fate and determined lot, that love for As'ad (son of Queen Hayat al-Nufus) rose in the heart of Queen Budur, and that affection for Amjad (son of Queen Budur) rose in the heart of Queen Hayat al-Nufus.[357] Hence it was that each of the women used to sport and play with the son of her sister-wife, kissing him and straining him to her bosom, whilst each mother thought that the other's behaviour arose but from maternal affection. On this wise 310 passion got the mastery of the two women's hearts and they became madly in love with the two youths, so that when the other's son came in to either of them, she would press him to her breast and long for him never to be parted from her; till, at last, when waiting grew longsome to them and they found no path to enjoyment, they refused meat and drink and banished the solace of sleep. Presently, the King fared forth to course and chase, bidding his two sons sit to do justice in his stead, each one day in turn, as was their wont.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King fared forth to sport and hunt, bidding his two sons sit to do justice in his stead, each one day by turn, as was their wont. Now Prince Amjad sat in judgement the first day, bidding and forbidding, appointing and deposing, giving and refusing; and Queen Hayat al-Nufus, mother of As'ad, wrote to him a letter suing for his favour and discovering to him her passion and devotion; altogether putting off the mask and giving him to know that she desired to enjoy him. So she took a scroll and thereon indited these cadences:—From the love

deranged ✿ the sorrowful and estranged ✿ whose torment is prolonged for the longing of thee! ✿ Were I to recount to thee the extent of my care ✿ and what of sadness I bear ✿ the passion which my heart doth tear ✿ and all that I endure for weeping and unrest ✿ and the rending of my sorrowful breast ✿ my unremitting grief ✿ and my woe without relief ✿ and all my suffering for severance of thee ✿ and sadness and love's ardency ✿ no letter could contain it; nor calculation could compass it ✿ Indeed earth and heaven upon me are strait; and I have no hope and no trust but what from thee I await ✿ Upon death I am come nigh ✿ and the horrors of dissolution I aby ✿ Burning upon me is sore ✿ with parting pangs and estrangement galore ✿ Were I to set forth the yearnings that possess me more and more ✿ no scrolls would suffice to hold such store ✿ and of the excess of my pain and pine, I have made the following lines:—

Were I to dwell on heart-consuming heat, ✿ Unease and transports in my spirit meet,

Nothing were left of ink and reeden pen ✿ Nor aught of paper; no, not e'en a sheet.

311 Then Queen Hayat al-Nufus wrapped up her letter in a piece of costly silk scented with musk and ambergris; and folded it up with her silken hair-strings[358] whose cost swallowed down treasures; laid it in a handkerchief and gave it to a eunuch bidding him bear it to Prince Amjad.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that she gave her missive to the eunuch in waiting and bade him bear it to Prince Amjad. And that eunuch went forth ignoring what the future hid for him (for the Omniscient ordereth events even as He willeth); and, going in to the Prince, kissed the ground between his hands and handed to him the letter. On receiving the kerchief he opened it and, reading the epistle and recognising its gist he was ware that his father's wife was essentially an adulteress and a traitress at heart to her husband, King Kamar al-Zaman. So he waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and railed at women and their works, saying, "Allah curse women, the traitresses, the imperfect in reason and religion!"[359] Then he drew his sword and said to the eunuch, "Out on thee, thou wicked slave! Dost thou carry messages of disloyalty for thy lord's wife? By Allah, there is no good in thee, O black of hue and heart, O foul of face and Nature's forming!" So he smote him on the neck and severed his head from his body; then, folding the kerchief over its contents he thrust it into his breast-pocket and went in to his own mother and told her what had passed, reviling and reproaching her, and saying, "Each one of you is viler than the other; and, by Allah the Great and Glorious, did I not fear ill-manneredly to transgress against the rights of my father, Kamar al-Zaman, and my brother, Prince As'ad, I would assuredly go in to her and cut off her head, even as I cut off that of her eunuch!" Then he went

forth from his mother in a mighty rage; and when the news reached Queen Hayat al-Nufus of what he had done with her eunuch, she abused him[3601] and cursed him and plotted perfidy against him. He passed the night, sick with rage, wrath and concern; nor found he pleasure in meat, drink or sleep. And when the next morning dawned 312 Prince As'ad fared forth in his turn to rule the folk in his father's stead, whilst his mother, Hayat al-Nufus, awoke in feeble plight because of what she had heard from Prince Amjad concerning the slaughter of her eunuch. So Prince As'ad sat in the audience-chamber that day, judging and administering justice, appointing and deposing, bidding and forbidding, giving and bestowing. And he ceased not thus till near the time of afternoon-prayer, when Queen Budur sent for a crafty old woman and, discovering to her what was in her heart, wrote a letter to Prince As'ad, complaining of the excess of her affection and desire for him in these cadenced lines:—"From her who perisheth for passion and love-forlorn ✿ to him who in nature and culture is goodliest born ✿ to him who is conceited of his own loveliness ✿ and glories in his amorous grace ✿ who from those that seek to enjoy him averteth his face ✿ and refuseth to show favour unto the self abasing and base ✿ him who is cruel and of disdainful mood ✿ from the lover despairing of good ✿ to Prince As'ad ✿ with passing beauty endowed ✿ and of excelling grace proud ✿ of the face moon-bright ✿ and the brow flower-white ✿ and dazzling splendid light ✿ This is my letter to him whose love melteth my body ✿ and rendeth my skin and bones! ✿ Know that my patience faileth me quite ✿ and I am perplexed in my plight ✿ longing and restlessness weary me ✿ and sleep and patience deny themselves to me ✿ but mourning and watching stick fast to me ✿ and desire and passion torment me ✿ and the extremes of languor and sickness have shent me ✿ Yet may my life be a ransom for thee ✿ albeit thy pleasure be to slay her who loveth thee ✿ and Allah prolong the life of thee ✿ and preserve thee from all infirmity!" And after these cadences she wrote these couplets:—

Fate hath commanded I become thy fere, ✿ O shining like full moon when clearest clear!
All beauty dost embrace, all eloquence; ✿ Brighter than aught within our worldly sphere:
Content am I my torturer thou be: ✿ Haply shalt alms me with one lovely leer!
Happy her death who dieth for thy love! ✿ No good in her who holdeth thee undear!

And also the following couplets:—

Unto thee, As'ad! I of passion-pangs complain; ✿ Have ruth on slave of love so burnt with flaming pain:
How long, I ask, shall hands of Love disport with me, ✿ With longings, dolour, sleepliness and bale and bane?
313 Anon I 'plain of sea in heart, anon of fire ✿ In vitals, O strange case, dear wish, my fainest fain!
O blamer, cease thy blame, and seek thyself to fly ✿ From Love, which makes these eyne a rill of tears to rain.
How oft I cry for absence and desire, Ah grief! ✿ But all my crying naught of gain for me shall gain:

Thy rigours dealt me sickness passing power to bear, ✿ Thou art my only leach, assain me an thou deign!
O chider, chide me not in caution, for I doubt ✿ That plaguey Love to thee shall also deal a bout.

Then Queen Budur perfumed the letter-paper with a profusion of odoriferous musk and, winding it in her hair-strings which were of Iráki silk, with pendants of oblong emeralds, set with pearls and stones of price, delivered it to the old woman, bidding her carry it to Prince As'ad.[361] She did so in order to pleasure her, and going in to the Prince, straightway and without stay, found him in his own rooms and delivered to him the letter in privacy; after which she stood waiting an hour or so for the answer. When As'ad had read the paper and knew its purport, he wrapped it up again in the ribbons and put it in his bosom-pocket: then (for he was wroth beyond all measure of wrath) he cursed false women and sprang up and drawing his sword, smote the old trot on the neck and cut off her pate. Thereupon he went in to his mother, Queen Hayat al-Nufus, whom he found lying on her bed in feeble case, for that which had betided her with Prince Amjad, and railed at her and cursed her; after which he left her and foregathered with his brother, to whom he related all that had befallen him with Queen Budur, adding, "By Allah, O my brother, but that I was ashamed before thee, I had gone in to her forthright and had smitten her head off her shoulders!" Replied Prince Amjad, "By Allah, O my brother, yesterday when I was sitting upon the seat of judgement, the like of what hath befallen thee this day befel me also with thy mother who sent me a letter of similar purport." And he told him all that had passed, adding, "By Allah, O my brother, naught but respect for thee withheld 314me from going in to her and dealing with her even as I dealt with the eunuch!" They passed the rest of the night conversing and cursing false womankind, and agreed to keep the matter secret, lest their father should hear of it and kill the two women. Yet they ceased not to suffer trouble and foresee affliction. And when the morrow dawned, the King returned with his suite from hunting and sat awhile in his chair of estate; after which he sent the Emirs about their business and went up to his palace, where he found his two wives lying a-bed and both exceeding sick and weak. Now they had made a plot against their two sons and concerted to do away their lives, for that they had exposed themselves before them and feared to be at their mercy and dependent upon their forbearance. When Kamar al-Zaman saw them on this wise, he said to them, "What aileth you?" Whereupon they rose to him and kissing his hands answered, perverting the case and saying, "Know, O King, that thy two sons, who have been reared in thy bounty, have played thee false and have dishonoured thee in the persons of thy wives." Now when he heard this, the light became darkness in his sight, and he raged with such wrath that his reason fled: then said he to them, "Explain me this matter." Replied Queen Budur, "O King of the age, know that these many days past thy son As'ad hath been in the persistent habit of sending me letters and messages to solicit me to lewdness and adultery while I still forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden; and, when thou wentest forth to hunt, he rushed

in on me, drunk and with a drawn sword in his hand, and smiting my eunuch, slew him. Then he mounted on my breast, still holding the sword, and I feared lest he should slay me, if I gainsaid him, even as he had slain my eunuch; so he took his wicked will of me by force. And now if thou do me not justice on him, O King, I will slay myself with my own hand, for I have no need of life in the world after this foul deed." And Queen Hayat al-Nufus, choking with tears, told him respecting Prince Amjad a story like that of her sister-wife.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Queen Hayat al-Nufus told her husband, King Kamar al-Zaman, a story 315 like that of her sister in wedlock, Budur, and, quoth she, "The same thing befel me with thy son Amjad;" after which she took to weeping and wailing and said, "Except thou do me justice on him I will tell my father, King Armanus." Then both women wept with sore weeping before King Kamar al-Zaman who, when he saw their tears and heard their words, concluded that their story was true and, waxing wroth beyond measure of wrath, went forth thinking to fall upon his two sons and put them to death. On his way he met his father-in-law, King Armanus who, hearing of his return from the chase, had come to salute him at that very hour; and, seeing him with naked brand in hand and blood dripping from his nostrils, for excess of rage, asked what ailed him. So Kamar al-Zaman told him all that his sons Amjad and As'ad had done and added, "And here I am now going in to them to slay them in the foulest way and make of them the most shameful of examples." Quoth King Armanus (and indeed he too was wroth with them), "Thou dost well, O my son, and may Allah not bless them nor any sons that do such deed against their father's honour. But, O my son, the sayer of the old saw saith:—Whoso looketh not to the end hath not Fortune to friend. In any case, they are thy sons, and it befitteth not that thou kill them with thine own hand, lest thou drink of their death-agony,[362] and anon repent of having slain them whenas repentance availeth thee naught. Rather do thou send them with one of thy Mamelukes into the desert and let him kill them there out of thy sight, for, as saith the adage:—Out of sight of my friend is better and pleasanter."[363] And when Kamar al-Zaman heard his father-in-law's words, he knew them to be just; so he sheathed his sword and turning back, sat down upon the throne of his realm. There he summoned his treasurer, a very old man, versed in affairs and in fortune's vicissitudes, to whom he said, "Go in to my sons, Amjad and As'ad; bind their hands behind them with strong bonds, lay them in two chests and load them upon a mule. Then take horse thou and carry them into mid-desert, where do thou kill them both and fill two vials with their blood and bring the same to me in haste." Replied the treasurer, "I hear and I obey," and he rose up hurriedly and went out forthright to seek the Princes; and, on his road, he met them 316 coming out of the palace-vestibule, for they had donned their best clothes

and their richest; and they were on their way to salute their sire and give him joy of his safe return from his going forth to hunt. Now when he saw them, he laid hands on them, saying, "O my sons, know ye that I am but a slave commanded, and that your father hath laid a commandment on me; will ye obey his commandment?" They said, "Yes"; whereupon he went up to them and, after pinioning their arms, laid them in the chests which he loaded on the back of a mule he had taken from the city. And he ceased not carrying them into the open country till near noon, when he halted in a waste and desolate place and, dismounting from his mare, let down the two chests from the mule's back. Then he opened them and took out Amjad and As'ad; and when he looked upon them he wept sore for their beauty and loveliness; then drawing his sword he said to them, "By Allah, O my lords, indeed it is hard for me to deal so evilly by you; but I am to be excused in this matter, being but a slave commanded, for that your father King Kamar al-Zaman hath bidden me strike off your heads." They replied, "O Emir, do the King's bidding, for we bear with patience that which Allah (to Whom be Honour, Might and Glory!) hath decreed to us; and thou art quit of our blood." Then they embraced and bade each other farewell, and As'ad said to the treasurer, "Allah upon thee, O uncle, spare me the sight of my brother's death-agony and make me not drink of his anguish, but kill me first, for that were the easier for me." And Amjad said the like and entreated the treasurer to kill him before As'ad, saying, "My brother is younger than I; so make me not taste of his anguish." And they both wept bitter tears whilst the treasurer wept for their weeping;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the treasurer wept for their weeping; then the two brothers embraced and bade farewell and one said to the other, "All this cometh of the malice of those traitresses, my mother and thy mother; and this is the reward of my forbearance towards thy mother and of thy forbearance towards my mother! But there is no Might and there 317 is no Majesty save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily, we are Allah's and unto Him we are returning."[364] And As'ad embraced his brother, sobbing and repeating these couplets:—

O Thou to whom sad trembling wights in fear complain! ✿ O ever ready whatso cometh to sustain!
The sole resource for me is at Thy door to knock; ✿ At whose door knock an Thou to open wilt not deign?
O Thou whose grace is treasured in the one word, Be![365] ✿ Favour me, I beseech, in Thee all weals contain.

Now when Amjad heard his brother's weeping he wept also and pressing him to his bosom repeated these two couplets:—

O Thou whose boons to me are more than one! ✿ Whose gifts and favours have nor count nor bound!
No stroke of all Fate's strokes e'er fell on me, ✿ But Thee to take me by the hand I found.

Then said Amjad to the treasurer, "I conjure thee by the One, Omnipotent, the Lord of Mercy, the Beneficent! slay me before my brother As'ad, so haply shall the fire be

quencht in my heart's core and in this life burn no more." But As'ad wept and exclaimed, "Not so: I will die first;" whereupon quoth Amjad, "It were best that I embrace thee and thou embrace me, so the sword may fall upon us and slay us both at a single stroke." Thereupon they embraced, face to face and clung to each other straitly, whilst the treasurer tied up the twain and bound them fast with cords, weeping the while. Then he drew his blade and said to them, "By Allah, O my lords, it is indeed hard to me to slay you! But have ye no last wishes that I may fulfil or charges which I may carry out, or message which I may deliver?" Replied Amjad, "We have no wish; and my only charge to thee is that thou set my brother below and me above him, that the blow may fall on me first; and when thou hast killed us and returnest to the King and he asketh thee:—What heardest thou from them before their death?; do thou 318 answer:—Verily thy sons salute thee and say to thee, Thou knewest not if we were innocent or guilty, yet hast thou put us to death and hast not certified thyself of our sin nor looked into our case. Then do thou repeat to him these two couplets:—

Women are Satans made for woe o' men; ✿ I fly to Allah from their devilish scathe:

Source of whatever bale befel our kind, ✿ In worldly matters and in things of Faith."

Continued Amjad, "We desire of thee naught but that thou repeat to our sire these two couplets"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me O auspicious King, that Amjad added, speaking to the treasurer, "We desire of thee naught but that thou repeat to our sire these two couplets which thou hast just now heard; and I conjure thee by Allah to have patience with us, whilst I cite to my brother this other pair of couplets." Then he wept with sore weeping and began:—

"The Kings who fared before us showed ✿ Of instances full many a show:

Of great and small and high and low ✿ How many this one road have trod!"

Now when the treasurer heard these words from Amjad, he wept till his beard was wet, whilst As'ad's eyes brimmed with tears and he in turn repeated these couplets:—

Fate frights us when the thing is past and gone; ✿ Weeping is not for form or face alone[366]:

What ails the Nights?[367] Allah blot out our sin, ✿ And be the Nights by other hand undone!

Ere this Zubayr-son[368] felt their spiteful hate, ✿ Who fled for refuge to the House and Stone:

319 Would that when Khárijah was for Amru slain[369] ✿ They had ransomed Ali with all men they own.

Then, with cheeks stained by tears down railing he recited also these verses:—

In sooth the Nights and Days are charactered ✿ By traitor falsehood and as knaves they lie;

The Desert-reek[370] recalls their teeth that shine; ✿ All horrid blackness is their Kohl of eye:

My sin anent the world which I abhor ✿ Is sin of sword when sworders fighting hie.

Then his sobs waxed louder and he said:—

O thou who woost a World[371] unworthy, learn ✿ 'Tis house of evils, 'tis Perdition's net:
A house where whoso laughs this day shall weep ✿ The next: then perish house of fume and fret!
Endless its frays and forays, and its thralls ✿ Are ne'er redeemed, while endless risks beset.
How many gloried in its pomps and pride, ✿ Till proud and pompous did all bounds forget,
Then showing back of shield she made them swill[372] ✿ Full draught, and claimèd all her vengeance debt.
For know her strokes fall swift and sure, altho' ✿ Long bide she and forslow the course of Fate:
So look thou to thy days lest life go by ✿ Idly, and meet thou more than thou hast met;
And cut all chains of world-love and desire ✿ And save thy soul and rise to secrets higher.

Now when As'ad made an end of these verses, he strained his brother Amjad in his arms, till they twain were one body, and the treasurer, drawing his sword, was about to strike them, when behold, his steed took fright at the wind of his upraised hand, and breaking its tether, fled into the desert. Now the horse had cost a thousand gold pieces and on its back was a splendid saddle worth much money; so the treasurer threw down his sword, and ran after his beast.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say,

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when his horse ran away, the treasurer ran after it in huge concern, and ceased not running to catch the runaway till it entered a thicket. He followed it whilst it dashed through the wood, smiting the earth with its hoofs till it raised a dust-cloud which towered high in air; and snorting and puffing and neighing and waxing fierce and furious. Now there happened to be in this thicket a lion of terrible might; hideous to sight, with eyes sparkling light: his look was grim and his aspect struck fright into man's sprite. Presently the treasurer turned and saw the lion making towards him; but found no way of escape nor had he his sword with him. So he said in himself, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! This strait is come upon me for no other cause but because of Amjad and As'ad; and indeed this journey was unblest from the first!" Meanwhile the two Princes were grievously oppressed by the heat and grew sore athirst, so that their tongues hung out and they cried for succour, but none came to their relief and they said, "Would to Heaven we had been slain and were at peace from this pain! But we know not whither the horse hath fled, that the treasurer is gone and hath left us thus pinioned. If he would but come back and do us die, it were easier to us than this torture to aby." Said As'ad, "O my brother, be patient, and the relief of Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) shall assuredly come to us; for the horse started not away save of His favour towards us, and naught irketh us but this thirst." Upon this he stretched and shook himself and strained right and left, till he burst his pinion-bonds; then he rose and unbound his brother and catching up the Emir's sword, said,

"By Allah, we will not go hence, till we look after him and learn what is become of him." Then they took to following on the trail till it led them to the thicket and they said to each other, "Of a surety, the horse and the treasurer have not passed out of this wood." Quoth As'ad, "Stay thou here, whilst I enter the thicket and search it;" and Amjad replied, "I will not let thee go in alone: nor will we enter it but together; so if we escape, we shall escape together and if we perish, we shall perish together." Accordingly both entered and found that the lion had sprang upon the treasurer, who lay like a sparrow in his grip, calling upon Allah for aid and signing with his hands to Heaven. Now when Amjad saw this, he took the sword and, rushing upon the lion, smote him between the eyes and laid him dead on the ground. The Emir sprang up, marvelling at this escape and seeing Amjad and As'ad, his master's sons, standing there, cast himself at their feet and exclaimed, "By Allah, O my lords, it were intolerable wrong in me to do you to death. May the man never be who would kill you! Indeed, with my very life, I will ransom you"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the treasurer to Amjad and As'ad, "With my life will I ransom you both!" Then he hastily rose and, at once embracing them, enquired how they had loosed their bonds and come thither; whereupon they told him how the bonds of one of them had fallen loose and he had unbound the other, whereto they were helped by the purity of their intentions, and how they had tracked his trail till they came upon him. So he thanked them for their deed and went with them forth of the thicket; and, when they were in the open country, they said to him, "O uncle, do our father's bidding." He replied, "Allah forbid that I should draw near to you with hurt! But know ye that I mean to take your clothes and clothe you with mine; then will I fill two vials with the lion's blood and go back to the King and tell him I have put you to death. But as 322 for you two, fare ye forth into the lands, for Allah's earth is wide; and know, O my lords, that it paineth me to part from you." At this, they all fell a-weeping; then the two youths put off their clothes and the treasurer habited them with his own. Moreover he made two parcels of their dress and, filling two vials with the lion's blood, set the parcels before him on his horse's back. Presently he took leave of them and, making his way to the city, ceased not faring till he went in to King Kamar al-Zaman and kissed the ground between his hands. The King saw him changed in face and troubled (which arose from his adventure with the lion) and, deeming this came of the slaughter of his two sons, rejoiced and said to him, "Hast thou done the work?" "Yes, O our lord," replied the treasurer and gave him the two parcels of clothes and the two vials full of blood. Asked the King, "What didst thou observe in them; and did they give thee any charge?" Answered the treasurer, "I found them patient and resigned to what came

down upon them and they said to me:—Verily, our father is excusable; bear him our salutation and say to him, Thou art quit of our killing. But we charge thee repeat to him these couplets:—

Verily women are devils created for us. We seek refuge with God from the artifice of the devils.

They are the source of all the misfortunes that have appeared among mankind in the affairs of the world and of religion."[373]

When the King heard these words of the treasurer, he bowed his head earthwards, a long while and knew his sons' words to mean that they had been wrongfully put to death. Then he bethought himself of the perfidy of women and the calamities brought about by them; and he took the two parcels and opened them and fell to turning over his sons' clothes and weeping,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Kamar al-Zaman opened the two bundles and fell to turning over 323 his sons' clothes and weeping, it so came to pass that he found, in the pocket of his son As'ad's raiment, a letter in the hand of his wife enclosing her hair-strings; so he opened and read it and understanding the contents knew that the Prince had been falsely accused and wrongously. Then he searched Amjad's parcel of dress and found in his pocket a letter in the handwriting of Queen Hayat al-Nufus enclosing also her hair-strings; so he opened and read it and knew that Amjad too had been wronged; whereupon he beat hand upon hand and exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I have slain my sons unjustly." And he buffeted his face, crying out, "Alas, my sons! Alas, my long grief!" Then he bade them build two tombs in one house, which he styled "House of Lamentations," and had graved thereon his sons' names; and he threw himself on Amjad's tomb, weeping and groaning and lamenting, and improvised these couplets:—

O moon for ever set this earth below, ✿ Whose loss bewail the stars which stud the sky!

O wand, which broken, ne'er with bend and wave ✿ Shall fascinate the ravisht gazer's eye;

These eyne for jealousy I 'reft of thee, ✿ Nor shall they till next life thy sight descry:

I'm drowned in sea of tears for insomny ✿ Wherefore, indeed in Sáhirah-stead[374] I lie.

Then he threw himself on As'ad's tomb, groaning and weeping and lamenting and versifying with these couplets:—

Indeed I longed to share unweal with thee, ✿ But Allah than my will willed otherwise:

My grief all blackens 'twixt mine eyes and space, ✿ Yet whitens all the blackness from mine eyes:[375]

Of tears they weep these eyne run never dry, ✿ And ulcerous flow in vitals never dries:

Right sore it irks me seeing thee in stead[376] ✿ Where slave with sovran for once levelled lies.

And his weeping and wailing redoubled; and, after he had ended 324 his lamentations and his verse, he forsook his friends and intimates, and denying himself to his women

and his family, cut himself off from the world in the House of Lamentations, where he passed his time in weeping for his sons. Such was his case; but as regards Amjad and As'ad they fared on into the desert eating of the fruits of the earth and drinking of the remnants of the rain for a full month, till their travel brought them to a mountain of black flint[377] whose further end was unknown; and here the road forked, one line lying along the midway height and the other leading to its head. They took the way trending to the top and gave not over following it five days, but saw no end to it and were overcome with weariness, being unused to walking upon the mountains or elsewhere.[378] At last, despairing of coming to the last of the road, they retraced their steps and, taking the other, that led over the midway heights,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Princes Amjad and As'ad returned from the path leading to the Mountain-head and took that which ran along the midway heights, and walked through all that day till nightfall, when As'ad, weary with much travel, said to Amjad, "O my brother, I can walk no farther, for I am exceeding weak." Replied Amjad, "O my brother, take courage! May be Allah will send us relief." So they walked on part of the night, till the darkness closed in upon them, when As'ad became weary beyond measure of weariness and cried out, "O my brother, I am worn out and spent with walking," and threw himself upon the ground and wept. Amjad took him in his arms and walked on with him, bytimes sitting down to rest till break of day, when they came to the mountain-top and found there a stream of running water and by it a pomegranate-tree and a prayer-niche.[379] 325 They could hardly believe their eyes when they saw it; but, sitting down by that spring, drank of its water and ate of the fruit of that granado-tree; after which they lay on the ground and slept till sunrise, when they washed and bathed in the spring and, eating of the pomegranates, slept again till the time of mid-afternoon prayer. Then they thought to continue their journey, but As'ad could not walk, for both his feet were swollen. So they abode there three days till they were rested, after which they set out again and fared on over the mountain days and nights, tortured by and like to die of thirst, till they sighted a city gleaming afar off, at which they rejoiced and made towards it. When they drew near it, they thanked Allah (be His Name exalted!) and Amjad said to As'ad, "O my brother, sit here, whilst I go to yonder city and see what it is and whose it is and where we are in Allah's wide world, that we may know through what lands we have passed in crossing this mountain, whose skirts had we followed, we had not reached this city in a whole year. So praised be Allah for safety!" Replied As'ad, "By Allah, O my brother, none shall go down into that city save myself, and may I be thy ransom! If thou leave me alone, be it only for an hour, I shall imagine a thousand things and be drowned in a torrent of anxiety on thine account, for I cannot brook thine absence from me." Amjad rejoined, "Go then and tarry not." So As'ad

took some gold pieces, and leaving his brother to await him, descended the mountain and ceased not faring on till he entered the city. As he threaded the streets he was met by an old man age-decrepit, whose beard flowed down upon his breast and forked in twain;[380] he bore a walking-staff in his hand and was richly clad, with a great red turband on his head. When As'ad saw him, he wondered at his dress and his mien; nevertheless, he went up to him and saluting him said, "Where be the way to the market, O my master?" Hearing these words the Shaykh smiled in his face and replied, "O my son, meseemeth thou art a stranger?" As'ad rejoined, "Yes, I am a stranger."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

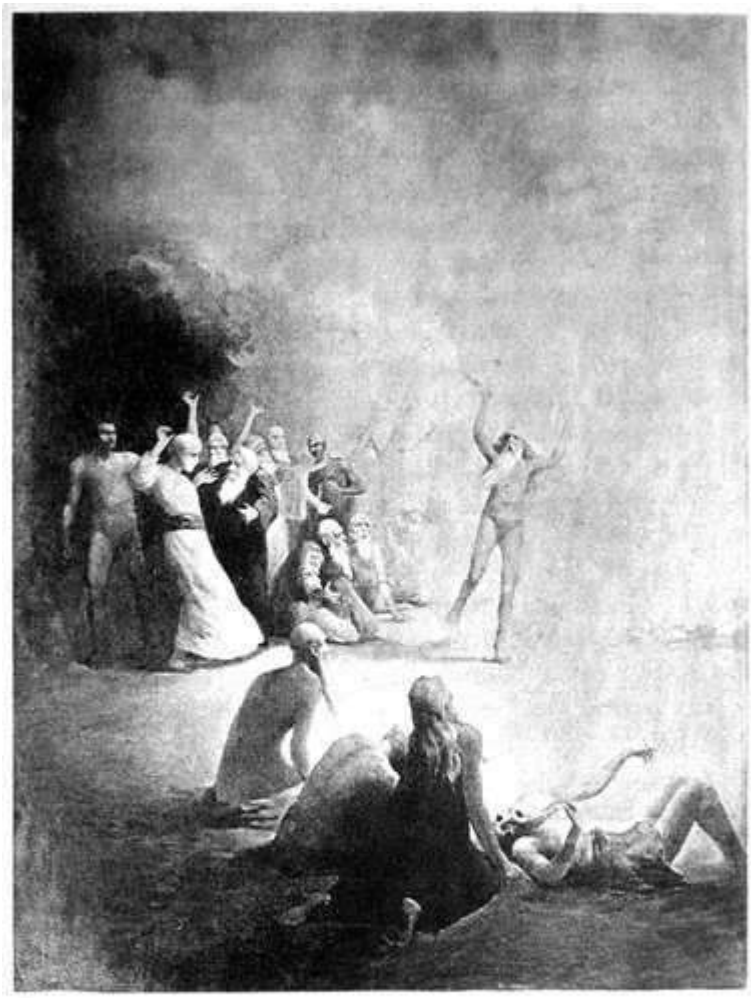
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Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Shaykh who met As'ad smiled in his face and said to him, "O my son, meseemeth thou art a stranger?" and As'ad replied, "Yes, I am a stranger." Then rejoined the old man, "Verily, thou gladdenest our country with thy presence, O my son, and thou desolatest thine own land by reason of thine absence. What wantest thou of the market?" Quoth As'ad, "O uncle, I have a brother, with whom I have come from a far land and with whom I have journeyed these three months; and, when we sighted this city, I left him, who is my elder brother, upon the mountain and came hither, purposing to buy victual and what else, and return therewith to him, that we might feed thereon." Said the old man, "Rejoice in all good, O my son, and know thou that to-day I give a marriage-feast, to which I have bidden many guests, and I have made ready plenty of meats, the best and most delicious that heart can desire. So if thou wilt come with me to my place, I will give thee freely all thou lackest without asking thee a price or aught else. Moreover I will teach thee the ways of this city; and, praised be Allah, O my son, that I, and none other have happened upon thee." "As thou wilt," answered As'ad, "do as thou art disposed, but make haste, for indeed my brother awaiteth me and his whole heart is with me." The old man took As'ad by the hand and carried him to a narrow lane, smiling in his face and saying, "Glory be to Him who hath delivered thee from the people of this city!" And he ceased not walking till he entered a spacious house, wherein was a saloon and behold, in the middle of it were forty old men, well stricken in years, collected together and forming a single ring as they sat round about a lighted fire, to which they were doing worship and prostrating themselves.[381] When As'ad saw this, he was confounded and the hair of his body stood on end though he knew not what they were; and the 327 Shaykh said to them, "O Elders of the Fire, how blessed is this day!" Then he called aloud, saying, "Hallo, Ghazbán!" Whereupon there came out to him a tall black slave of frightful aspect, grim-visaged and flat nosed as an ape

who, when the old man made a sign to him, bent As'ad's arms behind his back and pinioned them; after which the Shaykh said to him, "Let him down into the vault under the earth and there leave him and say to my slave-girl Such-an-one:—Torture him night and day and give him a cake of bread to eat morning and evening against the time come of the voyage to the Blue Sea and the Mountain of Fire, whereon we will slaughter him as a sacrifice." So the black carried him out at another door and, raising a flag in the floor, discovered a flight of twenty steps leading to a chamber[382] under the earth, into which he descended with him and, laying his feet in irons, gave him over to the slave-girl and went away. Meanwhile, the old men said to one another, "When the day of the Festival of the Fire cometh, we will sacrifice him on the mountain, as a propitiatory offering whereby we shall pleasure the Fire." Presently the damsel went down to him and beat him a grievous beating, till streams of blood flowed from his sides and he fainted; after which she set at his head a scone of bread and a cruse of brackish water and went away and left him. In the middle of the night, he revived and found himself bound and beaten and sore with beating: so he wept bitter tears; and recalling his former condition of honour and prosperity, lordship and dominion, and his separation from his sire and his exile from his native land——

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-eight Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when As'ad found himself bound and beaten and sore with beating he recalled his whilome condition of honour and prosperity and dominion and lordship, and he wept and groaned aloud and recited these couplets:—

328 Stand by the ruined stead and ask of us; ✿ Nor deem we dwell there as was state of us:
The World, that parter, hath departed us; ✿ Yet soothes not hate-full hearts the fate of us:
With whips a cursèd slave-girl scourges us, ✿ And teems her breast with rancorous hate of us:
Allah shall haply deign to unpart our lives, ✿ Chastise our foes, and end this strait of us.

And when As'ad had spoken his poetry, he put out his hand towards his head and finding there the crust and the cruse full of brackish water he ate a bittock, just enough to keep life in him, and drank a little water, but could get no sleep till morning for the swarms of bugs[383] and lice. As soon as it was day, the slave-girl came down to him and changed his clothes, which were drenched with blood and stuck to him, so that his skin came off with the shirt; wherefor he shrieked aloud and cried, "Alas!" and said, "O my God, if this be Thy pleasure, increase it upon me! O Lord, verily Thou art not unmindful of him that oppresseth me; do Thou then avenge me upon him!" And he groaned and repeated the following verses:—

Patient, O Allah! to Thy destiny ✿ I bow, suffice me what Thou deign decree:
Patient to bear Thy will, O Lord of me, ✿ Patient to burn on coals of Ghazátree:
They wrong me, visit me with hurt and harm; ✿ Haply Thy grace from them shall set me free:
Far be't, O Lord, from thee to spare the wronger ✿ O Lord of Destiny my hope's in Thee!

And what another saith:—

Bethink thee not of worldly state, ✿ Leave everything to course of Fate;
For oft a thing that irketh thee ✿ Shall in content eventuate;
And oft what strait is shall expand, ✿ And what expanded is wax strait.
Allah will do what wills His will, ✿ So be not thou importunate!
But 'joy the view of coming weal ✿ Shall make forget past bale and bate.

And when he had ended his verse, the slave-girl came down upon him with blows till he fainted again; and, throwing him a flap of bread and a gugglet of saltish water, went away and left him sad 329 and lonely, bound in chains of iron, with the blood streaming from his sides and far from those he loved. So he wept and called to mind his brother and the honours he erst enjoyed——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that As'ad called to mind his brother and the honours he erst enjoyed; so he wept and groaned and complained and poured forth tears in floods and improvised these couplets:—

Easy, O Fate! how long this wrong, this injury, ✿ Robbing each morn and eve my brotherhood fro' me?
Is't not time now thou deem this length sufficiency ✿ Of woes and, O thou Heart of Rock, show clemency?
My friends thou wrongedst when thou madst each enemy ✿ Mock and exult me for thy wrongs, thy tyranny:
My foeman's heart is solaced by the things he saw ✿ In me, of strangerhood and lonely misery:
Suffice thee not what came upon my head of dole, ✿ Friends lost for evermore, eyes wan and pale of blee?
But must in prison cast so narrow there is naught ✿ Save hand to bite, with bitten hand for company;
And tears that tempest down like goodly gift of cloud, ✿ And longing thirst whose fires weet no satiety.
Regretful yearnings, singulfs and unceasing sighs, ✿ Repine, remembrance and pain's very ecstacy:
Desire I suffer sore and melancholy deep, ✿ And I must bide a prey to endless phrenesy:

I find me ne'er a friend who looks with piteous eye, ✿ And seeks my presence to allay my misery:
Say, liveth any intimate with trusty love ✿ Who for mine ills will groan, my sleepless malady?
To whom moan I can make and, peradventure, he ✿ Shall pity eyes that sight of sleep can never see?
The flea and bug suck up my blood, as wight that drinks ✿ Wine from the proffering hand of fair virginity:
Amid the lice my body aye remindeth me ✿ Of orphan's good in Kázi's claw of villainy:
My home's a sepulchre that measures cubits three, ✿ Where pass I morn and eve in chainèd agony:
My wines are tears, my clank of chains takes music's stead; ✿ Cares my dessert of fruit and sorrows are my bed.

330 And when he had versed his verse and had prosed his prose, he again groaned and complained and remembered what he had been and how he had been parted from his brother. Thus far concerning him; but as regards his brother Amjad, he awaited As'ad till mid-day yet he returned not to him: whereupon Amjad's vitals fluttered, the pangs of parting were sore upon him and he poured forth abundant tears,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Amjad awaited his brother As'ad till mid-day and he returned not to him, Amjad's vitals fluttered; the pangs of parting were sore upon him and he poured forth abundant tears, exclaiming, "Alas, my brother! Alas, my friend! Alas my grief! How I feared me we should be separated!" Then he descended from the mountain-top with the tears running down his cheeks; and, entering the city, ceased not walking till he made the market. He asked the folk the name of the place and concerning its people and they said, "This is called the City of the Magians, and its citizens are mostly given to Fire-worshipping in lieu of the Omnipotent King." Then he enquired of the City of Ebony and they answered, "Of a truth it is a year's journey thither by land and six months by sea: it was governed erst by a King called Armanus; but he took to son-in-law and made King in his stead a Prince called Kamar al-Zaman distinguished for justice and munificence, equity and benevolence." When Amjad heard tell of his father, he groaned and wept and lamented and knew not whither to go. However, he bought a something of food and carried it to a retired spot where he sat down thinking to eat; but, recalling his brother, he fell a-weeping and swallowed but a morsel to keep breath and body together, and that against his will. Then he rose and walked about the city, seeking news of his brother, till he saw a Moslem tailor sitting in his shop; so he sat down by him and told him his story; whereupon quoth the tailor, "If he have fallen into the hands of the Magians, thou shalt hardly see him again: yet it may be Allah will reunite you twain. But thou, O my brother," he continued, "wilt thou lodge with me?" Amjad answered, "Yes"; and the tailor rejoiced at this. So he abode with him many days, what 331 while the tailor comforted him and exhorted him to patience and taught him tailoring, till he became expert in the craft. Now one day he went forth to the sea-shore and washed his clothes; after which he entered the bath and put on clean

raiment; then he walked about the city, to divert himself with its sights and presently there met him on the way a woman of passing beauty and loveliness, without peer for grace and comeliness. When she saw him she raised her face-veil and signed to him by moving her eyebrows and her eyes with luring glances, and versified these couplets:—

I drooped my glance when seen thee on the way ✿ As though, O slim-waist! felled by Sol's hot ray:
Thou art the fairest fair that e'er appeared, ✿ Fairer to-day than fair of yesterday:[384]
Were Beauty parted, a fifth part of it ✿ With Joseph or a part of fifth would stay;
The rest would fly to thee, thine ownest own; ✿ Be every soul thy sacrifice, I pray!

When Amjad heard these her words, they gladdened his heart which inclined to her and his bowels yearned towards her and the hands of love sported with him; so he sighed to her in reply and spoke these couplets:—

Above the rose of cheek is thorn of lance;[385] ✿ Who dareth pluck it, rashest chevisance?
Stretch not thy hand towards it, for night long ✿ Those lances marred because we snatched a glance!
Say her, who tyrant is and tempter too ✿ (Though justice might her tempting power enhance):—
Thy face would add to errors were it veiled; ✿ Unveiled I see its guard hath best of chance!
Eye cannot look upon Sol's naked face; ✿ But can, when mist-cloud dims his countenance:
The honey-hive is held by honey-bee;[386] ✿ Ask the tribe-guards what wants their vigilance?
An they would slay me, let them end their ire ✿ Rancorous, and grant us freely to advance:
They're not more murderous, an charge the whole ✿ Than charging glance of her who wears the mole.

332 And hearing these lines from Amjad she sighed with the deepest sighs and, signing to him again, repeated these couplets:—

'Tis thou hast trodden coyness-path not I: ✿ Grant me thy favours for the time draws nigh:
O thou who makest morn with light of brow, ✿ And with loosed brow-locks night in lift to stye!
Thine idol-aspect made of me thy slave, ✿ Tempting as temptedst me in days gone by:
'Tis just my liver fry with hottest love: ✿ Who worship fire for God must fire aby:
Thou sellest like of me for worthless price; ✿ If thou must sell, ask high of those who buy.

When Amjad heard these her words he said to her, "Wilt thou come to my lodging or shall I go with thee to thine?" So she hung her head in shame to the ground and repeated the words of Him whose Name be exalted, "Men shall have the pre-eminence above women, because of those advantages wherein Allah hath caused the one of them to excel the other."[387] Upon this, Amjad took the hint——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Amjad took the woman's hint and understood that she wished to go with him whither he was going; he felt himself bounden to find a place wherein to receive her, but was ashamed to carry her to the house of his host, the tailor. So he walked on and she walked after him, and the two

ceased not walking from street to street and place to place, till she was tired and said to him, "O my lord, where is thy house?" Answered he, "Before us a little way." Then he turned aside into a handsome by-street, followed by the young woman, and walked on till he came to the end, when he found it was no thoroughfare and exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Then raising his eyes, he saw, at the upper end of the lane a great door with two stone benches; but it was locked. So Amjad sat down on one of 333 the benches and she on the other; and she said to him, "O my lord, wherefore waitest thou?" He bowed his head awhile to the ground then raised it and answered, "I am awaiting my Mameluke who hath the key; for I bade him make me ready meat and drink and flowers, to deck the wine-service against my return from the bath." But he said to himself, "Haply the time will be tedious to her and she will go about her business, leaving me here, when I will wend my own way." However, as soon as she was weary of long waiting, she said, "O my lord, thy Mameluke delayeth; and here are we sitting in the street;" and she arose and took a stone and went up to the lock. Said Amjad, "Be not in haste, but have patience till the servant come." However, she hearkened not to him, but smote the wooden bolt with the stone and broke it in half, whereupon the door opened. Quoth he, "What possessed thee to do this deed?" Quoth she, "Pooh, pooh, my lord! what matter it? Is not the house thy house and thy place?" He said, "There was no need to break the bolt." Then the damsel entered, to the confusion of Amjad, who knew not what to do for fear of the people of the house; but she said to him, "Why dost thou not enter, O light of mine eyes and core of my heart?" Replied he, "I hear and obey; but my servant tarrieth long and I know not if he have done aught of what I bade him and specially enjoined upon him, or not." Hereupon he entered, sore in fear of the people of the house, and found himself in a handsome saloon with four daïs'd recesses, each facing other, and containing closets and raised seats, all bespread with stuffs of silk and brocade; and in the midst was a jetting fountain of costly fashion, on whose margin rested a covered tray of meats, with a leather tablecloth hanging up and gem-encrusted dishes, full of fruits and sweet-scented flowers. Hard by stood drinking vessels and a candlestick with a single wax-candle therein; and the place was full of precious stuffs and was ranged with chests and stools, and on each seat lay a parcel of clothes upon which was a purse full of monies, gold and silver. The floor was paved with marble and the house bore witness in every part to its owner's fortune. When Amjad saw all this, he was confounded at his case and said to himself, "I am a lost man! Verily we are Allah's and to Allah we are returning!" As for the damsel, when she sighted the place she rejoiced indeed with a joy nothing could exceed, and said to him, "By Allah, O my lord, thy servant hath not failed of his duty; for see, he hath swept the place and cooked the meat and set on the fruit; and indeed I come at the 334 best of times." But he paid no heed to her, his heart being taken up with fear of the house-folk; and she said, "Fie, O my lord, O my heart! What aileth thee to stand

thus?" Then she sighed; and, giving him a buss which sounded like the cracking of a walnut, said, "O my lord, an thou have made an appointment with other than with me, I will gird my middle and serve her and thee." Amjad laughed from a heart full of rage and wrath and came forwards and sat down, panting and saying to himself, "Alack, mine ill death and doom when the owner of the place shall return!" Then she seated herself by him and fell to toying and laughing, whilst Amjad sat careful and frowning, thinking a thousand thoughts and communing with himself, "Assuredly the master of the house cannot but come, and then what shall I say to him? he needs must kill me and my life will be lost thus foolishly." Presently she rose and, tucking up her sleeves, took a tray of food on which she laid the cloth and then set it before Amjad and began to eat, saying, "Eat, O my lord." So he came forward and ate; but the food was not pleasant to him; on the contrary he ceased not to look towards the door, till the damsel had eaten her fill, when she took away the tray of the meats and, setting on the dessert, fell to eating of the dried fruits. Then she brought the wine-service and opening the jar, filled a cup and handed it to Amjad, who took it from her hand saying to himself, "Ah, ah! and well-away, when the master of the house cometh and seeth me!"; and he kept his eyes fixed on the threshold, even with cup in hand. While he was in this case, lo! in came the master of the house, who was a white slave, one of the chief men of the city, being Master of the Horse[388] to the King. He had fitted up this saloon for his pleasures, that he might make merry therein and be private with whom he would, and he had that day bidden a youth whom he loved and had made this entertainment for him. Now the name of this slave was Bahádur,[389] and he was open of hand, generous, munificent and fain of alms-giving and charitable works.——And Shahzarad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Bahadur, the Master of the Horse and the owner of the house, came to the door of the saloon and found it open, he entered slowly and softly and looking in, with head advanced and outstretched neck, saw Amjad and the girl sitting before the dish of fruit and the wine-jar in front of them. Now Amjad at that moment had the cup in his hand and his face turned to the door; and when his glance met Bahadur's eyes his hue turned pale yellow and his side-muscles quivered, so seeing his trouble Bahadur signed to him with his finger on his lips, as much as to say, "Be silent and come hither to me." Whereupon he set down the cup and rose and the damsel cried, "Whither away?" He shook his head and, signing to her that he wished to make water, went out into the passage barefoot. Now when he saw Bahadur he knew him for the master of the house; so he hastened to him and, kissing his hands, said to him, "Allah upon thee, O my lord, ere thou do me a hurt, hear what I have to say." Then he told him who he was from first to last and

acquainted him with what caused him to quit his native land and royal state, and how he had not entered his house of his free will, but that it was the girl who had broken the lock-bolt and done all this.[390] When Bahadur heard his story and knew that he was a King's son, he felt for him and, taking compassion on him, said, "Hearken to me, O Amjad, and do what I bid thee and I will guarantee thy safety from that thou fearest; but, if thou cross me, I will kill thee." Amjad replied, "Command me as thou wilt: I will not gainsay thee in aught; no, never, for I am the freedman of thy bounty." Rejoined Bahadur, "Then go back forthwith into the saloon, sit down in thy place and be at peace and at thine ease; I will presently come in to thee, and when thou seest me (remember my name is Bahadur) do thou revile me and rail at me, saying:—What made thee tarry till so late? And accept no excuse from me; nay, so far from it, rise and beat me; and, if thou spare me, I will do away thy life. Enter now and make merry and whatsoever thou seekest of me at 336 this time I will bring thee forthwith; and do thou spend this night as thou wilt and on the morrow wend thy way. This I do in honour of thy strangerhood, for I love the stranger and hold myself bounden to do him devoir." So Amjad kissed his hand, and, returning to the saloon with his face clad in its natural white and red, at once said to the damsel, "O my mistress, thy presence hath gladdened this thine own place and ours is indeed a blessed night." Quoth the girl, "Verily I see a wonderful change in thee, that thou now welcomest me so cordially!" So Amjad answered, "By Allah, O my lady, methought my servant Bahadur had robbed me of some necklaces of jewels, worth ten thousand dinars each; however, when I went out but now in concern for this, I sought for them and found them in their place. I know not why the slave tarrieth so long and needs must I punish him for it." She was satisfied with his answer, and they sported and drank and made merry and ceased not to be so till near sundown, when Bahadur came in to them, having changed his clothes and girt his middle and put on shoes, such as are worn of Mamelukes. He saluted and kissed the ground; then held his hands behind him and stood, with his head hanging down, as one who confesseth to a fault. So Amjad looked at him with angry eyes and asked, "Why hast thou tarried till now, O most pestilent of slaves?" Answered Bahadur, "O my lord, I was busy washing my clothes and knew not of thy being here; for our appointed time was nightfall and not day-tide." But Amjad cried out at him, saying, "Thou liest, O vilest of slaves! By Allah, I must needs beat thee." So he rose and, throwing Bahadur prone on the ground, took a stick and beat him gently; but the damsel sprang up and, snatching the stick from his hand, came down upon Bahadur so lustily, that in extreme pain the tears ran from his eyes and he ground his teeth together and called out for succour; whilst Amjad cried out to the girl "Don't"; and she cried out, "Let me satisfy my anger upon him!" till at last he pulled the stick out of her hand and pushed her away. So Bahadur rose and, wiping away his tears from his cheeks, waited upon them the while; after which he swept the hall and lighted the lamps; but as often as he went in and out, the lady abused him and cursed him till Amjad was wroth with her and said, "For Almighty

Allah's sake leave my Mameluke; he is not used to this." Then they sat and ceased not eating and drinking (and Bahadur waiting upon them) till midnight when, being weary with service and beating, he fell 337asleep in the midst of the hall and snored and snorted; whereupon the damsel, who was drunken with wine, said to Amjad, "Arise, take the sword hanging yonder and cut me off this slave's head; and, if thou do it not, I will be the death of thee!" "What possesseth thee to slay my slave?" asked Amjad; and she answered, "Our joyaunce will not be complete but by his death. If thou wilt not kill him, I will do it myself." Quoth Amjad, "By Allah's rights to thee, do not this thing!" Quoth she, "It must perforce be;" and, taking down the sword, drew it and made at Badahur to kill him; but Amjad said in his mind, "This man hath entreated us courteously and sheltered us and done us kindness and made himself my slave: shall we requite him by slaughtering him? This shall never be!" Then he said to the woman, "If my Mameluke must be killed, better I should kill him than thou." So saying, he took the sword from her and, raising his hand, smote her on the neck and made her head fly from her body. It fell upon Bahadur who awoke and sat up and opened his eyes, when he saw Amjad standing by him and in his hand the sword dyed with blood, and the damsel lying dead. He enquired what had passed, and Amjad told him all she had said, adding, "Nothing would satisfy her but she must slay thee; and this is her reward." Then Bahadur rose and, kissing the Prince's hand, said to him, "Would to Heaven thou hadst spared her! but now there is nothing for it but to rid us of her without stay or delay, before the day break." Then he girded his loins and took the body, wrapped it in an Abá-cloak and, laying it in a large basket of palm-leaves, he shouldered it saying, "Thou art a stranger here and knowest no one: so sit thou in this place and await my return till daybreak. If I come back to thee, I will assuredly do thee great good service and use my endeavours to have news of thy brother; but if by sunrise I return not, know that all is over with me; and peace be on thee, and the house and all it containeth of stuffs and money are thine." Then he fared forth from the saloon bearing the basket; and, threading the streets, he made for the salt sea, thinking to throw it therein: but as he drew near the shore, he turned and saw that the Chief of Police and his officers had ranged themselves around him; and, on recognising him, they wondered and opened the basket, wherein they found the slain woman. So they seized him and laid him in bilboes all that night till the morning, when they carried him and the basket, as it was, to the King and reported the case. The King was sore enraged when he looked upon the slain and said to 338Bahadur, "Woe to thee! Thou art always so doing; thou killest folk and castest them into the sea and takest their goods. How many murders hast thou done ere this?" Thereupon Bahadur hung his head——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Bahadur hung down his head groundwards before the King, who cried out at him, saying, "Woe to thee! Who killed this girl?" He replied, "O my lord! I killed her, and there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"[391] So the King in his anger, commanded to hang him; and the hangman went down with him by the King's commandment, and the Chief of Police accompanied him with a crier who called upon all the folk to witness the execution of Bahadur, the King's Master of the Horse; and on this wise they paraded him through the main streets and the market-streets. This is how it fared with Bahadur; but as regards Amjad, he awaited his host's return till the day broke and the sun rose, and when he saw that he came not, he exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Would I knew what is become of him?" And, as he sat musing behold, he heard the crier proclaiming Bahadur's sentence and bidding the people to see the spectacle of his hanging at mid-day; whereat he wept and exclaimed, "Verily, we are Allah's and to Him we are returning! He meaneth to sacrifice himself unjustly for my sake, when I it was who slew her. By Allah, this shall never be!" Then he went from the saloon and, shutting the door after him, hurriedly threaded the streets till he overtook Bahadur, when he stood before the Chief of Police and said to him, "O my lord, put not Bahadur to death, for he is innocent. By Allah, none killed her but I." Now when the Captain of Police heard these words, he took them both and, carrying them before the King, acquainted him with what Amjad had said; whereupon he looked at the Prince and asked him, "Didst thou kill the damsel?" He answered, "Yes" and the King said, "Tell me why thou killedst her, and speak the truth." 339 Replied Amjad, "O King, it is indeed a marvellous event and a wondrous matter that hath befallen me: were it graven with needles on the eye-corners, it would serve as a warner to whoso would be warned!" Then he told him his whole story and informed him of all that had befallen him and his brother, first and last; whereat the King was much startled and surprised and said to him, "Know that now I find thee to be excusable; but list, O youth! Wilt thou be my Wazír?" "Hearkening and obedience," answered Amjad; whereupon the King bestowed magnificent dresses of honour on him and Bahadur and gave him a handsome house, with eunuchs and officers and all things needful, appointing him stipends and allowances and bidding him make search for his brother As'ad. So Amjad sat down in the seat of the Wazirate and governed and did justice and invested and deposed and took and gave. Moreover, he sent out a crier to cry his brother throughout the city, and for many days made proclamation in the main streets and market-streets, but heard no news of As'ad nor happened on any trace of him. Such was his case; but as regards his brother, the Magi ceased not to torture As'ad night and day and eve and morn for a whole year's space, till their festival drew near, when the old man Bahram[392] made ready for the voyage and fitted out a ship for himself.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Bahram, the Magian, having fitted out a ship for the voyage, took As'ad and put him in a chest which he locked and had it transported on board. Now it so came to pass that, at the very time of shipping it, Amjad was standing to divert himself by looking upon the sea; and when he saw the men carrying the gear and shipping it, his heart throbbed and he called to his pages to bring him his beast. Then, mounting with a company of his officers, he rode down to the sea-side and halted before the Magian's ship, which he commanded his men to board and search. They did his bidding, and boarded the vessel and rummaged in every part, but found nothing; 340 so they returned and told Amjad, who mounted again and rode back. But he felt troubled in mind; and when he reached his place and entered his palace, he cast his eyes on the wall and saw written thereon two lines which were these couplets:——

"My friends! if ye are banisht from mine eyes, ✿ From heart and mind ye ne'er go wandering:

But ye have left me in my woe, and rob ✿ Rest from my eyelids while ye are slumbering."

And seeing them Amjad thought of his brother and wept. Such was his case; but as for Bahram, the Magian, he embarked and shouted and bawled to his crew to make sail in all haste. So they shook out the sails and departed and ceased not to fare on many days and nights; and, every other day, Bahram took out As'ad and gave him a bit of bread and made him drink a sup of water, till they drew near the Mountain of Fire. Then there came out on them a storm-wind and the sea rose against them, so that the ship was driven out of her course till she took a wrong line and fell into strange waters; and, at last they came in sight of a city builded upon the shore, with a castle whose windows overlooked the main. Now the ruler of this city was a Queen called Marjánah, and the captain said to Bahram, "O my lord, we have strayed from our course and come to the island of Queen Marjanah, who is a devout Moslemah; and, if she know that we are Magians, she will take our ship and slay us to the last man. Yet needs must we put in here to rest and refit." Quoth Bahram, "Right is thy recking, and whatso thou seest fit that will I do!" Said the ship-master, "If the Queen summon us and question us, how shall we answer her?"; and Bahram replied, "Let us clothe this Moslem we have with us in a Mameluke's habit and carry him ashore with us, so that when the Queen sees him, she will suppose and say, This is a slave. As for me I will tell her that I am a slave-dealer[393] who buys and sells white slaves, and that I had with me many but have sold all save this one, whom I retained to keep 341 my accounts, for he can read and write." And the captain said, "This device should serve." Presently they reached the city and slackened sail and cast the anchors; and the ship lay still, when behold, Queen Marjanah came down to them, attended by her guards and, halting before the vessel, called out to the captain, who landed and kissed the ground before her. Quoth she, "What is the lading of this thy ship and whom hast thou with thee?" Quoth he, "O Queen of the Age, I have with me a merchant who dealeth in

slaves." And she said, "Hither with him to me"; whereupon Bahram came ashore to her, with As'ad walking behind him in a slave's habit, and kissed the earth before her. She asked, "What is thy condition?"; and he answered, "I am a dealer in chattels." Then she looked at As'ad and, taking him for a Mameluke, asked him, "What is thy name, O youth?" He answered, "Dost thou ask my present or my former name?" "Hast thou then two names?" enquired she, and he replied (and indeed his voice was choked with tears), "Yes; my name aforetime was Al-As'ad, the most happy, but now it is Al-Mu'tarr—Miserrimus." Her heart inclined to him and she said, "Canst thou write?" "Yes," answered he, and she gave him ink-case and reed-pen and paper and said to him, "Write somewhat that I may see it." So he wrote these two couplets:—

What can the slave do when pursued by Fate, ✿ O justest Judge! whatever be his state?[394]

Whom God throws hand-bound in the depths and says, ✿ Beware lest water should thy body wet?[395]



A. Lalauze Pinæ et Sc.

Now when she read these lines, she had ruth upon him and said to 342 Bahram, "Sell me this slave." He replied, "O my lady, I cannot sell him, for I have parted with all the rest and none is left with me but he." Quoth the Queen, "I must need have him of thee, either by sale or way of gift." But quoth Bahram, "I will neither sell him nor give him." Whereat she was wroth and, taking As'ad by the hand, carried him up to the castle and sent to Bahram, saying, "Except thou set sail and depart our city this very night, I will seize all thy goods and break up thy ship." Now when the message reached the Magian, he grieved with sore grief and cried, "Verily this voyage is on no wise to be commended." Then he arose and made ready and took all he needed and awaited the coming of the night to resume his voyage, saying to the sailors, "Provide

yourselves with your things and fill your water-skins, that we may set sail at the last of the night." So the sailors did their business and awaited the coming of darkness. Such was their case; but as regards Queen Marjanah, when she had brought As'ad into the castle, she opened the casements overlooking the sea and bade her handmaids bring food. They set food before As'ad and herself and both ate, after which the Queen called for wine——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Queen Marjanah bade her handmaids bring wine and they set it before her, she fell to drinking with As'ad. Now, Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) filled her heart with love for the Prince and she kept filling his cup and handing it to him till his reason fled; and presently he rose and left the hall to satisfy a call of nature. As he passed out of the saloon he saw an open door through which he went and walked on till his walk brought him to a vast garden full of all manner fruits and flowers; and, sitting down under a tree, he did his occasion. Then he rose and went up to a jetting fountain in the garden and made the lesser ablution and washed his hands and face, after which he would have risen to go away; but the air smote him and he fell back, with his clothes undone and slept, and night overcame him thus. So far concerning him; but as concerns Bahram, the night being come, he cried out to his 343 crew, saying, "Set sail and let us away!"; and they answered, "We hear and obey, but wait till we fill our water-skins and then we will set sail." So they landed with their water-skins and went round about the castle, and found nothing but garden-walls: whereupon they climbed over into the garden and followed the track of feet, which led them to the fountain; and there they found As'ad lying on his back. They knew him and were glad to find him; and, after filling their water-skins, they bore him off and climbed the wall again with him and carried him back in haste to Bahram to whom they said, "Hear the good tidings of thy winning thy wish; and gladden thy heart and beat thy drums and sound thy pipes; for thy prisoner, whom Queen Marjanah took from thee by force, we have found and brought back to thee"; and they threw As'ad down before him. When Bahram saw him, his heart leapt for joy and his breast swelled with gladness. Then he bestowed largesse on the sailors and bade them set sail in haste. So they sailed forthright, intending to make the Mountain of Fire and stayed not their course till the morning. This is how it fared with them; but as regards Queen Marjanah, she abode awhile, after As'ad went down from her, awaiting his return in vain for he came not; thereupon she rose and sought him, yet found no trace of him. Then she bade her women light flambeaux and look for him, whilst she went forth in person and, seeing the garden-door open, knew that he had gone thither. So she went out into the garden and finding his sandals lying by the fountain, searched the place in every part, but came upon no sign of him; and yet she gave not over the search till morning. Then she enquired for the ship and they told

her, "The vessel set sail in the first watch of the night"; wherefor she knew that they had taken As'ad with them, and this was grievous to her and she was sore angered. She bade equip ten great ships forthwith and, making ready for fight, embarked in one of the ten with her Mamelukes and slave-women and men-at-arms, all splendidly accoutred and weaponed for war. They spread the sails and she said to the captains, "If you overtake the Magian's ship, ye shall have of me dresses of honour and largesse of money; but if you fail so to do, I will slay you to the last man." Whereat fear and great hope animated the crews and they sailed all that day and the night and the second day and the third day till, on the fourth they sighted the ship of Bahram, the Magian, and before 344 evening fell the Queen's squadron had surrounded it on all sides, just as Bahram had taken As'ad forth of the chest and was beating and torturing him, whilst the Prince cried out for help and deliverance, but found neither helper nor deliverer: and the grievous bastinado sorely tormented him. Now while so occupied, Bahram chanced to look up and, seeing himself encompassed by the Queen's ships, as the white of the eye encompasseth the black, he gave himself up for lost and groaned and said, "Woe to thee, O As'ad! This is all out of thy head." Then taking him by the hand he bade his men throw him overboard and cried, "By Allah I will slay thee before I die myself!" So they carried him along by the hands and feet and cast him into the sea and he sank; but Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) willed that his life be saved and that his doom be deferred; so He caused him to sink and rise again and he struck out with his hands and feet, till the Almighty gave him relief, and sent him deliverance; and the waves bore him far from the Magian's ship and threw him ashore. He landed, scarce crediting his escape, and once more on land he doffed his clothes and wrung them and spread them out to dry; whilst he sat naked and weeping over his condition, and bewailing his calamities and mortal dangers, and captivity and strangerhood. And presently he repeated these two couplets:—

Allah, my patience fails: I have no ward; ✿ My breast is straitened and clean cut my cord;

To whom shall wretched slave of case complain, ✿ Save to his Lord? O thou of lords the Lord!

Then, having ended his verse, he rose and donned his clothes but he knew not whither to go or whence to come; so he fed on the herbs of the earth and the fruits of the trees and he drank of the streams, and fared on night and day till he came in sight of a city; whereupon he rejoiced and hastened his pace; but when he reached it——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when he reached the city the shades of evening closed around him and the 345 gates were shut. Now by the decrees of Fate and man's lot this was the very city wherein he had been a prisoner and to whose King his brother Amjad was Minister. When As'ad saw the gate was locked, he turned back and made for the burial-ground, where finding a tomb without a door, he

entered therein and lay down and fell asleep, with his face covered by his long sleeve.[396] Meanwhile, Queen Marjanah, coming up with Bahram's ship, questioned him of As'ad. Now the Magian, when Queen Marjanah overtook him with her ships, baffled her by his artifice and gramarye; swearing to her that he was not with him and that he knew nothing of him. She searched the ship, but found no trace of her friend, so she took Bahram and, carrying him back to her castle, would have put him to death, but he ransomed himself from her with all his good and his ship; and she released him and his men. They went forth from her hardly believing in their deliverance, and fared on ten days' journey till they came to their own city and found the gate shut, it being eventide. So they made for the burial-ground, thinking to lie the night there and, going round about the tombs, as Fate and Fortune would have it, saw the building wherein As'ad lay wide open; whereat Bahram marvelled and said, "I must look into this sepulchre." Then he entered and found As'ad lying in a corner fast asleep, with his head covered by his sleeve; so he raised his head, and looking in his face, knew him for the man on whose account he had lost his goods and his ship, and cried, "What! art thou yet alive?" Then he bound him and gagged him without further parley, and carried him to his house, where he clapped heavy shackles on his feet and lowered him into the underground dungeon aforesaid prepared for the tormenting of Moslems, and he bade his daughter by name Bostán,[397] torture him night and day, till the next year, when they would again visit the Mountain of Fire and there offer him up as a sacrifice. Then he beat him grievously and locking the dungeon door upon him, gave the keys to his daughter. By and by, Bostan opened the door and went 346 down to beat him, but finding him a comely youth and a sweet-faced with arched brows and eyes black with nature's Kohl,[398] she fell in love with him and asked him, "What is thy name?" "My name is As'ad," answered he; whereat she cried, "Mayst thou indeed be happy as thy name,[399] and happy be thy days! Thou deservest not torture and blows, and I see thou hast been injuriously entreated." And she comforted him with kind words and loosed his bonds. Then she questioned him of the religion of Al-Islam and he told her that it was the true and right Faith and that our lord Mohammed had approved himself by surpassing miracles[400] and signs manifest, and that fire-worship is harmful and not profitable; and he went on to expound to her the tenets of Al-Islam till she was persuaded and the love of the True Faith entered her heart. Then, as Almighty Allah had mixed up with her being a fond affection for As'ad, she pronounced the Two Testimonies[401] of the Faith and became of the people of felicity. After this, she brought him meat and drink and talked with him and they prayed together: moreover, she made him chicken stews and fed him therewith, till he regained strength and his sickness left him and he was restored to his former health. Such things befel him with the daughter of Bahram, the Magian; and so it happened that one day she left him and stood at the house-door when behold, she heard the crier crying aloud and saying, "Whoso hath with him a handsome young man, whose favour is thus and thus, and bringeth him forth, shall have all he seeketh of

money; [347] but if any have him and deny it, he shall be hanged over his own door and his property shall be plundered and his blood go for naught." Now As'ad had acquainted Bostan bint Bahram with his whole history: so, when she heard the crier, she knew that it was he who was sought for and, going down to him, told him the news. Then he fared forth and made for the mansion of the Wazir, whom, when As'ad saw, he exclaimed, "By Allah, this Minister is my brother Amjad!" Then he went up (and the damsel walking behind him) to the Palace, where he again saw his brother, and threw himself upon him; whereupon Amjad also knew him and fell upon his neck and they embraced each other, whilst the Wazir's Mamelukes dismounted and stood round them. They lay awhile insensible and, when they came to themselves, Amjad took his brother and carried him to the Sultan, to whom he related the whole story, and the Sultan charged him to plunder Bahram's house.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Sultan ordered Amjad to plunder Bahram's house and to hang its owner. So Amjad despatched thither for that purpose a company of men, who sacked the house and took Bahram and brought his daughter to the Wazir by whom she was received with all honour, for As'ad had told his brother the torments he had suffered and the kindness she had done him. Thereupon Amjad related in his turn to As'ad all that had passed between himself and the damsel; and how he had escaped hanging and had become Wazir; and they made moan, each to other, of the anguish they had suffered for separation. Then the Sultan summoned Bahram and bade strike off his head; but he said, "O most mighty King, art thou indeed resolved to put me to death?" Replied the King, "Yes, except thou save thyself by becoming a Moslem." Quoth Bahram, "O King, bear with me a little while!" Then he bowed his head groundwards and presently raising it again, made profession of The Faith and islamised at the hands of the Sultan. They all rejoiced at his conversion and Amjad and As'ad told him all that had befallen them, whereat he wondered and said, [348] "O my lords, make ready for the journey and I will depart with you and carry you back to your father's court in a ship." At this they rejoiced and wept with sore weeping; but he said, "O my lords, weep not for your departure, for it shall reunite you with those you love, even as were Ni'amah and Naomi." "And what befel Ni'amah and Naomi?" asked they. "They tell," replied Bahram, (but Allah alone is All-knowing) the following tale of

NI’AMAH BIN AL-RABI’A AND NAOMI HIS SLAVE-GIRL.

There lived once in the city of Cufa[1] a man called Al-Rabí'a bin Hátim, who was one of the chief men of the town, a wealthy and a healthy, and Heaven had vouchsafed him a son, whom he named Ni'amat Allah.[2] One day, being in the slave-brokers' mart, he saw a woman exposed for sale with a little maid of wonderful beauty and grace on her arm. So he beckoned to the broker and asked him, "How much for this woman and her daughter?" He answered "Fifty dinars." Quoth Al-Rabi'a "Write the contract of sale and take the money and give it to her owner." Then he gave the broker the price and his brokerage and taking the woman and her child, carried them to his house. Now when the daughter of his uncle who was his wife saw the slave, she said to her husband, "O my cousin, what is this damsel?" He replied, "Of a truth, I bought her for the sake of the little one on her arm; for know that, when she groweth up, there will not be her like for beauty, either in the land of the Arabs or the Ajams." His wife remarked, "Right was thy rede"; and said to the woman, "What is thy name?" She replied, "O my lady, my name is Taufík.[3]" "And what is thy daughter's name?" asked she. Answered the slave, "Sa'ad, the happy." Rejoined her mistress, "Thou sayst sooth, thou art indeed happy, and happy is he who hath bought thee." Then quoth she to her husband, "O my cousin, what wilt thou call her?"; and quoth he, "Whatso thou 2choosest"; so she, "Then let us call her Naomi;" and he rejoined, "Good is thy device." The little Naomi was reared with Al-Rabi'a's son Ni'amat in one cradle, so to speak, till the twain reached the age of ten and each grew handsomer than the other; and the boy used to address her, "O my sister!" and she, "O my brother!", till they came to that age when Al-Rabi'a said to Ni'amah, "O my son, Naomi is not thy sister but thy slave. I bought her in thy name whilst thou wast yet in the cradle; so call her no more sister from this day forth." Quoth Ni'amah, "If that be so, I will take her to wife." Then he went to his mother and told her of this, and she said to him, "O my son, she is thy handmaid." So he wedded and went in unto Naomi and loved her; and two[4] years passed over them whilst in this condition, nor was there in all Cufa a fairer girl than Naomi, or a sweeter or a more graceful. As she grew up she learnt the Koran and read works of science and excelled in music and playing upon all kinds of instruments; and in the beauty of her singing she surpassed all the folk of her time. Now one day, as she sat with her husband in the wine-chamber, she took the lute, tightened the strings, and sang these two couplets:—

While thou'rt my lord whose bounty's my estate, ✿ A sword whereby my woes to annihilate,

Recourse I never need to Amru or Zayd,[5] ✿ Nor aught save thee if way to me grow strait!

Ni'amah was charmed with these verses and said to her, "By my life, O Naomi, sing to us with the tambourine and other instruments!" So she sang these couplets to a lively measure:—

By His life who holds my guiding-rein, I swear ✿ I'll meet on love-ground parlous foe nor care:

Good sooth I'll vex revilers, thee obey ✿ And quit my slumbers and all joy forswear:

And for thy love I'll dig in vitals mine ✿ A grave, nor shall my vitals weet 'tis there!

3 And Ni’amah exclaimed, “Heaven favoured art thou, O Naomi!” But whilst they led thus the most joyous life, behold! Al-Hajjáj,[6] the Viceroy of Cufa said to himself, “Needs must I contrive to take this girl named Naomi and send her to the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwán, for he hath not in his palace her like for beauty and sweet singing.” So he summoned an old woman of the duennas of his wives and said to her, “Go to the house of Al-Rabi’a and foregather with the girl Naomi and combine means to carry her off; for her like is not to be found on the face of the earth.” She promised to do his bidding; so next morning she donned the woollen clothes of a devotee and hung around her neck a rosary of beads by the thousand; and, hending in hand a staff and a leather water-bottle of Yamani manufacture,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman promised to do the bidding of Al-Hajjaj, and whenas it 4 was morning she donned the woollen clothes of a devotee[7] and hung around her neck a rosary of beads by the thousand and hent in hand a staff and a leather water-bottle of Yamani manufacture and fared forth crying, “Glory be to Allah! Praised be Allah! There is no god but *the* God! Allah is Most Great! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!” Nor did she leave off her lauds and her groaning in prayer whilst her heart was full of guile and wiles, till she came to the house of Ni’amah bin al-Rabi’a at the hour of noon-prayer, and knocked at the door. The doorkeeper opened and said to her, “What dost thou want?” Quoth she, “I am a poor pious woman, whom the time of noon-prayer hath overtaken, and lief would I pray in this blessed place.” Answered the porter, “O old woman, this is no mosque nor oratory, but the house of Ni’amah son of al-Rabi’a.” She replied, “I know there is neither cathedral-mosque nor oratory like the house of Ni’amah bin al-Rabi’a. I am a chamberwoman of the palace of the Prince of True Believers and am come out for worship and the visitation of Holy Places.” But the porter rejoined, “Thou canst not enter;” and many words passed between them, till at last she caught hold and hung to him saying, “Shall the like of me be denied admission to the house of Ni’amah bin al-Rabi’a, I who have free access to the houses of Emirs and Grandees?” Anon, out came Ni’amah and, hearing their loud language, laughed and bade the old woman enter after him. So she followed him into the presence of Naomi, whom she saluted after the godliest and goodliest fashion, and, when she looked on her, she was confounded at her exceeding seemlihead and said to her, “O my lady, I commend thee to the safeguard of Allah, who made thee and thy lord fellows in beauty and loveliness!” Then she stood up in the prayer-niche and betook herself to inclination and prostration and prayer, till day departed and night darkened and starkened, when Naomi said to her, “O my mother, rest thy legs and feet awhile.” Replied the old 5 woman, “O my lady, whoso seeketh the world to

come let him weary him in this world, and whoso wearieth not himself in this world shall not attain the dwellings of the just in the world to come." Then Naomi brought her food and said to her, "Eat of my bread and pray Heaven to accept my penitence and to have mercy on me." But she cried, "O my lady, I am fasting. As for thee, thou art but a girl and it besitteth thee to eat and drink and make merry; Allah be indulgent to thee!; for the Almighty saith:—All shall be punished except him who shall repent and believe and shall work a righteous work."[8] So Naomi continued sitting with the old woman in talk and presently said to Ni'amah, "O my lord, conjure this ancient dame to sojourn with us awhile, for piety and devotion are imprinted on her countenance." Quoth he, "Set apart for her a chamber where she may say her prayers; and suffer no one to go in to her: peradventure, Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) shall prosper us by the blessing of her presence and never separate us." So the old woman passed her night in praying and reciting the Koran; and when Allah caused the morn to dawn, she went in to Ni'amah and Naomi and, giving them good morning, said to them, "I pray Allah have you in His holy keeping!" Quoth Naomi, "Whither away, O my mother? My lord hath bidden me set apart for thee a chamber, where thou mayst seclude thee for thy devotions." Replied the old woman, "Allah give him long life, and continue His favour to you both! But I would have you charge the doorkeeper not to stay my coming in to you; and, Inshallah! I will go the round of the Holy Places and pray for you two at the end of my devotions every day and night." Then she went out (whilst Naomi wept for parting with her knowing not the cause of her coming), and returned to Al-Hajjaj who said to her, "An thou do my bidding soon, thou shalt have of me abundant good." Quoth she, "I ask of thee a full month;" and quoth he "Take the month." Thereupon the old hag fell to daily visiting Ni'amah's house and frequented his slave-wife, Naomi;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

6

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old hag fell to visiting daily Ni'amah's house and frequenting his slave-wife, Naomi; and both ceased not to honour her, and she used to go in to them morning and evening and all in the house respected her till, one day, being alone with Naomi, she said to her, "O my lady! by Allah, when I go to the Holy Places, I will pray for thee; and I only wish thou wert with me, that thou mightest look on the Elders of the Faith who resort thither, and they should pray for thee, according to thy desire." Naomi cried, "I conjure thee by Allah take me with thee!"; and she replied, "Ask leave of thy mother-in-law, and I will take thee." So Naomi said to her husband's mother, "O my lady, ask my master to let us go forth, me and thee, one day with this my old mother, to prayer and worship with the Fakirs in the Holy Places." Now when Ni'amah came in and sat down, the old woman went up to him and would have kissed his hand, but he forbade

her; so she invoked blessings[9] on him and left the house. Next day she came again, in the absence of Ni'amah, and she addressed Naomi, saying, "We prayed for thee yesterday; but arise now and divert thyself and return ere thy lord come home." So Naomi said to her mother-in-law, "I beseech thee, for Allah's sake, give me leave to go with this pious woman, that I may sight the saints of Allah in the Holy Places, and return speedily ere my lord come back." Quoth Ni'amah's mother, "I fear lest thy lord know;" but said the old woman, "By Allah, I will not let her take seat on the floor; no, she shall look, standing on her feet, and not tarry." So she took the damsel by guile and, carrying her to Al-Hajjaj's palace, told him of her coming, after placing her in a lonely chamber; whereupon he went in to her and, looking upon her, saw her to be the loveliest of the people of the day, never had he beheld her like. Now when Naomi caught sight of him she veiled her face from him; but he left her not till he had called 7his Chamberlain, whom he commanded to take fifty horsemen; and he bade him mount the damsel on a swift dromedary, and bear her to Damascus and there deliver her to the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan. Moreover, he gave him a letter for the Caliph, saying, "Bear him this letter and bring me his answer and hasten thy return to me." So the Chamberlain, without losing time, took the damsel (and she tearful for separation from her lord) and, setting out with her on a dromedary, gave not over journeying till he reached Damascus. There he sought audience of the Commander of the Faithful and, when it was granted, the Chamberlain delivered the damsel and reported the circumstance. The Caliph appointed her a separate apartment and going into his Harim, said to his wife, "Al-Hajjaj hath bought me a slave-girl of the daughters of the Kings of Cufa[10] for ten thousand dinars, and hath sent me this letter."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph acquainted his wife with the story of the slave-girl, she said to him, "Allah increase to thee His favour!" Then the Caliph's sister went in to the supposed slave-girl and, when she saw her, she said, "By Allah, not unlucky is the man who hath thee in his house, were thy cost an hundred thousand dinars!" And Naomi replied, "O fair of face, what King's palace is this, and what is the city?" She answered, "This is the city of Damascus, and this is the palace of my brother, the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan.[11]" Then she resumed, "Didst thou not know all this?" Naomi said, "By Allah, O my lady, I had no knowledge of it!"; when the other asked, "And he who sold thee and took thy price did he not tell thee that the Caliph had bought thee?" 8Now when Naomi heard these words, she shed tears and said to herself, "Verily, I have been tricked and the trick hath succeeded," adding to herself, "If I speak, none will credit me; so I will hold my peace and take patience, for I know that the relief of Allah is near." Then she bent her head for shame, and indeed her cheeks

were tanned by the journey and the sun. So the Caliph's sister left her that day and returned to her on the morrow with clothes and necklaces of jewels, and dressed her; after which the Caliph came in to her and sat down by her side, and his sister said to him, "Look on this handmaid in whom Allah hath conjoined every perfection of beauty and loveliness." So he said to Naomi, "Draw back the veil from thy face;" but she would not unveil, and he beheld not her face. However, he saw her wrists and love of her entered his heart; and he said to his sister, "I will not go in unto her for three days, till she be cheered by thy converse." Then he arose and left her, but Naomi ceased not to brood over her case and sigh for her separation from her master, Ni'amah, till she fell sick of a fever during the night and ate not nor drank; and her favour faded and her charms were changed. They told the Caliph of this and her condition grieved him; so he visited her with physicians and men of skill, but none could come at a cure for her. This how it fared with her; but as regards Ni'amah, when he returned home he sat down on his bed and cried, "Ho, Naomi!" But she answered not; so he rose in haste and called out, yet none came to him, as all the women in the house had hidden themselves for fear of him. Then he went out to his mother, whom he found sitting with her cheek on her hand, and said to her, "O my mother, where is Naomi?" She answered, "O my son, she is with one who is worthier than I to be trusted with her, namely, the devout old woman; she went forth with her to visit devotionally the Fakirs and return." Quoth Ni'amah, "Since when hath this been her habit and at what hour went she forth?" Quoth his mother, "She went out early in the morning." He asked, "And how camest thou to give her leave for this?"; and she answered, "O my son, 'twas she persuaded me?" "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" exclaimed Ni'amah and, going forth from his home in a state of distraction, he repaired to the Captain of the Watch to whom said he, "Dost thou play tricks upon me and steal my slave-girl away from my house? I will assuredly complain of thee to the Commander of the Faithful." Said the Chief of 9Police, "Who hath taken her?" and Ni'amah replied, "An old woman of such and such a mien, clad in woollen raiment and carrying a rosary of beads numbered by thousands." Rejoined the other, "Find me the old woman and I will get thee back thy slave-girl." "And who knows the old woman?" retorted Ni'amah. "And who knows the hidden things save Allah (may He be extolled and exalted!)?" cried the Chief, who knew her for Al-Hajjaj's procuress. Cried Ni'amah, "I look to thee for my slave-girl, and Al-Hajjaj shall judge between thee and me;" and the Master of Police answered, "Go to whom thou wilt." So Ni'amah went to the palace of Al-Hajjaj, for his father was one of the chief men of Cufa; and, when he arrived there, the Chamberlain went in to the Governor and told him the case; whereupon Al-Hajjaj said, "Hither with him!" and when he stood before him enquired, "What be thy business?" Said Ni'amah, "Such and such things have befallen me;" and the Governor said, "Bring me the Chief of Police, and we will command him to seek for the old woman." Now he knew that the Chief of Police was

acquainted with her; so, when he came, he said to him, “I wish thee to make search for the slave-girl of Ni’amah son of Al-Rabi’a.” And he answered, “None knoweth the hidden things save Almighty Allah.” Rejoined Al-Hajjaj, “There is no help for it but thou send out horsemen and look for the damsel in all the roads, and seek for her in the towns.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Al-Hajjaj said to the Captain of the watch, “There is no help for it but thou send out horsemen, and look for the damsel on all the roads and seek for her in the towns.” Then he turned to Ni’amah and said to him, “An thy slave-girl return not, I will give thee ten slave-girls from my house and ten from that of the Chief of Police.” And he again bade the Captain of the Watch, “Go and seek for the girl.” So he went out, and Ni’amah returned home full of trouble and despairing of life; for he had now reached the age of fourteen and there was yet no hair on his side-cheeks. So he wept and lamented and shut himself up from his household; and ceased not to weep and lament, he and his mother, till the 10 morning, when his father came in to him and said, “O my son, of a truth, Al-Hajjaj hath put a cheat upon the damsel and hath taken her; but from hour to hour Allah giveth relief.” However grief redoubled on Ni’amah, so that he knew not what he said nor knew he who came in to him, and he fell sick for three months; his charms were changed, his father despaired of him and the physicians visited him and said, “There is no remedy for him save the damsel.” Now as his father was sitting one day, behold, he heard tell of a skilful Persian physician, whom the folk gave out for perfect in medicine and astrology and geomancy. So Al-Rabi’a sent for him and, seating him by his side, entreated him with honour and said to him, “Look into my son’s case.” Thereupon quoth he to Ni’amah, “Give me thy hand.” The young man gave him his hand and he felt his pulse and his joints and looked in his face; then he laughed and, turning to his father, said, “Thy son’s sole ailment is one of the heart.”[121] He replied, “Thou sayest sooth, O sage, but apply thy skill to his state and case, and acquaint me with the whole thereof and hide naught from me of his condition.” Quoth the Persian, “Of a truth he is enamoured of a slave-girl and this slave-girl is either in Bassorah or Damascus; and there is no remedy for him but reunion with her.” Said Al-Rabi’a, “An thou bring them together, thou shalt live all thy life in wealth and delight.” Answered the Persian, “In good sooth this be an easy matter and soon brought about;” and he turned to Ni’amah and said to him, “No hurt shall befal thee; so be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear.” Then quoth he to Al-Rabi’a, “Bring me out four thousand dinars of your money;” so he gave them to him, and he added, “I wish to carry thy son with me to Damascus; and Almighty Allah willing, I will not return thence but with the damsel.” Then he turned to the youth and asked, “What is thy name?”; and he answered “Ni’amah.” Quoth the Persian, “O Ni’amah, sit up and be

of good heart, for Allah will reunite thee with the damsel." And when he sat up the leach continued, "Be of good cheer for we set out for Damascus this very day: put thy trust in the Lord, and eat and drink and be cheerful so as to fortify thyself for travel." Upon this the Persian began making preparation of all things needed, such as presents and rarities; and he took of 11 Al-Rabi'a in all the sum of ten thousand dinars, together with horses and camels and beasts of burden and other requisites. Then Ni'amah farewelled his father and mother and journeyed with the physician to Aleppo. They could find no news of Naomi there, so they fared on to Damascus, where they abode three days, after which the Persian took a shop and he adorned even the shelves with vessels of costly porcelain, with covers of silver, and with gildings and stuffs of price. Moreover, he set before himself vases and flagons of glass full of all manner of ointments and syrups, and he surrounded them with cups of crystal and, placing astrolabe and geomantic tablet facing him, he donned a physician's habit and took his seat in the shop. Then he set Ni'amah standing before him clad in a shirt and gown of silk and, girding his middle with a silken kerchief gold-embroidered, said to him, "O Ni'amah, henceforth thou art my son; so call me naught but sire, and I will call thee naught but son." And he replied, "I hear and I obey." Thereupon the people of Damascus flocked to the Persian's shop that they might gaze on the youth's goodliness and the beauty of the shop and its contents, whilst the physician spoke to Ni'amah in Persian and he answered him in the same tongue, for he knew the language, after the wont of the sons of the notables. So that Persian doctor soon became known among the townsfolk and they began to acquaint him with their ailments, and he to prescribe for them remedies. Moreover, they brought him the water of the sick in phials,[13] and he would test it and say, "He, whose water this is, is suffering from such and such a disease," and the patient would declare, "Verily this physician sayeth sooth." So he continued to do the occasions of the folk and they to flock to him, till his fame spread throughout the city and into the houses of the great. Now, one day as he sat in his shop, behold, there came up an old woman riding on an ass with a stuffed saddle of brocade embroidered with jewels; and, stopping before the Persian's shop, drew rein and beckoned him, saying, "Take my hand." He took her hand, and she alighted and asked him, "Art thou the Persian physician from Irak?" "Yes," answered he, and she said, "Know that I have a sick daughter." Then she brought out to him a phial and the Persian looked at it and said to her, "O my mistress, tell me thy 12 daughter's name, that I may calculate her horoscope and learn the hour in which it will befit her to drink medicine." She replied, "O my brother the Persian,[14] her name is Naomi."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Persian heard the name of Naomi, he fell to calculating and writing on his hand and presently said, "O

my lady, I cannot prescribe a medicine for her till I know what country woman she is, because of the difference of climate: so tell me in what land she was brought up and what is her age." The old woman replied, "She is fourteen years old and she was brought up in Cufa of Irak." He asked, "And how long hath she sojourned in this country?" "But a few months," answered she. Now when Ni'amah heard the old woman's words and recognised the name of his slave-girl, his heart fluttered and he was like to faint. Then said the Persian, "Such and such medicines will suit her case;" and the old woman rejoined, "Then make them up and give me what thou hast mentioned, with the blessing of Almighty Allah." So saying, she threw upon the shop-board ten gold pieces; and he looked at Ni'amah and bade him prepare the necessary drugs; whereupon she also looked at the youth and exclaimed, "Allah have thee in his keeping, O my son! Verily, she favoureth thee in age and mien." Then said she to the physician, "O my brother the Persian, is this thy slave or thy son?" "He is my son," answered he. So Ni'amah put up the medicine and, placing it in a little box, took a piece of paper and wrote thereon these two couplets:[15]—

If Naomi bless me with a single glance, ✿ Let Su'adá sue and Juml joy to pet:

They said, "Forget her: twenty such thou'lt find." ✿ But none is like her—I will *not* forget!

13 He pressed the paper into the box and, sealing it up, wrote upon the cover the following words in Cufic character, "I am Ni'amah son of al-Rabi'a of Cufa." Then he set it before the old woman who took it and bade them farewell and returned to the Caliph's palace; and when she went up with the drugs to the damsel she placed the little box of medicine at her feet, saying, "O my lady, know that there is lately come to our town a Persian physician, than whom I never saw a more skilful nor a better versed in matters of malady. I told him thy name, after showing him the water-bottle, and forthwith he knew thine ailment and prescribed a remedy. Then he bade his son make thee up this medicine; and there is not in Damascus a comelier or a seemlier youth than this lad of his, nor hath anyone a shop the like of his shop." So Naomi took the box and, seeing the names of her lord and his father written on the cover, changed colour and said to herself, "Doubtless, the owner of this shop is come in search of me." So she said to the old woman, "Describe to me this youth." Answered the old woman, "His name is Ni'amah, he hath a mole on his right eyebrow, is richly clad and is perfectly handsome." Cried Naomi, "Give me the medicine, whereon be the blessing and help of Almighty Allah!" So she drank off the potion (and she laughing) and said, "Indeed, it is a blessed medicine!" Then she sought in the box and, finding the paper, opened it, read it, understood it and knew that this was indeed her lord, whereat her heart was solaced and she rejoiced. Now when the old woman saw her laughing, she exclaimed, "This is indeed a blessed day!"; and Naomi said, "O nurse, I have a mind for something to eat and drink." The old woman said to the serving-women, "Bring a tray of dainty viands for your mistress"; whereupon they set food before her and she sat down to eat. And behold in came the Caliph who, seeing her

sitting at meat, rejoiced; and the old woman said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I give thee joy of thy handmaid Naomi's recovery! And the cause is that there is lately come to this our city a physician than whom I never saw a better versed in diseases and their remedies. I fetched her medicine from him and she hath drunken of it but once and is restored to health." Quoth he, "Take a thousand dinars and apply thyself to her treatment, till she be completely recovered." And he went away, rejoicing in the damsel's recovery, whilst the old woman betook herself to the Persian's house and delivered the thousand dinars, giving him to know that she was become the Caliph's slave and also 14 handing him a letter which Naomi had written. He took it and gave the letter to Ni'amah, who at first sight knew her hand and fell down in a swoon. When he revived he opened the letter and found these words written therein: "From the slave despoiled of her Ni'amah, her delight; her whose reason hath been beguiled and who is parted from the core of her heart. But afterwards. Of a truth thy letter hath reached me and hath broadened my breast, and solaced my soul, even as saith the poet:—

Thy note came: long lost fingers wrote that note, ✿ Till drop they sweetest scents for what they wrote:
'Twas Moses to his mother's arms restored; ✿ 'Twas Jacob's eye-sight cured by Joseph's coat!"[16]

When Ni'amah read these verses, his eyes ran over with tears and the old woman said to him, "What maketh thee to weep, O my son? Allah never cause thine eye to shed tears!" Cried the Persian, "O my lady, how should my son not weep, seeing that this is his slave-girl and he her lord, Ni'amah son of al-Rabi'a of Cufa; and her health dependeth on her seeing him, for naught aileth her but loving him."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Persian cried out to the old woman, "How shall my son not weep, seeing that this is his slave-girl and he her lord, Ni'amah son of al-Rabi'a of Cufa; and the health of this damsel dependeth on her seeing him and naught aileth her but loving him. So, do thou, O my lady, take these thousand dinars to thyself and thou shalt have of 15 me yet more than this; only look on us with eyes of ruth; for we know not how to bring this affair to a happy end save through thee." Then she said to Ni'amah, "Say, art thou indeed her lord?" He replied, "Yes," and she rejoined, "Thou sayest sooth; for she ceaseth not continually to name thee." Then he told her all that had passed from first to last, and she said, "O youth, thou shalt owe thy reunion with her to none but myself." So she mounted and, at once returning to Naomi, looked in her face and laughed saying, "It is just, O my daughter, that thou weep and fall sick for thy separation from thy master, Ni'amah son of Al-Rabi'a of Cufa." Quoth Naomi, "Verily, the veil hath been withdrawn for thee and the truth revealed to thee." Rejoined the old woman, "Be of good cheer and take heart, for I will assuredly bring you together, though it cost me my life." Then she returned to Ni'amah and said to him, "I went to thy slave-girl and conversed with her, and I find

that she longeth for thee yet more than thou for her; for although the Commander of the Faithful is minded to become intimate with her, she refuseth herself to him. But if thou be stout of purpose and firm of heart, I will bring you together and venture my life for you, and play some trick and make shift to carry thee into the Caliph's palace, where thou shalt meet her, for she cannot come forth." And Ni'amah answered, "Allah requite thee with good!" Then she took leave of him and went back to Naomi and said, "Thy lord is indeed dying of love for thee and would fain see thee and foregather with thee. What sayest thou?" Naomi replied, "And I too am longing for his sight and dying for his love." Whereupon the old woman took a parcel of women's clothes and ornaments and, repairing to Ni'amah, said to him, "Come with me into some place apart." So he brought her into the room behind the shop where she stained his hands and decked his wrists and plaited his hair, after which she clad him in a slave-girl's habit and adorned him after the fairest fashion of woman's adornment, till he was as one of the Houris of the Garden of Heaven, and when she saw him thus she exclaimed, "Blessed be Allah, best of Creators! By Allah, thou art handsomer than the damsel.[17] Now, walk with thy 16 left shoulder forwards and thy right well behind, and sway thy hips from side to side."[18] So he walked before her, as she bade him; and, when she saw he had caught the trick of woman's gait, she said to him, "Expect me to-morrow night, and Allah willing, I will take and carry thee to the palace. But when thou seest the Chamberlains and the Eunuchs be bold, and bow thy head and speak not with any, for I will prevent their speech; and with Allah is success!" Accordingly, when the morning dawned, she returned and, carrying him to the palace, entered before him and he after her step by step. The Chamberlain would have stopped his entering, but the old woman said to him, "O most ill-omened of slaves, this is the handmaid of Naomi, the Caliph's favourite. How durst thou stay her when she would enter?" Then said she, "Come in, O damsel!"; and the old woman went in and they ceased not faring on, till they drew near the door leading to the inner piazza of the palace, when she said to him, "O Ni'amah, hearten thyself and take courage and enter and turn to the left: then count five doors and pass through the sixth, for it is that of the place prepared for thee. Fear nothing, and if any speak to thee, answer not neither stop." Then she went up with him to the door, and the Chamberlain there on guard accosted her, saying, "What damsel is this?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Chamberlain accosted the old woman, saying, "What damsel is this?"; quoth the ancient dame, "Our lady hath a mind to buy her;" and he rejoined, "None may enter save by leave of the Commander of the Faithful; so do thou go back with her. I cannot let her pass for thus am I commanded." Replied the old woman, "O Chief Chamberlain, use thy reason. Thou knowest that Naomi, the Caliph's slave-girl, of whom he is enamoured, is but

now restored to health and the Commander of the Faithful hardly yet crediteth her recovery. She is minded to buy this handmaid; [17] so oppose thou not her entrance, lest haply it come to Naomi's knowledge and she be wroth with thee and suffer a relapse and this cause thy head to be cut off." Then said she to Ni'amah, "Enter, O damsel; pay no heed to what he saith and tell not the Queen-consort that her Chamberlain opposed thine entrance." So Ni'amah bowed his head and entered the palace, and would have turned to the left, but mistook the direction and walked to his right; and, meaning to count five doors and enter the sixth, he counted six and entering the seventh, found himself in a place whose floor was carpeted with brocade and whose walls were hung with curtains of gold-embroidered silk. And therein stood censers of aloes-wood and ambergris and strong-scented musk, and at the upper end was a couch bespread with cloth of gold on which he seated himself, marvelling at the magnificence he saw and knowing not what was written for him in the Secret Purpose. As he sat musing on his case, the Caliph's sister, followed by her handmaid, came in upon him; and, seeing the youth seated there took him for a slave-girl and accosted him and said, "Who art thou O damsel? and what is thy case and who brought thee hither?" He made no reply, and was silent, when she continued, "O damsel! if thou be one of my brother's concubines and he be wroth with thee, I will intercede with him for thee and get thee grace." But he answered her not a word; so she said to her slave-girl, "Stand at the door and let none enter." Then she went up to Ni'amah and looking at him was amazed at his beauty and said to him, "O lady, tell me who thou art and what is thy name and how thou camest here; for I have never seen thee in our palace." Still he answered not, whereat she was angered and, putting her hand to his bosom, found no breasts and would have unveiled him, that she might know who he was; but he said to her, "O my lady, I am thy slave and I cast myself on thy protection: do thou protect me." She said, "No harm shall come to thee, but tell me who thou art and who brought thee into this my apartment." Answered he, "O Princess, I am known as Ni'amah bin al-Rabi'a of Cufa and I have ventured my life for the sake of my slave-girl Naomi, whom Al-Hajjaj took by sleight and sent hither." Said she, "Fear not: no harm shall befal thee;" then, calling her maid, she said to her, "Go to Naomi's chamber and send her to me." Meanwhile the old woman went to Naomi's bedroom and said to her, "Hath thy lord come to thee?" "No, by Allah!" [18] answered Naomi, and the other said, "Belike he hath gone astray and entered some chamber other than thine and lost himself." So Naomi cried, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Our last hour is come and we are all lost." And while they were sitting and sadly enough pondering their case, in came the Princess's handmaid and saluting Naomi said to her, "My lady biddeth thee to her banquet." "I hear and I obey," answered the damsel and the old woman said, "Belike thy lord is with the Caliph's sister and the veil of secrecy hath been rent." So Naomi at once sprang up and betook herself to the Princess, who said

to her, "Here is thy lord sitting with me; it seemeth he hath mistaken the place; but, please Allah, neither thou nor he has any cause for fear." When Naomi heard these words, she took heart of grace and went up to Ni'amah; and her lord when he saw her——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ni'amah saw his handmaid Naomi, he rose to meet her and strained her to his bosom and both fell to the ground fainting. As soon as they came to themselves, the Caliph's sister said to them, "Sit ye down and take we counsel for your deliverance from this your strait." And they answered, "O our lady, we hear and obey; it is thine to command." Quoth she, "By Allah, no harm shall befal you from us!" Then she bade her handmaids bring meat and drink which was done, and they sat down and ate till they had enough, after which they sat drinking. Then the cup went round amongst them and their cares ceased from them; but Ni'amah said, "Would I knew how this will end." The Princess asked, "O Ni'amah, dost thou love thy slave Naomi?"; and he answered, "Of a truth it is my passion for her which hath brought me to this state of peril for my life." Then said she to the damsel, "O Naomi, dost thou love thy lord Ni'amah?"; and she replied, "O my lady, it is the love of him which hath wasted my body and brought me to evil case." Rejoined the Princess, "By Allah, since ye love each other thus, may he not be who would part you! Be of good cheer and keep your eyes cool and clear." At this they both rejoiced and Naomi called for a lute and, when they brought [19] it, she took it and tuned it and played a lively measure which enchanted the hearers, and after the prelude sang these couplets:—

When the slanderers cared but to part us twain, ✿ We owed no blood-debt could raise their ire;
And they poured in our ears all the din of war, ✿ And aid failed and friends, when my want was dire:
I fought them hard with mine eyes and tears; ✿ With breath and sword, with the stream and fire!

Then Naomi gave the lute to her master, Ni'amah, saying, "Sing thou to us some verse." So he took it and playing a lively measure, intoned these couplets:—

Full Moon if unfreckled would favour thee, ✿ And Sun uneclipsed would reflect thy blee:
I wonder (but love is of wonders full ✿ And ardour and passion and ecstasy)
How short the way to my love I fare, ✿ Which, from her faring, so long I see.

Now when he had made an end of his song, Naomi filled the cup and gave it to him, and he took it and drank it off; then she filled again and gave the cup to the Caliph's sister who also emptied it; after which the Princess in her turn took the lute and tightened the strings and tuned it and sang these two couplets:—

Grief, cark and care in my heart reside, ✿ And the fires of love in my breast abide;
My wasted form to all eyes shows clear; ✿ For Desire my body hath mortified.

Then she filled the cup and gave it to Naomi, who drank it off and taking the lute, sang these two couplets:—

O to whom I gave soul which thou torturest, ✿ And in vain I'd recover from fair Unfaith,

Do grant thy favours my care to cure ✿ Ere I die, for this be my latest breath.

And they ceased not to sing verses and drink to the sweet sound of the strings, full of mirth and merriment and joy and jollity till behold, in came the Commander of the Faithful. Now when they saw him, they rose and kissed the ground before him; and he, seeing Naomi with the lute in her hand, said to her, "O Naomi, praised be Allah who hath done away from thee sickness and 20 suffering!" Then he looked at Ni'amah (who was still disguised as a woman), and said to the Princess, "O my sister, what damsel is this by Naomi's side?" She replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou hast here a handmaid, one of thy concubines and the bosom friend of Naomi who will neither eat nor drink without her." And she repeated the words of the poet:—

Two contraries, and both concur in opposite charms, ✿ And charms so contraried by contrast lovelier show.

Quoth the Caliph, "By Allah Omnipotent, verily she is as handsome as Naomi, and to-morrow I will appoint her a separate chamber beside that of her friend and send her furniture and stuffs and all that befitteth her, in honour of Naomi." Then the Princess called for food and set it before her brother, who ate and made himself at home in their place and company. Then filling a cup he signed to Naomi to sing; so she took the lute, after draining two of them and sang these two couplets:—

Since my toper-friend in my hand hath given ✿ Three cups that brim and bubble, e'er since

I've trailed my skirts throughout night for pride ✿ As tho', Prince of the Faithful, I were thy Prince!

The Prince of True Believers was delighted and filling another cup, gave it to Naomi and bade her sing again; so after draining the cup and sweeping the strings, she sang as follows:—

O most noble of men in this time and stound, ✿ Of whom none may boast he is equal found!

O matchless in greatness of soul and gifts, ✿ O thou Chief, O thou King amongst all renowned:

Lord, who dealest large boons to the Lords of Earth, ✿ Whom thou vexest not nor dost hold them bound;

The Lord preserve thee, and spoil thy foes, ✿ And ne'er cease thy lot with good Fortune crowned!

Now when the Caliph heard these couplets, he exclaimed, "By Allah, good! By Allah, excellent! Verily the Lord hath been copious[19] to thee, O Naomi! How clever is thy tongue and how 21 clear is thy speech!" And they ceased not their mirth and good cheer till midnight, when the Caliph's sister said to him, "Give ear, O Commander of the Faithful to a tale I have read in books of a certain man of rank." "And what is this tale?" quoth he. Quoth she "Know, O Prince of the Faithful that there lived once in the city of Cufa a youth called Ni'amah, son of Al-Rabi'a, and he had a slave-girl whom he loved and who loved him. They had been reared in one bed; but when they grew up and mutual love gat hold of them, Fortune smote them with her calamities and Time, the tyrant, brought upon them his adversity and decreed separation unto

them. Thereupon designing and slanderous folk enticed her by sleight forth of his house and, stealing her away from his home, sold her to one of the Kings for ten thousand dinars. Now the girl loved her lord even as he loved her; so he left kith and kin and house and home and the gifts of fortune, and set out to search for her and when she was found he devised means to gain access to her"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph's sister said, "And Ni'amah ceased not absenting himself from his kith and kin and patrial stead, that he might gain access to his handmaid, and he incurred every peril and lavished his life till he gained access to her, and her name was Naomi, like this slave-girl. But the interview was short; they had not been long in company when in came the King, who had bought her of her kidnapper, and hastily ordered them to be slain, without doing justice by his own soul and delaying to enquire into the matter before the command was carried out. Now what sayest thou, O Commander of the Faithful, of this King's wrongous conduct?" Answered the Caliph; "This was indeed a strange thing: it behoved that King to pardon when he had the power to punish; and he ought to have regarded three things in their favour. The first was that they loved each other; the second that they were in his house and in his grasp; and the third that it befitteth a King to be deliberate in judging and ordering between folk, and how much more so in cases where he himself is concerned! Wherefore this King thus did an unkingly deed." 22 Then said his sister, "O my brother, by the King of the heavens and the earth, I conjure thee, bid Naomi sing and hearken to that she shall sing!" So he said, "O Naomi, sing to me;" whereupon she played a lively measure and sang these couplets:—

Beguiled us Fortune who her guile displays, ✿ Smiting the heart, bequeathing thoughts that craze,
And parting lovers whom she made to meet, ✿ Till tears in torrent either cheek displays:
They were and I was and my life was glad, ✿ While Fortune often joyed to join our ways;
I *will* pour tear-flood, *will* rain gouts of blood, ✿ Thy loss bemoaning through the nights and days!

Now when the Commander of the Faithful heard this verse, he was moved to great delight and his sister said to him, "O my brother, whoso decideth in aught against himself, him it behoveth to abide by it and do according to his word; and thou hast judged against thyself by this judgement." Then said she, "O Ni'amah, stand up and do thou likewise up stand, O Naomi!" So they stood up and she continued, "O Prince of True Believers, she who standeth before thee is Naomi the stolen, whom Al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Sakafi kidnapped and sent to thee, falsely pretending in his letter to thee that he had bought her for ten thousand gold pieces. And this other who standeth before thee is her lord, Ni'amah, son of Al-Rabi'a; and I beseech thee, by the honour of thy pious forebears and by Hamzah and Ukayl and Abbas,[201] to pardon them both and overlook their offence and bestow them one on the other, that thou mayst win rich

reward in the next world of thy just dealing with them; for they are under thy hand and verily they have eaten of thy meat and drunken of thy drink; and behold, I make intercession for them and beg of thee the boon of their blood." Thereupon quoth the Caliph, "Thou speakest sooth: I did indeed give judgement as thou sayst, and I am not one to pass sentence and to revoke it." Then said he, "O Naomi, say, be this thy lord?" And she answered, "Even so, O Commander of the Faithful." Then quoth he, "No harm shall befal you, I give you each to other;" adding to the 23 young man, "O Ni'amah, who told thee where she was and taught thee how to get at this place?" He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, hearken to my tale and give ear to my history; for, by the virtue of thy pious forefathers, I will hide nothing from thee!" And he told him all that had passed between himself and the Persian physician and the old nurse, and how she had brought him into the palace and he had mistaken the doors; whereat the Caliph wondered with exceeding wonder and said, "Fetch me the Persian." So they brought him into the presence and he was made one of his chief officers. Moreover the King bestowed on him robes of honour and ordered him a handsome present, saying, "When a man hath shown like this man such artful management, it behoveth us to make him one of our chief officers." The Caliph also loaded Ni'amah and Naomi with gifts and honours and rewarded the old nurse; and they abode with him seven days in joy and content and all delight of life, when Ni'amah craved leave to return to Cufa with his slave-girl. The Caliph gave them permission and they departed and arrived in due course at Cufa, where Ni'amah was restored to his father and mother, and they abode in all the joys and jollities of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies. Now when Amjad and As'ad heard from Bahram this story, they marvelled with extreme marvel and said, "By Allah, this is indeed a rare tale!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Amjad and As'ad heard this story from Bahram the Magian who had become a Moslem, they marvelled with extreme marvel and thus passed that night; and when the next morning dawned, they mounted and riding to the palace, sought an audience of the King who granted it and received them with high honour. Now as they were sitting together talking, of a sudden they heard the townsfolk crying aloud and shouting to one another and calling for help; and the Chamberlain came in to the King and said to him, "Some King hath encamped before the city, he and his host, with arms and weapons displayed, and we know not their object and aim." The King took counsel with his Wazir Amjad and his 24 brother As'ad; and Amjad said, "I will go out to him and learn the cause of his coming." So he took horse and, riding forth from the city, repaired to the stranger's camp, where he found the King and with him a mighty many and mounted Mamelukes. When the guards saw him, they knew him for an envoy from the King of

the city; so they took him and brought him before their Sultan. Then Amjad kissed the ground before him; but lo! the King was a Queen, who was veiled with a mouth-veil, and she said to Amjad, "Know that I have no design on this your city and that I am come hither only in quest of a beardless slave of mine, whom if I find with you, I will do you no harm; but if I find him not, then shall there befal sore onslaught between me and you." Asked Amjad, "O Queen, what like is thy slave and what is his story and what may be his name?" Said she, "His name is As'ad and my name is Marjanah, and this slave came to my town in company of Bahram, a Magian, who refused to sell him to me; so I took him by force, but his master fell upon him by night and bore him away by stealth and he is of such and such a favour." When Amjad heard that, he knew it was indeed his brother As'ad whom she sought and said to her, "O Queen of the age, Alhamdolillah, praised be Allah, who hath brought us relief! Verily this slave whom thou seekest is my brother." Then he told her their story and all that had befallen them in the land of exile, and acquainted her with the cause of their departure from the Islands of Ebony, whereat she marvelled and rejoiced to have found As'ad. So she bestowed a dress of honour upon Amjad, and he returned forthright to the King and told him what had passed, at which they all rejoiced and the King went forth with Amjad and As'ad to meet Queen Marjanah. When they were admitted to her presence and sat down to converse with her and were thus pleasantly engaged, behold, a dust-cloud rose and flew and grew, till it walled the view. And after a while it lifted and showed beneath it an army dight for victory, in numbers like the swelling sea, armed and armoured cap-à-pie who, making for the city, encompassed it around as the ring encompasseth the little finger;[21] and a bared brand was in every hand. When Amjad 25 and As'ad saw this, they exclaimed, "Verily to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return! What is this mighty host? Doubtless, these are enemies, and except we agree with this Queen Marjanah to fight them, they will take the town from us and slay us. There is no resource for us but to go out to them and see who they are." So Amjad arose and took horse and passed through the city-gate to Queen Marjanah's camp; but when he reached the approaching army he found it to be that of his grandsire, King Ghayur, father of his mother Queen Budur.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Amjad reached the approaching host, he found it to be that of his grandsire, Lord of the Isles and the Seas and the Seven Castles; and when he went into the presence, he kissed the ground between his hands and delivered to him the message. Quoth the King, "My name is King Ghayur and I come wayfaring in quest of my daughter Budur whom fortune hath taken from me; for she left me and returned not to me, nor have I heard any tidings of her or of her husband Kamar al-Zaman. Have ye any news of them?" When Amjad heard this, he hung his head towards the ground for a while in thought till he

felt assured that this King was none other than his grandfather, his mother's father; whereupon he raised his head and, kissing ground before him, told him that he was the son of his daughter Budur; on hearing which 26 Ghayur threw himself upon him and they both fell a-weeping.[22] Then said Ghayur, "Praised be Allah, O my son, for safety, since I have foregathered with thee," and Amjad told him that his daughter Budur was safe and sound, and her husband Kamar al-Zaman likewise, and acquainted him that both abode in a city called the City of Ebony. Moreover, he related to him how his father, being wroth with him and his brother, had commanded that both be put to death, but that his treasurer had taken pity on them and let them go with their lives. Quoth King Ghayur, "I will go back with thee and thy brother to your father and make your peace with him." So Amjad kissed the ground before him in huge delight and the King bestowed a dress of honour upon him, after which he returned, smiling, to the King of the City of the Magians and told him what he had learnt from King Ghayur, whereat he wondered with exceeding wonder. Then he despatched guest-gifts of sheep and horses and camels and forage and so forth to King Ghayur, and did the like by Queen Marjanah; and both of them told her what chanced; whereupon quoth she, "I too will accompany you with my troops and will do my endeavour to make this peace." Meanwhile behold, there arose another dust-cloud and flew and grew till it walled the view and blackened the day's bright hue; and under it they heard shouts and cries and neighing of steeds and beheld sword glance and the glint of levelled lance. When this new host drew near the city and saw the two other armies, they beat their drums and the King of the Magians exclaimed, "This is indeed naught but a blessed day. Praised be Allah who hath made us of accord with these two armies; and if it be His will, He shall give us peace with yon other as well." Then said he to Amjad and As'ad, "Fare forth and fetch us news of these troops, for they are a mighty host, never saw I a mightier." So they opened the city gates, which the King had shut for fear of the beleaguering armies, and Amjad and As'ad went forth and, coming 27 to the new host, found that it was indeed a mighty many. But as soon as they came to it behold, they knew that it was the army of the King of the Ebony Islands, wherein was their father, King Kamar al-Zaman in person. Now when they looked upon him, they kissed ground and wept; but, when he beheld them, he threw himself upon them weeping, with sore weeping, and strained them to his breast for a full hour. Then he excused himself to them and told them what desolation he had suffered for their loss and exile; and they acquainted him with King Ghayur's arrival, whereupon he mounted with his chief officers and taking with him his two sons, proceeded to that King's camp. As they drew near, one of the Princes rode forward and informed King Ghayur of Kamar al-Zaman's coming, whereupon he came out to meet him and they joined company, marvelling at these things and how they had chanced to foregather in that place. Then the townsfolk made them banquets of all manner meats and sweetmeats and presented to them horses and camels and fodder

and other guest-gifts and all that the troops needed. And while this was doing, behold, yet another cloud of dust arose and flew till it walled the view, whilst earth trembled with the tramp of steed and tabors sounded like stormy winds. After a while, the dust lifted and discovered an army clad in coats of mail and armed cap-à-pie; but all were in black garb, and in their midst rode a very old man whose beard flowed down over his breast and he also was clad in black. When the King in the city and the city-folk saw this great host, he said to the other Kings, "Praised be Allah by whose omnipotent command ye are met here, all in one day, and have proved all known one to the other! But what vast and victorious army is this which hemmeth in the whole land like a wall?" They answered, "Have no fear of them; we are three Kings, each with a great army, and if they be enemies, we will join thee in doing battle with them, were they three times as many as they now are." Meanwhile, up came an envoy from the approaching host, making for the city. So they brought him before Kamar al-Zaman, King Ghayur, Queen Marjanah and the King of the city; and he kissed the ground and said, "My liege lord cometh from Persia-land; for many years ago he lost his son and he is seeking him in all countries. If he find him with you, well and good; but if he find him not, there will be war between him and you and he will waste your city." Rejoined Kamar al-Zaman, "It shall not come to that; but how is thy 28 master called in Aiam land?" Answered the envoy, "He is called King Shahriman, lord of the Khalidan Islands; and he hath levied these troops in the lands traversed by him, whilst seeking his son." Now when Kamar al-Zaman heard these words, he cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fainting fit which lasted a long while; and anon coming to himself he wept bitter tears and said to Amjad and As'ad, "Go ye, O my sons, with the herald, salute your grandfather and my father, King Shahriman, and give him glad tidings of me, for he mourneth my loss and even to the present time he weareth black raiment for my sake." Then he told the other Kings all that had befallen him in the days of his youth, at which they wondered and, going down with him from the city, repaired to his father, whom he saluted, and they embraced and fell to the ground senseless for excess of joy. And when they revived after a while, Kamar al-Zaman acquainted his father with all his adventures and the other Kings saluted Shahriman. Then, after having married Marjanah to As'ad, they sent her back to her kingdom, charging her not to cease correspondence with them; so she took leave and went her way. Moreover they married Amjad to Bostan, Bahram's daughter, and they all set out for the City of Ebony. And when they arrived there, Kamar al-Zaman went in to his father-in-law, King Armanus, and told him all that had befallen him and how he had found his sons; whereat Armanus rejoiced and gave him joy of his safe return. Then King Ghayur went in to his daughter, Queen Budur,[23] and saluted her and quenched his longing for her company, and they all abode a full month's space in the City of Ebony; after which the King and his daughter returned to their own country.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Ghayur set out with his daughter and his host for his own land, and they took with them Amjad and returned home by easy marches. And when Ghayur was settled again in his kingdom, 29 he made his grandson King in his stead; and as to Kamar al-Zaman he also made As'ad king in his room over the capital of the Ebony Islands, with the consent of his grandfather, King Armanus and set out himself, with his father, King Shahriman, till the two made the Islands of Khalidan. Then the lieges decorated the city in their honour and they ceased not to beat the drums for glad tidings a whole month; nor did Kamar al-Zaman leave to govern in his father's place, till there overtook them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies; and Allah knoweth all things! Quoth King Shahryar, "O Shahrazad, this is indeed a most wonderful tale!" And she answered, "O King, it is not more wonderful than that of

12- ALA AL-DIN ABU AL-SHAMAT."[24]

"What is that?" asked he, and she said, It hath reached me that there lived, in times of yore and years and ages long gone before, a merchant of Cairo[25] named Shams al-Din, who was of the best and truest-spoken of the traders of the city; and he had eunuchs and servants and negro-slaves and handmaids and Mamelukes and great store of money. Moreover, he was Consul[26] of the Merchants of Cairo and owned a wife, whom he loved and who loved him; except that he had lived with her forty years, yet had not been blessed with a son or even a daughter. One day, as he sat in his shop, he noted that the merchants, each and every, had a son or two sons or more sitting in their shops like their sires. Now the day being Friday; he entered the Hammam-bath and made the total ablution: after which he came out and took the barber's glass and looked in it, saying, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God and I testify that Mohammed is the Messenger of God!" Then he considered his beard and, seeing that the white hairs in it covered the black, bethought himself that hoariness is the harbinger of death. Now his wife knew the time of his coming home and had washed and made herself ready for him, so when 30 he came in to her, she said, "Good evening," but he replied "I see no good." Then she called to the handmaid, "Spread the supper-tray;" and when this was done quoth she to her husband, "Sup, O my lord." Quoth he, "I will eat nothing," and pushing the tray away with his foot, turned his back upon her. She asked, "Why dost thou thus? and what hath vexed thee?"; and he answered, "Thou art the cause of my vexation."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shams al-Din said to his wife, "Thou art the cause of my vexation." She asked, "Wherefore?" and he answered, "When I opened my shop this morning, I saw that each and every of the merchants had with him a son or two sons or more, sitting in their shops like their fathers; and I said to myself:—He who took thy sire will not spare thee. Now the night I first visited thee,[27] thou madest me swear that I would never take a second wife over thee nor a concubine, Abyssinian or Greek or handmaid of other race; nor would lie a single night away from thee: and behold, thou art barren, and having thee is like boring into the rock." Rejoined she, "Allah is my witness that the fault lies with thee, for that thy seed is thin." He asked, "And what showeth the man whose semen is thin?" And she answered, "He cannot get women with child, nor beget children." Quoth he, "What

thickeneth the seed? tell me and I will buy it: haply, it will thicken mine." Quoth she, "Enquire for it of the druggists." So he slept with her that night and arose on the morrow, repenting of having spoken angrily to her; and she also regretted her cross words. Then he went to the market and, finding a druggist, saluted him; and when his salutation was returned said to him, "Say, hast thou with thee a seed-thickener?" He replied, "I had it, but am out of it: enquire thou of my neighbour." Then Shams al-Din made the round till he had asked every one, but they all laughed at him, and presently he returned to his shop and sat down, sore 31 troubled. Now there was in the bazar a man who was Deputy Syndic of the brokers and was given to the use of opium and electuary and green hashísh.[28] He was called Shaykh Mohammed Samsam and being poor he used to wish Shams al-Din good morrow every day. So he came to him according to his custom and saluted him. The merchant returned his salute, but in ill-temper, and the other, seeing him vexed, said, "O my lord, what hath crossed thee?" Thereupon Shams al-Din told him all that occurred between himself and his wife, adding, "These forty years have I been married to her yet hath she borne me neither son nor daughter; and they say:—The cause of thy failure to get her with child is the thinness of thy seed; so I have been seeking a something wherewith to thicken my semen but found it not." Quoth Shaykh Mohammed, "O my lord, I have a seed-thickener, but what wilt thou say to him who causeth thy wife to conceive by thee after these forty years have passed?" Answered the merchant, "If thou do this, I will work thy weal and reward thee." "Then give me a dinar," rejoined the broker, and Shams al-Din said, "Take these two dinars." He took them and said, "Give me also yonder big bowl of porcelain." So he gave it to him and the 32 broker betook himself to a hashish-seller, of whom he bought two ounces of concentrated Roumi opium and equal parts of Chinese cubebs, cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms, ginger, white pepper and mountain skink[29]; and, pounding them all together, boiled them in sweet olive-oil; after which he added three ounces of male frankincense in fragments and a cupful of coriander-seed; and, macerating the whole, made it into an electuary with Roumi bee-honey. Then he put the confection in the bowl and carried it to the merchant, to whom he delivered it, saying, "Here is the seed-thickener, and the manner of using it is this. Take of my electuary with a spoon after supping, and wash it down with a sherbet made of rose conserve; but first sup off mutton and house-pigeon plentifully seasoned and hotly spiced." So the merchant bought all this and sent the meat and pigeons to his wife, saying; "Dress them deftly and lay up the seed-thickener until I want it and call for it." She did his bidding and, when she served up the meats, he ate the evening meal, after which he called for the bowl and ate of the electuary. It pleased him well, so he ate the rest and knew his wife. That very night she conceived by him and, after three months, her courses ceased, no blood came from her and she knew that she was with child. When the days of her pregnancy were accomplished, the pangs of labour took her and they raised loud lullilooings and cries of joy. The midwife delivered her

with difficulty, by pronouncing over the boy at his birth the names of Mohammed and Ali, and said, "Allah is Most Great!"; and she called in his ear the call to prayer. Then she 33 wrapped him up and passed him to his mother, who took him and gave him the breast; and he sucked and was full and slept. The midwife abode with them three days, till they had made the mothering-cakes of sugared bread and sweetmeats; and they distributed them on the seventh day. Then they sprinkled salt against the evil eye and the merchant, going in to his wife, gave her joy of her safe delivery, and said, "Where is Allah's deposit?" So they brought him a babe of surpassing beauty, the handiwork of the Orderer who is ever present and, though he was but seven days old, those who saw him would have deemed him a yearling child. So the merchant looked on his face and, seeing it like a shining full moon, with moles on either cheek, said he to his wife, "What hast thou named him?" Answered she, "If it were a girl I had named her; but this is a boy, so none shall name him but thou." Now the people of that time used to name their children by omens; and, whilst the merchant and his wife were taking counsel of the name, behold, one said to his friend, "Ho my lord, Ala al-Din!" So the merchant said, "We will call him Ala al-Din Abú al-Shámát."[30] Then he committed the child to the nurse, and he drank milk two years, after which they weaned him and he grew up and throve and walked upon the floor. When he came to seven years old, they put him in a chamber under a trap-door, for fear of the evil eye, and his father said, "He shall not come out, till his beard grow." So he gave him in charge to a handmaid and a blackamoor; the girl dressed him his meals and the slave carried them to him. Then his father circumcised him and made him a great feast; after which he brought him a doctor of the law, who taught him to write and read and repeat the Koran, and other arts and sciences, till he became a good scholar and an accomplished. One day it so came to pass that the slave, after 34 bringing him the tray of food went away and left the trap-door open: so Ala al-Din came forth from the vault and went in to his mother, with whom was a company of women of rank. As they sat talking, behold, in came upon them the youth as he were a white slave drunken[31] for the excess of his beauty; and when they saw him, they veiled their faces and said to his mother, "Allah requite thee, O such an one! How canst thou let this strange Mameluke in upon us? Knowest thou not that modesty is a point of the Faith?" She replied, "Pronounce Allah's name[32] and cry Bismillah! this is my son, the fruit of my vitals and the heir of Consul Shams al-Din, the child of the nurse and the collar and the crust and the crumb."[33] Quoth they, "Never in our days knew we that thou hadst a son"; and quoth she, "Verily his father feared for him the evil eye and reared him in an under-ground chamber;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala-al-Din's mother said to her lady-friends, "Verily his father feared for him the evil eye and reared him in an under-

ground chamber; and haply the slave forgot to shut the door and he fared forth; but we did not mean that he should come out, before his beard was grown." The women gave her joy of him, and the youth went out from them into the court yard where he seated himself in the open sitting-room; and behold, in came the slaves with his father's she-mule, and he said to them, "Whence cometh this mule?" Quoth they, "We escorted thy father when riding her to the shop, and we have brought her back." He asked, "What may be my father's trade?"; and they answered, "Thy father is Consul of the merchants in the land of Egypt and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs." Then he went in to his mother and said to her, "O my mother, what is my father's trade?" Said she, "O my son, thy sire is a merchant and Consul of the merchants in the land of [35] Egypt and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs. His slaves consult him not in selling aught whose price is less than one thousand gold pieces, but merchandise worth him an hundred and less they sell at their own discretion; nor doth any merchandise whatever, little or muchel, leave the country without passing through his hands and he disposeth of it as he pleaseth; nor is a bale packed and sent abroad amongst folk but what is under his disposal. And Almighty Allah, O my son, hath given thy father monies past compt." He rejoined, "O my mother, praised be Allah, that I am son of the Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs and that my father is Consul of the merchants! But why, O my mother, do ye put me in the under-ground chamber and leave me prisoner there?" Quoth she, "O my son, we imprisoned thee not save for fear of folks' eyes: 'the evil eye is a truth,'[34] and most of those in their long homes are its victims." Quoth he, "O my mother, and where is a refuge-place against Fate? Verily care never made Destiny forbear, nor is there flight from what is written for every wight. He who took my grandfather will not spare myself nor my father; for, though he live to-day he shall not live to-morrow. And when my father dieth and I come forth and say:—I am Ala al-Din, son of Shams al-Din the merchant, none of the people will believe me, but men of years and standing will say:—In our lives never saw we a son or a daughter of Shams al-Din. Then the public Treasury will come down and take my father's estate, and Allah have mercy on him who said:—The noble dieth and his wealth passeth away, and the meanest of men take his women. Therefore, O my mother, speak thou to my father, that he carry me with him to the bazar and open for me a shop; so may I sit there with my merchandise and teach me to buy and sell and take and give." Answered his mother, "O my son, as soon as thy sire returneth I will tell him this." So when the merchant came home, he found his son Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat sitting with his mother and said to her, "Why hast thou brought him forth of the under-ground chamber?" She replied, "O son of my uncle, it was not I that brought him out; but the servants forgot to shut the door and left it open; so, as I sat with a company of women of rank, behold, he came forth and walked in to me." Then she went on to repeat to him his son's words; so he said, "O my son, to-morrow, [36] Inshallah! I will take thee with me to the bazar; but, my boy, sitting in markets and shops demandeth

good manners and courteous carriage in all conditions." Ala al-Din passed the night rejoicing in his father's promise and, when the morrow came, the merchant carried him to the Hammam and clad him in a suit worth a mint of money. As soon as they had broken their fast and drunk their sherbets, Shams al-Din mounted his she-mule and putting his son upon another, rode to the market, followed by his boy. But when the market-folk saw their Consul making towards them, foregoing a youth as he were a slice of the full moon on the fourteenth night, they said, one to other, "See thou yonder boy behind the Consul of the merchants; verily, we thought well of him, but he is, like the leek, gray of head and green at heart."[35] And Shaykh Mohammed Samsam, Deputy Syndic of the market, the man before mentioned, said to the dealers, "O merchants, we will not keep the like of him for our Shaykh; no, never!" Now it was the custom anent the Consul when he came from his house of a morning and sat down in his shop, for the Deputy Syndic of the market to go and recite to him and to all the merchants assembled around him the Fátihah or opening chapter of the Koran,[36] after which they accosted him one by one and wished him good morrow and went away, each to his business-place. But when Shams al-Din seated himself in his shop that day as usual, the traders came not to him as accustomed; so he called the Deputy and said to him, "Why come not the merchants together as usual?" Answered Mohammed Samsam, "I know not how to tell thee these troubles, for they have agreed to depose thee from 37 the Shaykh-ship of the market and to recite the Fatihah to thee no more." Asked Shams al-Din, "What may be their reason?"; and asked the Deputy, "What boy is this that sitteth by thy side and thou a man of years and chief of the merchants? Is this lad a Mameluke or akin to thy wife? Verily, I think thou lovest him and inclinest lewdly to the boy." Thereupon the Consul cried out at him, saying, "Silence, Allah curse thee, genus and species! This is my son." Rejoined the Deputy, "Never in our born days have we seen thee with a son," and Shams al-Din answered, "When thou gavest me the seed-thickener, my wife conceived and bare this youth; but I reared him in a souterrain for fear of the evil eye, nor was it my purpose that he should come forth, till he could take his beard in his hand.[37] However, his mother would not agree to this, and he on his part begged I would stock him a shop and teach him to sell and buy." So the Deputy Syndic returned to the other traders and acquainted them with the truth of the case, whereupon they all arose to accompany him; and, going in a body to Shams al-Din's shop, stood before him and recited the "Opener" of the Koran; after which they gave him joy of his son and said to him, "The Lord prosper root and branch! But even the poorest of us, when son or daughter is born to him, needs must cook a pan-full of custard[38] and bid his friends and kith and kin; yet hast thou not done this." Quoth he, "This I owe you; be our meeting in the garden."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

Her sister Dunyazad said to her, “Pray continue thy story for us, an thou be awake and not inclined to sleep.” Quoth she:—With pleasure and goodwill: it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Consul of the merchants promised them a banquet and said “Be our meeting in the garden.” So when morning dawned he despatched the carpet-layer to the saloon of the garden-pavilion [38] and bade him furnish the two. Moreover, he sent thither all that was needful for cooking, such as sheep and clarified butter and so forth, according to the requirements of the case; and spread two tables, one in the pavilion and another in the saloon. Then Shams al-Din and his boy girded themselves, and he said to Ala al-Din “O my son, whenas a greybeard entereth, I will meet him and seat him at the table in the pavilion; and do thou, in like manner, receive the beardless youths and seat them at the table in the saloon.” He asked, “O my father, why dost thou spread two tables, one for men and another for youths?”; and he answered, “O my son, the beardless is ashamed to eat with the bearded.” And his son thought this his answer full and sufficient. So when the merchants arrived, Shams al-Din received the men and seated them in the pavilion, whilst Ala al-Din received the youths and seated them in the saloon. Then the food was set on and the guests ate and drank and made merry and sat over their wine, whilst the attendants perfumed them with the smoke of scented woods, and the elders fell to conversing of matters of science and traditions of the Prophet. Now there was amongst them a merchant called Mahmúd of Balkh, a professing Moslem but at heart a Magian, a man of lewd and mischievous life who loved boys. And when he saw Ala al-Din from whose father he used to buy stuffs and merchandise, one sight of his face sent him a thousand sighs and Satan dangled the jewel before his eyes, so that he was taken with love-longing and desire and affection and his heart was filled with mad passion for him. Presently he arose and made for the youths, who stood up to receive him; and at this moment Ala al-Din being taken with an urgent call of Nature, withdrew to make water; whereupon Mahmud turned to the other youths and said to them, “If ye will incline Ala al-Din’s mind to journeying with me, I will give each of you a dress worth a power of money.” Then he returned from them to the men’s party; and, as the youths were sitting, Ala al-Din suddenly came back, when all rose to receive him and seated him in the place of highest honour. Presently, one of them said to his neighbour, “O my lord Hasan, tell me whence came to thee the capital whereon thou tradest.” He replied, “When I grew up and came to man’s estate, I said to my sire:—O my father, give me merchandise. Quoth he:—O my son, I have none by me; but go thou to some merchant and take of him money and traffic with it; and so learn to buy and sell, give and take. [39] So I went to one of the traders and borrowed of him a thousand dinars, wherewith I bought stuffs and carrying them to Damascus, sold them there at a profit of two for one. Then I bought Syrian stuffs and carrying them to Aleppo, made a similar gain of them; after which I bought stuffs of Aleppo and repaired with them to Baghdad, where I sold them with like result, two for one; nor did I cease trading upon

my capital till I was worth nigh ten thousand ducats." Then each of the others told his friend some such tale, till it came to Ala al-Din's turn to speak, when they said to him, "And thou, O my lord Ala al-Din?" Quoth he, "I was brought up in a chamber underground and came forth from it only this week; and I do but go to the shop and return home from the shop." They remarked, "Thou art used to wone at home and wottest not the joys of travel, for travel is for men only." He replied, "I reck not of voyaging and wayfaring doth not tempt me." Whereupon quoth one to the other, "This one is like the fish: when he leaveth the water he dieth." Then they said to him, "O Ala al-Din, the glory of the sons of the merchants is not but in travel for the sake of gain." Their talk angered him; so he left them weeping-eyed and heavy-hearted and mounting his mule returned home. Now his mother saw him in tears and in bad temper and asked him, "What hath made thee weep, O my son?"; and he answered, "Of a truth, all the sons of the merchants put me to shame and said:—Naught is more glorious for a merchant's son than travel for gain and to get him gold."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala al-Din said to his mother, "Of a truth all the sons of the merchants put me to shame and said:—Naught is more honourable for a merchant's son than travel for gain." "O my son, hast thou a mind to travel?" "Even so!" "And whither wilt thou go?" "To the city of Baghdad; for there folk make double the cost price on their goods." "O my son, thy father is a very rich man and, if he provide thee not with merchandise, I will supply it out of my own monies." "The best favour is that which is soonest 40 bestowed; if this kindness is to be, now is the time." So she called the slaves and sent them for cloth-packers; then, opening a store-house, brought out ten loads of stuffs, which they made up into bales for him. Such was his case; but as regards his father, Shams al-Din, he looked about and failed to find Ala al-Din in the garden and enquiring after him, was told that he had mounted mule and gone home; so he too mounted and followed him. Now when he entered the house, he saw the bales ready bound and asked what they were; whereupon his wife told him what had chanced between Ala al-Din and the sons of the merchants; and he cried, "O my son, Allah's malison on travel and stranger-hood! Verily Allah's Apostle (whom the Lord bless and preserve!) hath said:—It is of a man's happy fortune that he eat his daily bread in his own land; and it was said of the ancients:—Leave travel, though but for a mile." Then quoth he to his son, "Say, art thou indeed resolved to travel and wilt thou not turn back from it?" Quoth the other, "There is no help for it but that I journey to Baghdad with merchandise, else will I doff clothes and don dervish gear and fare a-wandering over the world." Shams al-Din rejoined, "I am no penniless pauper but have great plenty of wealth;" then he showed him all he owned of monies and stuffs and stock-in-trade and observed, "With me are stuffs and merchandise befitting every country in the world." Then he showed him

among the rest, forty bales ready bound, with the price, a thousand dinars, written on each, and said, "O my son take these forty loads, together with the ten which thy mother gave thee, and set out under the safeguard of Almighty Allah. But, O my child, I fear for thee a certain wood in thy way, called the Lion's Copse,[39] and a valley hight the Vale of Dogs, for there lives are lost without mercy." He said, "How so, O my father?"; and he replied, "Because of a Badawi bandit named Ajlán." Quoth Ala al-Din, "Such is Allah's luck; if any share of it be mine, no harm shall hap to me." Then they rode to the cattle-bazar, where behold, a cameleer[40] alighted from his she-mule and kissing the Consul's hand, said to him, "O my lord, it is long, by 41 Allah, since thou hast employed us in the way of business." He replied, "Every time hath its fortune and its men,[41] and Allah have ruth on him who said:—

And the old man crept o'er the worldly ways ✿ So bowed, his beard o'er his knees down flow'th:
Quoth I:—What gars thee so doubled go? ✿ Quoth he (as to me his hands he show'th)
My youth is lost, in the dust it lieth; ✿ And see, I bend me to find my youth."[42]

Now when he had ended his verses, he said, "O chief of the caravan, it is not I who am minded to travel, but this my son." Quoth the cameleer, "Allah save him for thee." Then the Consul made a contract between Ala al-Din and the man, appointing that the youth should be to him as a son, and gave him into his charge, saying, "Take these hundred gold pieces for thy people." Moreover he bought his son threescore mules and a lamp and a tomb-covering for the Sayyid Abd al-Kadir of Gílán[43] and said to him, "O my son, while I am absent, this is thy sire in my stead: whatsoever he biddeth thee, do thou obey him." So saying, he returned home with the mules and servants and that night they made a Khitmah or perlection of the Koran and held a festival in honour of the Shaykh Abd al-Kadir al-Jiláni. And when the morrow dawned, the Consul gave his son ten thousand dinars, saying, "O my son, when thou comest to Baghdad, if thou find stuffs easy of sale, sell them; but if they be dull, spend of these dinars." Then they loaded the mules and, taking leave of one another, all the wayfarers setting out on their journey, marched forth from the city. Now Mahmud of Balkh had made ready his own venture for Baghdad and had moved his bales and set up his tents without the walls, saying in himself, "Thou shalt not enjoy this youth but in the desert, where there is neither spy nor marplot to trouble thee." It chanced that he had in hand a thousand 42 dinars which he owed to the youth's father, the balance of a business-transaction between them; so he went and bade farewell to the Consul, who charged him, "Give the thousand dinars to my son Ala al-Din;" and commended the lad to his care, saying, "He is as it were thy son." Accordingly, Ala al-Din joined company with Mahmud of Balkh——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that Ala al-Din joined company with Mahmud of Balkh who, before beginning the march, charged the youth's cook to

dress nothing for him, but himself provided him and his company with meat and drink. Now he had four houses, one in Cairo, another in Damascus, a third in Aleppo and a fourth in Baghdad. So they set out and ceased not journeying over waste and wold till they drew near Damascus, when Mahmud sent his slave to Ala al-Din, whom he found sitting and reading. He went up to him and kissed his hands, and Ala al-Din having asked him what he wanted, he answered, "My master saluteth thee and craveth thy company to a banquet at his place." Quoth the youth, "Not till I consult my father Kamál al-Din, the captain of the caravan." So he asked advice of the Makaddam,[44] who said, "Do not go." Then they left Damascus and journeyed on till they came to Aleppo, where Mahmud made a second entertainment and sent to invite Ala al-Din; but he consulted the Chief Cameleer who again forbade him. Then they marched from Aleppo and fared on, till there remained between them and Baghdad only a single stage. Here Mahmud prepared a third feast and sent to bid Ala al-Din to it: Kamal al-Din once more forbade his accepting it, but he said, "I must needs go." So he rose and, slinging a sword over his shoulder, under his clothes, repaired to the tent of Mahmud of Balkh, who came to meet him and saluted him. Then he set before him a sumptuous repast and they ate and drank and washed hands. At last Mahmud bent towards Ala al-Din to snatch a kiss from him, but the youth 43 received the kiss on the palm of his hand and said to him, "What wouldest thou be at?" Quoth Mahmud, "In very sooth I brought thee hither that I might take my pleasure with thee in this jousting-ground, and we will comment upon the words of him who saith:—

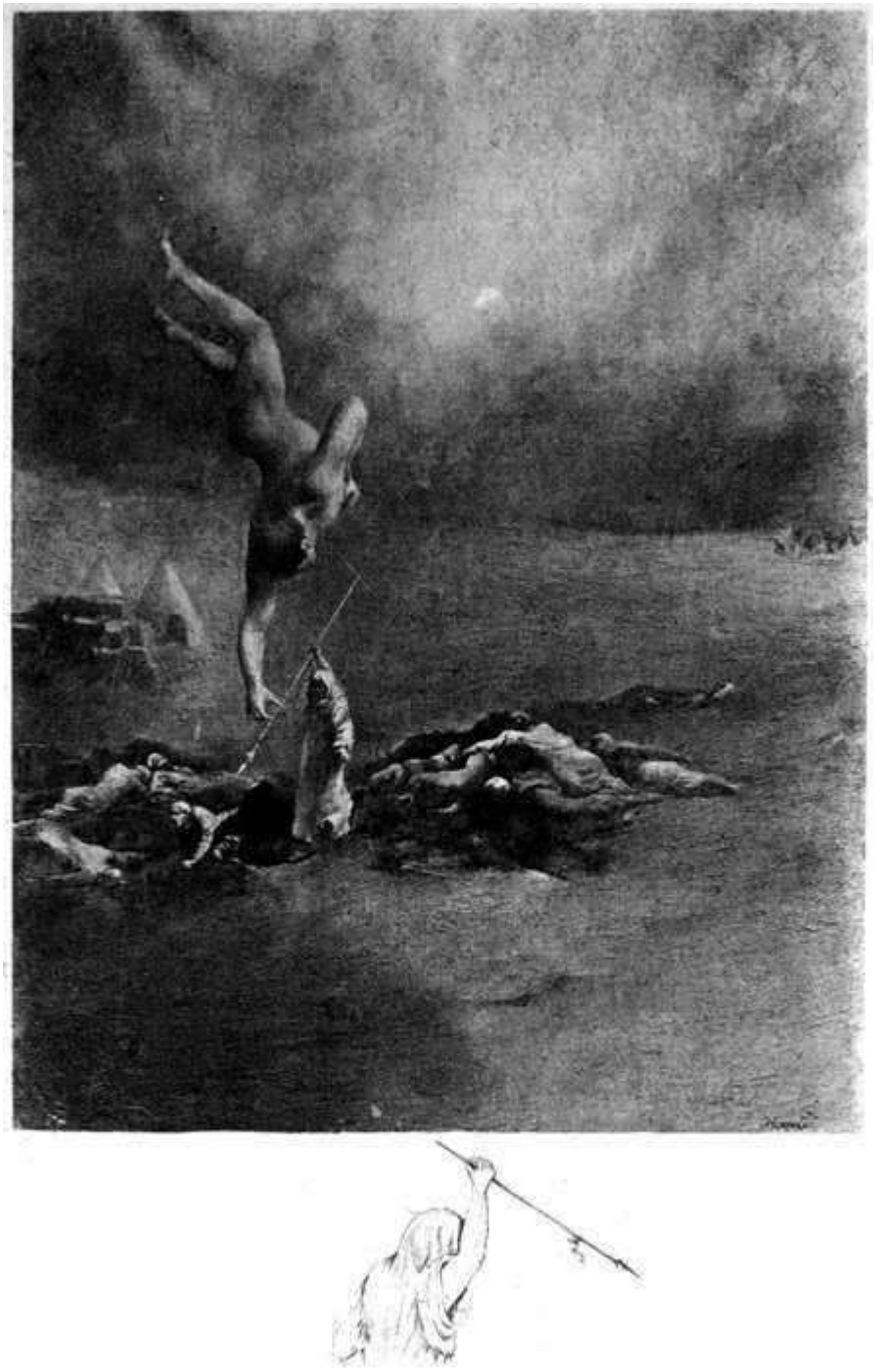
Say, canst not come to us one momentling, ✿ Like milk of ewekin or aught glistening,
And eat what liketh thee of dainty cate, ✿ And take thy due of fee in silverling,
And bear whatso thou wilt, without mislike, ✿ Of spanling, fistling or a spanlong thing?"

Then Mahmud of Balkh would have laid hands on Ala al-Din to ravish him; but he rose and baring his brand, said to him, "Shame on thy gray hairs! Hast thou no fear of Allah, and He of exceeding awe?[45] May He have mercy on him who saith:—

Preserve thy hoary hairs from soil and stain, ✿ For whitest colours are the easiest stained!"

And when he ended his verses he said to Mahmud of Balkh, "Verily this merchandise[46] is a trust from Allah and may not be sold. If I sold this property to other than thee for gold, I would sell it to thee for silver; but by Allah, O filthy villain, I will never again company with thee; no, never!" Then he returned to Kamal al-Din the guide and said to him, "Yonder man is a lewd fellow, and I will no longer consort with him nor suffer his company by the way." He replied, "O my son, did I not say to thee:—Go not near him? But if we part company with him, I fear destruction for ourselves; so let us still make one caravan." But Ala al-Din cried, "It may not be that I ever again travel with him." So he loaded his beasts and journeyed onwards, he and his company, till they came to a valley, where Ala al-Din would have halted, but the Cameleer said to him, "Do not halt here; rather let us fare forwards and press our pace, so haply we make Baghdad before the gates are closed, for they open and

shut 44 them with the sun, in fear lest the Rejectors[47] should take the city and throw the books of religious learning into the Tigris." But Ala al-Din replied to him, "O my father, I came not forth from home with this merchandise, or travelled hither for the sake of traffic, but to divert myself with the sight of foreign lands and folks;" and he rejoined, "O my son, we fear for thee and for thy goods from the wild Arabs." Whereupon the youth answered, "Harkye, fellow, art thou master or man? I will not enter Baghdad till the morning, that the sons of the city may see my merchandise and know me." "Do as thou wilt," said the other; "I have given thee the wisest advice, but thou art the best judge of thine own case." Then Ala al-Din bade them unload the mules and pitch the tent; so they did his bidding and abode there till the middle of the night, when he went out to obey a call of nature and suddenly saw something gleaming afar off. So he said to Kamal al-Din, "O captain, what is yonder glittering?" The Cameleer sat up and, considering it straitly, knew it for the glint of spear-heads and the steel of Badawi weapons and swords. And lo and behold! this was a troop of wild Arabs under a chief called Ajlán Abú Náib, Shaykh of the Arabs, and when they neared the camp and saw the bales and baggage, they said one to another, "O night of loot!" Now when Kamal al-Din heard these their words he cried, "Avaunt, O vilest of Arabs!" But Abu Naib so smote him with his throw-spear in the breast, that the point came out gleaming from his back, and he fell down dead at the tent-door. Then cried the water-carrier,[48] "Avaunt, O foulest of Arabs!" and one of them smote him with a sword upon the shoulder, that it issued shining from the tendons of the throat, and he also fell down dead. (And all this while Ala al-Din stood looking on.) Then the Badawin surrounded and charged the caravan from every side and slew all Ala al-Din's company without sparing a man: after which they loaded the mules with the spoil and made off. Quoth Ala al-Din to himself, "Nothing will slay thee save thy mule and thy dress!"; so he arose and put off his gown and threw it over the back of a mule, remaining in his shirt and bag-trousers only; after which he looked towards the tent-door and, seeing there a pool of gore flowing from the slaughtered, wallowed in it with his remaining clothes till he was as a slain man drowned in his own blood. Thus it fared with him; but as regards the Shaykh of the wild Arabs, Ajlan, he said to his banditti, "O Arabs, was this caravan bound from Egypt for Baghdad or from Baghdad for Egypt?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



45

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that when the Badawi asked his banditti, “O Arabs, was this caravan bound from Egypt for Baghdad or from Baghdad for Egypt?”; they answered, “’Twas bound from Egypt for Baghdad;” and he said, “Return ye to the slain, for methinks the owner of this caravan is not dead.” So they

turned back to the slain and fell to prodding and slashing them with lance and sword till they came to Ala al-Din, who had thrown himself down among the corpses. And when they came to him, quoth they, "Thou dost but feign thyself dead, but we will make an end of thee," and one of the Badawin levelled his javelin and would have plunged it into his breast when he cried out, "Save me, O my lord Abd al-Kadir, O Saint of Gilan!" and behold, he saw a hand turn the lance away from his breast to that of Kamal al-Din the cameleer, so that it pierced him and spared himself.[49] Then the Arabs made off; and, when Ala al-Din saw that the birds were flown with their god-send, he sat up and finding no one, rose and set off running; but, behold Abu Náib the Badawi looked back and said to his troop, "I see somewhat moving afar off, O Arabs!" So one of the bandits 46 turned back and, spying Ala al-Din running, called out to him, saying, "Flight shall not forward thee and we after thee;" and he smote his mare with his heel and she hastened after him. Then Ala al-Din seeing before him a watering tank and a cistern beside it, climbed up into a niche in the cistern and, stretching himself at full length, feigned to be asleep and said, "O gracious Protector, cover me with the veil of Thy protection which may not be torn away!" And lo! the Badawi came up to the cistern and, standing in his stirrup-irons put out his hand to lay hold of Ala al-Din; but he said, "O my lady Nafísah[50]! Now is thy time!" And behold, a scorpion stung the Badawi in the palm and he cried out, saying, "Help, O Arabs! I am stung;" and he alighted from his mare's back. So his comrades came up to him and mounted him again, asking, "What hath befallen thee?" whereto he answered, "A young scorpion[51] stung me." So they departed, with the caravan. Such was their case; but as regards Ala al-Din, he tarried in the niche, and Mahmud of Balkh bade load his beasts and fared forwards till he came to the Lion's Copse where he found Ala al-Din's attendants all lying slain. At this he rejoiced and went on till he reached the cistern and the reservoir. Now his mule was athirst and turned aside to drink, but she saw Ala al-Din's shadow in the water and shied and started; whereupon Mahmud raised his eyes and, seeing Ala al-Din lying in the niche, stripped to his shirt and bag-trousers, said to him, "What man this deed to thee hath dight and left thee in this evil plight?" Answered Ala al-Din, "The Arabs," and Mahmud said, "O my son, the mules and the baggage were thy ransom; so do thou comfort thyself with his saying who said:—

If thereby man can save his head from death, ✿ His good is worth him but a slice of nail!

But now, O my son, come down and fear no hurt." Thereupon he 47 descended from the cistern-niche and Mahmud mounted him on a mule, and they fared on till they reached Baghdad, where he brought him to his own house and carried him to the bath, saying to him, "The goods and money were the ransom of thy life, O my son; but, if thou wilt hearken to me, I will give thee the worth of that thou hast lost, twice told." When he came out of the bath, Mahmud carried him into a saloon decorated with gold with four raised floors, and bade them bring a tray with all manner of meats. So they

ate and drank and Mahmud bent towards Ala al-Din to snatch a kiss from him; but he received it upon the palm of his hand and said, “What, dost thou persist in thy evil designs upon me? Did I not tell thee that, were I wont to sell this merchandise to other than thee for gold, I would sell it thee for silver?” Quoth Mahmud, “I will give thee neither merchandise nor mule nor clothes save at this price; for I am gone mad for love of thee, and bless him who said:—

Told us, ascribing to his Shaykhs, our Shaykh ✿ Abú Bilál, these words they wont to utter:[52]

Unhealed the lover wones of love desire, ✿ By kiss and clip; his only cure’s to futter!”

Ala al-Din replied, “Of a truth this may never be, take back thy dress and thy mule and open the door that I may go out.” So he opened the door, and Ala al-Din fared forth and walked on, with the dogs barking at his heels, and he went forwards through the dark when behold, he saw the door of a mosque standing open and, entering the vestibule, there took shelter and concealment; and suddenly a light approached him and on examining it he saw that it came from a pair of lanthorns borne by two slaves before two merchants. Now one was an old man of comely face and the other a youth; and he heard the younger say to the elder, “O my uncle, I conjure thee by Allah, give me back my cousin!” The old man replied, “Did I not forbid thee, many a time, when the oath of divorce was always in thy mouth, as it were Holy Writ?” Then he turned to his right and, seeing Ala al-Din as he were a slice of the full moon, said to him, “Peace be with thee! who art thou, O my son?” Quoth he, returning the salutation of peace, “I am Ala al-Din, son of Shams al-Din, Consul of the merchants 48 for Egypt. I besought my father for merchandise; so he packed me fifty loads of stuffs and goods,”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala al-Din continued, “So he packed me fifty loads of goods and gave me ten thousand dinars, wherewith I set out for Baghdad; but when I reached the Lion’s Copse, the wild Arabs came out against me and took all my goods and monies. So I entered the city knowing not where to pass the night and, seeing this place, I took shelter here.” Quoth the old man, “O my son, what sayest thou to my giving thee a thousand dinars and a suit of clothes and a mule worth other two thousand?” Ala al-Din asked, “To what end wilt thou give me these things, O my uncle?” and the other answered, “This young man who accompanieth me, is the son of my brother and an only son; and I have a daughter called Zubaydah[53] the lutist, an only child who is a model of beauty and loveliness, so I married her to him. Now he loveth her, but she loatheth him; and when he chanced to take an oath of triple divorcement and broke it, forthright she left him. Whereupon he egged on all the folk to intercede with me to restore her to him; but I told him that this could not lawfully be save by an intermediate marriage, and we have agreed to make some stranger the intermediary[54] in order that none may taunt and shame him

with this affair. So, as thou art a stranger, come with us and we will marry thee to her; thou shalt lie with her to-night and on the morrow divorce her and we will give thee what I said." Quoth Ala al-Din 49 to himself, "By Allah, to bide the night with a bride on a bed in a house is far better than sleeping in the streets and vestibules!" So he went with them to the Kazi whose heart, as soon as he saw Ala al-Din, was moved to love him, and who said to the old man, "What is your will?" He replied, "We wish to make this young man an intermediary husband for my daughter; but we will write a bond against him binding him to pay down by way of marriage-settlement ten thousand gold pieces. Now if after passing the night with her he divorce her in the morning, we will give him a mule and dress each worth a thousand dinars, and a third thousand of ready money; but if he divorce her not, he shall pay down the ten thousand dinars according to contract." So they agreed to the agreement and the father of the bride to be received his bond for the marriage-settlement. Then he took Ala al-Din and, clothing him anew, carried him to his daughter's house and there he left him standing at the door, whilst he himself went in to the young lady and said, "Take the bond of thy marriage-settlement, for I have wedded thee to a handsome youth by name Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat: so do thou use him with the best of usage." Then he put the bond into her hands and left her and went to his own lodging. Now the lady's cousin had an old duenna who used to visit Zubaydah, and he had done many a kindness to this woman, so he said to her, "O my mother, if my cousin Zubaydah see this handsome young man, she will never after accept my offer; so I would fain have thee contrive some trick to keep her and him apart." She answered, "By the life of thy youth,[55] I will not suffer him to approach her!" Then she went to Ala al-Din and said to him, "O my son, I have a word of advice to give thee, for the love of Almighty Allah and do thou accept my counsel, as I fear for thee from this young woman: better thou let her lie alone and feel not her person nor draw thee near to her." He asked, "Why so?"; and she answered, "Because her body is full of leprosy and I dread lest she infect thy fair and seemly youth." Quoth he, "I have no need of her." Thereupon she went to the lady and said the like to her of Ala al-Din; and she replied, "I have no need of him, but will let him lie alone, and on the morrow he shall gang his gait." Then she called a slave-girl and said to her, "Take the tray of food and set it before him that he may sup." So the handmaid carried him the tray of food and 50 set it before him and he ate his fill: after which he sat down and raised his charming voice and fell to reciting the chapter called Y. S.[56] The lady listened to him and found his voice as melodious as the psalms of David sung by David himself,[57] which when she heard, she exclaimed, "Allah disappoint the old hag who told me that he was affected with leprosy! Surely this is not the voice of one who hath such a disease; and all was a lie against him."[58] Then she took a lute of India-land workmanship and, tuning the strings, sang to it in a voice so sweet its music would stay the birds in the heart of heaven; and began these two couplets:—

I love a fawn with gentle white-black eyes, ✿ Whose walk the willow-wand with envy kills:

Forbidding me he bids for rival mine, ✿ Tis Allah's grace who grants to whom He wills!

And when he heard her chant these lines he ended his recitation of the chapter, and began also to sing and repeated the following couplet:—

My Salám to the Fawn in the garments concealed, ✿ And to roses in gardens of cheek revealed.

The lady rose up when she heard this, and her inclination for him redoubled and she lifted the curtain; and Ala al-Din, seeing her, recited these two couplets:—

She shineth forth, a moon, and bends, a willow-wand, ✿ And breathes out ambergris, and gazes, a gazelle.

Meseems as if grief loved my heart and when from her ✿ Estrangement I abide possession to it fell.[59]

Thereupon she came forward, swinging her haunches and gracefully swaying a shape the handiwork of Him whose boons are hidden; and each of them stole one glance of the eyes that cost them 51 a thousand sighs. And when the shafts of the two regards which met rankled in his heart, he repeated these two couplets:—

She 'spied the moon of Heaven, reminding me ✿ Of nights when met we in the meadows li'en:

True, both saw moons, but sooth to say, it was ✿ Her very eyes I saw, and she my eyne.

And when she drew near him, and there remained but two paces between them, he recited these two couplets:—

She spread three tresses of unplaited hair ✿ One night, and showed me nights not one but four;

And faced the moon of Heaven with her brow, ✿ And showed me two-fold moons in single hour.

And as she was hard by him he said to her, "Keep away from me, lest thou infect me." Whereupon she uncovered her wrist[60] to him, and he saw that it was cleft, as it were in two halves, by its veins and sinews and its whiteness was as the whiteness of virgin silver. Then said she, "Keep away from me, thou! for thou art stricken with leprosy, and may be thou wilt infect me." He asked, "Who told thee I was a leper?" and she answered, "The old woman so told me." Quoth he, "'Twas she told me also that thou wast afflicted with white scurvy;" and so saying, he bared his forearms and showed her that his skin was also like virgin silver. Thereupon she pressed him to her bosom and he pressed her to his bosom and the twain embraced with closest embrace, then she took him and, lying down on her back, let down her petticoat-trousers, and in an instant that which his father had left him rose up in rebellion against him and he said, "Go it, O Shaykh Zachary[61] of shaggery, O father of veins!"; and putting both hands to her flanks, he set the sugar-stick[62] to the mouth of the cleft and thrust on till he came to the wicket called "Pecten." His passage was by the Gate of Victories[63] and therefrom he entered 52 the Monday market, and those of Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday,[64] and, finding the carpet after the measure of the daïs-floor,[65] he plied the box within its cover till he came to the end of it. And when morning dawned he cried to her, "Alas for delight which is not fulfilled! The raven[66] taketh it and flieth away!" She asked, "What meaneth this saying?"; and he answered, "O my lady, I have but this hour to abide with thee." Quoth she, "Who saith so?" and quoth he,

"Thy father made me give him a written bond to pay ten thousand dinars to thy wedding-settlement; and, except I pay it this very day, they will imprison me for debt in the Kazi's house; and now my hand lacketh one half-dirham of the sum." She asked, "O my lord, is the marriage-bond in thy hand or in theirs?"; and he answered, "O my lady, in mine, but I have nothing." She rejoined, "The matter is easy; fear thou nothing. Take these hundred dinars: an I had more, I would give thee what thou lackest; but of a truth my father, of his love for my cousin, hath transported all his goods, even to my jewellery, from my lodging to his. But when they send thee a serjeant of the Ecclesiastical Court,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young lady rejoined to Ala al-Din, "And when they send thee at an early hour a serjeant of the Ecclesiastical Court, and the Kazi and my father bid thee divorce me, do thou reply, By what law is it lawful 53 and right that I should marry at nightfall and divorce in the morning? Then kiss the Kazi's hand and give him a present, and in like manner kiss the Assessors' hands and give each of them ten gold pieces. So they will all speak with thee, and if they ask thee, Why dost thou not divorce her and take the thousand dinars and the mule and suit of clothes, according to contract duly contracted? do thou answer, Every hair of her head is worth a thousand ducats to me and I will never put her away, neither will I take a suit of clothes nor aught else. And if the Kazi say to thee, Then pay down the marriage settlement, do thou reply, I am short of cash at this present; whereupon he and the Assessors will deal in friendly fashion with thee and allow thee time to pay." Now whilst they were talking, behold, the Kazi's officer knocked at the door; so Ala al-Din went down and the man said to him, "Come, speak the Efendi,[67] for thy father-in-law summoneth thee." So Ala al-Din gave him five dinars and said to him, "O Summoner, by what law am I bound to marry at nightfall and divorce next morning?" The serjeant answered, "By no law of ours at all, at all; and if thou be ignorant of the religious law, I will act as thine advocate." Then they went to the divorce-court and the Kazi said to Ala al-Din, "Why dost thou not put away the woman and take what falleth to thee by the contract?" Hearing this he went up to the Kazi; and, kissing his hand, put fifty dinars in it and said, "O our lord the Kazi, by what law is it lawful and right that I should marry at nightfall and divorce in the morning in my own despite?" The Kazi answered, "Divorce on compulsion and by force is sanctioned by no school of the Moslems." Then said the young lady's father, "If thou wilt not divorce, pay me the ten thousand dinars, her marriage-settlement." Quoth Ala al-Din, "Give me a delay of three days;" but the Kazi said, "Three days is not time enough; he shall give thee ten." So they agreed to this and bound him after ten days either to pay the dowry or to divorce her. And after consenting he left them and taking meat and rice and clarified butter[68] and what else of food he needed,

returned to the house and told the young woman all that had passed; whereupon she said, "'Twixt night and day, wonders may display; and Allah bless him for his say:—

54 Be mild when rage shall come to afflict thy soul; ✿ Be patient when calamity breeds ire;

Lookye, the Nights are big with child by Time, ✿ Whose pregnancy bears wondrous things and dire."

Then she rose and made ready food and brought the tray, and they two ate and drank and were merry and mirthful. Presently, Ala al-Din besought her to let him hear a little music; so she took the lute and played a melody that had made the hardest stone dance for glee, and the strings cried out in present ecstacy, "O Loving One!";[69] after which she passed from the adagio into the presto and a livelier measure. As they thus spent their leisure in joy and jollity and mirth and merriment, behold, there came a knocking at the door and she said to him; "Go see who is at the door." So he went down and opened it and finding four Dervishes standing without, said to them, "What want ye?" They replied, "O my lord, we are foreign and wandering religious mendicants, the viands of whose souls are music and dainty verse, and we would fain take our pleasure with thee this night till morning doth appear, when we will wend our way, and with Almighty Allah be thy reward; for we adore music and there is not one of us but knoweth by heart store of odes and songs and ritornellos."[70] He answered, "There is one I must consult;" and he returned and told Zubaydah who said, "Open the door to them." So he brought them up and made them sit down and welcomed them; then he fetched them food, but they would not eat and said, "O our lord, our meat is to repeat Allah's name in our hearts and to hear music with our ears: and bless him who saith:—

Our aim is only converse to enjoy, ✿ And eating joyeth only cattle-kind.[71]

And just now we heard pleasant music in thy house, but when we entered, it ceased; and fain would we know whether the player was a slave-girl, white or black, or a maiden of good family." He answered, "It was this my wife," and told them all that had befallen him, adding, "Verily my father-in-law hath 55 bound me to pay a marriage settlement of ten thousand dinars for her, and they have given me ten days' time." Said one of the Dervishes, "Have no care and think of naught but good; for I am Shaykh of the Convent and have forty Dervishes under my orders. I will presently collect from them the ten thousand dinars and thou shalt pay thy father-in-law the wedding settlement. But now bid thy wife make us music that we may be gladdened and pleasured; for to some folk music is meat, to others medicine and to others refreshing as a fan." Now these four Dervishes were none other than the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, his Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide, Abu al-Nowás al-Hasan son of Háni[72] and Masrur the sworder; and the reason of their coming to the house was that the Caliph, being heavy at heart, had summoned his Minister and said, "O Wazir! it is our will to go down to the city and pace its streets, for my breast is sore straitened." So they all four donned dervish-dress and went down and walked about, till they came to that house where, hearing music, they were minded to know the cause. They spent the

night in joyance and harmony and telling tale after tale until morning dawned, when the Caliph laid an hundred gold pieces under the prayer-carpet and all taking leave of Ala al-Din, went their way. Now when Zubaydah lifted the carpet she found beneath it the hundred dinars and she said to her husband, "Take these hundred dinars which I have found under the prayer-carpet; assuredly the Dervishes when about to leave us laid them there, without our knowledge." So Ala al-Din took the money and, repairing to the market, bought therewith meat and rice and clarified butter and all they required. And when it was night, he lit the wax-candles and said to his wife, "The mendicants, it is true, have not brought the ten thousand dinars which they promised me; but indeed they are poor men." As they were talking, behold, the Dervishes knocked at the door [56] and she said, "Go down and open to them." So he did her bidding and bringing them up, said to them, "Have you brought me the ten thousand dinars you promised me?" They answered, "We have not been able to collect aught thereof as yet; but fear nothing: Inshallah, to-morrow we will compound for thee some alchemical cookery. But now bid thy wife play us her very best pieces and gladden our hearts for we love music." So she took her lute and made them such melody that had caused the hardest rocks to dance with glee; and they passed the night in mirth and merriment, converse and good cheer, till morn appeared with its sheen and shone, when the Caliph laid an hundred gold pieces under the prayer-carpet and all, after taking leave of Ala al-Din, went their way. And they ceased not to visit him thus every night for nine nights; and each morning the Caliph put an hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet, till the tenth night, when they came not. Now the reason of their failure to come was that the Caliph had sent to a great merchant, saying to him, "Bring me fifty loads of stuffs, such as come from Cairo,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Prince of True Believers said to that merchant, "Bring me fifty loads of stuffs such as come from Cairo, and let each one be worth a thousand dinars, and write on each bale its price; and bring me also a male Abyssinian slave." The merchant did the bidding of the Caliph who committed to the slave a basin and ewer of gold and other presents, together with the fifty loads; and wrote a letter to Ala al-Din as from his father Shams al-Din and said to him, "Take these bales and what else is with them, and go to such and such a quarter wherein dwelleth the Provost of the merchants and say:—Where be Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat? till folk direct thee to his quarter and his house." So the slave took the letter and the goods and what else and fared forth on his errand. Such was his case; but as regards Zubaydah's cousin and first husband, he went to her father and said to him, "Come let us go to Ala al-Din and make him divorce the daughter of my uncle." So they set out both together and, when they came to the street [57] in which the house stood, they found fifty he-mules laden with bales of stuffs, and a blackamoor

riding on a she-mule. So they said to him, "Whose loads are these?" He replied, "They belong to my lord Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat; for his father equipped him with merchandise and sent him on a journey to Baghdad-city; but the wild Arabs came forth against him and took his money and goods and all he had. So when the ill news reached his father, he despatched me to him with these loads, in lieu of those he had lost; besides a mule laden with fifty thousand dinars, a parcel of clothes worth a power of money, a robe of sables[73] and a basin and ewer of gold." Whereupon the lady's father said, "He whom thou seekest is my son-in-law and I will show thee his house." Meanwhile Ala al-Din was sitting at home in huge concern, when lo! one knocked, at the door and he said, "O Zubaydah, Allah is all-knowing! but I fear thy father hath sent me an officer from the Kazi or the Chief of Police." Quoth she, "Go down and see what it is." So he went down; and, opening the door, found his father-in-law, the Provost of the merchants with an Abyssinian slave, dusky-complexioned and pleasant of favour, riding on a mule. When the slave saw him he dismounted and kissed his hands; and Ala al-Din said, "What dost thou want?" He replied, "I am the slave of my lord Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, son of Shams al-Din, Consul of the merchants for the land of Egypt, who hath sent me to him with this charge." Then he gave him the letter and Ala al-Din opening it found written what followeth:[74]—

Ho thou my letter! when my friend shall see thee, ✿ Kiss thou the ground and buss his sandal-shoon:

Look thou hie softly and thou hasten not; ✿ My life and rest are in those hands so boon.

"After hearty salutions and congratulations and high estimation from Shams al-Din to his son, Abu al-Shamat. Know, O my son, that news hath reached me of the slaughter of thy men and the plunder of thy monies and goods; so I send thee herewith fifty loads of Egyptian stuffs, together with a suit of clothes and a robe 58 of sables and a basin and ewer of gold. Fear thou no evil and the goods thou hast lost were the ransom of thy life; so regret them not and may no further grief befal thee. Thy mother and the people of the house are doing well in health and happiness and all greet thee with abundant greetings. Moreover, O my son, it hath reached me that they have married thee, by way of intermediary, to the lady Zubaydah the Lutist and they have imposed on thee a marriage-settlement of ten thousand dinars; wherefore I send thee also fifty thousand dinars by the slave Salím."[75] Now when Ala al-Din had made an end of reading the letter, he took possession of the loads and, turning to the Provost, said to him, "O my father-in-law, take the ten thousand dinars, the marriage-settlement of thy daughter Zubaydah, and take also the loads of goods and dispose of them, and thine be the profit; only return me the cost-price." He answered, "Nay, by Allah, I will take nothing; and, as for thy wife's settlement, do thou settle the matter with her." Then, after the goods had been brought in, they went to Zubaydah and she said to her sire, "O my father, whose loads be these?" He said, "These belong to thy husband, Ala al-Din: his father hath sent them to him instead of those whereof the wild Arabs spoiled him. Moreover, he hath sent him fifty thousand dinars with a

parcel of clothes, a robe of sables, a she-mule for riding and a basin and ewer of gold. As for the marriage-settlement that is for thy recking." Thereupon Ala al-Din rose and, opening the money-box, gave her her settlement and the lady's cousin said, "O my uncle, let him divorce to me my wife;" but the old man replied, "This may never be now; for the marriage-tie is in his hand." Thereupon the young man went out, sore afflicted and sadly vexed and, returning home, fell sick, for his heart had received its death-blow; so he presently died. But as for Ala al-Din, after receiving his goods he went to the bazar and buying what meats and drinks he needed, made a banquet as usual against the night, saying to Zubaydah, "See these lying Dervishes; they promised us and broke their promises." Quoth she, "Thou art the son of a Consul of the merchants, yet was thy hand short of half a dirham; how then should it be with poor Dervishes?" Quoth he, "Almighty Allah hath enabled us to do without them; but if they come to us never again will I open the door to them." She asked, "Why so, whenas their coming footsteps brought us good 59luck; and, moreover, they put an hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet for us every night? Perforce must thou open the door to them an they come." So when day departed with its light and in gloom came night, they lighted the wax candles and he said to her, "Rise, Zubaydah, make us music;" and behold, at this moment some one knocked at the door, and she said, "Go and look who is at the door." So he went down and opened it and seeing the Dervishes, said, "Oh, fair welcome to the liars! Come up." Accordingly they went up with him and he seated them and brought them the tray of food; and they ate and drank and became merry and mirthful, and presently said to him, "O my lord, our hearts have been troubled for thee: what hath passed between thee and thy father-in-law?" He answered, "Allah compensated us beyond and above our desire." Rejoined they, "By Allah, we were in fear for thee"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Dervishes thus addressed Ala al-Din, "By Allah, we were in fear for thee and naught kept us from thee but our lack of cash and coin." Quoth he, "Speedy relief hath come to me from my Lord; for my father hath sent me fifty thousand dinars and fifty loads of stuffs, each load worth a thousand dinars; besides a riding-mule, a robe of sables, an Abyssinian slave and a basin and ewer of gold. Moreover, I have made my peace with my father-in-law and my wife hath become my lawful wife by my paying her settlement; so laud to Allah for that!" Presently the Caliph rose to do a necessity; whereupon Ja'afar bent him towards Ala al-Din and said, "Look to thy manners, for thou art in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful." Asked he, "How have I failed in good breeding before the Commander of the Faithful, and which of you is he?" Quoth Ja'afar, "He who went out but now to make water is the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, and I am the Wazir Ja'afar; and this is Masrur the executioner and this other is Abu

Nowas Hasan bin Hani. And now, O Ala al-Din, use thy reason and bethink thee how many days' journey it is between Cairo and Baghdad." He replied, "Five-and-forty days' journey;" and Ja'afar rejoined, "Thy baggage was stolen only ten 60 days ago; so how could the news have reached thy father, and how could he pack thee up other goods and send them to thee five-and-forty days' journey in ten days' time?" Quoth Ala al-Din, "O my lord and whence then came they?" "From the Commander of the Faithful," replied Ja'afar, "of his great affection for thee." As they were speaking, lo! the Caliph entered and Ala al-Din rising, kissed the ground before him and said, "Allah keep thee, O Prince of the Faithful, and give thee long life; and may the lieges never lack thy bounty and beneficence!" Replied the Caliph, "O Ala al-Din, let Zubaydah play us an air, by way of house-warming[76] for thy deliverance." Thereupon she played him on the lute so rare a melody that the very stones shook for glee, and the strings cried out for present ecstasy, "O Loving One!" They spent the night after the merriest fashion, and in the morning the Caliph said to Ala al-Din, "Come to the Divan to-morrow." He answered, "Hearkening and obedience, O Commander of the Faithful; so Allah will and thou be well and in good case!" On the morrow he took ten trays and, putting on each a costly present, went up with them to the palace; and the Caliph was sitting on the throne when, behold, Ala al-Din appeared at the door of the Divan, repeating these two couplets:—

Honour and Glory wait on thee each morn! ✿ Thine enviers' noses in the dust be set!

Ne'er cease thy days to be as white as snow; ✿ Thy foeman's days to be as black as jet!

"Welcome, O Ala al-Din!" said the Caliph, and he replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, the Prophet (whom Allah bless and assain!)[77] was wont to accept presents; and these ten trays, with what is on them, are my offering to thee." The Caliph accepted his gift and, ordering him a robe of honour, made him Provost of the merchants and gave him a seat in the Divan. And as he was sitting behold, his father-in-law came in and, seeing 61 Ala al-Din seated in his place and clad in a robe of honour, said to the Caliph, "O King of the age, why is this man sitting in my place and wearing this robe of honour?" Quoth the Caliph, "I have made him Provost of the merchants, for offices are by investiture and not in perpetuity, and thou art deposed." Answered the merchant, "Thou hast done well, O Commander of the Faithful, for he is ours and one of us. Allah make the best of us the managers of our affairs! How many a little one hath become great!" Then the Caliph wrote Ala al-Din a Firman[78] of investiture and gave it to the Governor who gave it to the crier,[79] and the crier made proclamation in the Divan saying, "None is Provost of the merchants but Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, and his word is to be heard, and he must be obeyed with due respect paid, and he meriteth homage and honour and high degree!" Moreover, when the Divan broke up, the Governor went down with the crier before Ala al-Din and the crier repeated the proclamation and they carried Ala al-Din through the thoroughfares of Baghdad, making proclamation of his dignity. Next day, Ala al-Din opened a shop

for his slave Salim and set him therein, to buy and sell, whilst he himself rode to the palace and took his place in the Caliph's Divan.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala al-Din rode to the palace and took his place in the Caliph's Divan. Now it came to pass one day, when he sat in his stead as was his wont, behold, one said to the Caliph, "O Commander of the Faithful, may thy head survive such an one the cup-companion!; for he is gone to the mercy of Almighty Allah, but be thy life prolonged!"[80] Quoth the Caliph, "Where is Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat?" So he went up to the Commander of the Faithful, who at once clad him in a splendid dress of honour and made him his boon-companion; appointing him a monthly pay and allowance of a thousand dinars. He continued to keep him company till, one day, as he 62 sat in the Divan, according to his custom attending upon the Caliph, lo and behold! an Emir came up with sword and shield in hand and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, may thy head long outlive the Head of the Sixty, for he is dead this day;" whereupon the Caliph ordered Ala al-Din a dress of honour and made him Chief of the Sixty, in place of the other who had neither wife nor son nor daughter. So Ala al-Din laid hands on his estate and the Caliph said to him, "Bury him in the earth and take all he hath left of wealth and slaves and handmaids."[81] Then he shook the handkerchief[82] and dismissed the Divan, whereupon Ala al-Din went forth, attended by Ahmad al-Danaf, captain of the right, and Hasan Shúmán, captain of the left, riding at his either stirrup, each with his forty men.[83] Presently, he turned to Hasan Shuman and his men and said to them, "Plead ye for me with the Captain Ahmad al-Danaf that he please to accept me as his son by covenant before Allah." And Ahmad assented, saying, "I and my forty men will go before thee to the Divan every morning." Now after this Ala al-Din continued in the Caliph's service many days; till one day it chanced that he left the Divan and returning home, dismissed Ahmad al-Danaf and his men and sat down with his wife Zubaydah, the lute-player, who lighted the wax candles and went out of the room upon an occasion. Suddenly he heard a loud shriek; so he rose up and running in haste to see what was the matter, found that it was his wife who had cried out. She was lying at full length on the ground and, when he put his hand to her breast, he found her dead. Now her father's house faced that of Ala al-Din, and he, hearing the shriek, came in and said, "What is the matter, O my lord Ala al-Din?" He replied, "O my father, may thy head outlive thy daughter Zubaydah! But, O my father, honour to the dead is burying them." So when the morning dawned, they buried her in the earth and her husband and father condoled with and mutually consoled each other. Thus far concerning her; but as regards Ala al-Din, he donned mourning dress and declined the Divan, abiding tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted at home. After a while, the Caliph said to Ja'afar, "O Wazir, what is the cause of 63 Ala al-Din's absence from the Divan?"

The Minister answered, “O Commander of the Faithful, he is in mourning for his wife Zubaydah; and is occupied in receiving those who come to console him;” and the Caliph said, “It behoveth us to pay him a visit of condolence.” “I hear and I obey,” replied Ja’afar. So they took horse, the Caliph and the Minister and a few attendants, and rode to Ala al-Din’s house and, as he was sitting at home, behold, the party came in upon him; whereupon he rose to receive them and kissed the ground before the Caliph, who said to him, “Allah make good thy loss to thee!” Answered Ala al-Din, “May Allah preserve thee to us, O Commander of the Faithful!” Then said the Caliph, “O Ala al-Din, why hast thou absented thyself from the Divan?” And he replied, “Because of my mourning for my wife, Zubaydah, O Commander of the Faithful.” The Caliph rejoined, “Put away grief from thee: verily she is dead and gone to the mercy of Almighty Allah and mourning will avail thee nothing; no, nothing.” But Ala al-Din said “O Commander of the Faithful, I shall never leave mourning for her till I die and they bury me by her side.” Quoth the Caliph, “In Allah is compensation for every decease, and neither device nor riches can deliver from death; and divinely gifted was he who said:—

All sons of woman, albe long preserved, ✿ Are borne upon the bulging bier some day.[84]

How then shall ‘joy man joy or taste delight, ✿ Upon whose cheeks shall rest the dust and clay?”

When the Caliph had made an end of condoling with him, he charged him not to absent himself from the Divan and returned to his palace. And Ala al-Din, after a last sorrowful night, mounted early in the morning and, riding to the court, kissed the ground before the Commander of the Faithful who made a movement 64as if rising from the throne,[85] to greet and welcome him; and bade him take his appointed place in the Divan, saying, “O Ala al-Din, thou art my guest to-night.” So presently he carried him into his serraglio and calling a slave-girl named Kút al-Kulúb, said to her, “Ala al-Din had a wife called Zubaydah, who used to sing to him and solace him of cark and care; but she is gone to the mercy of Almighty Allah, and now I would have thee play him an air upon the lute,”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph said to the damsel Kut al-Kulub, “I would have thee play him upon the lute an air, of fashion sweet and rare, that he may be solaced of his cark and care.” So she rose and made sweet music; and the Caliph said to Ala al-Din, “What sayst thou of this damsel’s voice?” He replied, “Verily, O Commander of the Faithful, Zubaydah’s voice was the finer; but she is skilled in touching the lute cunningly and her playing would make a rock dance with glee.” The Caliph asked, “Doth she please thee?” and he answered, “She doth, O Commander of the Faithful;” whereupon the King said, “By the life of my head and the tombs of my forefathers, she is a gift from me to thee, she and her waiting-women!” Ala al-Din fancied that the Caliph was jesting with him; but, on the morrow,

the King went in to Kut al-Kulub and said to her, “I have given thee to Ala al-Din;” whereat she rejoiced, for she had seen and loved him. Then the Caliph returned from his serraglio-palace to the Divan; and, calling porters, said to them, “Set all the goods of Kut al-Kulub and her waiting-women in a litter, and carry them to Ala al-Din’s home.” So they conducted her to the house and showed her into the pavilion, whilst the Caliph sat in the hall of audience till the close of day, when the Divan broke up and he retired to his harem. Such was his case; but as regards Kut al-Kulub, when she had taken up her lodging in Ala al-Din’s mansion, she and her women, forty in all, besides the eunuchry, she called two of these caponised slaves and said to them, “Sit ye on stools, one on 65 the right and another on the left hand of the door; and, when Ala al-Din cometh home, both of you kiss his hands and say to him, “Our mistress Kut al-Kulub requesteth thy presence in the pavilion, for the Caliph hath given her to thee, her and her women.”” They answered, “We hear and obey;” and did as she bade them. So, when Ala al-Din returned, he found two of the Caliph’s eunuchs sitting at the door and was amazed at the matter and said to himself, “Surely, this is not my own house; or else what can have happened?” Now when the eunuchs saw him, they rose to him and, kissing his hands, said to him, “We are of the Caliph’s household and slaves to Kut al-Kulub, who saluteth thee giving thee to know that the Caliph hath bestowed her on thee, her and her women, and requesteth thy presence.” Quoth Ala al-Din, “Say ye to her:—Thou art welcome; but so long as thou shalt abide with me, I will not enter the pavilion wherein thou art, for what was the master’s should not become the man’s; and furthermore ask her:—What was the sum of thy day’s expenditure in the Caliph’s palace?” So they went in and did his errand to her, and she answered, “An hundred dinars a day;” whereupon quoth he to himself, “There was no need for the Caliph to give me Kut al-Kulub, that I should be put to such expense for her; but there is no help for it.” So she abode with him awhile and he assigned her daily an hundred dinars for her maintenance; till, one day, he absented himself from the Divan and the Caliph said to Ja’afar, “O Wazir, I gave not Kut al-Kulub unto Ala al-Din but that she might console him for his wife; why, then, doth he still hold aloof from us?” Answered Ja’afar, “O Commander of the Faithful, he spake sooth who said:—Whoso findeth his fere, forgetteth his friends.” Rejoined the Caliph, “Haply he hath not absented himself without excuse, but we will pay him a visit.” Now some days before this, Ala al-Din had said to Ja’afar, “I complained to the Caliph of my grief and mourning for the loss of my wife Zubaydah and he gave me Kut al-Kulub;” and the Minister replied, “Except he loved thee, he had not given her to thee. Say hast thou gone in unto her, O Ala al-Din?” He rejoined, “No, by Allah! I know not her length from her breadth.” He asked “And why?” and he answered, “O Wazir, what befitteth the lord befitteth not the liege.” Then the Caliph and Ja’afar disguised themselves and went privily to visit Ala al-Din; but he knew them and rising to them kissed the hands of the Caliph, who looked at him and saw signs of sorrow in 66 his

face. So he said to him, “O Ala al-Din, whence cometh this sorrow wherein I see thee? Hast thou not gone in unto Kut al-Kulub?” He replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, what befitteth the lord befitteth not the thrall. No, as yet I have not gone in to visit her nor do I know her length from her breadth; so pray quit me of her.” Quoth the Caliph, “I would fain see her and question her of her case;” and quoth Ala al-Din, “I hear and I obey, O Commander of the Faithful.” So the Caliph went in——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

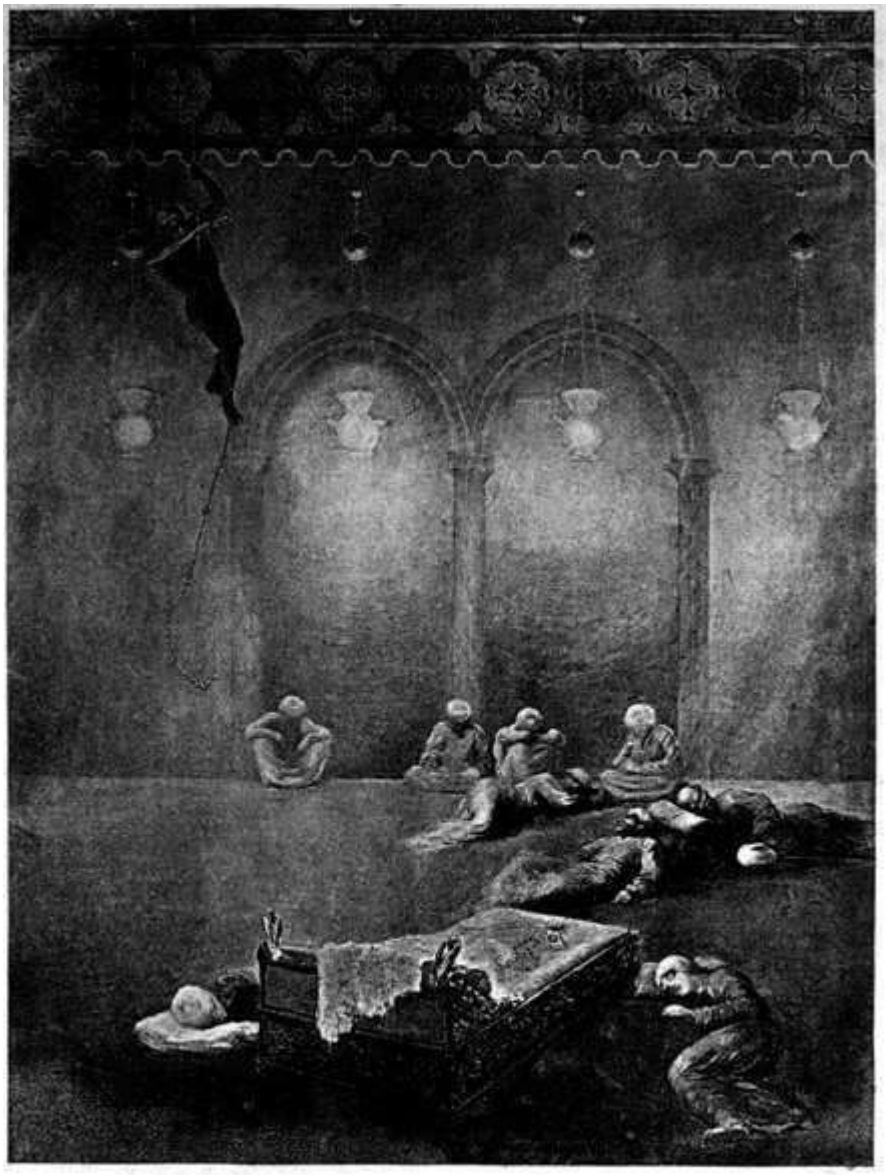
Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph went in to Kut al-Kulub, who rose to him on sighting him and kissed the ground between his hands; when he said to her, “Hath Ala al-Din gone in unto thee?” and she answered, “No, O Commander of the Faithful, I sent to bid him come, but he would not.” So the Caliph bade carry her back to the Harim and saying to Ala al-Din, “Do not absent thyself from us,” returned to his palace. Accordingly, next morning, Ala al-Din mounted and rode to the Divan, where he took his seat as Chief of the Sixty. Presently the Caliph ordered his treasurer to give the Wazir Ja’afar ten thousand dinars and said when his order was obeyed, “I charge thee to go down to the bazar where handmaidens are sold and buy Ala al-Din a slave-girl with this sum.” So in obedience to the King Ja’afar took Ala al-Din and went down with him to the bazar. Now as chance would have it, that very day, the Emir Khálid, whom the Caliph had made Governor of Baghdad, went down to the market to buy a slave-girl for his son and the cause of his going was that his wife, Khátún by name, had borne him a son called Habzalam Bazázah,[86] and the same was foul of favour and had reached the age of twenty, without learning to mount horse; albeit his father was brave and bold, a doughty 67 rider ready to plunge into the Sea of Darkness.[87] And it happened that on a certain night he had a dream which caused nocturnal pollution, whereof he told his mother who rejoiced and said to his father, “I want to find him a wife, as he is now ripe for wedlock.” Quoth Khalid, “The fellow is so foul of favour and withal so rank of odour, so sordid and beastly that no woman would take him at a gift.” And she answered, “We will buy him a slave-girl.” So it befel, for the accomplishing of what Allah Almighty had decreed, that on the same day Ja’afar and Ala al-Din, the Governor Khalid and his son went down to the market and behold, they saw in the hands of a broker, a beautiful girl lovely-faced and of perfect shape, and the Wazir said to him, “O broker, ask her owner if he will take a thousand dinars for her.” And as the broker passed by the Governor with the slave, Habzalam Bazazah cast at her one glance of the eyes which entailed for himself one thousand sighs; and he fell in love with her and passion got hold of him and he said, “O my father, buy me yonder slave-girl.” So the Emir called the broker, who brought the girl to him, and asked her her name. She replied, “My name is Jessamine;” and he said to Habzalam Bazazah, “O my son, an she please thee, do thou bid higher for her.” Then he asked the broker, “What hath been bidden for

her?" and he replied, "A thousand dinars." Said the Governor's son, "She is mine for a thousand pieces of gold and one more;" and the broker passed on to Ala al-Din who bid two thousand dinars for her; and as often as the Emir's son bid another dinar, Ala al-Din bid a thousand. The ugly youth was vexed at this and said, "O broker! who is it that outbiddeth me for the slave-girl?" Answered the broker, "It is the Wazir Ja'afar who is minded to buy her for Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat." And Ala al-Din continued till he brought her price up to ten thousand dinars, and her owner was satisfied to sell her for that sum. Then he took the girl and said to her, "I give thee thy freedom for the love of Almighty Allah;" and forthwith wrote his contract of marriage with her and carried her to his house. Now when the broker returned, after having received his brokerage, the Emir's son summoned him and said to him, "Where is the girl?" Quoth he, "She was bought for ten thousand dinars by Ala al-Din, who hath set her free and married her." At this the young man was 68 greatly vexed and cast down and, sighing many a sigh, returned home, sick for love of the damsel; and he threw himself on his bed and refused food, for love and longing were sore upon him. Now when his mother saw him in this plight, she said to him, "Heaven assain thee, O my son! What aileth thee?" And he answered, "Buy me Jessamine, O my mother." Quoth she, "When the flower-seller passeth I will buy thee a basketful of jessamine." Quoth he, "It is not the jessamine one smells, but a slave-girl 'named Jessamine, whom my father would not buy for me." So she said to her husband, "Why and wherefore didst thou not buy him the girl?" and he replied, "What is fit for the lord is not fit for the liege and I have no power to take her: no less a man bought her than Ala al-Din, Chief of the Sixty." Then the youth's weakness redoubled upon him, till he gave up sleeping and eating, and his mother bound her head with the fillets of mourning. And while in her sadness she sat at home, lamenting over her son, behold, came in to her an old woman, known as the mother of Ahmad Kamákim[88] the arch-thief, a knave who would bore through a middle wall and scale the tallest of the tall and steal the very kohl off the eye-ball.[89] From his earliest years he had been given to these malpractices, till they made him Captain of the Watch, when he stole a sum of money; and the Chief of Police, coming upon him in the act, carried him to the Caliph, who bade put him to death on the common execution-ground.[90] But he implored protection of the Wazir whose intercession the Caliph never rejected; so he pleaded for him with the Commander of the Faithful who said, "How canst thou intercede for this pest of the human race?" Ja'afar answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, do thou imprison him; whoso built the first jail was a sage, seeing that a jail is the grave of the living and a joy for the foe." So the Caliph bade lay him in bilboes and write thereon, "Appointed to remain here until death and not to be loosed but on the corpse-washer's bench;" and they cast him fettered into limbo. Now his mother was a frequent visitor to the house of the Emir Khalid, who was Governor and Chief of Police; and she used to go in to her son in jail and say to him, "Did I not warn thee to turn from 69 thy wicked ways?"[91] And

he would always answer her, “Allah decreed this to me; but, O my mother, when thou visitest the Emir’s wife make her intercede for me with her husband.” So when the old woman came into the Lady Khatun, she found her bound with the fillets of mourning and said to her, “Wherefore dost thou mourn?” She replied, “For my son Habzalam Bazazah;” and the old woman exclaimed, “Heaven assain thy son!; what hath befallen him?” So the mother told her the whole story, and she said, “What wouldst thou say of him who should achieve such a feat as would save thy son?” Asked the lady, “And what feat wilt thou do?” Quoth the old woman, “I have a son called Ahmad Kamakim, the arch-thief, who lieth chained in jail and on his bilboes is written:—Appointed to remain till death; so do thou don thy richest clothes and trick thee out with thy finest jewels and present thyself to thy husband with an open face and smiling mien; and when he seeketh of thee what men seek of women, put him off and baulk him of his will and say:—By Allah, ‘tis a strange thing! When a man desireth aught of his wife he dunneth her till she doeth it; but if a wife desire aught of her husband, he will not grant it to her. Then he will say:—What dost thou want?; and do thou answer:—First swear to grant my request. If he swear to thee by his head or by Allah, say to him:—Swear to me the oath of divorce, and do not yield to him, except he do this. And whenas he hath sworn to thee the oath of divorce, say to him:—Thou keepest in prison a man called Ahmad Kamakim, and he hath a poor old mother, who hath set upon me and who urgeth me in the matter and who saith, Let thy husband intercede for him with the Caliph, that my son may repent and thou gain heavenly guerdon.” And the Lady Khatun replied, “I hear and obey.” So when her husband came into her——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-third Night,



She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Governor came in to his wife, who spoke to him as she had been 70 taught and made him swear the divorce-oath before she would yield to his wishes. He lay with her that night and, when morning dawned, after he had made the Ghusl-ablution and prayed the dawn-prayer, he repaired to the prison and said, "O Ahmad Kamakim, O thou arch-thief, dost thou repent of thy works?"; whereto he replied, "I do indeed repent and turn to Allah and say with heart and tongue:—I ask pardon of Allah." So the Governor took him out of

jail and carried him to the Court (he being still in bilboes) and, approaching the Caliph kissed ground before him. Quoth the King, "O Emir Khalid, what seekest thou?"; whereupon he brought forward Ahmad Kamakim, shuffling and tripping in his fetters, and the Caliph said to him, "What! art thou yet alive, O Kamakim?" He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, the miserable are long-lived." Quoth the Caliph to the Emir, "Why hast thou brought him hither?"; and quoth he, "O Commander of the Faithful, he hath a poor old mother cut off from the world who hath none but this son and she hath had recourse to thy slave, imploring him to intercede with thee to strike off his chains, for he repenteth of his evil courses; and to make him Captain of the Watch as before." The Caliph asked Ahmad Kamakim, "Dost thou repent of thy sins?" "I do indeed repent me to Allah, O Commander of the Faithful," answered he; whereupon the Caliph called for the blacksmith and made him strike off his irons on the corpse-washer's bench.[92] Moreover, he restored him to his former office and charged him to walk in the ways of godliness and righteousness. So he kissed the Caliph's hands and, being invested with the uniform of Captain of the Watch, he went forth, whilst they made proclamation of his appointment. Now for a long time he abode in the exercise of his office, till one day his mother went in to the Governor's wife, who said to her, "Praised be Allah who hath delivered thy son from prison and restored him to health and safety! But why dost thou not bid him contrive some trick to get the girl Jessamine for son Habzalam Bazazah?" "That will I," answered she and, going out from her, repaired to her son. She found him drunk with wine and said to him, "O my son, no one caused thy release from jail but the wife of the Governor, and she would have thee find some means to slay Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat and get his slave-girl Jessamine for her son Habzalam Bazazah." He answered, 71"That will be the easiest of things; and I must needs set about it this very night." Now this was the first night of the new month, and it was the custom of the Caliph to spend that night with the Lady Zubaydah, for the setting free of a slave-girl or a Mameluke or something of the sort. Moreover, on such occasions he used to doff his royal habit, together with his rosary and dagger-sword and royal signet, and set them all upon a chair in the sitting-saloon: and he had also a golden lanthorn, adorned with three jewels strung on a wire of gold, by which he set great store; and he would commit all these things to the charge of the eunuchry, whilst he went into the Lady Zubaydah's apartment. So arch-thief Ahmad Kamakim waited till midnight, when Canopus shone bright, and all creatures to sleep were dight whilst the Creator veiled them with the veil of night. Then he took his drawn sword in his right and his grappling-hook in his left and, repairing to the Caliph's sitting-saloon planted his scaling ladder and cast his grapnel on to the side of the terrace-roof; then, raising the trap-door, let himself down into the saloon, where he found the eunuchs asleep. He drugged them with hemp-fumes;[93] and, taking the Caliph's dress, dagger, rosary, kerchief, signet-ring and the lanthorn whereupon were the pearls, returned whence he came and betook himself to the house of Ala al-Din, who had that night celebrated his

wedding festivities with Jessamine and had gone in unto her and gotten her with child. So arch-thief Ahmad Kamakim climbed over into his saloon and, raising one of the marble slabs from the sunken part of the floor,[94] dug a hole under it and laid the stolen things therein, all save the lanthorn, which he kept for himself. Then he plastered down the marble slab as it before was, and returning whence he came, went back to his own house, saying, "I will now tackle my drink and set this lanthorn before me and quaff the cup to its light."[95] Now as soon as it was dawn of day, the Caliph went out into the sitting-chamber; and, seeing the eunuchs drugged with hemp, aroused them. Then he put his hand to the chair and found neither dress nor signet nor rosary nor dagger-sword nor 72 kerchief nor lanthorn; whereat he was exceeding wroth and donning the dress of anger, which was a scarlet suit,[96] sat down in the Divan. So the Wazir Ja'afar came forward and kissing the ground before him, said, "Allah avert all evil from the Commander of the Faithful!" Answered the Caliph, "O Wazir, the evil is passing great!" Ja'afar asked, "What has happened?" so he told him what had occurred; and, behold, the Chief of Police appeared with Ahmad Kamakim the robber at his stirrup, when he found the Commander of the Faithful sore enraged. As soon as the Caliph saw him, he said to him, "O Emir Khalid, how goes Baghdad?" And he answered, "Safe and secure." Cried he, "Thou liest!" "How so, O Prince of True Believers?" asked the Emir. So he told him the case and added, "I charge thee to bring me back all the stolen things." Replied the Emir, "O Commander of the Faithful, the vinegar worm is of and in the vinegar, and no stranger can get at this place."[97] But the Caliph said, "Except thou bring me these things, I will put thee to death." Quoth he, "Ere thou slay me, slay Ahmad Kamakim, for none should know the robber and the traitor but the Captain of the Watch." Then came forward Ahmad Kamakim and said to the Caliph, "Accept my intercession for the Chief of Police, and I will be responsible to thee for the thief and will track his trail till I find him; but give me two Kazis and two Assessors for he who did this thing feareth thee not, nor doth he fear the Governor nor any other." Answered the Caliph, "Thou shalt have what thou wantest; but let search be made first in my palace and then in those of the Wazir and the Chief of the Sixty." Rejoined Ahmad Kamakim, "Thou sayest well, O Commander of the Faithful; belike the man that did this ill-deed be one who hath been reared in the King's houshold or in that of one of his officers." Cried the Caliph, "As my head liveth, whosoever shall have done 73 the deed I will assuredly put him to death, be it mine own son!" Then Ahmad Kamakim received a written warrant to enter and perforce search the houses;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ahmad Kamakim got what he wanted, and received a written warrant to enter and perforce search the houses; so he fared forth, taking in his hand a rod[98] made of bronze and copper, iron and steel, of

each three equal parts. He first searched the palace of the Caliph, then that of the Wazir Ja'afar; after which he went the round of the houses of the Chamberlains and the Viceroys till he came to that of Ala al-Din. Now when the Chief of the Sixty heard the clamour before his house, he left his wife Jessamine and went down and, opening the door, found the Master of Police without in the midst of a tumultuous crowd. So he said, "What is the matter, O Emir Khalid?" Thereupon the Chief told him the case and Ala al-Din said, "Enter my house and search it." The Governor replied, "Pardon, O my lord; thou art a man in whom trust is reposed and Allah forfend that the trusty turn traitor!" Quoth Ala al-Din, "There is no help for it but that my house be searched." So the Chief of Police entered, attended by the Kazi and his Assessors; whereupon Ahmad Kamakim went straight to the depressed floor of the saloon and came to the slab, under which he had buried the stolen goods and let the rod fall upon it with such violence that the marble broke in sunder and behold something glittered underneath. Then said he, "Bismillah; in the name of Allah! Mashallah; whatso Allah willeth! By the blessing of our coming a hoard hath been hit upon; wait while we go down into this hiding-place and see what is therein." So the Kazi and Assessors looked into the hole and finding there the stolen goods, drew up a statement[99] of how they had discovered them in Ala al-Din's house, to which they set their seals. Then, they bade seize upon Ala al-Din and took his turband from his 74 head, and officially registered all his monies and effects which were in the mansion. Meanwhile, arch-thief Ahmad Kamakim laid hands on Jessamine, who was with child by Ala al-Din, and committed her to his mother, saying, "Deliver her to Khatun, the Governor's lady:" so the old woman took her and carried her to the wife of the Master of Police. Now as soon as Habzalam Bazazah saw her, health and heart returned to him and he arose without stay or delay and joyed with exceeding joy and would have drawn near her; but she pluckt a dagger from her girdle and said, "Keep off from me, or I will kill thee and kill myself after." Exclaimed his mother, "O strumpet, let my son have his will of thee!" But Jessamine answered "O bitch, by what law is it lawful for a woman to marry two men; and how shall the dog be admitted to the place of the lion?" With this, the ugly youth's love-longing redoubled and he sickened for yearning and unfulfilled desire; and refusing food returned to his pillow. Then said his mother to her, "O harlot, how canst thou make me thus to sorrow for my son? Needs must I punish thee with torture; and as for Ala al-Din, he will assuredly be hanged." "And I will die for love of him," answered Jessamine. Then the Governor's wife arose and stripped her of her jewels and silken raiment and, clothing her in petticoat-trousers of sack-cloth and a shift of hair-cloth, sent her down into the kitchen and made her a scullery-wench, saying, "The reward for thy constancy shall be to break up fire-wood and peel onions and set fire under the cooking-pots." Quoth she, "I am willing to suffer all manner of hardships and servitude, but I will not suffer the sight of thy son." However, Allah inclined the hearts of the slave-girls to her and they used to do her service in the kitchen. Such was the case with Jessamine; but as regards Ala al-Din

they carried him, together with the stolen goods, to the Divan where the Caliph still sat upon his throne. And behold, the King looked upon his effects and said, “Where did ye find them?” They replied, “In the very middle of the house belonging to Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat;” whereat the Caliph was filled with wrath and took the things, but found not the lanthorn among them and said, “O Ala al-Din, where is the lanthorn?” He answered “I stole it not; I know naught of it; I never saw it; I can give no information about it!” Said the Caliph, “O traitor, how cometh it that I brought thee near unto me and thou hast cast me out afar, and I trusted in thee and thou betrayest me?” And he commanded to hang him. So the Chief 75 of Police took him and went down with him into the city, whilst the crier preceded them proclaiming aloud and saying, “This is the reward and the least of the reward he shall receive who doth treason against the Caliphs of True Belief!” And the folk flocked to the place where the gallows stood. Thus far concerning him; but as regards Ahmad al-Danaf, Ala al-Din’s adopted father, he was sitting making merry with his followers in a garden, and carousing and pleasuring when lo! in came one of the water-carriers of the Divan and, kissing the hand of Ahmad al-Danaf, said to him, “O Captain Ahmad, O Danaf! thou sittest at thine ease with water flowing at thy feet,[100] and thou knowest not what hath happened.” Asked Ahmad, “What is it?” and the other answered, “They have gone down to the gallows with thy son Ala al-Din, adopted by a covenant before Allah!” Quoth Ahmad, “What is the remedy here, O Hasan Shuuman, and what sayst thou of this?” He replied, “Assuredly Ala al-Din is innocent and this blame hath come to him from some one enemy.”[101] Quoth Ahmad, “What counsellest thou?” and Hasan said, “We must rescue him, Inshallah!” Then he went to the jail and said to the gaolor, “Give us some one who deserveth death.” So he gave him one that was likest of men to Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat; and they covered his head and carried him to the place of execution between Ahmad al-Danaf and Ali al-Zaybak of Cairo.[102] Now they had brought Ala al-Din to the gibbet, to hang him, but Ahmad al-Danaf came forward and set his foot on that of the hangman, who said, “Give me room to do my duty.” He replied, “O accursed, take this man and hang him in Ala al-Din’s stead; for he is innocent and we will ransom him with this fellow, even as Abraham ransomed Ishmael with the ram.”[103] So the hangman seized the man and hanged him in lieu of Ala al-Din; whereupon Ahmad and Ali took Ala al-Din and carried 76 him to Ahmad’s quarters and, when there, Ala al-Din turned to him and said, “O my sire and chief, Allah requite thee with the best of good!” Quoth he, “O Ala al-Din”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Calamity Ahmad cried, “O Ala al-Din, what is this deed thou hast done? The mercy of Allah be on him who said:—Whoso trusteth thee betray him not, e’en if thou be a traitor. Now the Caliph set thee in high place about him and styled thee ‘Trusty’ and ‘Faithful’; how then couldst thou

deal thus with him and steal his goods?" "By the Most Great Name, O my father and chief," replied Ala al-Din, "I had no hand in this, nor did I such deed, nor know I who did it." Quoth Ahmad, "Of a surety none did this but a manifest enemy and whoso doth aught shall be requited for his deed; but, O Ala al-Din, thou canst sojourn no longer in Baghdad, for Kings, O my son, may not pass from one thing to another, and when they go in quest of a man, ah! longsome is his travail." "Whither shall I go, O my chief?" asked Ala al-Din; and he answered, "O my son, I will bring thee to Alexandria, for it is a blessed place; its threshold is green and its sojourn is agreeable." And Ala al-Din rejoined, "I hear and I obey, O my chief." So Ahmad said to Hasan Shuuman, "Be mindful and, when the Caliph asketh for me, say:—He is gone touring about the provinces." Then, taking Ala al-Din, he went forth of Baghdad and stayed not going till they came to the outlying vineyards and gardens, where they met two Jews of the Caliph's tax-gatherers, riding on mules. Quoth Ahmad Al-Danaf to these, "Give me the black-mail;"[104] and quoth they, "Why should we pay thee black-mail?" whereto he replied, "Because I am the watchman of this valley." So they gave him each an hundred gold pieces, after which he slew them and took their mules, one of which he mounted, whilst Ala al-Din bestrode the other. Then they rode on till they came to the city of Ayás[105] and 77 put up their beasts for the night at the Khan. And when morning dawned, Ala al-Din sold his own mule and committed that of Ahmad to the charge of the doorkeeper of the caravanserai, after which they took ship from Ayas port and sailed to Alexandria. Here they landed and walked up to the bazar and behold, there was a broker crying a shop and a chamber behind it for nine hundred and fifty dinars. Upon this Ala al-Din bid a thousand which the broker accepted, for the premises belonged to the Treasury; and the seller handed over to him the keys and the buyer opened the shop and found the inner parlour furnished with carpets and cushions. Moreover, he found there a store-room full of sails and masts, cordage and seamen's chests, bags of beads and cowrie[106]-shells, stirrups, battle-axes, maces, knives, scissors and such matters, for the last owner of the shop had been a dealer in second-hand goods.[107] So he took his seat in the shop and Ahmad al-Danaf said to him, "O my son, the shop and the room and that which is therein are become thine; so tarry thou here and buy and sell; and repine not at thy lot for Almighty Allah blesseth trade." After this he abode with him three days and on the fourth he took leave of him, saying, "Abide here till I go back and bring thee the Caliph's pardon and learn who hath played thee this trick." Then he shipped for Ayas, where he took the mule from the inn and, returning to Baghdad met Pestilence Hasan and his followers, to whom said he, "Hath the Caliph asked after me?"; and he replied, "No, nor hast thou come to his thought." So he resumed his service about the Caliph's person and set himself to sniff about for news of Ala al-Din's case, till one day he heard the Caliph say to the Wazir, "See, O Ja'afar, how Ala al-Din dealt with me!" Replied the Minister, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou hast requited him with hanging and hath he not met with his reward?" Quoth he, "O Wazir, I have a mind to

go down and see him hanging;" and the Wazir answered, "Do what thou wilt, O Commander of the Faithful." So the Caliph, accompanied by Ja'afar, went down to the place of execution and, raising his eyes, saw the hanged man to be other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, surnamed the Trusty, and said, "O Wazir, this is not Ala al-Din!" "How knowest thou that it is not he?" asked the Minister, and the 78 Caliph answered, "Ala al-Din was short and this one is tall." Quoth Ja'afar, "Hanging stretcheth." Quoth the Caliph, "Ala al-Din was fair and this one's face is black." Said Ja'afar, "Knowest thou not, O Commander of the Faithful, that death is followed by blackness?" Then the Caliph bade take down the body from the gallows-tree and they found the names of the two Shaykhs, Abu Bakr and Omar, written on its heels;[108] whereupon cried the Caliph, "O Wazir, Ala al-Din was a Sunnite, and this fellow is a Rejecter, a Shi'ah." He answered, "Glory be to Allah who knoweth the hidden things, while we know not whether this was Ala al-Din or other than he." Then the Caliph bade bury the body and they buried it; and Ala al-Din was forgotten as though he never had been. Such was his case; but as regards Habzalam Bazazah, the Emir Khalid's son, he ceased not to languish for love and longing till he died and they joined him to the dust. And as for the young wife Jessamine, she accomplished the months of her pregnancy and, being taken with labour-pains, gave birth to a boy-child like unto the moon. And when her fellow slave-girls said to her, "What wilt thou name him?" she answered, "Were his father well he had named him; but now I will name him Aslán."[109] She gave him suck for two successive years, then weaned him, and he crawled and walked. Now it so came to pass that one day, whilst his mother was busied with the service of the kitchen, the boy went out and, seeing the stairs, mounted to the guest-chamber.[110] And the Emir Khalid who was sitting there took him upon his lap and glorified his Lord for that which he had created and fashioned; then closely eyeing his face, the Governor saw that he was the likest of all creatures to Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat. Presently, his mother Jessamine sought for him and finding him not, mounted to the guest-chamber, where she saw the Emir seated, with the child playing in his lap, for Allah had inclined his heart to the boy. And when the child espied his mother, he would have thrown himself upon her; but the Emir held him tight to his bosom and said to Jessamine, "Come hither, O damsel." So she 79 came to him, when he said to her, "Whose son is this?"; and she replied, "He is my son and the fruit of my vitals." "And who is his father?" asked the Emir; and she answered, "His father was Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, but now he is become thy son." Quoth Khalid, "In very sooth Ala al-Din was a traitor." Quoth she, "Allah deliver him from treason! the Heavens forfend and forbid that the 'Trusty' should be a traitor!" Then said he, "When this boy shall grow up and reach man's estate and say to thee:—Who is my father? say to him:—Thou art the son of the Emir Khalid, Governor and Chief of Police." And she answered, "I hear and I obey." Then he circumcised the boy and reared him with the goodliest rearing, and engaged for him a professor of law and

religious science, and an expert pensman who taught him to read and write; so he read the Koran twice and learnt it by heart and he grew up, saying to the Emir, "O my father!" Moreover, the Governor used to go down with him to the tilting-ground and assemble horsemen and teach the lad the fashion of fight and fray, and the place to plant lance-thrust and sabre-stroke; so that by the time he was fourteen years old, he became a valiant wight and accomplished knight and gained the rank of Emir. Now it chanced one day that Aslan fell in with Ahmad Kamakim, the arch-thief, and accompanied him as cup-companion to the tavern[111] and behold, Ahmad took out the jewelled lanthorn he had stolen from the Caliph and, setting it before him, pledged the wine cup to its light, till he became drunken. So Aslan said to him, "O Captain, give me this lanthorn;" but he replied, "I cannot give it to thee." Asked Aslan, "Why not?"; and Ahmad answered, "Because lives have been lost for it." "Whose life?" enquired Aslan; and Ahmad rejoined, "There came hither a man who was made Chief of the Sixty; he was named Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat and he lost his life through this lanthorn." Quoth Aslan, "And what was that story, and what brought about his death?" Quoth Ahmad Kamakim, "Thou hadst an elder brother by name Habzalam Bazazah, and when he reached the age of sixteen and was ripe for marriage, thy father would have bought him a slave-girl named Jessamine." And he went on to tell him the whole story from first to last of 80 Habzalam Bazazah's illness and what befel Ala al-Din in his innocence. When Aslan heard this, he said in thought, "Haply this slave-girl was my mother Jessamine, and my father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat." So the boy went out from him sorrowful, and met Calamity Ahmad, who at sight of him exclaimed, "Glory be to Him unto whom none is like!" Asked Hasan the Pestilence, "Whereat dost thou marvel, O my chief?" and Ahmad the Calamity replied, "At the make of yonder boy Aslan, for he is the likest of human creatures to Ala al-Din Abu al Shamat." Then he called the lad and said to him, "O Aslan what is thy mother's name?"; to which he replied, "She is called the damsel Jessamine;" and the other said, "Harkye, Aslan, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; for thy father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat: but, O my son, go thou in to thy mother and question her of thy father." He said, "Hearkening and obedience," and, going in to his mother put the question; whereupon quoth she, "Thy sire is the Emir Khalid!" "Not so," rejoined he, "my father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat." At this the mother wept and said, "Who acquainted thee with this, O my son?" And he answered "Ahmad Al-Danaf, Captain of the Guard." So she told him the whole story, saying, "O my son, the True hath prevailed and the False hath failed:[112] know that Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat was indeed thy sire, but it was none save the Emir Khalid who reared thee and adopted thee as his son. And now, O my child, when thou seest Ahmad al-Danaf the captain, do thou say to him:—I conjure thee, by Allah, O my chief, take my blood-revenge on the murderer of my father Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat!" So he went out from his mother——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

81

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Aslan went out from his mother and, betaking himself to Calamity Ahmad, kissed his hand. Quoth the captain, "What aileth thee, O Aslan?" and quoth he, "I know now for certain that my father was Ali al-Din Abu al-Shamat and I would have thee take my blood-revenge on his murderer." He asked, "And who was thy father's murderer?" whereto Aslan answered, "Ahmad Kamakim the Arch-thief." "Who told thee this?" enquired he, and Aslan rejoined, "I saw in his hand the jewelled lanthorn which was lost with the rest of the Caliph's gear, and I said to him:—Give me this lanthorn! but he refused, saying, Lives have been lost on account of this; and told me it was he who had broken into the palace and stolen the articles and deposited them in my father's house." Then said Ahmad al-Danaf, "When thou seest the Emir Khalid don his harness of war say to him:—Equip me like thyself and take me with thee. Then do thou go forth and perform some feat of prowess before the Commander of the Faithful, and he will say to thee:—Ask a boon of me, O Aslan! And do thou make answer, I ask of thee this boon, that thou take my blood-revenge on my father's murderer. If he say, Thy father is yet alive and is the Emir Khalid, the Chief of the Police; answer thou:—My father was Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, and the Emir Khalid hath a claim upon me only as the foster-father who adopted me. Then tell him all that passed between thee and Ahmad Kamakim and say:—O Prince of True Believers, order him to be searched and I will bring the lanthorn forth from his bosom." Thereupon said Aslan to him, "I hear and obey;" and, returning to the Emir Khalid, found him making ready to repair to the Caliph's court and said to him, "I would fain have thee arm and harness me like thyself and take me with thee to the Divan." So he equipped him and carried him thither. Then the Caliph sallied forth of Baghdad with his troops and they pitched tents and pavilions without the city; whereupon the host divided into two parties and forming ranks fell to playing Polo, one striking the ball with the mall, and another striking it back to him. Now there was among the troops a spy, who had been hired to slay the Caliph; so he took the ball and smiting it with the bat drove it straight at the Caliph's face, when behold, Aslan fended 82 it off and catching it drove it back at him who smote it, so that it struck him between the shoulders and he fell to the ground. The Caliph exclaimed, "Allah bless thee, O Aslan!" and they all dismounted and sat on chairs. Then the Caliph bade them bring the smiter of the ball before him and said, "Who tempted thee to do this thing and art thou friend or foe?" Quoth he, "I am thy foe and it was my purpose to kill thee." Asked the Caliph, "And wherefore? Art not a Moslem?" Replied the spy; "No! I am a Rejecter."[113] So the Caliph bade them put him to death and said to Aslan, "Ask a boon of me." Quoth he, "I ask of thee this boon, that thou take my blood-revenge on my father's murderer." He said, "Thy father is alive and there he stands on his two feet." "And who is he?" asked Aslan; and the

Caliph answered, “He is the Emir Khalid, Chief of Police.” Rejoined Aslan, “O Commander of the Faithful, he is no father of mine, save by right of fosterage; my father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat.” “Then thy father was a traitor,” cried the Caliph. “Allah forbid, O Commander of the Faithful,” rejoined Aslan, “that the ‘Trusty’ should be a traitor! But how did he betray thee?” Quoth the Caliph, “He stole my habit and what was therewith.” Aslan retorted, “O Commander of the Faithful, Allah forfend that my father should be a traitor! But, O my lord, when thy habit was lost and found didst thou likewise recover the lanthorn which was stolen from thee?” Answered the Caliph, “We never got it back;” and Aslan said, “I saw it in the hands of Ahmad Kamakim and begged it of him; but he refused to give it me, saying:—Lives have been lost on account of this. Then he told me of the sickness of Habzalam Bazazah, son of the Emir Khalid, by reason of his passion for the damsel Jessamine, and how he himself was released from bonds and that it was he who stole the habit and the lamp: so do thou, O Commander of the Faithful, take my blood-revenge for my father on him who murdered him.” At once the Caliph cried, “Seize ye Ahmad Kamakim!” and they seized him; whereupon he asked, “Where be the Captain, Ahmad al-Danaf?” And when he was summoned the Caliph bade him search Kamakim; so he put his hand into the thief’s bosom and pulled out the lanthorn. 83 Said the Caliph, “Come hither, thou traitor: whence hadst thou this lanthorn?” and Kamakim replied, “I bought it, O Commander of the Faithful!” The Caliph rejoined, “Where didst thou buy it?” Then they beat him till he owned that he had stolen the lanthorn, the habit and the rest, and the Caliph said “What moved thee to do this thing O traitor, and ruin Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, the Trusty and Faithful?” Then he bade them lay hands on him and on the Chief of Police, but the Chief said, “O Commander of the Faithful, indeed I am unjustly treated; thou badest me hang him, and I had no knowledge of this trick, for the plot was contrived between the old woman and Ahmad Kamakim and my wife. I crave thine intercession,[114] O Aslan.” So Aslan interceded for him with the Caliph, who said, “What hath Allah done with this youngster’s mother?” Answered Khalid, “She is with me,” and the Caliph continued, “I command that thou order thy wife to dress her in her own clothes and ornaments and restore her to her former degree, a lady of rank; and do thou remove the seals from Ala al-Din’s house and give his son possession of his estate.” “I hear and obey,” answered Khalid; and, going forth, gave the order to his wife who clad Jessamine in her own apparel; whilst he himself removed the seals from Ala al-Din’s house and gave Aslan the keys. Then said the Caliph, “Ask a boon of me, O Aslan;” and he replied, “I beg of thee the boon to unite me with my father.” Whereat the Caliph wept and said, “Most like thy sire was he that was hanged and is dead; but by the life of my forefathers, whoso bringeth me the glad news that he is yet in the bondage of this life, I will give him all he seeketh!” Then came forward Ahmad al-Danaf and, kissing the ground between his hands, said, “Grant me indemnity, O Commander of the Faithful!” “Thou hast it,” answered the Caliph; and Calamity

Ahmad said, “I give thee the good news that Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, the Trusty, the Faithful, is alive and well.” Quoth the Caliph “What is this thou sayest?” Quoth Al-Danaf, “As thy head liveth I say sooth; for I ransomed him with another, of those who deserved death; and carried him to Alexandria, where I opened for him a shop and set him up as dealer in second-hand goods.” Then said the Prince of True Believers——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

84

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph ordered Calamity Ahmad, saying, “I charge thee fetch him to me;” and the other replied, “To hear is to obey;” whereupon the Caliph bade them give him ten thousand gold pieces and he fared forth for Alexandria. On this wise it happed with Aslan; but as regards his father, Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, he sold in course of time all that was in his shop excepting a few things and amongst them a long bag of leather. And happening to shake the bag there fell out a jewel which filled the palm of the hand, hanging to a chain of gold and having many facets but especially five, whereon were names and talismanic characters, as they were ant-tracks. So he rubbed each face; but none answered him[115] and he said to himself, “Doubtless it is a piece of variegated onyx;” and then hung it up in the shop. And behold, a Consul[116] passed along the street; and, raising his eyes, saw the jewel hanging up; so he seated himself over against the shop and said to Ala al-Din, “O my lord, is the jewel for sale?” He answered, “All I have is for sale.” Thereupon the Frank said, “Wilt thou sell me that same for eighty thousand dinars?” “Allah open!” replied Ala al-Din. The Frank asked, “Wilt thou sell it for an hundred thousand dinars?”; and he answered, “I sell it to thee for a hundred thousand dinars; pay me down the monies.” Quoth the Consul, “I cannot carry about such sum as its price, for there be robbers and sharpers in Alexandria; but come with me to my ship and I will pay thee the price and give thee to boot a bale of Angora wool, a bale of satin, a bale of velvet and a bale of broadcloth.” So Ala al-Din rose and locked up his shop, after giving the jewel to the Frank, and committed the keys to his neighbour, saying, “Keep these keys in trust for me, whilst I go with this Consul to his ship and return with the price of my jewel. If I be long absent and there come to thee Ahmad al-Danaf, the Captain who stablished in this shop, give him the keys and tell him where I am.” Then he went with the Consul to his ship and no sooner had he boarded it than the Frank set him a stool and, 85making him sit down, said to his men, “Bring the money.” So they brought it and he paid him the price of the jewel and gave him the four bales he had promised him and one over; after which he said to him, “O my lord, honour me by accepting a bite or a sup” And Ala al-Din answered, “If thou have any water, give me to drink.” So the Frank called for sherbets and they brought drink drugged with Bhang, of which no sooner had Ala al-Din drunk, than he fell over on

his back; whereupon they stowed away the chairs and shipped the shoving-poles and made sail. Now the wind blew fair for them till it drove them into blue water; and when they were beyond sight of land the Kaptán[117] bade bring Ala al-Din up out of the hold and made him smell the counter-drug of Bhang; whereupon he opened his eyes and said, "Where am I?" He replied, "Thou art bound and in my power and if thou hadst said, Allah open! to an hundred thousand dinars for the jewel, I would have bidden thee more." "What art thou?" asked Ala al-Din, and the other answered, "I am a sea-captain and mean to carry thee to my sweetheart." Now as they were talking, behold, a ship hove in sight carrying forty Moslem merchants; so the Frank captain attacked the vessel and made fast to it with grappling-irons; then he boarded it with his men and took it and plundered it; after which he sailed on with his prize, till he reached the city of Genoa. There the Kaptan, who was carrying off Ala al-Din, landed and repaired to a palace whose postern gave upon the sea, and behold, there came down to him a damsel in a chin-veil who said, "Hast thou brought the jewel and the owner?" "I have brought them both," answered he; and she said, "Then give me the jewel." So he gave it to her; and, returning to the port, fired his cannon to announce his safe return; whereupon the King of the city, being notified of that Kaptan's arrival, came down to receive him and asked him, "How hath been this voyage?" He answered, "A right prosperous one, and while voyaging I have made prize of a ship with one-and forty Moslem merchants." Said the King, "Land them at the port:" so he landed the merchants in irons and Ala al-Din among the rest; and the King and the Kaptan mounted and made the captives walk before them till they reached the audience-chamber, when the Franks seated themselves 86 and caused the prisoners to pass in parade order, one by one before the King who said to the first, "O Moslem, whence comest thou?" He answered, "From Alexandria;" whereupon the King said, "O headsman, put him to death." So the sworder smote him with the sword and cut off his head: and thus it fared with the second and the third, till forty were dead and there remained but Ala al-Din, who drank the cup of his comrades' sighs and agony and said to himself, "Allah have mercy on thee, O Ala al-Din. Thou art a dead man." Then said the King to him, "And thou, what countryman art thou?" He answered, "I am of Alexandria," and the King said, "O headsman, strike off his head." So the sworder raised arm and sword, and was about to strike, when behold, an old woman of venerable aspect presented herself before the King, who rose to do her honour, and said to him, "O King, did I not bid thee remember, when the Captain came back with captives, to keep one or two for the convent, to serve in the church?" The King replied, "O my mother, would thou hadst come a while earlier! But take this one that is left." So she turned to Ala al-Din and said to him, "Say, wilt thou serve in the church, or shall I let the King slay thee?" Quoth he, "I will serve in the church." So she took him and carried him forth of the court and went to the church, where he said to her, "What service must I do?" She replied, "Thou must rise with the dawn and take five mules and go with them to the forest and there cut dry fire-wood and saw it

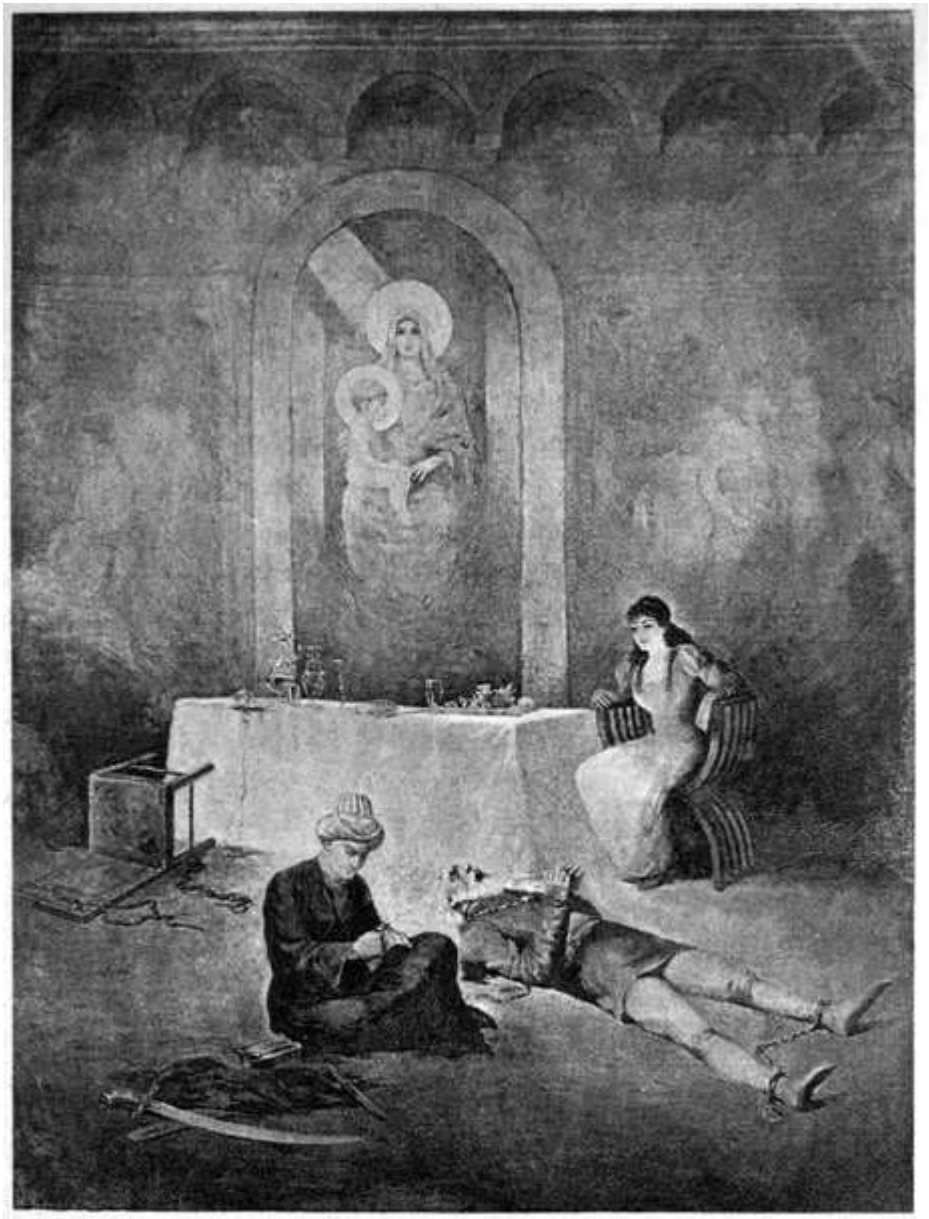
short and bring it to the convent-kitchen. Then must thou take up the carpets and sweep and wipe the stone and marble pavements and lay the carpets down again, as they were; after which thou must take two bushels and a half of wheat and bolt it and grind it and knead it and make it into cracknels[118] for the convent; and thou must take also a bushel of lentils[119] and sift and crush and cook them. Then must thou fetch water in barrels and fill the four fountains; after which thou must take three hundred and threescore and six wooden bowls and crumble the cracknels therein and pour of the lentil-pottage over each and carry every monk and patriarch his bowl." Said Ala al-Din,[120] "Take me back to the King and let him kill me, it were easier to 87 me than this service." Replied the old woman, "If thou do truly and rightly the service that is due from thee thou shalt escape death; but, if thou do it not, I will let the King kill thee." And with these words Ala al-Din was left sitting heavy at heart. Now there were in the church ten blind cripples, and one of them said to him, "Bring me a pot." So he brought it him and he cacked and eased himself therein and said, "Throw away the ordure." He did so, and the blind man said, "The Messiah's blessing be upon thee, O servant of the church!" Presently behold, the old woman came in and said to him, "Why hast thou not done thy service in the church?" Answered he, "How many hands have I, that I should suffice for all this work?" She rejoined, "Thou fool, I brought thee not hither except to work;" and she added, "Take, O my son, this rod (which was of copper capped with a cross) and go forth into the highway and, when thou meetest the governor of the city, say to him:—I summon thee to the service of the church, in the name of our Lord the Messiah. And he will not disobey thee. Then make him take the wheat, sift, grind, bolt, knead, and bake it into cracknels; and if any gainsay thee, beat him and fear none." "To hear is to obey," answered he and did as she said, and never ceased pressing great and small into his service; nor did he leave to do thus for the space of seventeen years. Now one day as he sat in church lo! the old woman came to him and said, "Go forth of the convent." He asked, "Whither shall I go?" and she answered, "Thou canst pass the night in a tavern or with one of thy comrades." Quoth he, "Why dost thou send me forth of the church?" and quoth she, "The Princess Husn Maryam, daughter of Yohanná,[121] King of this city, purposeth to visit the church and it befitteth not that any abide in her way." So he made a show of obeying her orders and rose up and pretended that he was leaving the church; but he said in his mind, "I wonder whether the Princess is like our women or fairer than they! At any rate I will not go till I have had a look at her." So he hid himself in a closet with a window looking into the church and, as he watched, 88 behold, in came the King's daughter. He cast at her one glance of eyes that cost him a thousand sighs, for he found her like the full moon when it cometh swimming out of the clouds; and he saw with her a young lady——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ala al-Din looked at the King's daughter, he saw with her a young lady to whom he heard her say, "Thy company hath cheered me, O Zubaydah." So he looked straitly at the damsel and found her to be none other than his dead wife, Zubaydah the Lutist. Then the Princess said to Zubaydah, "Come, play us an air on the lute." But she answered, "I will make no music for thee, till thou grant my wish and keep thy word to me." Asked the Princess, "And what did I promise thee?"; and Zubaydah answered, "That thou wouldst reunite me with my husband Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, the Trusty, the Faithful." Rejoined the Princess, "O Zubaydah, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; play us a piece as a thank-offering and an ear-feast for reunion with thy husband Ala al-Din." "Where is he?" asked Zubaydah, and Maryam answered, "He is in yonder closet listening to our words." So Zubaydah played on the lute a melody which had made a rock dance for glee; and when Ala al-Din heard it, his bowels yearned towards her and he came forth from the closet and, throwing himself upon his wife Zubaydah, strained her to his bosom. She also knew him and the twain embraced and fell to the ground in a swoon. Then came forward the Princess Husn Maryam and sprinkled rose-water on them, till they revived when she said to them, "Allah hath reunited you." Replied Ala al-Din, "By thy kind offices, O lady." Then, turning to his wife, he said to her, "O Zubaydah, thou didst surely die and we tombed thee in the tomb: how then returnedst thou to life and camest thou to this place?" She answered, "O my lord, I did not die; but an Aun[122] of the 89 Jinn snatched me up and flew with me hither. She whom thou buriedst was a Jinniyah, who shaped herself to my shape and feigned herself dead; but when you entombed her she broke open the tomb and came forth from it and returned to the service of this her mistress, the Princess Husn Maryam. As for me I was possessed[123] and, when I opened my eyes, I found myself with this Princess thou seest; so I said to her:—Why hast thou brought me hither. Replied she:—I am predestined to marry thy husband, Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat: wilt thou then, O Zubaydah, accept me to co-consort, a night for me and a night for thee? Rejoined I:—To hear is to obey, O my lady, but where is my husband? Quoth she:—Upon his forehead is written what Allah hath decreed to him; as soon as the writing which is there writ is fulfilled to him, there is no help for it but he come hither, and we will beguile the time of our separation from him with songs and playing upon instruments of music, till it please Allah to unite us with him. So I abode all these days with her till Allah brought us together in this church." Then Husn Maryam turned to him and said, "O my lord, Ala al-Din, wilt thou be to me baron and I be to the femme?" Quoth he, "O my lady, I am a Moslem and thou art a Nazarene; so how can I intermarry with thee?" Quoth she, "Allah forbid that I should be an infidel! Nay, I am a Moslemah; for these eighteen years I have held fast the Faith of Al-Islam and I am pure of any creed other than that of the Islamite." Then said he, "O my lady, I desire a return to my native land;" and she replied, "Know that I see written on thy forehead things which thou must needs accomplish, and then thou shalt

win to thy will. Moreover, be lief and fain, O Ala al-Din, that there hath been born to thee a son named Aslan; who now being arrived at age of discretion, sitteth in thy place with the Caliph. Know also that Truth hath prevailed and that Falsehood naught availed; and that the Lord hath withdrawn the curtain of secrecy from him who stole the Caliph's goods, that is, Ahmad Kamakim the arch-thief and traitor; and he now lieth bound and in jail. And know further 'twas I who sent thee the jewel and had it put in the bag where thou foundest it, and 'twas I who sent the captain that brought thee and the jewel; for thou must know that the man 90 is enamoured of me and seeketh my favours and would possess me; but I refused to yield to his wishes or let him have his will of me; and I said to him:—Thou shalt never have me till thou bring me the jewel and its owner. So I gave him an hundred purses and despatched him to thee, in the habit of a merchant, whereas he is a captain and a war-man; and when they led thee to thy death after slaying the forty captives, I also sent thee this old woman to save thee from slaughter." Said he, "Allah requite thee for us with all good! Indeed thou hast done well." Then Husn Maryam renewed at his hands her profession of Al-Islam; and, when he was assured of the truth of her speech, he said to her, "O my lady, tell me what are the virtues of this jewel and whence cometh it?" She answered, "This jewel came from an enchanted hoard, and it hath five virtues which will profit us in time of need. Now my lady grandmother, the mother of my father, was an enchantress and skilled in solving secrets and finding hidden treasures from one of the which came the jewel into her hands. And as I grew up and reached the age of fourteen, I read the Evangel and other books and I found the name of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and preserve!) in the four books, namely the Evangel, the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Koran;[124] so I believed in Mohammed and became a Moslemah, being certain and assured that none is worship-worth save Allah Almighty, and that to the Lord of all mankind no faith is acceptable save that of Al-Islam. Now when my lady-grandmother fell sick, she gave me this jewel and taught me its five virtues. Moreover, before she died, my father said to her:—Take thy tablets of geomancy and throw a figure, and tell us the issue of my affair and what will befal me. And she foretold him that the far-off one[125] should die, slain by the hand of a captive from Alexandria. So he swore to kill every prisoner from that place and told the Kaptan of this, saying:—There is no help for it but thou fall on the ships of the Moslems and seize 91 them and whomsoever thou findest of Alexandria, kill him or bring him to me. The Captain did his bidding until he had slain as many in number as the hairs of his head. Then my grandmother died and I took a geomantic tablet, being minded and determined to know the future, and I said to myself:—Let me see who will wed me! Whereupon I threw a figure and found that none should be my husband save one called Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, the Trusty, the Faithful. At this I marvelled and waited till the times were accomplished and I foregathered with thee." So Ala al-Din took her to wife and said to her, "I desire to return to my own country."

Quoth she, “If it be so, rise up and come with me.” Then she took him and, hiding him in a closet of her palace, went in to her father, who said to her, “O my daughter, my heart is exceeding heavy this day; sit down and let us make merry with wine, I and thou.” So she sat down with him and he called for a table of wine; and she plied him till he lost his wits, when she drugged a cup with Bhang and he drank it off and fell upon his back. Then she brought Ala al-Din out of the closet and said to him, “Come; verily thine enemy lieth prostrate, for I made him drunk and drugged him; so do thou with him as thou wilt.” Accordingly Ala al-Din went to the King and, finding him lying drugged and helpless, pinioned him fast and manacled and fettered him with chains. Then he gave him the counter-drug and he came to himself——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala al-Din gave the antidote of Bhang to King Yohanna, father of Husn Maryam, and he came to himself and found Ala al-Din and his daughter sitting on his breast. So he said to her, “O my daughter, dost thou deal thus with me?” She answered “If I be indeed thy daughter, become a Moslem, even as I became a Moslemah; for the truth was shown to me and I attested

it; and the false, and I deserted it. I have submitted myself unto Allah, The Lord of the Three Worlds, and am pure of all faiths contrary to that of Al-Islam in this world and in the next world. Wherefore, if thou wilt become a Moslem, well and good; if not, thy death were better than thy life." Ala al-Din also exhorted 92 him to embrace the True Faith; but he refused and was contumacious; so Ala al-Din drew a dagger and cut his throat from ear to ear.[126] Then he wrote a scroll, setting forth what had happened and laid it on the brow of the dead; after which they took what was light of load and weighty of worth and turned from the palace and returned to the church. Here the Princess drew forth the jewel and, placing her hand upon the facet where was figured a couch, rubbed it; and behold, a couch appeared before her and she mounted upon it with Ala al-Din and his wife, Zubaydah, the Lutist, saying, "I conjure thee by the virtue of the names and talismans and characts engraven on this jewel, rise up with us, O Couch!" And it rose with them into the air and flew, till it came to a Wady wholly bare of growth, when the Princess turned earthwards the facet on which the couch was figured, and it sank with them to the ground. Then she turned up the face whereon was fashioned a pavilion and tapping it said, "Let a pavilion be pitched in this valley;" and there appeared a pavilion, wherein they seated themselves. Now this Wady was a desert waste, without grass or water; so she turned a third face of the jewel towards the sky, and said, "By the virtue of the names of Allah, let trees upgrow here and a river flow beside them!" And forthwith trees sprang up and by their side ran a river plashing and dashing. They made the ablution and prayed and drank of the stream; after which the Princess turned up the three other facets till she came to the fourth, whereon was portrayed a table of food, and said, "By the virtue of the names of Allah, let the table be spread!" And behold, there appeared before them a table, spread with all manner of rich meats, and they ate and drank and made merry and were full of joy. Such was their case; but as regards Husn Maryam's father, his son went in to waken him and found him slain; and, seeing Ala al-Din's scroll, took it and read it, and readily understood it. Then he sought his sister and finding her not, betook himself to the old woman in the church, of whom he enquired for her, but she said, "Since yesterday I have not seen her." So he returned to the troops and cried out, saying, "To horse, ye horsemen!" Then he told them what had happened, so they mounted and rode after the fugitives, till they drew near the pavilion. Presently Husn Maryam arose and looked up and saw a cloud of 93 dust which spread till it walled the view, then it lifted and flew, and lo! stood disclosed her brother and his troops, crying aloud, "Whither will ye fly, and we on your track!" Then said she to Ala al-Din, "Are thy feet firm in fight?" He replied, "Even as the stake in bran, I know not war nor battle, nor swords nor spears." So she pulled out the jewel and rubbed the fifth face, that on which were graven a horse and his rider, and behold, straightway a cavalier appeared out of the desert and ceased not to do battle with the pursuing host and smite them with the sword, till he routed them and put them to flight. Then the Princess

asked Ala al-Din, “Wilt thou go to Cairo or to Alexandria?”; and he answered, “To Alexandria.” So they mounted the couch and she pronounced over it the conjuration, whereupon it set off with them and, in the twinkling of an eye, brought them to Alexandria. They alighted without the city and Ala al-Din hid the women in a cavern, whilst he went into Alexandria and fetched them outer clothing, wherewith he covered them. Then he carried them to his shop and, leaving them in the “ben”[127] walked forth to fetch them the morning-meal, and behold, he met Calamity Ahmad who chanced to be coming from Baghdad. He saw him in the street and received him with open arms, saluting him and welcoming him. Whereupon Ahmad al-Danaf gave him the good news of his son Aslan and how he was now come to the age of twenty: and Ala al-Din, in his turn, told the Captain of the Guard all that had befallen him from first to last, whereat he marvelled with exceeding marvel. Then he brought him to his shop and sitting-room where they passed the night; and next day he sold his place of business and laid its price with other monies. Now Ahmad al-Danaf had told him that the Caliph sought him; but he said, “I am bound first for Cairo, to salute my father and mother and the people of my house.” So they all mounted the couch and it carried them to Cairo the God-guarded; and here they alighted in the street called Yellow,[128] where stood the house of Shams al-Din. Then Ala al-Din knocked at the door, and his mother said, “Who is at the door, now that we have lost our beloved for evermore?” He replied, “’Tis I! Ala al-Din!” whereupon they came down and embraced him. Then he sent his wives and baggage into the house and entering himself with Ahmad al-Danaf, rested there 94 three days, after which he was minded to set out for Baghdad. His father said, “Abide with me, O my son;” but he answered, “I cannot bear to be parted from my child Aslan.” So he took his father and mother and fared forth for Baghdad. Now when they came thither, Ahmad al-Danaf went in to the Caliph and gave him the glad tidings of Ala al-Din’s arrival and told him his story; whereupon the King went forth to greet him taking the youth Aslan, and they met and embraced each other. Then the Commander of the Faithful summoned the arch-thief Ahmad Kamakim and said to Ala al-Din, “Up and at thy foe!” So he drew his sword and smote off Ahmad Kamakim’s head. Then the Caliph held festival for Ala al-Din and, summoning the Kazis and witnesses, wrote the contract and married him to the Princess Husn Maryam; and he went in unto her and found her an unpierced pearl. Moreover, the Caliph made Aslan Chief of the Sixty and bestowed upon him and his father sumptuous dresses of honour; and they abode in the enjoyment of all joys and joyance of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies. But the tales of generous men are manifold and amongst them is the story of

[13- Stories of Graciouses]

HATIM OF THE TRIBE OF TAYY.

It is told of Hátim of the tribe of Tayy,[129] that when he died, they buried him on the top of a mountain and set over his grave two troughs hewn out of two rocks and stone girls with dishevelled hair. At the foot of the hill was a stream of running water, and when wayfarers camped there, they heard loud crying and keening in the night, from dark till daybreak; but when they arose in the morning, they found nothing but the girls carved in stone. Now 95 when Zú 'l-Kurá'a,[130] King of Himyar, going forth of his tribe, came to that valley, he halted to pass the night there——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zu 'l-Kura'a passed by the valley he nighted there; and, when he drew near the mountain, he heard the keening and said, "What lamenting is that on yonder hill?" They answered him, saying, "Verily this be the tomb of Hatim al-Táyyi over which are two troughs of stone and stone figures of girls with dishevelled hair; and all who camp in this place by night hear this crying and keening." So he said jestingly, "O Hatim of Tayy! we are thy guests this night, and we are lank with hunger." Then sleep overcame him, but presently he awoke in affright and cried out, saying, "Help, O Arabs! Look to my beast!" So they came to him, and finding his she-camel struggling and struck down, they stabbed her in the throat and roasted her flesh and ate. Then they asked him what had happened and he said, "When I closed my eyes, I saw in my sleep Hatim of Tayy who came to me sword in hand and cried:—Thou comest to us and we have nothing by us. Then he smote my she-camel with his sword, and she had surely died even though ye had not come to her and slaughtered her."[131] Now when morning dawned the King mounted the beast of one of his companions and, taking the owner up behind him, set out and fared on till midday, when they saw a man coming towards them, mounted on a camel and leading another, and said to him, "Who art thou?" He answered, "I am Adi,[132] son of Hatim of Tayy; where is Zu 'l-Kura'a, Emir of Himyar?" Replied they, "This is he;" and he said to the prince, "Take this she-camel in place of thy beast which my father slaughtered for thee." Asked Zu 'l-Kura'a, "Who 96 told thee of this?" and Adi answered, "My father appeared to me in a dream last night and said to me:—Harkye, Adi; Zu 'l-Kura'a King of Himyar, sought the guest-rite of me and I, having naught to give him, slaughtered his she-camel, that he might eat: so do thou carry him a she-camel to ride, for I have nothing." And Zu 'l-

Kura'a took her, marvelling at the generosity of Hatim of Tayy alive and dead. And amongst instances of generosity is the

TALE OF MA'AN THE SON OF ZAIDAH.[133]

It is told of Ma'an bin Záidah that, being out one day a-chasing and a-hunting, he became athirst but his men had no water with them; and while thus suffering behold, three damsels met him bearing three skins of water;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-first Night,[134]

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that three girls met him bearing three skins of water; so he begged drink of them, and they gave him to drink. Then he sought of his men somewhat 97 to give the damsels but they had no money; so he presented to each girl ten golden-piled arrows from his quiver. Whereupon quoth one of them to her friend, "Well-a-day! These fashions pertain to none but Ma'an bin Zaidah! so let each one of us say somewhat of verse in his praise." Then quoth the first:—

He heads his arrows with piles of gold, ✿ And while shooting his foes is his bounty doled:

Affording the wounded a means of cure, ✿ And a sheet for the bider beneath the mould!

And quoth the second:—

A warrior showing such open hand, ✿ His boons all friends and all foes enfold:

The piles of his arrows of or are made, ✿ So that battle his bounty may not withhold!

And quoth the third:—

From that liberal hand on his foes he rains ✿ Shafts aureate-headed and manifold:

Wherewith the hurt shall chirurgeon pay, ✿ And for slain the shrouds round their corpses roll'd.[135]

And there is also told a tale of

MA'AN SON OF ZAIDAH AND THE BADAWI.

Now Ma'an bin Záidah went forth one day to the chase with his company, and they came upon a herd of gazelles; so they separated in pursuit and Ma'an was left alone to chase one of them. When he had made prize of it he alighted and slaughtered it; and as he was thus engaged, he espied a person[136] coming forth out of the desert on an ass. So he remounted and riding up to the new-comer, saluted him and asked him, "Whence 98 comest thou?" Quoth he, "I come from the land of Kuzá'ah, where we have had a two years' dearth; but this year it was a season of plenty and I sowed early cucumbers.[137] They came up before their time, so I gathered what seemed the best of

them and set out to carry them to the Emir Ma'an bin Zaidah, because of his well-known beneficence and notorious munificence." Asked Ma'an, "How much dost thou hope to get of him?"; and the Badawi answered, "A thousand dinars." Quoth the Emir, "What if he say this is too much?" Said the Badawi, "Then I will ask five hundred dinars." "And if he say, Too much?" "Then three hundred!" "And if he say yet, Too much?" "Then two hundred!" "And if he say yet, Too much?" "Then one hundred!" "And if he say yet, Too much?" "Then, fifty!" "And if he say yet, Too much?" "Then thirty!" "And if he say still, Too much?" asked Ma'an bin Zaidah. Answered the Badawi, "I will make my ass set his four feet in his Honour's home[138] and return to my people, disappointed and empty-handed." So Ma'an laughed at him and urged his steed till he came up with his suite and returned to his place, when he said to his chamberlain, "An there come to thee a man with cucumbers and riding on an ass admit him to me." Presently up came the Badawi and was admitted to Ma'an's presence; but knew not the Emir for the man he had met in the desert, by reason of the gravity and majesty of his semblance and the multitude of his eunuchs and attendants, for he was seated on his chair of estate with his officers ranged in lines before him and on either side. So he saluted him and Ma'an said to him "What bringeth thee, O brother of the Arabs?" Answered the Badawi, "I hoped in the Emir, and have brought him curly cucumbers out of season." Asked Ma'an, "And how much dost thou expect of us?" "A thousand dinars," answered the Badawi. "This is far too much," quoth Ma'an. Quoth he, "Five hundred." "Too much!" "Then three hundred." "Too much!" "Two hundred." "Too much!" "One hundred." "Too much!" "Fifty." "Too much!" At last the Badawi came down to thirty dinars; but Ma'an still replied, "Too much!" So the Badawi cried, "By 99 Allah, the man who met me in the desert brought me bad luck! But I will not go lower than thirty dinars." The Emir laughed and said nothing; whereupon the wild Arab knew that it was he whom he had met and said, "O my lord, except thou bring the thirty dinars, see ye, there is the ass tied ready at the door and here sits Ma'an, his honour, at home." So Ma'an laughed, till he fell on his back; and, calling his steward, said to him, "Give him a thousand dinars and five hundred and three hundred and two hundred and one hundred and fifty and thirty; and leave the ass tied up where he is." So the Arab to his amazement, received two thousand one hundred and eighty dinars, and Allah have mercy on them both and on all generous men! And I have also heard, O auspicious King, a tale of

THE CITY OF LABTAYT.[139]

There was once a royal city in the land of Roum, called the City of Labtayt wherein stood a tower which was always shut. And whenever a King died and another King of the Greeks took the Kingship after him, he set on the tower a new and strong lock, till there were four-and-twenty locks upon the gate, according to the number of the Kings. After this time, there came to the throne a man who was not of the old royal

house, and he had a mind to open these locks, that he might see what was within the tower. The grandees of his kingdom forbade him from this and pressed him to desist and reproved him and blamed him; but he persisted saying, "Needs must this place be opened." Then they offered him all that their hands possessed of monies and treasures and things of price, if he would but refrain; still he would not be baulked——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

100

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the grandees offered that King all their hands possessed of monies and treasures if he would but refrain; still he would not be baulked and said, "There is no help for it but I open this tower." So he pulled off the locks and entering, found within the tower figures of Arabs on their horses and camels, habited in turbands[140] hanging down at the ends, with swords in baldrick-belts thrown over their shoulders and bearing long lances in their hands. He found there also a scroll which he greedily took and read, and these words were written therein:—"Whenas this door is opened will conquer this country a raid of the Arabs, after the likeness of the figures here depicted; wherefore beware, and again beware of opening it." Now this city was in Andalusia; and that very year Tárik ibn Ziyád conquered it, during the Caliphate of Al-Walíd son of Abd al-Malik[141] of the sons of Umayyah; and slew this King after the sorriest fashion and sacked the city and made prisoners of the women and boys therein and got great loot. Moreover, he found there immense treasures; amongst the rest more than an hundred and seventy crowns of pearls and jacinths and other gems of price; and he found a saloon, wherein horsemen might throw the spears, full of vessels of gold and silver, such as no description can comprise. Moreover, he found there the table of food for the Prophet of Allah, Solomon son of David (peace with both of them!), which is extant even now in a city of the Greeks; it is told that it was of grass-green emerald with vessels of gold and platters of jasper. Likewise he found the Psalms written in the old Ionian[142] character on leaves of gold bezel'd with jewels; together with a book setting forth the properties of stones and herbs and minerals, as well as the use of charcts and talismans and the canons of the art of alchymy; and he found a third volume which treated of 101 the art of cutting and setting rubies and other precious stones and of the preparation of poisons and theriacks. There found he also a mappa mundi figuring the earth and the seas and the different cities and countries and villages of the world; and he found a vast saloon full of hermetic powder, one drachm of which elixir would turn a thousand drachms of silver into fine gold; likewise a marvellous mirror, great and round, of mixed metals, which had been made for Solomon, son of David (on the twain be peace!) wherein whoso looked might see the counterfeit presentment of the seven climates of the world; and he beheld a chamber full of Brahmini[143] jacinths for which no words can suffice. So he despatched all these things

to Walid bin Abd al-Malik, and the Arabs spread all over the cities of Andalusia which is one of the finest of lands. This is the end of the story of the City of Labtayt. And a tale is also told of

THE CALIPH HISHAM AND THE ARAB YOUTH.

The Caliph Hishám bin Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, was hunting one day, when he sighted an antelope and pursued it with his dogs. As he was following the quarry, he saw an Arab youth pasturing sheep and said to him, "Ho boy, up and after yonder antelope, for it escapeth me!" The youth raised his head to him and replied, "O ignorant of what to the deserving is due, thou lookest on me with disdain and speakest to me with contempt; thy speaking is that of a tyrant true and thy doing what an ass would do." Quoth Hisham, "Woe to thee, dost thou not know me?" Rejoined the youth, "Verily thine unmannerliness hath made thee known to me, in that thou spakest to me, without beginning by the salutation."[144] Repeated the Caliph, "Fie upon thee! I am Hisham bin Abd al-Malik." "May Allah not favour thy dwelling-place," replied the Arab, "nor guard thine abiding place! How many are thy words and how few thy generous deeds!" Hardly had he ended speaking, when up came the troop 102 from all sides and surrounded him as the white encircleth the black of the eye, all and each saying, "Peace be with thee, O Commander of the Faithful!" Quoth Hisham, "Cut short this talk and seize me yonder boy." So they laid hands on him; and when he saw the multitude of Chamberlains and Wazirs and Lords of State, he was in nowise concerned and questioned not of them, but let his chin drop on his breast and looked where his feet fell, till they brought him to the Caliph[145] when he stood before him, with head bowed groundwards and saluted him not and spoke him not. So one of the eunuchs said to him, "O dog of the Arabs, what hindereth thy saluting the Commander of the Faithful?" The youth turned to him angrily and replied, "O packsaddle of an ass, it was the length of the way that hindered me from this and the steepness of the steps and the profuseness of my sweat." Then said Hisham (and indeed he was exceeding wroth), "O boy, verily thy days are come to their latest hour; thy hope is gone from thee and thy life is past out of thee." He answered, "By Allah, O Hisham, verily an my life-term be prolonged and Fate ordain not its cutting short, thy words irk me not, be they long or short." Then said the Chief Chamberlain to him, "Doth it befit thy degree, O vilest of the Arabs, to bandy words with the Commander of the Faithful?" He answered promptly, "Mayest thou meet with adversity and may woe and wailing never leave thee! Hast thou not heard the saying of Almighty Allah?:—One day, every soul shall come to defend itself."[146] Hereupon Hisham rose, in great wrath, and said, "O headsman, bring me the head of this lad; for indeed he exceedeth in talk, such as passeth conception." So the sworder took him and, making him kneel on the carpet of blood, drew his sword above him and said to the Caliph,

"O Commander of the Faithful, this thy slave is misguided and is on the way to 103 his grave; shall I smite off his head and be quit of his blood?" "Yes," replied Hisham. He repeated his question and the Caliph again answered in the affirmative. Then he asked leave a third time; and the youth, knowing that, if the Caliph assented yet once more, it would be the signal of his death, laughed till his wisdom-teeth showed; whereupon Hisham's wrath redoubled and he said to him, "O boy, meseems thou art mad; seest thou not that thou art about to depart the world? Why then dost thou laugh in mockery of thyself?" He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, if a larger life-term befel me, none can hurt me, great or small; but I have bethought me of some couplets, which do thou hear, for my death cannot escape thee." Quoth Hisham, "Say on and be brief;" so the Arab repeated these couplets:—

It happed one day a hawk pounced on a bird, ✿ A wildling sparrow driven by destiny;
And held in pounces spake the sparrow thus, ✿ E'en as the hawk rose ready home to hie:—
"Scant flesh have I to fill the maw of thee ✿ And for thy lordly food poor morsel I."
Then smiled the hawk in flattered vanity ✿ And pride, so set the sparrow free to fly.

At this Hisham smiled and said, "By the truth of my kinship to the Apostle of Allah (whom Allah bless and keep!), had he spoken this speech at first and asked for aught except the Caliphate, verily I would have given it to him. Stuff his mouth with jewels,[147] O eunuch and entreat him courteously;" so they did as he bade them and the Arab went his way. And amongst pleasant tales is that of

IBRAHIM BIN AL-MAHDI AND THE BARBER-SURGEON.

They relate that Ibrahím, son of al-Mahdí,[148] brother of Harun al-Rashid, when the Caliphate devolved to Al-Maamun, the son of his brother Harun, refused to acknowledge his nephew and 104 betook himself to Rayy[149]; where he claimed the throne and abode thus a year and eleven months and twelve days. Meanwhile his nephew, Al-Maamun, awaited his return to allegiance and his accepting a dependent position till, at last, despairing of this, he mounted with his horsemen and footmen and repaired to Rayy in quest of him. Now when the news came to Ibrahim, he found nothing for it but to flee to Baghdad and hide there, fearing for his life; and Maamun set a price of an hundred thousand gold pieces upon his head, to be paid to whoso might betray him. (Quoth Ibrahim) "When I heard of this price I feared for my head"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ibrahim continued:—Now when I heard of this price I feared for my head and knew not what to do: so I went forth of my house in disguise at midday, knowing not whither I should go. Presently I entered

a broad street which was no thoroughfare and said in my mind, “Verily, we are Allah’s and unto Him we are returning! I have exposed my life to destruction. If I retrace my steps, I shall arouse suspicion.” Then, being still in disguise I espied, at the upper end of the street, a negro-slave standing at his door; so I went up to him and said to him, “Hast thou a place where I may abide for an hour of the day?” “Yes,” answered he, and opening the door admitted me into a decent house, furnished with carpets and mats and cushions of leather. Then he shut the door on me and went away; and I misdoubted me he had heard of the reward offered for me, and said to myself, “He hath gone to inform against me.” But, as I sat pondering my case and boiling like cauldron over fire, behold, my host came back, accompanied by a porter loaded with bread and meat and new cooking-pots and gear and a new jar and new gugglets and other needfuls. He 105 made the porter set them down and, dismissing him, said to me, “I offer my life for thy ransom! I am a barber-surgeon, and I know it would disgust thee to eat with me, because of the way in which I get my livelihood;[150] so do thou shift for thyself and do what thou please with these things whereon no hand hath fallen.” (Quoth Ibrahim), Now I was in sore need of food so I cooked me a pot of meat whose like I remember not ever to have eaten; and, when I had satisfied my want, he said to me, “O my lord, Allah make me thy ransom! Art thou for wine?; for indeed it gladdeneth the soul and doeth away care.” “I have no dislike to it,” replied I, being desirous of the barber’s company; so he brought me new flagons of glass which no hand had touched and a jar of excellent wine, and said to me, “Strain for thyself, to thy liking;” whereupon I cleared the wine and mixed me a most delectable draught. Then he brought me a new cup and fruits and flowers in new vessels of earthenware; after which he said to me, “Wilt thou give me leave to sit apart and drink of my own wine by myself, of my joy in thee and for thee?” “Do so,” answered I. So I drank and he drank till the wine began to take effect upon us, when the barber rose and, going to a closet, took out a lute of polished wood and said to me, “O my lord, it is not for the like of me to ask the like of thee to sing, but it behoveth thine exceeding generosity to render my respect its due; so, if thou see fit to honour thy slave, thine is the high decision.” Quoth I (and indeed I thought not that he knew me), “How knowest thou that I excel in song?” He replied, “Glory be to Allah, our lord is too well renowned for that! Thou art my lord Ibrahim, son of Al-Mahdi, our Caliph of yesterday, he on whose head Al-Maamun hath set a price of an hundred thousand dinars to be paid to thy betrayer: but thou art in safety with me.” (Quoth Ibrahim), When I heard him say this, he was magnified in my eyes and his loyalty and noble nature were certified to me; so I complied with his wish and took the lute and tuned it, and sang. Then I bethought me of my severance from my children and my family and I began to say:—

Belike Who Yúsuf to his kin restored ✿ And honoured him in goal, a captive wight;

May grant our prayer to reunite our lots; ✿ For Allah, Lord of Worlds, hath all of might.

106When the barber heard this, exceeding joy took possession of him and he was of great good cheer; for it is said that when Ibrahim's neighbours heard him only sing out, "Ho, boy, saddle the mule!" they were filled with delight. Then, being overborne by mirth, he said to me, "O my lord, wilt thou give me leave to say what is come to my mind, albeit I am not of the folk of this craft?" I answered, "Do so; this is of thy great courtesy and kindness." So he took the lute and sang these verses:—

To our beloveds we moaned our length of night; ✿ Quoth they, "How short the nights that us benight!"

'Tis for that sleep like hood enveils *their* eyes ✿ Right soon, but from *our* eyes is fair of flight:

When night falls, dread and drear to those who love, ✿ *We* mourn; *they* joy to see departing light:

Had they but dree'd the weird, the bitter dole ✿ We dree, their beds like ours had bred them blight.

(Quoth Ibrahim), So I said to him, "By Allah, thou hast shown me a kindness, O my friend, and hast done away from me the pangs of sorrow. Let me hear more trifles of thy fashion." So he sang these couplets:—

When man keeps honour bright without a stain, ✿ Fair sits whatever robe to robe he's fain!

She jeered at me because so few we are; ✿ Quoth I:—"There's ever dearth of noble men!"

Naught irks us we are few, while neighbour tribes ✿ Count many; neighbours oft are base-born strain:

We are a clan which holds not Death reproach, ✿ Which A'mir and Samúl[151] hold illest bane:

Leads us our love of death to fated end; ✿ They hate that ending and delay would gain:

We to our neighbours' speech aye give the lie; ✿ But when we speak none dare give lie again.

(Quoth Ibrahim), When I heard these lines, I was filled with huge delight and marvelled with exceeding marvel. Then I slept and awoke not till past nightfall, when I washed my face, with a mind full of the high worth of this barber-surgeon and his passing courtesy; after which I wakened him and, taking out a purse I had by me containing a number of gold pieces, threw it to him, saying, "I commend thee to Allah, for I am about to go forth from thee, and pray thee to expend what is in this purse on thine requirements; 107and thou shalt have an abounding reward of me, when I am quit of my fear." (Quoth Ibrahim), But he returned the bag to me, saying, "O my lord, paupers like myself are of no value in thine eyes; but how, with due respect to my own generosity, can I take a price for the boon which fortune hath vouchsafed me of thy favour and thy visit to my poor abode? Nay, if thou repeat thy words and throw the purse to me again I will slay myself." So I put in my sleeve[152] the purse whose weight was irksome to me.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ibrahim son of Al-Mahdi continued:—So I put in my sleeve the purse whose weight was irksome to me; and turned to depart, but when I came to the house-door he said, "O my lord, of a truth this is a safer hiding-place for thee than any other, and thy keep is no burden to me; so do thou abide with me, till Allah be pleased to grant thee relief." Accordingly, I

turned back, saying, “On condition that thou spend of the money in this purse.” He made me think that he consented to this arrangement, and I abode with him some days in the utmost comfort; but, perceiving that he spent none of the contents of the purse, I revolted at the idea of abiding at his charge and thought it shame to be a burthen on him; so I left the house disguised in women’s apparel, donning short yellow walking-boots[153] and veil. Now as soon as I found myself in the street, I was seized with excessive fear, and going to pass the bridge behold, I came to a place sprinkled with water,[154] 108 where a trooper, who had been in my service, looked at me and knowing me, cried out, saying, “This is he whom Al-Maamun wanteth.” Then he laid hold of me but the love of sweet life lent me strength and I gave him and his horse a push which threw them down in that slippery place, so that he became an example to those who will take example; and the folk hastened to him. Meanwhile, I hurried my pace over the bridge and entered a main street, where I saw the door of a house open and a woman standing upon the threshold. So I said to her, “O my lady, have pity on me and save my life; for I am a man in fear.” Quoth she, “Enter and welcome;” and carried me into an upper dining-room, where she spread me a bed and brought me food, saying, “Calm thy fear, for not a soul shall know of thee.” As she spoke, lo! there came a loud knocking at the door; so she went and opened, and suddenly, my friend, whom I had thrown down on the bridge, appeared with his head bound up, the blood running down upon his clothes and without his horse. She asked, “O so and so, what accident hath befallen thee?”; and he answered, “I made prize of the young man whom the Caliph seeketh and he escaped from me;” whereupon he told her the whole story. So she brought out tinder[155] and, putting it into a piece of rag bandaged his head; after which she spread him a bed and he lay sick. Then she came up to me and said, “Methinks thou art the man in question?” “Even so,” answered I, and she said, “Fear not: no harm shall befal thee,” and redoubled in kindness to me. So I tarried with her three days, at the end of which time she said to me, “I am in fear for thee, lest yonder man happen upon thee and betray thee to what thou dreadest; so save thyself by flight.” I besought her to let me stay till nightfall, and she said, “There is no harm in that.” So, when the night came, I put on my woman’s gear and betook me to the house of a freed-woman who had once been our slave. When she saw me she wept and made a show of affliction and praised Almighty Allah for my safety. Then she went forth, as if she would go to market intent on hospitable thoughts, and I fancied all was right; but, ere long, suddenly I espied Ibrahim al-Mosili[156] making for the house amongst his troopers and servants, and led by a woman on foot; and looking 109 narrowly at her behold, she was the freed-woman, the mistress of the house, wherein I had taken refuge. So she delivered me into their hands, and I saw death face to face. They carried me, in my woman’s attire, to Al-Maamun who called a general council and had me brought before him. When I entered I saluted him by the title of Caliph, saying, “Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful!” and he

replied, “Allah give thee neither peace nor long life.” I rejoined, “According to thy good pleasure, O Commander of the Faithful!; it is for the claimant of blood-revenge[157] to decree punishment or pardon; but mercy is nigher to piety; and Allah hath set thy pardon above all other pardon, even as He made my sin to excel all other sin. So, if thou punish, it is of thine equity, and if thou pardon, it is of thy bounty.” And I repeated these couplets:—

My sin to thee is great, ✿ But greater thy degree:

So take revenge, or else ✿ Remit in clemency:

An I in deeds have not ✿ Been generous, generous be!

(Quoth Ibrahim), At this Al-Maamun raised his head to me an I hastened to add these two couplets:—

I’ve sinned enormous sin, ✿ But pardon in thee lies:

If pardon thou, ‘tis grace; ✿ Justice an thou chastise!

Then Al-Maamun bowed his head and repeated:—

I am (when friend would raise a rage that mote ✿ Make spittle choke me, sticking in my throat)

His pardoner, and pardon his offence, ✿ Fearing lest I should live a friend without.

(Quoth Ibrahim), Now when I heard these words I scented mercy, knowing his disposition to clemency.[158] Then he turned to his son Al-Abbas and his brother Abu Ishak and all his chief officers there present and said to them, “What deem ye of his case?” They all counselled him to do me dead, but they 110 differed as to the manner of my death. Then said he to his Wazir Ahmad bin al-Khálid, “And what sayest thou, O Ahmad?” He answered, “O Commander of the Faithful, an thou slay him, we find the like of thee who hath slain the like of him; but an thou pardon him, we find not the like of thee that hath pardoned the like of him.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Al-Maamun, Prince of the Faithful, heard the words of Ahmad bin al-Khalid, he bowed his head and began repeating:—

My tribe have slain that brother mine, Umaym, ✿ Yet would shoot back what shafts at them I aim:

If I deal pardon, noble pardon ‘tis; ✿ And if I shoot, my bones ‘twill only maim.[159]

And he also recited:—

Be mild to brother mingling ✿ What is wrong with what is right:

Kindness to him continue ✿ Whether good or graceless wight:

Abstain from all reproaching, ✿ An he joy or vex thy sprite:

Seest not that what thou lovest ✿ And what hatest go unite?

That joys of longer life-tide ✿ Ever fade with hair turned white?

That thorns on branches growing ✿ For the pluckt fruit catch thy sight?

Who never hath done evil, ✿ Doing good for sole delight?

When tried the sons of worldli- ✿ ness they mostly work unright.

(Quoth Ibrahim), Now when I heard these couplets, I withdrew my woman's veil from my head and cried out, with my loudest voice, "Allah is Most Great! By Allah, the Commander of the Faithful pardoneth me!" Quoth he, "No harm shall come to thee, O uncle;" and I rejoined, "O Commander of the Faithful, my sin is too sore for me to excuse it and thy mercy is too much for me to speak thanks for it." And I chanted these couplets to a lively motive:—

111 Who made all graces all collected He ✿ In Adam's loins, our Seventh Imam, for thee;[160]

Thou hast the hearts of men with reverence filled, ✿ Enguarding all with heart-humility;

Rebelled I never by delusion whelmed ✿ For object other than thy clemency;[161]

And thou hast pardoned me whose like was ne'er ✿ Pardoned before, though no man pled my plea:

Hast pitied little ones like Katá's[162] young, ✿ And mother's yearning heart a son to see.

Quoth Maamun, "I say, following our lord Joseph (on whom and on our Prophet be blessing and peace!) let there be no reproach cast on you this day. Allah forgiveth you; for He is the most merciful of those who show mercy.[163] Indeed I pardon thee, and restore to thee thy goods and lands, O uncle, and no harm shall befal thee." So I offered up devout prayers for him and repeated these couplets:—

Thou hast restored my wealth sans greed, and ere ✿ So didst, thou deignèdest my blood to spare:

Then if I shed my blood and wealth, to gain ✿ Thy grace, till even shoon from foot I tear,

Twere but repaying what thou lentest me, ✿ And what unloaned no man to blame would care:

Were I ungrateful for thy lavisht boons, ✿ Baser than thou'rt beneficent I were!

Then Al-Maamun showed me honour and favour and said to me, 112"O uncle, Abu Ishak and Al-Abbas counselled me to put thee to death." So I answered, "And they both counselled thee right, O Commander of the Faithful, but thou hast done after thine own nature and hast put away what I feared with what I hoped." Rejoined Al-Maamun, "O uncle, thou didst extinguish my rancour with the modesty of thine excuse, and I have pardoned thee without making thee drink the bitterness of obligation to intercessors." Then he prostrated himself in prayer a long while, after which he raised his head and said to me, "O uncle, knowest thou why I prostrated myself?" Answered I, "Haply thou didst this in thanksgiving to Allah, for that He hath given thee the mastery over thine enemy." He replied, "Such was not my design, but rather to thank Allah for having inspired me to pardon thee and for having cleared my mind towards thee. Now tell me thy tale." So I told him all that had befallen me with the barber, the trooper and his wife and with my freed-woman who had betrayed me. So he summoned the freed-woman, who was in her house, expecting the reward to be sent for her, and when she came before him he said to her, "What moved thee to deal thus with thy lord?" Quoth she, "Lust of money." Asked the Caliph. "Hast thou a child or a husband?"; and she answered "No;" whereupon he bade them give her an

hundred stripes with a whip and imprisoned her for life. Then he sent for the trooper and his wife and the barber-surgeon and asked the soldier what had moved him to do thus. “Lust of money,” quoth he; whereupon quoth the Caliph, “It befitteth thee to be a barber-cupper,”[164] and committed him to one whom he charged to place him in a barber-cupper’s shop, where he might learn the craft. But he showed honour to the trooper’s wife and lodged her in his palace, saying, “This is a woman of sound sense and fit for matters of moment.” Then said he to the barber-cupper, “Verily, thou hast shown worth and generosity which call for extraordinary honour.” So he commanded the trooper’s house and all that was therein to be given him and bestowed on him a dress of honour and in addition fifteen thousand dinars to be paid annually. And men tell the following tale concerning

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THE CITY OF MANY-COLUMNED IRAM AND ABDULLAH SON OF ABI KILABAH.[165]

It is related that Abdullah bin Abi Kilábah went forth in quest of a she-camel which had strayed from him; and, as he was wandering in the deserts of Al-Yaman and the district of Sabá,[166] behold, he came upon a great city girt by a vast castle around which were palaces and pavilions that rose high into middle air. He made for the place thinking to find there folk of whom he might ask concerning his she-camel; but, when he reached it, he found it desolate, without a living soul in it. So (quoth he) I alighted and, hobbling my dromedary,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah bin Abi Kilabah continued:—I dismounted and hobbling my dromedary, and composing my mind, entered into the city. Now when 114I came to the castle, I found it had two vast gates (never in the world was seen their like for size and height) inlaid with all manner jewels and jacinths, white and red, yellow and green. Beholding this I marvelled with great marvel and thought the case mighty wondrous; then entering the citadel in a flutter of fear and dazed with surprise and affright, I found it long and wide about equalling Al-Medinah[167] in point of size; and therein were lofty palaces laid out in pavilions all built of gold and silver and inlaid with many-coloured jewels and jacinths and chrysolites and pearls. And the door-leaves in the pavilions were like those of the castle for beauty; and their floors were strewn with great pearls and balls, no smaller than hazel-nuts, of musk and ambergris and saffron. Now when I came within the heart of the city and saw therein no created beings of the Sons of Adam I

was near swooning and dying for fear. Moreover, I looked down from the great roofs of the pavilion-chambers and their balconies and saw rivers running under them; and in the main streets were fruit-laden trees and tall palms; and the manner of their building was one brick of gold and one of silver. So I said in myself, "Doubtless this is the Paradise promised for the world to come." Then I loaded me with the jewels of its gravel and the musk of its dust as much as I could carry and returned to my own country, where I told the folk what I had seen. After a time the news reached Mu'áwiyah, son of Abu Sufyán, who was then Caliph in Al-Hijaz; so he wrote to his lieutenant in San'á of Al-Yaman to send for the teller of the story and question him of the truth of the case. Accordingly the lieutenant summoned me and questioned me of my adventure and of all appertaining to it; and I told him what I had seen, whereupon he despatched me to Mu'awiyah, before whom I repeated the story of the strange sights; but he would not credit it. So I brought out to him some of the pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron, in which latter there was still some sweet savour; but the pearls were grown yellow and had lost pearly colour.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah son of Abu Kilabah continued:—But the pearls were grown yellow and had lost pearly colour. Now Mu'awiyah wondered at this and, sending for Ka'ab al-Ahbar[168] said to him, "O Ka'ab, I have sent for thee to ascertain the truth of a certain matter and hope that thou wilt be able to certify me thereof." Asked Ka'ab, "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful?"; and Mu'awiyah answered, "Wottest thou of any city founded by man which is builded of gold and silver, the pillars whereof are of chrysolite and rubies and its gravel pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron?" He replied, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful, this is 'Iram with pillars decked and dight, the like of which was never made in the lands,'[169] and the builder was Shaddad son of Ad the Greater." Quoth the Caliph, "Tell us something of its history," and Ka'ab said:—Ad the Greater had two sons, Shadíd and Shaddád who, when their father died, ruled conjointly in his stead, and there was no King of the Kings of the earth but was subject to them. After awhile Shadid died and his brother Shaddad reigned over the earth alone. Now he was fond of reading in antique books; and, happening upon the description of the world to come and of Paradise, with its pavilions and galleries and trees and fruits and so forth, his soul moved him to build the like thereof in this world, after the fashion aforesaid. Now under his hand were an hundred thousand Kings, each ruling over an hundred thousand chiefs.[170] 116 commanding each an hundred thousand warriors; so he called these all before him and said to them, "I find in ancient books and annals a description of Paradise, as it is to be in the next world, and I desire to build me its like in this world. Go ye forth therefore to the goodliest tract

on earth and the most spacious and build me there a city of gold and silver, whose gravel shall be chrysolite and rubies and pearls; and for support of its vaults make pillars of jasper. Fill it with palaces, whereon ye shall set galleries and balconies and plant its lanes and thoroughfares with all manner trees bearing yellow-ripe fruits and make rivers to run through it in channels of gold and silver." Whereat said one and all, "How are we able to do this thing thou hast commanded, and whence shall we get the chrysolites and rubies and pearls whereof thou speakest?" Quoth he, "What! weet ye not that the Kings of the world are subject to me and under my hand and that none therein dare gainsay my word?" Answered they, "Yes, we know that."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lieges answered, "Yes, we know that;" whereupon the King rejoined, "Fare ye then to the mines of chrysolites and rubies and pearls and gold and silver and collect their produce and gather together all of value that is in the world and spare no pains and leave naught; and take also for me such of these things as be in men's hands and let nothing escape you: be diligent and beware of disobedience." And thereupon he wrote letters to all the Kings of the world and bade them gather together whatso of these things was in their subjects' hands, and get them to the mines of precious stones and metals, and bring forth all that was therein, even from the abysses of the seas. This they accomplished in the space of 20 years, for the number of rulers then reigning over the earth was three hundred and sixty Kings; and Shaddad presently assembled from all lands and countries architects and engineers and men of art and labourers and handicraftsmen, who dispersed over the world and explored all the wastes and wolds and tracts and holds. At last they came to an uninhabited spot, a vast and fair open plain clear of sand-hills and mountains, with founts flushing and rivers 117rushing, and they said, "This is the manner of place the King commanded us to seek and ordered us to find." So they busied themselves in building the city even as bade them Shaddad, King of the whole earth in its length and breadth; leading the fountains in channels and laying the foundations after the prescribed fashion. Moreover, all the Kings of earth's several reigns sent thither jewels and precious stones and pearls large and small and carnelian and refined gold and virgin silver upon camels by land, and in great ships over the waters, and there came to the builders' hands of all these materials so great a quantity as may neither be told nor counted nor conceived. So they laboured at the work three hundred years; and, when they had brought it to end, they went to King Shaddad and acquainted him therewith. Then said he, "Depart and make thereon an impregnable castle, rising and towering high in air, and build around it a thousand pavilions, each upon a thousand columns of chrysolite and ruby and vaulted with gold, that in each pavilion a Wazir may dwell." So they returned forthwith and did this in other twenty years; after which they again presented themselves before King Shaddad and

informed him of the accomplishment of his will. Then he commanded his Wazirs, who were a thousand in number, and his Chief Officers and such of his troops and others as he put trust in, to prepare for departure and removal to Many-columned Iram, in the suite and at the stirrup of Shaddad, son of Ad, King of the world; and he bade also such as he would of his women and his Harim and of his handmaids and eunuchs make them ready for the journey. They spent twenty years in preparing for departure, at the end of which time Shaddad set out with his host.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shaddad bin Ad fared forth, he and his host, rejoicing in the attainment of his desire till there remained but one day's journey between him and Iram of the Pillars. Then Allah sent down on him and on the stubborn unbelievers with him a mighty rushing sound from the Heavens of His power, which destroyed them all with its vehement clamour, and neither Shaddad nor any of his company 118 set eyes on the city.[171] Moreover, Allah blotted out the road which led to the city, and it stands in its stead unchanged until the Resurrection Day and the Hour of Judgement. So Mu'awiyah wondered greatly at Ka'ab al-Ahbar's story and said to him, "Hath any mortal ever made his way to that city?" He replied, "Yes; one of the companions of Mohammed (on whom be blessing and peace!) reached it, doubtless and forsure after the same fashion as this man here seated." And (quoth Al-Sha'abi[172]) it is related, on the authority of learned men of Himyar in Al-Yaman that Shaddad, when destroyed with all his host by the sound, was succeeded in his Kingship by his son Shaddad the Less, whom he left viceregent in Hazramaut[173] and Saba, when he and his marched upon Many-columned Iram. Now as soon as he heard of his father's death on the road, he caused his body to be brought back from the desert to Hazramaut and bade them hew him out a tomb in a cave, where he laid the body on a throne of gold and threw over the corpse threescore and ten robes of cloth of gold, purfled with precious stones. Lastly at his sire's head he set up a tablet of gold whereon were graven these verses:—

Take warning O proud, ✿ And in length o' life vain!
I'm Shaddád son of Ad, ✿ Of the forts castellain;
Lord of pillars and power, ✿ Lord of tried might and main,
Whom all earth-sons obeyed ✿ For my mischief and bane;
And who held East and West ✿ In mine awfullest reign.
He preached me salvation ✿ Whom God did assain,[174]
But we crossed him and asked ✿ "Can no refuge be ta'en?"
When a Cry on us cried ✿ From th' horizon plain,
And we fell on the field ✿ Like the harvested grain,
And the Fixt Day await ✿ We, in earth's bosom lain!

119 Al-Sa'alibi also relateth:—It chanced that two men once entered this cave and found steps at its upper end; so they descended and came to an under-ground chamber, an hundred cubits long by forty wide and an hundred high. In the midst stood a throne of gold, whereon lay a man of huge bulk, filling the whole length and breadth of the throne. He was covered with jewels and raiment gold-and-silver-wrought, and at his head was a tablet of gold bearing an inscription. So they took the tablet and carried it off, together with as many bars of gold and silver and so forth as they could bear away. And men also relate the tale of

ISAAC OF MOSUL.

Quoth Isaac of Mosul:[175]—I went out one night from Al-Maamun's presence, on my way to my house; and, being taken with a pressing need to make water, I turned aside into a by-street and stood in the middle fearing lest something might hurt me, if I squatted against a wall.[176] Presently, I espied something hanging down from one of the houses; so I felt it to find out what it might be and found that it was a great four-handled basket,[177] covered with brocade. Said I to myself, "There must be some reason for this," and knew not what to think; then drunkenness led me to seat myself in the basket, and behold, the people of the house pulled me up, thinking me to be the person they expected. Now when I came to the top of the wall; lo! four damsels were there, who said to me, "Descend and welcome and joy to thee!" Then one of them went before me with a wax candle and brought me down into a mansion, wherein were furnished sitting-chambers, whose like I had never seen save in the palace of the Caliphate. So I sat down and after a while, the curtains were suddenly drawn from one side of the room and, behold, in came damsels walking in procession 120 and hending in hand lighted flambeaux of wax and censers full of Sumatran aloes-wood, and amongst them a young lady as she were the rising full moon. So I stood up to her and she said, "Welcome to thee for a visitor!" and then she made me sit down again and asked me how I came thither. Quoth I, "I was returning home from the house of an intimate friend and went astray in the dark; then, being taken in the street with an urgent call to make water, I turned aside into this lane, where I found a basket let down. The strong wine which I had drunk led me to seat myself in it and it was drawn up with me into this house, and this is my story." She rejoined, "No harm shall befal thee, and I hope thou wilt have cause to praise the issue of thine adventure." Then she added, "But what is thy condition?" I said, "A merchant in the Baghdad bazar" and she, "Canst thou repeat any verses?" "Some small matter," quoth I. Quoth she "Then call a few to mind and let us hear some of them." But I said, "A visitor is bashful and timid; do thou begin." "True," replied she and recited some verses of the poets, past and present, choosing their choicest pieces; and I listened not knowing whether more to marvel at her beauty and loveliness or at the charm of her style of declamation. Then said she, "Is that bashfulness of thine gone?" and I said, "Yes, by Allah!" so she

rejoined, “Then, if thou wilt, recite us somewhat.” So I repeated to her a number of poems by old writers, and she applauded, saying, “By Allah, I did not think to find such culture among the trade folk, the sons of the bazar!” Then she called for food——Whereupon quoth Shahrazad’s sister Dunyazad, “How pleasant is this tale and enjoyable and sweet to the ear and sound to the sense!” But she answered, “And what is this story compared with that which thou shalt hear on the morrow’s night, if I be alive and the King deign spare me!” Then Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Isaac of Mosul continued:—Then the damsel called for food and, when it was served to her, she fell to eating it and setting it before me; and the sitting-room was full of all manner sweet-scented flowers and rare fruits, such as are never found save in Kings’ houses. [121] Presently, she called for wine and drank a cup, after which she filled another and gave it to me, saying, “Now is the time for converse and story-telling.” So I bethought myself and began to say, “It hath reached me that such and such things happened; and there was a man who said so and so,” till I had told her a number of pleasing tales and adventures with which she was delighted and cried, “’Tis marvellous that a merchant should bear in memory such store of stories like these, for they are fit for Kings.” Quoth I, “I had a neighbour who used to consort with Kings and carouse with them; so, when he was at leisure, I visited his house and he hath often told me what thou hast heard.” Thereupon she exclaimed “By my life, but thou hast a good memory!” So we continued to converse thus, and as often as I was silent, she would begin, till in this way we passed the most part of the night, whilst the burning aloes-wood diffused its fragrance and I was in such case that if Al-Maamun had suspected it, he would have flown like a bird with longing for it. Then said she to me, “Verily, thou art one of the most pleasant of men, polished, passing well bred and polite; but there lacketh one thing.” “What is that?” asked I, and she answered, “If thou only knew how to sing verses to the lute!” I answered, “I was passionately fond of this art aforetime, but finding I had no taste for it, I abandoned it, though at times my heart yearneth after it. Indeed, I should love to sing somewhat well at this moment and fulfil my night’s enjoyment.” Then she, “Meseemeth thou hintest a wish for the lute to be brought?” and I, “It is thine to decide, if thou wilt so far favour me, and to thee be the thanks.” So she called for a lute and sang a song in a voice whose like I never heard, both for sweetness of tone and skill in playing, and perfection of art. Then said she, “Knowest thou who composed this air and whose are the words of this song?” “No,” answered I; and she said, “The words are so and so’s and the air is Isaac’s.” I asked, “And hath Isaac then (may I be thy sacrifice!) such a talent?” She replied, “Bravo![1781] Bravo, Isaac! indeed, he excelleth in this art.” I rejoined, “Glory be to Allah who hath given this man what he hath vouchsafed unto none other!” Then she said, “And how would

it be, an thou heard this song from himself?" 122This wise we went on till break of day-dawn, when there came to her an old woman, as she were her nurse, and said to her, "Verily, the time is come." So she rose in haste and said to me, "Keep what hath passed between us to thyself; for such meetings are in confidence;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel whispered, "Keep what hath passed between us to thyself, for such meetings are in confidence;" and I replied, "May I be thy ransom! I needed no charge to this." Then I took leave of her and she sent a handmaid to show me the way and open the house door; so I went forth and returned to my own place, where I prayed the morning prayer and slept. Now after a time there came to me a messenger from Al-Maamun, so I went to him and passed the day in his company. And when the night fell I called to mind my yesternight's pleasure, a thing from which none but an ignoramus would abstain, and betook myself to the street, where I found the basket, and seating myself therein, was drawn up to the place in which I had passed the previous night. When the lady saw me, she said, "Indeed, thou hast been assiduous;" and I answered, "Meseemeth rather that I am neglectful." Then we fell to discoursing and passed the night as before in general conversation and reciting verses and telling rare tales, each in turn, till daybreak, when I wended me home; and I prayed the dawn-prayer and slept. Presently there came to me a messenger from Al-Maamun; so I went to him and spent my day with him till nightfall, when the Commander of the Faithful said to me, "I conjure thee to sit here, whilst I go out for a want and come back." As soon as the Caliph was gone, and quite gone, my thoughts began to tempt and try me and, calling to mind my late delight, I recked little what might befal me from the Prince of True Believers. So I sprang up and turning my back upon the sitting-room, ran to the street aforesaid, where I sat down in the basket and was drawn up as before. When the lady saw me, she said, "I begin to think thou art a sincere friend to us." Quoth I, "Yea, by Allah!" and quoth she, "Hast thou made our house thine abiding-place?" I replied, "May I be thy ransom! A 123guest claimeth guest-right for three days and if I return after this, ye are free to spill my blood." Then we passed the night as before; and when the time of departure drew near, I bethought me that Al-Maamun would assuredly question me nor would ever be content save with a full explanation: so I said to her, "I see thee to be of those who delight in singing. Now I have a cousin, the son of my father's brother, who is fairer than I in face and higher of rank and better of breeding; and he is the most intimate of Allah's creatures with Isaac." Quoth she, "Art thou a parasite[179] and an importunate one?" Quoth I, "It is for thee to decide in this matter;" and she, "If thy cousin be as thou hast described him, it would not mislike us to make acquaintance with him." Then, as the time was come, I left her and returned to my house, but hardly had I reached it, ere the Caliph's runners came down on me and

carried me before him by main force and roughly enough.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Isaac of Mosul continued:—And hardly had I reached my house ere the Caliph's runners came down upon me and carried me before him by main force and roughly enough. I found him seated on a chair, wroth with me, and he said to me, "O Isaac, art thou a traitor to thine allegiance?" replied I, "No, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful!" and he rejoined, "What hast thou then to say? tell me the whole truth;" and I, "Yes, I will, but in private." So he signed to his attendants, who withdrew to a distance, and I told him the case, adding, "I promised her to bring thee," and he said, "Thou didst well." Then we spent the day in our usual pleasures, but Al-Maamun's heart was taken up with her, and hardly was the appointed time come, when we set out. As we went along, I cautioned him, saying, "Look that thou call me not by my name before her; and I will demean myself [124] like thine attendant." And having agreed upon this, we fared forth till we came to the place, where we found two baskets hanging ready. So we sat down in them and were drawn up to the usual place, where the damsel came forward and saluted us. Now when Al-Maamun saw her, he was amazed at her beauty and loveliness; and she began to entertain him with stories and verses. Presently, she called for wine and we fell to drinking, she paying him special attention and he repaying her in kind. Then she took the lute and sang these verses:—

My lover came in at the close of night, ✿ I rose till he sat and remained upright;

And said "Sweet heart, hast thou come this hour? ✿ Nor feared on the watch and ward to 'light:"

Quoth he "The lover *had* cause to fear, ✿ But Love deprived him of wits and fright."

And when she ended her song she said to me, "And is thy cousin also a merchant?" I answered, "Yes," and she said, "Indeed, ye resemble each other nearly." But when Al-Maamun had drunk three pints,[180] he grew merry with wine and called out, saying, "Ho, Isaac!" And I replied, "Labbayk', Adsum, O Commander of the Faithful," whereupon quoth he, "Sing me this air." Now when the young lady learned that he was the Caliph, she withdrew to another place and disappeared; and, as I had made an end of my song Al-Maamun said to me, "See who is the master of this house"; whereupon an old woman hastened to make answer, saying, "It belongs to Hasan bin Sahl."[181] "Fetch him to me," said the Caliph. So she went away and after a while behold, in came Hasan, to whom said Al-Maamun "Hast thou a daughter?" He said, "Yes, and her name is Khadijah." Asked the Caliph, "Is she married?" Answered Hasan, "No, by Allah!" Said Al-Maamun, "Then I ask her of thee in marriage." Replied her father, "O Commander of the Faithful, she is thy handmaid [125] and at thy commandment." Quoth Al-Maamun, "I take her to wife at a present settlement of thirty thousand dinars, which thou shalt receive this very morning; and, when the money has been paid thee, do thou bring her to us this night." And Hasan answered,

"I hear and I obey." Thereupon we went forth and the Caliph said to me, "O Isaac, tell this story to no one." So I kept it secret till Al-Maamun's death. Surely never did man's life gather such pleasures as were mine these four days' time, whenas I companied with Al-Maamun by day and Khadijah by night; and, by Allah, never saw I among men the like of Al-Maamun nor among women have I ever set eyes on the like of Khadijah; no, nor on any that came near her in lively wit and pleasant speech! And Allah is All-knowing. But amongst stories is that of

THE SWEEP AND THE NOBLE LADY.

During the season of the Meccan pilgrimage, whilst the people were making circuit about the Holy House and the place of compassing was crowded, behold, a man laid hold of the covering of the Ka'abah[182] and cried out, from the bottom of his heart, saying, "I beseech thee, O Allah, that she may once again be wroth with her husband and that I may know her!" A company of the pilgrims heard him and seized him and carried him to the Emir of the pilgrims, after a sufficiency of blows; and, said they, "O Emir, we found this fellow in the Holy Places, saying thus and thus." So the Emir commanded to hang him; but he cried, "O Emir, I conjure thee, by the virtue of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and preserve!), hear my story and then do with me as thou wilt." Quoth the Emir, "Tell thy tale forthright." Know then, O Emir, quoth the man, that I am a sweep who works in the sheep-slaughterhouses and carries off the blood and the offal to the rubbish-heaps outside the gates. And it came to 126 pass as I went along one day with my ass loaded, I saw the people running away and one of them said to me, "Enter this alley, lest haply they slay thee." Quoth I, "What aileth the folk running away?" and one of the eunuchs, who were passing, said to me, "This is the Harim[183] of one of the notables and her eunuchs drive the people out of her way and beat them all, without respect to persons." So I turned aside with the donkey——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the man:—So I turned aside with the donkey and stood still awaiting the dispersal of the crowd; and I saw a number of eunuchs with staves in their hands, followed by nigh thirty women slaves, and amongst them a lady as she were a willow-wand or a thirsty gazelle, perfect in beauty and grace and amorous languor, and all were attending upon her. Now when she came to the mouth of the passage where I stood, she turned right and left and, calling one of the Castratos, whispered in his ear; and behold, he came up to me and laid hold of me, whilst another eunuch took my ass and made off with it. And when the spectators fled, the first eunuch bound me with a rope and dragged me after him till I knew not what to do; and the people followed us and cried out, saying, "This is not allowed of Allah! What hath this poor scavenger done that he should be bound with ropes?" and praying the eunuchs, "Have pity on him and let him go, so Allah

have pity on you!" And I the while said in my mind, "Doubtless the eunuchry seized me, because their mistress smelt the stink of the offal and it sickened her. Belike she is with child or ailing; but there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" So I continued walking on behind them, till they stopped at the door of a great house; and, entering before me, brought me into a big hall—I know not how I shall describe its magnificence—furnished with the finest furniture. And the women also entered the hall; and I bound and held by the eunuch and saying to myself, "Doubtless they will torture me [127] here till I die and none know of my death." However, after a while, they carried me into a neat bath-room leading out of the hall; and as I sat there, behold, in came three slave-girls who seated themselves round me and said to me, "Strip off thy rags and tatters." So I pulled off my threadbare clothes and one of them fell a-rubbing my legs and feet whilst another scrubbed my head and a third shampooed my body. When they had made an end of washing me, they brought me a parcel of clothes and said to me, "Put these on"; and I answered, "By Allah, I know not how!" So they came up to me and dressed me, laughing together at me the while; after which they brought casting-bottles full of rose-water, and sprinkled me therewith. Then I went out with them into another saloon; by Allah, I know not how to praise its splendour for the wealth of paintings and furniture therein; and entering it, I saw a person seated on a couch of Indian rattan——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the sweep continued:—When I entered that saloon I saw a person seated on a couch of Indian rattan, with ivory feet and before her a number of damsels. When she saw me she rose to me and called me; so I went up to her and she seated me by her side. Then she bade her slave-girls bring food, and they brought all manner of rich meats, such as I never saw in all my life; I do not even know the names of the dishes, much less their nature. So I ate my fill and when the dishes had been taken away and we had washed our hands, she called for fruits which came without stay or delay and ordered me eat of them; and when we had ended eating she bade one of the waiting-women bring the wine furniture. So they set on flagons of divers kinds of wine and burned perfumes in all the censers, what while a damsel like the moon rose and served us with wine to the sound of the smitten strings; and I drank, and the lady drank, till we were seized with wine and the whole time I doubted not but that all this was an illusion of sleep. Presently, she signed to one of the damsels to spread us a bed in such a place, which being done, she rose and took me by the hand and led me thither, and lay down and I lay with her till the morning, and as often as I pressed her to my breast I smelt the delicious [128] fragrance of musk and other perfumes that exhaled from her and could not think otherwise but that I was in Paradise or in the vain phantasies of a dream. Now when it was day, she

asked me where I lodged and I told her, “In such a place;” whereupon she gave me leave to depart, handing to me a kerchief worked with gold and silver and containing somewhat tied in it, and took leave of me, saying, “Go to the bath with this.” I rejoiced and said to myself, “If there be but five coppers here, it will buy me this day my morning meal.” Then I left her, as though I were leaving Paradise, and returned to my poor crib where I opened the kerchief and found in it fifty miskals of gold. So I buried them in the ground and, buying two farthings’ worth of bread and “kitchen,”[184] seated me at the door and broke my fast; after which I sat pondering my case and continued so doing till the time of afternoon-prayer, when lo! a slave-girl accosted me saying, “My mistress calleth for thee.” I followed her to the house aforesaid and, after asking permission, she carried me into the lady, before whom I kissed the ground, and she commanded me to sit and called for meat and wine as on the previous day; after which I again lay with her all night. On the morrow, she gave me a second kerchief, with other fifty dinars therein, and I took it and going home, buried this also. In such pleasant condition I continued eight days running, going in to her at the hour of afternoon-prayer and leaving her at daybreak; but, on the eighth night, as I lay with her, behold, one of her slave-girls came running in and said to me, “Arise, go up into yonder closet.” So I rose and went into the closet, which was over the gate, and presently I heard a great clamour and tramp of horse; and, looking out of the window which gave on the street in front of the house, I saw a young man as he were the rising moon on the night of fulness come riding up attended by a number of servants and soldiers who were about him on foot. He alighted at the door and entering the saloon found the lady seated on the couch; so he kissed the ground between her hands then came up to her and kissed her hands; but she would not speak to him. However, he continued patiently to humble himself, and soothe her and speak her fair, till he made his peace with her, and they lay together that night.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the scavenger continued:—Now when her husband had made his peace with the young lady, he lay with her that night; and next morning, the soldiers came for him and he mounted and rode away; whereupon she drew near to me and said, “Sawst thou yonder man?” I answered, “Yes;” and she said, “He is my husband, and I will tell thee what befel me with him. It came to pass one day that we were sitting, he and I, in the garden within the house, and behold, he rose from my side and was absent a long while, till I grew tired of waiting and said to myself:—Most like, he is in the privy. So I arose and went to the water-closet, but not finding him there, went down to the kitchen, where I saw a slave-girl; and when I enquired for him, she showed him to me lying with one of the cookmaids. Hereupon, I swore a great oath that I assuredly would do adultery with the

foulest and filthiest man in Baghdad; and the day the eunuch laid hands on thee, I had been four days going round about the city in quest of one who should answer to this description, but found none fouler nor filthier than thy good self. So I took thee and there passed between us that which Allah fore-ordained to us; and now I am quit of my oath." Then she added, "If, however, my husband return yet again to the cookmaid and lie with her, I will restore thee to thy lost place in my favours." Now when I heard these words from her lips, what while she pierced my heart with the shafts of her glances, my tears streamed forth, till my eyelids were chafed sore with weeping, and I repeated the saying of the poet:—

Grant me the kiss of that left hand ten times; ✿ And learn it hath than right hand higher grade;[185]

For 'tis but little since that same left hand ✿ Washed off Sir Reverence when ablution made.

Then she made them give me other fifty dinars (making in all four hundred gold pieces I had of her) and bade me depart. So I went 130 out from her and came hither, that I might pray Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) to make her husband return to the cookmaid, that haply I might be again admitted to her favours. When the Emir of the pilgrims heard the man's story, he set him free and said to the bystanders, "Allah upon you, pray for him, for indeed he is excusable." And men also tell the tale of

THE MOCK CALIPH.

It is related that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, was one night restless with extreme restlessness, so he summoned his Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide, and said to him, "My breast is straitened and I have a desire to divert myself to-night by walking about the streets of Baghdad and looking into folks' affairs; but with this precaution that we disguise ourselves in merchants' gear, so none shall know us." He answered, "Hearkening and obedience." They rose at once and doffing the rich raiment they wore, donned merchants' habits and sallied forth three in number, the Caliph, Ja'afar and Masrur the sworder. Then they walked from place to place, till they came to the Tigris and saw an old man sitting in a boat; so they went up to him and saluting him, said, "O Shaykh, we desire thee of thy kindness and favour to carry us a-pleasuring down the river, in this thy boat, and take this dinar to thy hire."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when they said to the old man, "We desire thee to carry us a-pleasuring in this thy boat and take this dinar;" he answered, "Who may go a-pleasuring on the Tigris? The Caliph Harun al-Rashid every night cometh down Tigris-stream in his state-barge[186] and with him one crying aloud:—Ho, ye people all, great and small, gentle and simple, men and boys, whoso is found in a boat on the Tigris by night, I will strike off his head or hang him to the mast of his craft! 131 And ye had well nigh met him; for here cometh his carrack." But the Caliph and Ja'afar said, "O Shaykh, take these two dinars, and run us under one of

yonder arches, that we may hide there till the Caliph's barge have passed." The old man replied, "Hand over your gold and rely we on Allah, the Almighty!" So he took the two dinars and embarked them in the boat; and he put off and rowed about with them awhile, when behold, the barge came down the river in mid-stream, with lighted flambeaux and cressets flaming therein. Quoth the old man, "Did not I tell you that the Caliph passed along the river every night?"; and ceased not muttering, "O Protector, remove not the veils of Thy protection!" Then he ran the boat under an arch and threw a piece of black cloth over the Caliph and his companions, who looked out from under the covering and saw, in the bows of the barge, a man holding in hand a cresset of red gold which he fed with Sumatran lign-aloes and the figure was clad in a robe of red satin, with a narrow turband of Mosul shape round on his head; and over one of his shoulders hung a sleeved cloak[187] of cramoisy satin, and on the other was a green silk bag full of the aloes-wood, with which he fed the cresset by way of fire-wood. And they sighted in the stern another man, clad like the first and bearing a like cresset, and in the barge were two hundred white slaves, standing ranged to the right and left; and in the middle a throne of red gold, whereon sat a handsome young man, like the moon, clad in a dress of black, embroidered with yellow gold. Before him they beheld a man, as he were the Wazir Ja'afar, and at his head stood an eunuch, as he were Masrur, with a drawn sword in his hand; besides a score of cup-companions. Now when the Caliph saw this, he turned and said, "O Ja'afar," and the Minister replied, "At thy service, O Prince of True Believers." Then quoth the Caliph, "Belike this is one of my sons, Al-Amin or Al-Maamun." Then he examined the young man who sat on the throne and finding him perfect in beauty and loveliness and stature and symmetric grace, said to Ja'afar, "Verily, this young man abateth nor jot nor tittle of the state of the Caliphate! See, there standeth before him one as he were thyself, O Ja'afar; yonder eunuch who standeth at his head is as he were Masrur and those courtiers as they were my own. By Allah, O Ja'afar, my reason is 132 confounded and I am filled with amazement at this matter!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph saw this spectacle his reason was confounded and he cried, "By Allah, I am filled with amazement at this matter!" and Ja'afar replied, "And I also, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful." Then the barge passed on and disappeared from sight; whereupon the boatman pushed out again into the stream, saying, "Praised be Allah for safety, since none hath fallen in with us!" Quoth the Caliph, "O, old man, doth the Caliph come down the Tigris-river every night?" The boatman answered, "Yes, O my lord; and on such wise hath he done every night this year past." "O Shaykh," rejoined Al-Rashid, "we wish thee of thy favour to await us here to-morrow night and we will give thee five golden dinars, for we are stranger folk, lodging in the quarter Al-Khandak, and

we have a mind to divert ourselves." Said the oldster, "With joy and good will!" Then the Caliph and Ja'afar and Masrur left the boatman and returned to the palace, where they doffed their merchants' habits and, donning their apparel of state, sat down each in his several stead; and came the Emirs and Wazirs and Chamberlains and Officers; and the Divan assembled and was crowded as of custom. But when day ended and all the folk had dispersed and wended each his own way, the Caliph said to his Wazir, "Rise, O Ja'afar, let us go and amuse ourselves by looking on the second Caliph." At this, Ja'afar and Masrur laughed, and the three, donning merchants' habits, went forth by a secret postern and made their way through the city, in great glee, till they came to the Tigris, where they found the greybeard sitting and awaiting them. They embarked with him in the boat and hardly had they sat down before up came the mock Caliph's barge; and, when they looked at it attentively, they saw therein two hundred Mamelukes other than those of the previous night, while the link-bearers cried aloud as of wont. Quoth the Caliph, "O Wazir, had I heard tell of this, I had not believed it; but I have seen it with my own sight." Then said he to the boatman, "Take, O Shaykh, these ten dinars and row us along abreast of them, for they are in the light and we in the shade, and we can see them and amuse ourselves by looking on them, but they cannot see us." So the man took the money and pushing off ran abreast of them in the shadow of the barge——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid said to the old man, "Take these ten dinars and row us abreast of them;" to which he replied, "I hear and I obey." And he fared with them and ceased not going in the blackness of the barge, till they came amongst the gardens that lay alongside of them and sighted a large walled enclosure; and presently, the barge cast anchor before a postern door, where they saw servants standing with a she-mule saddled and bridled. Here the mock Caliph landed and, mounting the mule, rode away with his courtiers and his cup-companions preceded by the cresset-bearers crying aloud, and followed by his household which busied itself in his service. Then Harun al-Rashid, Ja'afar and Masrur landed also and, making their way through the press of servants, walked on before them. Presently, the cresset-bearers espied them and seeing three persons in merchants' habits, and strangers to the country, took offence at them; so they pointed them out and brought them before the other Caliph, who looked at them and asked, "How came ye to this place and who brought you at this tide?" They answered, "O our lord, we are foreign merchants and far from our homes, who arrived here this day and were out a-walking to-night, and behold, ye came up and these men laid hands on us and brought us to thy presence; and this is all our story." Quoth the mock Caliph, "Since ye be stranger folk no harm shall befal you; but had ye been of Baghdad, I had struck off your heads." Then he turned to his Wazir and said to him, "Take these men

with thee; for they are our guests to-night." "To hear is to obey, O our lord," answered he; and they companied him till they came to a lofty and splendid palace set upon the firmest base; no Sultan possesseth such a place; rising from the dusty mould and upon the marges of the clouds laying hold. Its door was of Indian teak-wood inlaid with gold that glowed; and through it one passed into a royal-hall in whose 134midst was a jetting fount girt by a raised estrade. It was provided with carpets and cushions of brocade and small pillows and long settees and hanging curtains; it was furnished with a splendour that dazed the mind and dumbed the tongue, and upon the door were written these two couplets:—

A Palace whereon be blessings and praise! ✿ Which with all their beauty have robed the Days:

Where marvels and miracle-sights abound, ✿ And to write its honours the pen affrays.

The false Caliph entered with his company, and sat down on a throne of gold set with jewels and covered with a prayer-carpet of yellow silk; whilst the boon-companions took their seats and the sword-bearer of high works stood before him. Then the tables were laid and they ate; after which the dishes were removed and they washed their hands and the wine-service was set on with flagons and bowls in due order. The cup went round till it came to the Caliph, Harun al-Rashid, who refused the draught and the mock Caliph said to Ja'afar, "What mattereth thy friend that he drinketh not?" He replied, "O my lord, indeed 'tis a long while he hath drunk naught of this." Quoth the sham Caliph, "I have drink other than this, a kind of apple-wine,[188] that will suit thy companion." So he bade them bring the cider which they did forthright when the false Caliph, coming up to Harun al-Rashid, said to him, "As often as it cometh to thy turn drink thou of this." Then they continued to drink and make merry and pass the cup till the wine rose to their brains and mastered their wits;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the false Caliph and his co-sitters sat at their cups and gave not over drinking till the wine rose to their brains and mastered their wits; and Harun al-Rashid said to the Minister, "O Ja'afar, by Allah, we have no such vessels as these. Would to Heaven I knew what manner of man this youth is!" But while they were talking 135privily the young man cast a glance upon them and seeing the Wazir whisper the Caliph said, "'Tis rude to whisper." He replied, "No rudeness was meant: this my friend did but say to me:—Verily I have travelled in most countries and have caroused with the greatest of Kings and I have companied with noble captains; yet never saw I a goodlier ordering than this entertainment nor passed a more delightful night; save that the people of Baghdad are wont to say, Wine without music often leaves *you* sick." When the second Caliph heard this, he smiled pleasantly and struck with a rod he had in his hand a round gong;[189] and behold, a door opened and out came a eunuch, bearing a chair of ivory, inlaid with gold glittering fiery red and followed by a damsel of passing beauty and

loveliness, symmetry and grace. He set down the chair and the damsel seated herself on it, as she were the sun shining sheen in a sky serene. In her hand she had a lute of Hindu make, which she laid in her lap and bent down over it as a mother bendeth over her little one, and sang to it, after a prelude in four-and-twenty modes, amazing all wits. Then she returned to the first mode and to a lively measure chanted these couplets:—

Love's tongue within my heart speaks plain to thee, ✿ Telling thee clearly I am fain of thee;

Witness the fevers of a tortured heart, ✿ And ulcered eyelid tear-flood rains for thee;

God's fate o'ertaketh all created things! ✿ I knew not love till learnt Love's pain of thee.

Now when the mock Caliph heard these lines sung by the damsel, he cried with a great cry and rent his raiment to the very skirt, whereupon they let down a curtain over him and brought him a fresh robe, handsomer than the first. He put it on and sat as before, till the cup came round to him, when he struck the gong a second time and lo! a door opened and out of it came a eunuch with a chair of gold, followed by a damsel fairer than the first, bearing a lute, such as would strike the envious mute. She sat down on the chair and sang to her instrument these two couplets:—

136 How patient bide, with love in sprite of me, ✿ And tears in tempest[190] blinding sight of me?

By Allah, life has no delight of me! ✿ How gladden heart whose core is blight of me?

No sooner had the youth heard this poetry than he cried out with a loud cry and rent his raiment to the skirt: whereupon they let down the curtain over him and brought him another suit of clothes. He put it on and, sitting up as before, fell again to cheerful talk, till the cup came round to him, when he smote once more upon the gong and out came a eunuch with a chair, followed by a damsel fairer than she who forewent her. So she sat down on the chair, with a lute in her hand, and sang thereto these couplets:—

Cease ye this farness; 'bate this pride of you, ✿ To whom my heart clings, by life-tide of you!

Have ruth on hapless, mourning, lover-wretch, ✿ Desire-full, pining, passion-tried of you:

Sickness hath wasted him, whose ecstasy ✿ Prays Heaven it may be satisfied of you;

Oh fullest moons[191] that dwell in deepest heart! ✿ How can I think of aught by side of you?

Now when the young man heard these couplets, he cried out with a great cry and rent his raiment, whereupon they let fall the curtain over him and brought him other robes. Then he returned to his former case with his boon-companions and the bowl went round as before, till the cup came to him, when he struck the gong a fourth time and the door opening, out came a page-boy bearing a chair followed by a damsel. He set the chair for her 137 and she sat down thereon and taking the lute, tuned it and sang to it these couplets:—

When shall disunion and estrangement end? ✿ When shall my bygone joys again be kenned?

Yesterday we were joined in same abode; ✿ Conversing heedless of each envious friend:[192]

Trickt us that traitor Time, disjoined our lot ✿ And our waste home to desert fate condemned:

Wouldst have me, Grumbler! from my dearling fly? ✿ I find my vitals blame will not perpend:
Cease thou to censure; leave me to repine; ✿ My mind e'er findeth thoughts that pleasure lend.
O Lords[193] of me who brake our troth and plight, ✿ Deem not to lose your hold of heart and sprite!

When the false Caliph heard the girl's song, he cried out with a loud outcry and rent his raiment——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She said, When the false Caliph heard the girl's song, he cried with a loud outcry and rent his raiment and fell to the ground fainting; whereupon they would have let down the curtain over him, as of custom; but its cords stuck fast and Harun al-Rashid, after considering him carefully, saw on his body the marks of beating with palm-rods and said to Ja'afar, "By Allah, he is a handsome youth, but a foul thief!" "Whence knowest thou that, O Commander of the Faithful?" asked Ja'afar, and the Caliph answered, "Sawest thou not the whip-scars on his ribs?" Then they let fall the curtain over him and brought him a fresh dress, which he put on and sat up as before with his courtiers 138 and cup-companions. Presently he saw the Caliph and Ja'afar whispering together and said to them, "What is the matter, fair sirs?" Quoth Ja'afar, "O my lord, all is well,[194] save that this my comrade, who (as is not unknown to thee) is of the merchant-company and hath visited all the great cities and countries of the world and hath consorted with kings and men of highest consideration, saith to me:—Verily, that which our lord the Caliph hath done this night is beyond measure extravagant, never saw I any do the like doings in any country; for he hath rent such and such dresses, each worth a thousand dinars and this is surely excessive unthriftiness." Replied the second Caliph, "Ho thou, the money is my money and the stuff my stuff, and this is by way of largesse to my suite and servants; for each suit that is rent belongeth to one of my cup-companions here present, and I assign to them with each suit of clothes the sum of five hundred dinars." The Wazir Ja'afar replied, "Well is whatso thou doest, O our lord," and recited these two couplets:—

Virtue in hand of thee hath built a house, ✿ And to mankind thou dost thy wealth expose:
If an the virtues ever close their doors, ✿ That hand would be a key the lock to unclose.

Now when the young man heard these verses recited by the Minister Ja'afar, he ordered him to be gifted with a thousand dinars and a dress of honour. Then the cup went round among them and the wine was sweet to them; but, after a while quoth the Caliph to Ja'afar, "Ask him of the marks on his sides, that we may see what he will say by way of reply." Answered Ja'afar, "Softly, O my lord, be not hasty and soothe thy mind, for patience is more becoming." Rejoined the Caliph, "By the life of my head and by the revered tomb of Al-Abbas,[195] except thou ask him, I will assuredly stop thy breath!" With this the young man turned towards the Minister and said to him, "What aileth thee and thy friend to be whispering together? Tell me what is the matter with you." "It is nothing save good," replied Ja'afar; but the mock Caliph

rejoined, “I conjure thee, by Allah, 139 tell me what aileth you and hide from me nothing of your case.” Answered the Wazir, “O my lord, verily this one here saw on thy sides the marks of beating with whips and palm-fronds and marvelled thereat with exceeding marvel, saying:—How came the Caliph to be beaten?; and he would fain know the cause of this.” Now when the youth heard this, he smiled and said, “Know ye that my story is wondrous and my case marvellous; were it graven with needles on the eye-corners, it would serve as a warner to whoso would be warned.” And he sighed and repeated these couplets:—

Strange is my story, passing prodigy; ✿ By Love I swear, my ways wax strait on me!
An ye desire to hear me, listen, and ✿ Let all in this assembly silent be.
Heed ye my words which are of meaning deep, ✿ Nor lies my speech; ‘tis truest verity.
I’m slain[196] by longing and by ardent love; ✿ My slayer’s the pearl of fair virginity.
She hath a jet black eye like Hindi blade, ✿ And bowèd eyebrows shoot her archery;
My heart assures me our Imam is here, ✿ This age’s Caliph, old nobility:
Your second, Ja’afar hight, is his Wazir; ✿ A Sáhib,[197] Sahib-son of high degree:
The third is called Masrur who wields the sword: ✿ Now, if in words of mine some truth you see,
I have won every wish by this event ✿ Which fills my heart with joy and gladdest gree.

When they heard these words Ja’afar swore to him an ambiguous oath that they were not those he named, whereupon he laughed and said:—Know, O my lords, that I am not the Commander of the Faithful and that I do but style myself thus, to win my will of the sons of the city. My true name is Mohammed Ali, son of Ali the Jeweller, and my father was one of the notables of Baghdad, who left me great store of gold and silver and pearls and coral and rubies and chrysolites and other jewels, besides messuages and lands, Hammam-baths and brickeries, orchards and flower-gardens. Now as I sat in my shop one day surrounded by my eunuchs and dependents, behold, there came up a young lady, mounted on a 140 she-mule and attended by three damsels like moons. Riding up to my shop she alighted and seated herself by my side and said, “Art thou Mohammed the Jeweller?” Replied I, “Even so! I am he, thy Mameluke, thy chattel.” She asked, “Hast thou a necklace of jewels fit for me?” and I answered, “O my lady, I will show thee what I have; and lay all before thee and, if any please thee, it will be of thy slave’s good luck; if they please thee not, of his ill fortune.” Now I had by me an hundred necklaces and showed them all to her; but none of them pleased her and she said, “I want a better than those I have seen.” I had a small necklace which my father had bought at an hundred thousand dinars and whose like was not to be found with any of the great kings; so I said to her, “O my lady, I have yet one necklace of fine stones fit for bezels, the like of which none possesseth, great or small.” Said she, “Show it to me,” so I showed it to her, and she said, “This is what I wanted and what I have wished for all my life;” adding, “What is its price?” Quoth I, “It cost my father an hundred thousand dinars;” and she said, “I will give thee five

thousand dinars to thy profit." I answered, "O my lady, the necklace and its owner are at thy service and I cannot gainsay thee." But she rejoined, "Needs must thou have the profit, and I am still most grateful to thee." Then she rose without stay or delay; and, mounting the mule in haste, said to me, "O my lord, in Allah's name, favour us with thy company to receive the money; for this thy day with us is white as milk."[198] So I shut the shop and accompanied her, in all security, till we came to a house, on which were manifest the signs of wealth and rank; for its door was wrought with gold and silver and ultramarine, and thereon were written these two couplets:—

Hola, thou mansion! woe ne'er enter thee; ✿ Nor be thine owner e'er misused of Fate;

Excellent mansion to all guests art thou, ✿ When other mansions to the guest are strait.

The young lady dismounted and entered the house, bidding me sit down on the bench at the gate, till the money-changer should arrive. So I sat awhile, when behold, a damsel came out to me and said, "O my lord, enter the vestibule; for it is a dishonour 141 that thou shouldst sit at the gate." Thereupon I arose and entered the vestibule and sat down on the settle there; and, as I sat, lo! another damsel came out and said to me, "O my lord, my mistress biddeth thee enter and sit down at the door of the saloon, to receive thy money." I entered and sat down, nor had I sat a moment when behold, a curtain of silk which concealed a throne of gold was drawn aside, and I saw seated thereon the lady who had made the purchase; and round her neck she wore the necklace which looked pale and wan by the side of a face as it were the rounded moon. At her sight, my wit was troubled and my mind confounded, by reason of her exceeding beauty and loveliness; but when she saw me she rose from her throne and coming close up to me, said, "O light of mine eyes, is every handsome one like thee pitiless to his mistress?" I answered, "O my lady, beauty, all of it, is in thee and is but one of thy hidden charms." And she rejoined, "O Jeweller, know that I love thee and can hardly credit that I have brought thee hither." Then she bent towards me and I kissed her and she kissed me and, as she caressed me, drew me towards her and to her breast she pressed me.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Jeweller continued:—Then she bent towards me and kissed and caressed me; and, as she caressed me, drew me towards her and to her breast she pressed me. Now she knew by my condition that I had a mind to enjoy her; so she said to me, "O my lord, wouldst thou foregather with me unlawfully? By Allah, may he not live who would do the like of this sin and who takes pleasure in talk unclean! I am a maid, a virgin whom no man hath approached, nor am I unknown in the city. Knowest thou who I am?" Quoth I, "No, by Allah, O my lady!"; and quoth she, "I am the Lady Dunyá, daughter of Yáhyá bin Khálid the Barmecide and sister of Ja'afar, Wazir to the Caliph." Now as I heard this, I drew back from her, saying, "O my lady, it is no fault of mine if I have been over-bold with

thee; it was thou didst encourage me to aspire to thy love, by giving me access to thee." She answered, "No harm shall befal thee, and needs must thou attain 142 thy desire in the only way pleasing to Allah. I am my own mistress and the Kazi shall act as my guardian in consenting to the marriage contract; for it is my will that I be to thee wife and thou be to me man." Then she sent for the Kazi and the witnesses and busied herself with making ready; and, when they came, she said to them, "Mohammed Ali, bin Ali the Jeweller, seeketh me in wedlock and hath given me the necklace to my marriage-settlement; and I accept and consent." So they wrote out the contract of marriage between us; and ere I went in to her the servants brought the wine-furniture and the cups passed round after the fairest fashion and the goodliest ordering; and, when the wine mounted to our heads, she ordered a damsel, a lute-player,[199] to sing. So she took the lute and sang to a pleasing and stirring motive these couplets:—

He comes; and fawn and branch and moon delight these eyne ✿ Fie[200] on his heart who sleeps o' nights without repine;

Fair youth, for whom Heaven willed to quench in cheek one light, ✿ And left another light on other cheek bright li'en:

I fain finesse my chiders when they mention him, ✿ As though the hearing of his name I would decline;

And willing ear I lend when they of other speak; ✿ Yet would my soul within outflow in floods of brine:

Beauty's own prophet, he is all a miracle ✿ Of heavenly grace, and greatest shows his face for sign:[201]

To prayer Bilál-like cries that Mole upon his cheek ✿ To ward from pearly brow all eyes of ill design:[202]

The censors of their ignorance would my love dispel ✿ But after Faith I can't at once turn Infidel.

We were ravished by the sweet music she made striking the strings, and the beauty of the verses she sang; and the other damsels went on to sing and to recite one after another, till ten 143 had so done; when the Lady Dunya took the lute and playing a lively measure, chanted these couplets:—

I swear by swayings of that form so fair, ✿ Aye from thy parting fiery pangs I bear:

Pity a heart which burneth in thy love, ✿ O bright as fullest moon in blackest air!

Vouchsafe thy boons to him who ne'er will cease ✿ In light of wine-cup all thy charms declare,

Amid the roses which with varied hues ✿ Are to the myrtle-bush[203] a mere despair.

When she had finished her verse; I took the lute from her hands and, playing a quaint and no vulgar prelude sang the following verses:—

Laud to my Lord who gave thee all of loveliness; ✿ Myself amid thy thralls I willingly confess:

O thou, whose eyes and glances captivate mankind, ✿ Pray that I 'scape those arrows shot with all thy stress!

Two hostile rivals water and enflaming fire ✿ Thy cheek hath married, which for marvel I profess:

Thou art Sa'ír in heart of me and eke Na'ím;[204] ✿ Thou *agro-dolce*, eke heart's sweetest bitterness.

When she heard this my song she rejoiced with exceeding joy; then, dismissing her slave-women, she brought me to a most goodly place, where they had spread us a bed of various colours. She did off her clothes and I had a lover's privacy of her and

found her a pearl unpierced and a filly unridden. So I rejoiced in her and never in my born days spent I a more delicious night.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Mohammed bin Ali the Jeweller continued:—So I went in unto the Lady Dunya, daughter of Yahya bin Khalid the Barmecide, and I found 144 her a pearl unthridden and a filly unridden. So I rejoiced in her and repeated these couplets:—

O Night here stay! I want no morning light; ✿ My lover's face to me is lamp and light:[2051]

As ring of ring-dove round his neck's my arm; ✿ And made my palm his mouth-veil; and, twas right.

This be the crown of bliss, and ne'er we'll cease ✿ To clip, nor care to be in other plight.

And I abode with her a whole month, forsaking shop and family and home, till one day she said to me, "O light of my eyes, O my lord Mohammed, I have determined to go to the Hammam to-day; so sit thou on this couch and rise not from thy place, till I return to thee." "I hear and I obey," answered I, and she made me swear to this; after which she took her women and went off to the bath. But by Allah, O my brothers, she had not reached the head of the street ere the door opened and in came an old woman, who said to me, "O my lord Mohammed, the Lady Zubaydah biddeth thee to her, for she hath heard of thy fine manners and accomplishments and skill in singing." I answered, "By Allah, I will not rise from my place, till the Lady Dunya come back." Rejoined the old woman, "O my lord, do not anger the Lady Zubaydah with thee and vex her so as to make her thy foe: nay, rise up and speak with her and return to thy place." So I rose at once and followed her into the presence of the Lady Zubaydah and, when I entered her presence she said to me, "O light of the eye, art thou the Lady Dunya's beloved?" "I am thy Mameluke, thy chattel," replied I. Quoth she, "Sooth spake he who reported thee possessed of beauty and grace and good breeding and every fine quality; indeed, thou surpassest all praise and all report. But now sing to me, that I may hear thee." Quoth I, "Hearkening and obedience;" so she brought me a lute, and I sang to it these couplets:—

The hapless lover's heart is of his wooing weary grown; ✿ And hand of sickness wasted him till naught but skin and bone:

Who should be amid the riders which the haltered camels urge, ✿ But that same lover whose beloved doth in the litters wone:

145 To Allah's charge I leave that moon-like Beauty in your tents ✿ Whom my heart loves, albe my glance on her may ne'er be thrown.

Now she is fain; then she is fierce: how sweet her coyness shows; ✿ Yea, sweet whatever doth or saith to lover lovèd one!

When I had finished my song she said to me, "Allah assain thy body and thy voice! Verily, thou art perfect in beauty and good breeding and singing. But now rise and return to thy place, ere the Lady Dunya come back, lest she find thee not and be wroth

with thee." Then I kissed the ground before her and the old woman forewent me till I reached the door whence I came. So I entered and, going up to the couch, found that my wife had come back from the bath and was lying asleep there. Seeing this I sat down at her feet and rubbed them; whereupon she opened her eyes and seeing me, drew up both her feet and gave me a kick that threw me off the couch,[206] saying, "O traitor, thou hast been false to thine oath and hast perjured thyself. Thou swarest to me that thou wouldst not rise from thy place; yet didst thou break thy promise and go to the Lady Zubaydah. By Allah, but that I fear public scandal, I would pull down her palace over her head!" Then said she to her black slave, "O Sawáb, arise and strike off this lying traitor's head, for we have no further need of him." So the slave came up to me and, tearing a strip from his skirt, bandaged with it my eyes[207] and would have struck off my head;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Mohammed the Jeweller continued:—So the slave came up to me and, tearing a strip from his skirt, bandaged with it my eyes and would have struck off my head; but all her women, great and small, rose and came up to her and said to her, "O our lady, this is not the first 146 who hath erred: indeed, he knew not thy humour and hath done thee no offence deserving death." Replied she, "By Allah, I must needs set my mark on him." And she bade them bash me; so they beat me on my ribs and the marks ye saw are the scars of that fustigation. Then she ordered them to cast me out, and they carried me to a distance from the house and threw me down like a log. After a time I rose and dragged myself little by little to my own place, where I sent for a surgeon and showed him my hurts; and he comforted me and did his best to cure me. As soon as I was recovered I went to the Hammam and, as my pains and sickness had left me, I repaired to my shop and took and sold all that was therein. With the proceeds, I bought me four hundred white slaves, such as no King ever got together, and caused two hundred of them to ride out with me every day. Then I made me yonder barge whereon I spent five thousand gold pieces; and styled myself Caliph and appointed each of my servants to the charge of some one of the Caliph's officers and clad him in official habit. Moreover, I made proclamation, "Whoso goeth a-pleasuring on the Tigris by night, I will strike off his head, without ruth or delay;" and on such wise have I done this whole year past, during which time I have heard no news of the lady neither happened upon any trace of her. Then wept he copiously and repeated these couplets:—

By Allah! while the days endure ne'er shall forget her I, ✿ Nor draw to any nigh save those who draw her to me nigh:

Like to the fullest moon her form and favour show to me; ✿ Laud to her All-creating Lord, laud to the Lord on high!

She left me full of mourning, sleepless, sick with pine and pain ✿ And ceaseth not my heart to yearn her mystery[208] to espy.

Now when Harun al-Rashid heard the young man's story and knew the passion and transport and love-lowe that afflicted him, he was moved to compassion and wonder and said, "Glory be to Allah, who hath appointed to every effect a cause!" Then they craved the young man's permission to depart; which being granted, they took leave of him, the Caliph purposing to do him justice meet, and him with the utmost munificence entreat; and they returned to the palace of the Caliphate, where they changed clothes 147 for others befitting their state and sat down, whilst Masrur the Sworder of High Justice stood before them. After awhile, quoth the Caliph to Ja'afar, "O Wazir, bring me the young man"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the Caliph to his Minister, "Bring me the young man with whom we were last night." "I hear and obey," answered Ja'afar and, going to the youth, saluted him, saying, "Obey the summons of the Commander of the Faithful, the Caliph Harun al-Rashid." So he returned with him to the palace, in great anxiety by reason of the summons; and, going in to the King, kissed ground before him; and offered up a prayer for the endurance of his glory and prosperity, for the accomplishment of his desires, for the continuance of his beneficence and for the cessation of evil and punishment; ordering his speech as best he might and ending by saying, "Peace be on thee, O Prince of True Believers and Protector of the folk of the Faith!" Then he repeated these two couplets:—

Kiss thou his fingers which no fingers are; ✿ Keys of our daily bread those fingers ken:

And praise his actions which no actions are; ✿ But precious necklaces round necks of men.

So the Caliph smiled in his face and returned his salute, looking on him with the eye of favour; then he bade him draw near and sit down before him and said to him, "O Mohammed Ali, I wish thee to tell me what befel thee last night, for it was strange and passing strange." Quoth the youth, "Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful, give me the kerchief of immunity, that my dread may be appeased and my heart eased." Replied the Caliph, "I promise thee safety from fear and woes." So the young man told him his story from first to last, whereby the Caliph knew him to be a lover and severed from his beloved and said to him, "Desirest thou that I restore her to thee?" "This were of the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful," answered the youth and repeated these two couplets:—

148 Ne'er cease thy gate be Ka'abah to mankind; ✿ Long may its threshold dust man's brow beseem!

That o'er all countries it may be proclaimed, ✿ This is the Place and thou art Ibrahim.[209]

Thereupon the Caliph turned to his Minister and said to him, "O Ja'afar, bring me thy sister, the Lady Dunya, daughter of the Wazir Yahya bin Khalid!" "I hear and I obey," answered he and fetched her without let or delay. Now when she stood before the

Caliph he said to her, "Dost thou know who this is?"; and she replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, how should women have knowledge of men?"[2101] So the Caliph smiled and said, "O Dunya, this is thy beloved, Mohammed bin Ali the Jeweller. We are acquainted with his case, for we have heard the whole story from beginning to end, and have apprehended its inward and its outward; and it is no more hidden from me, for all it was kept in secrecy." Replied she, "O Commander of the Faithful, this was written in the Book of Destiny; I crave the forgiveness of Almighty Allah for the wrong I have wrought, and pray thee to pardon me of thy favour." At this the Caliph laughed and, summoning the Kazi and witnesses, renewed the marriage-contract between the Lady Dunya and her husband, Mohammed Ali son of the Jeweller whereby there betided them, both her and him the utmost felicity, and to their enviers mortification and misery. Moreover, he made Mohammed Ali one of his boon-companions, and they abode in joy and cheer and gladness, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies. And men also relate the pleasant tale of

ALI THE PERSIAN.

It is said that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, being restless one night, sent for his Wazir and said to him, "O Ja'afar, I am sore wakeful and heavy-hearted this night, and I desire of thee what may solace my spirit and cause my breast to broaden with amusement." Quoth Ja'afar, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have a friend, by name Ali the Persian, who hath store of tales and pleasant stories, such as lighten the heart and make care depart." Quoth the Caliph, "Fetch him to me," and quoth Ja'afar, "Hearkening and obedience;" and, going out from before him, sent to seek Ali the Persian and when he came said to him, "Answer the summons of the Commander of the Faithful." "To hear is to obey," answered Ali;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Persian replied, "To hear is to obey;" and at once followed the Wazir into the presence of the Caliph who bade him be seated and said to him, "O Ali, my heart is heavy within me this night and it hath come to my ear that thou hast great store of tales and anecdotes; so I desire of thee that thou let me hear what will relieve my despondency and brighten my melancholy." Said he, "O Commander of the Faithful, shall I tell thee what I have seen with my eyes or what I have heard with my ears?" He replied, "An thou have seen aught worth the telling, let me hear that." Replied Ali:—Hearkening and obedience. Know thou, O Commander of the Faithful, that some years ago I left this my native city of Baghdad on a journey, having with me a lad who carried a light leathern bag. Presently we came to a certain city, where, as I was buying and selling behold, a rascally Kurd fell on me and seized my wallet perforce, saying, "This is my

bag, and all which is in it is my property." Thereupon, I cried aloud "Ho Moslems,[211] one and all, deliver me from the hand of the vilest of 150 oppressors!" But the folk said, "Come, both of you, to the Kazi and abide ye by his judgement with joint consent." So I agreed to submit myself to such decision and we both presented ourselves before the Kazi, who said, "What bringeth you hither and what is your case and your quarrel?" Quoth I, "We are men at difference, who appeal to thee and make complaint and submit ourselves to thy judgement." Asked the Kazi, "Which of you is the complainant?"; so the Kurd came forward[212] and said, "Allah preserve our lord the Kazi! Verily, this bag is my bag and all that is in it is my swag. It was lost from me and I found it with this man mine enemy." The Kazi asked, "When didst thou lose it?"; and the Kurd answered, "But yesterday, and I passed a sleepless night by reason of its loss." "And it be thy bag," quoth the Kazi, "tell me what is in it." Quoth the Kurd, "There were in my bag two silver styles for eye-powder and antimony for the eyes and a kerchief for the hands, wherein I had laid two gilt cups and two candlesticks. Moreover it contained two tents and two platters and two spoons and a cushion and two leather rugs and two ewers and a brass tray and two basins and a cooking-pot and two water-jars and a ladle and a sacking-needle and a she-cat and two bitches and a wooden trencher and two sacks and two saddles and a gown and two fur pelisses and a cow and two calves and a she-goat and two sheep and an ewe and two lambs and two green pavilions and a camel and two she-camels and a lioness and two lions and a she-bear and two jackals and a mattrass and two sofas and an upper chamber and two saloons and a portico and two sitting-rooms and a kitchen with two doors and a company of Kurds who will bear witness that the bag is my bag." Then said the Kazi to me, "And thou, sirrah, what sayest thou?" So I came forward, O commander of the Faithful (and indeed the Kurd's speech had bewildered me) and said, "Allah advance our lord the Kazi! Verily, there was naught in this my wallet, save a little ruined tenement and another without a door and a dog-house and a boys' school and youths playing dice and tents and tent-ropes and the cities of Bassorah and Baghdad and the palace of Shaddad bin Ad and an ironsmith's forge and a fishing-net and cudgels and pickets and girls and boys and a thousand pimps who will testify that the bag is my bag." Now when the Kurd heard my words, he wept and 151 wailed and said, "O my lord the Kazi, this my bag is known and what is in it is a matter of renown; for in this bag there be castles and citadels and cranes and beasts of prey and men playing chess and draughts. Furthermore, in this my bag is a brood-mare and two colts and a stallion and two blood-steeds and two long lances; and it containeth eke a lion and two hares and a city and two villages and a whore and two sharking panders and an hermaphrodite and two gallows-birds and a blind man and two wights with good sight and a limping cripple and two lameters and a Christian ecclesiastic and two deacons and a patriarch and two monks and a Kazi and two assessors, who will be evidence that the bag is my bag." Quoth the Kazi to me,

"And what sayst thou, O Ali?" So, O Commander of the Faithful, being filled with rage, I came forward and said, "Allah keep our lord the Kazi!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Persian continued:—So being filled with rage, O Commander of the Faithful, I came forward and said, "Allah keep our lord the Kazi! I had in this my wallet a coat of mail and a broadsword and armouries and a thousand fighting rams and a sheep-fold with its pasturage and a thousand barking dogs and gardens and vines and flowers and sweet smelling herbs and figs and apples and statues and pictures and flagons and goblets and fair-faced slave-girls and singing-women and marriage-feasts and tumult and clamour and great tracts of land and brothers of success, which were robbers, and a company of daybreak-raiders with swords and spears and bows and arrows and true friends and dear ones and intimates and comrades and men imprisoned for punishment and cup-companions and a drum and flutes and flags and banners and boys and girls and brides (in all their wedding bravery), and singing-girls and five Abyssinian women and three Hindi maidens and four damsels of Al-Medinah and a score of Greek girls and eighty Kurdish dames and seventy Georgian ladies and Tigris and Euphrates and a fowling net and a flint and steel and many-columned Iram and a thousand rogues and pimps and horse-courses and stables and 152 mosques and baths and a builder and a carpenter and a plank and a nail and a black slave with his flageolet and a captain and a caravan-leader and towns and cities and an hundred thousand dinars and Cufa and Anbár[213] and twenty chests full of stuffs and twenty store-houses for victual and Gaza and Askalon and from Damietta to Al-Sawán[214]; and the palace of Kisra Anushirwán and the kingdom of Solomon and from Wadi Nu'umán to the land of Khorasán and Balkh and Ispahán and from India to the Sudán. Therein also (may Allah prolong the life of our lord the Kazi!) are doublets and cloths and a thousand sharp razors to shave off the Kazi's beard, except he fear my resentment and adjudge the bag to be my bag." Now when the Kazi heard what I and the Kurd avouched, he was confounded and said, "I see ye twain be none other than two pestilent fellows, atheistical villains who make sport of Kazis and magistrates and stand not in fear of reproach. Never did tongue tell nor ear hear aught more extraordinary than that which ye pretend. By Allah, from China to Shajarat Umm Ghaylán, nor from Fars to Sudan nor from Wadi Nu'uman to Khorasan, was ever heard the like of what ye avouch or credited the like of what ye affirm. Say, fellows, be this bag a bottomless sea or the Day of Resurrection that shall gather together the just and unjust?" Then the Kazi bade them open the bag; so I opened it and behold, there was in it bread and a lemon and cheese and olives. So I threw the bag down before the Kurd and ganged my gait. Now when the Caliph heard this tale from Ali the Persian, he laughed till he fell on his back and made him a handsome present.[215] And men also relate a

TALE OF HARUN AL-RASHID AND THE SLAVE-GIRL AND THE IMAM ABU YUSUF.

It is said that Ja'afar the Barmecide was one night carousing with Al-Rashid, who said, "O Ja'afar, it hath reached me that thou hast bought such and such a slave-girl. Now I have long sought her for she is passing fair; and my heart is taken up with love of her, so do thou sell her to me." He replied, "I will not sell her, O Commander of the Faithful." Quoth he, "Then give her to me." Quoth the other, "Nor will I give her." Then Al-Rashid exclaimed, "Be Zubaydah triply divorced an thou shall not either sell or give her to me!" Then Ja'afar, exclaimed, "Be my wife triply divorced an I either sell or give her to thee!" After awhile they recovered from their tipsiness and were aware of having fallen into a grave dilemma, but knew not by what device to extricate themselves. Then said Al-Rashid, "None can help us in this strait but Abú Yúsuf."[216] So they sent for him, and this was in the middle of the night; and when the messenger reached him, he arose in alarm, saying to himself, "I should not be sent for at this tide and time, save by reason of some question of moment to Al-Islam." So he went out in haste and mounted his she-mule, saying to his servant, "Take the mule's nose-bag with thee; it may be she hath not finished her feed; and when we come to the Caliph's palace, put the bag on her, that she may eat what is left of her fodder, during the last of the night." And the man replied, "I hear and obey." Now when the Imam was admitted to the presence, Al-Rashid rose to receive him and seated him on the couch beside himself (where he was wont to seat none save the Kazi), and said to him, "We have not sent for thee at this untimely time and tide save to advise us upon a grave 154 matter, which is such and such and wherewith we know not how to deal." And he expounded to him the case. Abu Yusuf answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, this is the easiest of things." Then he turned to Ja'afar and said, "O Ja'afar, sell half of her to the Commander of the Faithful and give him the other half; so shall ye both be quit of your oaths." The Caliph was delighted with this and both did as he prescribed. Then said Al-Rashid, "Bring me the girl at once,"— —And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid commanded, "Bring me the girl at once, for I long for her exceedingly." So they brought her and the Caliph said to Abu Yusuf, "I have a mind to have her forthright; for I cannot bear to abstain from her during the prescribed period of purification; now how is this to be done?" Abu Yusuf replied, "Bring me one of thine own male slaves who hath never been manumitted." So they brought one and Abu Yusuf said, "Give me leave to marry her to him; then let him divorce her before consummation; and thus

shall it be lawful for thee to lie with her before purification." This second expedient pleased the Caliph yet more than the first; he sent for the Mameluke and, whenas he came, said to the Kazi, "I authorise thee to marry her to him." So the Imam proposed the marriage to the slave, who accepted it and performed the ceremony; after which he said to the slave, "Divorce her, and thou shalt have an hundred dinars." But he replied, "I won't do this;" and the Imam went on to increase his offer, and the slave to refuse till he bid him a thousand dinars. Then the man asked him, "Doth it rest with me to divorce her, or with thee or with the Commander of the Faithful?" He answered, "It is in thy hand." "Then by Allah," quoth the slave, "I will never do it; no, never!" Hearing these words the Caliph was exceeding wroth and said to the Imam, "What is to be done, O Abu Yusuf?" Replied he, "Be not concerned, O Commander of the Faithful; the thing is easy. Make this slave the damsel's chattel." Quoth Al-Rashid, "I give him to her;" and the Imam said to the girl, "Say:—I accept." So she said, "I accept;" whereon quoth Abu Yusuf, "I pronounce separation from bed and board and divorce between them, 155 for that he hath become her property, and so the marriage is annulled." With this, Al-Rashid rose to his feet and exclaimed, "It is the like of thee that shall be Kazi in my time." Then he called for sundry trays of gold and emptied them before Abu Yusuf, to whom he said, "Hast thou wherein to put this?" The Imam bethought him of the mule's nose-bag; so he sent for it and, filling it with gold, took it and went home. And on the morrow, he said to his friends, "There is no easier nor shorter road to the goods of this world and the next, than that of religious learning; for, see, I have gotten all this money by answering two or three questions." So consider thou, O polite reader,[217] the pleasantness of this anecdote, for it compriseth divers goodly features, amongst which are the complaisance of Ja'afar to Al-Rashid, and the wisdom of the Caliph who chose such a Kazi and the excellent learning of Abu Yusuf, may Almighty Allah have mercy on their souls one and all! And they also tell the

TALE OF THE LOVER WHO FEIGNED HIMSELF A THIEF.

When Khálid ibn Abdallah al-Kasri[218] was Emir of Bassorah, there came to him one day a company of men dragging a youth of exceeding beauty and lofty bearing and perfumed attire; whose aspect expressed good breeding, abundant wit and dignity of the gravest. They brought him before the Governor, who asked what it was and they replied, "This fellow is a thief, whom we caught last night in our dwelling-house." Whereupon Khalid looked at him and was pleased with his well-favouredness and elegant aspect; so he said to the others, "Loose him," and going up to the young man, asked what he had to say for himself. He replied, "Verily the folk have spoken truly and the case is as they have said." Quoth Khalid, "And what moved thee to this and thou so noble of port and comely of mien?" Quoth the 156 other "The lust after

worldly good, and the ordinance of Allah (extolled and exalted be He!).” Rejoined Khalid, “Be thy mother bereaved of thee![219] Hadst thou not, in thy fair face and sound sense and good breeding, what should restrain thee from thieving?” Answered the young man, “O Emir, leave this talk and proceed to what Almighty Allah hath ordained; this is what my hands have earned, and, ‘God is not unjust towards mankind.’”[220] So Khalid was silent awhile considering the matter; then he bade the young man draw near him and said, “Verily, thy confession before witnesses perplexeth me, for I cannot believe thee to be a thief: haply thou hast some story that is other than one of theft; and if so tell it me.” Replied the youth, “O Emir, imagine naught other than what I have confessed to in thy presence; for I have no tale to tell save that verily I entered these folks’ house and stole what I could lay hands on, and they caught me and took the stuff from me and carried me before thee.” Then Khalid bade clap him in gaol and commanded a crier to cry throughout Bassorah, “O yes! O yes! Whoso be minded to look upon the punishment of such an one, the thief, and the cutting-off of his hand, let him be present to-morrow morning at such a place!” Now when the young man found himself in prison, with irons on his feet, he sighed heavily and with tears streaming from his eyes extemporised these couplets:—

When Khálid menaced off to strike my hand ✿ If I refuse to tell him of her case;
Quoth I, “Far, far fro’ me that I should tell ✿ A love, which ever shall my heart engrace;
Loss of my hand for sin I have confessed ✿ To me were easier than to shame her face.”

The warders heard him and went and told Khalid who, when it was dark night, sent for the youth and conversed with him. He found him clever and well-bred, intelligent, lively and a pleasant companion; so he ordered him food and he ate. Then after an 157 hour’s talk said Khalid, “I know indeed thou hast a story to tell that is no thief’s; so when the Kazi shall come to-morrow morning and shall question thee about this robbery, do thou deny the charge of theft and avouch what may avert the pain and penalty of cutting off thy hand; for the Apostle (whom Allah bless and keep!) saith:—In cases of doubt, eschew punishment.” Then he sent him back to prison——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Khalid, after conversing with the youth, sent him back to prison, where he passed the night. And when morning dawned the folk assembled to see his hand cut off, nor was there a soul in Bassorah, man or woman, but was present to look upon the punishment of that handsome youth. Then Khalid mounted in company of the notables of the city and others; and, summoning all four Kazis, sent for the young man, who came hobbling and stumbling in his fetters. There was none saw him but wept over him and the women all lifted up their voices in lamentation as for the dead. Then the Kazi bade silence the women and said to the prisoner, “These folk avouch that thou didst enter their dwelling-house and steal their goods: belike thou stolest less than a quarter dinar[221]?” Replied he, “Nay, I

stole that and more." "Peradventure," rejoined the Kazi, "thou art partner with the folk in some of the goods?" Quoth the young man; "Not so: it was all theirs, and I had no right in it." At this the Khalid was wroth and rose and smote him on the face with his whip, applying to his own case this couplet:—

Man wills his wish to him accorded be; ✿ But Allah naught accords save what He wills.

Then he called for the butcher to do the work, who came and drew forth his knife and taking the prisoner's hand set the blade to it, when, behold, a damsel pressed through the crowd of women 158 clad in tattered clothes,[222] and cried out and threw herself on the young man. Then she unveiled and showed a face like the moon; whereupon the people raised a mighty clamour and there was like to have been a riot amongst them and a violent scene. But she cried out her loudest, saying, "I conjure thee, by Allah, O Emir, hasten not to cut off this man's hand, till thou have read what is in this scroll!" So saying, she gave him a scroll, and Khalid took it and opened it and read therein these couplets:—

"Ah Khalid! this one is a slave of love distraught, ✿ And these bowed eyelashes sent shaft that caused his grief:

Shot him an arrow sped by eyes of mine, for he, ✿ Wedded to burning love, of ills hath no relief:

He hath avowed a deed he never did, the while ✿ Deeming this better than disgrace of lover lief:

Bear then, I pray, with this distracted lover mine ✿ Whose noble nature falsely calls himself a thief!"

When Khalid had read these lines; he withdrew himself from the people and summoned the girl and questioned her; and she told him that the young man was her lover and she his mistress; and that thinking to visit her he came to the dwelling of her people and threw a stone into the house, to warn her of his coming. Her father and brothers heard the noise of the stone and sallied out on him; but he, hearing them coming, caught up all the household stuff and made himself appear a robber to cover his mistress's honour. "Now when they saw him they seized him (continued she), crying:—A thief! and brought him before thee, whereupon he confessed to the robbery and persisted in his confession, that he might spare me disgrace; and this he did, making himself a thief, of the exceeding nobility and generosity of his nature." Khalid answered, "He is indeed worthy to have his desire;" and, calling the young man to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he sent for the girl's father and bespoke him, saying, "O Shaykh, we thought to carry out the law of mutilation in the case of this young man; but Allah (to whom be Honour and Glory!) hath preserved us from this, and I now adjudge him the sum of ten thousand dirhams, for that he would have given his hand for the preservation of thine honour and that of thy daughter and for the sparing of shame to you both. Moreover, 159 I adjudge other ten thousand dirhams to thy daughter, for that she made known to me the truth of the case; and I ask thy leave to marry her to him." Rejoined the old man, "O Emir, thou hast my consent." So Khalid praised Allah and thanked Him and improved the occasion by preaching a goodly sermon and a prayerful;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Khalid praised Allah and thanked Him and improved the occasion by preaching a goodly sermon and a prayerful; after which he said to the young man, “I give thee to wife the damsel, such an one here present, with her own permission and her father’s consent; and her wedding settlement shall be this money, to wit, ten thousand dirhams.” “I accept this marriage at thy hands,” replied the youth; and Khalid bade them carry the money on brass trays in procession to the young man’s house, whilst the people dispersed, fully satisfied. “And surely (quoth he who tells the tale[223]) never saw I a rarer day than this, for that it began with tears and annoy; and it ended with smiles and joy.” And in contrast of this story is this piteous tale of

JA’AFAR THE BARMECIDE AND THE BEAN-SELLER.

When Harun al-Rashid crucified Ja’afar the Barmecide[224] he commanded that all who wept or made moan for him should also be crucified; so the folk abstained from that. Now it chanced that a wild Arab, who dwelt in a distant wold, used every year to bring to 160 the aforesaid Ja’afar an ode[225] in his honour, for which he rewarded him with a thousand dinars; and the Badawi took them and, returning to his own country, lived upon them, he and his family, for the rest of the year. Accordingly, he came with his ode at the wonted time and, finding that Ja’afar had been crucified, betook himself to the place where his body was hanging, and there made his camel kneel down and wept with sore weeping and mourned with grievous mourning; and he recited his ode and fell asleep. Presently Ja’afar the Barmecide appeared to him in a vision and said, “Verily thou hast wearied thyself to come to us and findest us as thou seest; but go to Bassorah and ask for a man there whose name is such and such, one of the merchants of the town, and say to him:—Ja’afar, the Barmecide, saluteth thee and biddeth thee give me a thousand dinars, by the token of the bean.” Now when the wild Arab awoke, he repaired to Bassorah, where he sought out the merchant and found him and repeated to him what Ja’afar had said in the dream; whereupon he wept with weeping so sore that he was like to depart the world. Then he welcomed the Badawi and seated him by his side and made his stay pleasant and entertained him three days as an honoured guest; and when he was minded to depart he gave him a thousand and five hundred dinars, saying, “The thousand are what is commanded to thee, and the five hundred are a gift from me to thee; and every year thou shalt have of me a thousand gold pieces.” Now when the Arab was about to take leave, he said to the merchant, “Allah upon thee, tell me the story of the bean, that I may know the origin of all this.” He answered:—In the early part of my life I was poor and hawked hot beans[226] about the streets of Baghdad to 161 keep me alive. So I went out one raw and

rainy day, without clothes enough on my body to protect me from the weather; now shivering for excess of cold and now stumbling into the pools of rain-water, and altogether in so piteous a plight as would make me shudder with goose-skin to look upon. But it chanced that Ja'afar that day was seated with his officers and his concubines, in an upper chamber overlooking the street when his eyes fell on me; so he took pity on my case and, sending one of his dependents to fetch me to him, said as soon as he saw me, "Sell thy beans to my people." So I began to mete out the beans with a measure I had by me; and each who took a measure of beans filled the measure with gold pieces till all my store was gone and my basket was clean empty. Then I gathered together the gold I had gotten, and Ja'afar said to me, "Hast thou any beans left?" "I know not," answered I, and then sought in the basket, but found only one bean. So Ja'afar took from me the single bean and, splitting it in twain, kept one half himself and gave the other to one of his concubines, saying, "For how much wilt thou buy this half bean?" She replied, "For the tale of all this gold twice-told;" whereat I was confounded and said to myself, "This is impossible." But, as I stood wondering, behold, she gave an order to one of her handmaids and the girl brought me the sum of the collected monies twice-told. Then said Ja'afar, "And I will buy the half I have by me for double the sum of the whole," presently adding, "Now take the price of thy bean." And he gave an order to one of his servants, who gathered together the whole of the money and laid it in my basket; and I took it and went my ways. Then I betook myself to Bassorah, where I traded with the monies and Allah prospered me amply, to Him be the praise and the thanks! So, if I give thee every year a thousand dinars of the bounty of Ja'afar, it will in no wise injure me. Consider then the munificence of Ja'afar's nature and how he was praised both alive and dead, the mercy of Allah Almighty be upon him! And men also recount the tale of

ABU MOHAMMED HIGHT LAZYBONES.

It is told that Harun al-Rashid was sitting one day on the throne of the Caliphate, when there came in to him a youth of his eunuchry, bearing a crown of red gold, set with pearls and rubies and all manner of other gems and jewels, such as money might not buy; and, bussing the ground between his hands, said, "O Commander of the Faithful, the Lady Zubaydah kisseth the earth before thee"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say. Whereupon quoth her sister Dunyazad, "How pleasant is thy tale and profitable; and how sweet is thy speech and how delectable!" "And where is this," replied Shahrazad, "compared with what I shall tell you next night an I live and the King grant me leave!" Thereupon quoth the King to himself, "By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the end of her tale."

Now when it was the Three Hundredth Night,

Quoth Dunyazad, “Favour us, O my sister, with thy tale,” and she replied, “With joy and good will, if the King accord me leave;” whereupon the King said, “Tell thy tale, O Shahrazad.” So she pursued:—It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth said to the Caliph, “The Lady Zubaydah kisseth the earth before thee and saith to thee, Thou knowest she hath bidden make this crown, which lacketh a great jewel for its dome-top; and she hath made search among her treasures, but cannot find a jewel of size to suit her mind.” Quoth the Caliph to his Chamberlains and Viceregents, “Make search for a great jewel, such as Zubaydah desireth.” So they sought, but found nothing befitting her and told the Caliph who, vexed and annoyed thereat, exclaimed, “How am I Caliph and King of the Kings of the earth and cannot find so small a matter as a jewel? Woe to you! Ask of the merchants.” So they enquired of the traders, who replied, “Our lord the Caliph will not find a jewel such as he requireth save with a man of Bassorah, by name Abú Mohammed hight Lazybones.” Thereupon they acquainted the Caliph with this and he bade his Wazir Ja’afar send a note to the Emir Mohammed 163 al-Zubaydí, Governor of Bassorah, commanding him to equip Abu Mohammed Lazybones and bring him into the presence of the Commander of the Faithful. The Minister accordingly wrote a note to that effect and despatched it by Masrur, who set out forthright for the city of Bassorah, and went in to the Emir Mohammed al-Zubaydi, who rejoiced in him and treated him with the highmost honour. Then Masrur read him the mandate of the Prince of True Believers, Harun al-Rashid, to which he replied, “I hear and I obey,” and forthwith despatched him, with a company of his followers, to Abu Mohammed’s house. When they reached it, they knocked at the door, whereupon a page came out and Masrur said to him, “Tell thy lord, The Commander of the Faithful summoneth thee.” The servant went in and told his master, who came out and found Masrur, the Caliph’s Chamberlain, and a company of the Governor’s men at the door. So he kissed ground before Masrur and said, “I hear and obey the summons of the Commander of the Faithful; but first enter ye my house.” They replied, “We cannot do that, save in haste; even as the Prince of True Believers commanded us, for he awaiteth thy coming.” But he said, “Have patience with me a little, till I set my affairs in order.” So after much pressure and abundant persuasion, they entered the house with him and found the vestibule hung with curtains of azure brocade, purfled with red gold, and Abu Mohammed Lazybones bade one of his servants carry Masrur to the private Hammam. Now this bath was in the house and Masrur found its walls and floors of rare and precious marbles, wrought with gold and silver, and its waters mingled with rose-water. Then the servants served Masrur and his company with the perfection of service; and, on their going forth of the Hammam, clad them in robes of honour, brocade-work interwoven with gold. And after leaving the bath Masrur and his men went in to Abu Mohammed Lazybones and found him seated in his upper chamber; and over his head hung curtains of gold-brocade, wrought with pearls and jewels, and the pavilion was spread with cushions, embroidered in red gold. Now the

owner was sitting softly upon a quilted cloth covering a settee inlaid with stones of price; and, when he saw Masrur, he went forward to meet him and bidding him welcome, seated him by his side. Then he called for the food-trays; so they brought them, and when Masrur saw the tables, he exclaimed, "By Allah, never did I behold the like of these appointments in the palace of the 164 Commander of the Faithful!" For indeed the trays contained every manner of meat all served in dishes of gilded porcelain.[227] So we ate and drank and made merry till the end of the day (quoth Masrur) when the host gave to each and every of us five thousand dinars; and on the morrow he clad us in dresses of honour of green and gold and entreated us with the utmost worship. Then said Masrur to him, "We can tarry no longer for fear of the Caliph's displeasure." Answered Abu Mohammed Lazybones, "O my lord, have patience with us till the morrow, that we may equip ourselves, and we will then depart with you." So they tarried with him that day and slept the night; and next morning Abu Mohammed's servants saddled him a she-mule with selle and trappings of gold, set with all manner of pearls and stones of price; whereupon quoth Masrur to himself, "I wonder when Abu Mohammed shall present himself in such equipage, if the Caliph will ask him how he came by all this wealth." Thereupon they took leave of Al-Zubaydi and, setting out from Bassorah, fared on, without ceasing to fare till they reached Baghdad-city and presented themselves before the Caliph, who bade Abu Mohammed be seated. He sat down and addressed the Caliph in courtly phrase, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have brought with me an humble offering by way of homage: have I thy gracious permission to produce it?" Al-Rashid replied, "There is no harm in that,"[228] whereupon Abu Mohammed bade his men bring in a chest, from which he took a number of rarities, and amongst the rest, trees of gold with leaves of white emerald,[229] and fruits of pigeon-blood rubies and topazes and new pearls and bright. And as the Caliph was struck with admiration he fetched a second chest and brought out of it a tent of brocade, crowned with pearls and jacinths and emeralds and jaspers and other precious stones; its poles were of freshly-cut Hindi aloes-wood, 165 and its skirts were set with the greenest smaragds. Thereon were depicted all manner of animals such as beasts and birds, spangled with precious stones, rubies, emeralds, chrysolites and balasses and every kind of precious metal. Now when Al-Rashid saw these things, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and Abu Mohammed Lazybones said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, deem not that I have brought these to thee, fearing aught or coveting anything; but I knew myself to be but a man of the people and that such things befitted none save the Commander of the Faithful. And now, with thy leave, I will show thee, for thy diversion, something of what I can do." Al-Rashid replied, "Do what thou wilt, that we may see." "To hear is to obey," said Abu Mohammed and, moving his lips, beckoned the palace battlements,[230] whereupon they inclined to him; then he made another sign to them, and they returned to their place. Presently he made a sign with his eye, and there

appeared before him closets with closed doors, to which he spoke, and lo! the voices of birds answered him from within. The Caliph marvelled with passing marvel at this and said to him, “How camest thou by all this, seeing that thou art known only as Abu Mohammed Lazybones, and they tell me that thy father was a cupper, serving in a public Hammam, who left thee nothing?” Whereupon he answered, Listen to my story——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and First Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu Mohammed Lazybones thus spake to the Caliph:—O Prince of True Believers, listen to my story, for it is a marvellous and its particulars are wondrous; were it graven with graver-needles upon the eye-corners it were a warner to whoso would be warned. Quoth Al-Rashid, “Let us hear all thou hast to say, O Abu Mohammed!” So he began:—Know then, O Commander of the Faithful (Allah prolong to thee glory and dominion!), the report of the folk, that I am known as the Lazybones and that my father left me nothing, is true; for he was, as thou hast said, nothing but a barber-cupper in a Hammam. And I throughout 166 my youth was the idlest wight on the face of the earth; indeed, so great was my sluggishness that, if I lay at full length in the sultry season and the sun came round upon me, I was too lazy to rise and remove from the sun to the shade. And thus I abode till I reached my fifteenth year, when my father deceased in the mercy of Allah Almighty and left me nothing. However, my mother used to go out a-charing and feed me and give me to drink, whilst I lay on my side. Now it came to pass that one day she came in to me with five silver dirhams, and said to me, “O my son, I hear that Shaykh Abú al-Muzaffar[2311] is about to go a voyage to China.” (Now this Shaykh was a good and charitable man who loved the poor.) “So come, O my son, take these five silver bits; and let us both carry them to him and beg him to buy thee therewith somewhat from the land of China; so haply thou mayst make a profit of it by the bounty of Allah, whose name be exalted!” I was too idle to move for her; but she swore by the Almighty that, except I rose and went with her, she would bring me neither meat nor drink nor come in to me, but would leave me to die of hunger and thirst. Now when I heard her words, O Commander of the Faithful, I knew she would do as she threatened for her knowledge of my sluggishness; so I said to her, “Help me to sit up.” She did so, and I wept the while and said to her, “Bring me my shoes.” Accordingly, she brought them and I said, “Put them on my feet.” She put them on my feet and I said, “Lift me up off the ground.” So she lifted me up and I said, “Support me, that I may walk.” So she supported me and I continued to fare a-foot, at times stumbling over my skirts, till we came to the river-bank, where we saluted the Shaykh and I said to him, “O my uncle, art thou Abu al-Muzaffar?” “At thy service,” answered he, and I, “Take these dirhams and with them buy me somewhat from the land of China: haply Allah may vouchsafe me a profit of it.” Quoth the Shaykh to his

companions, “Do ye know this youth?” They answered, “Yes, he is known as Abu Mohammed Lazybones, and we never saw him stir from his house till this moment.” Then said he to me, “O my son, give me the silver with the blessing of Almighty Allah!” So he took the money, saying, “Bismillah—in the name of Allah!”—and I returned home with my mother. Presently Shaykh Abu al-Muzaffar set sail, with a company of merchants, and stayed not till they reached the land [167] of China, where he and his bought and sold; and, having won what they wished, set out on their homeward voyage. When they had been three days at sea, the Shaykh said to his company, “Stay the vessel!” They asked, “What dost thou want?” and he answered, “Know that I have forgotten the commission wherewith Abu Mohammed Lazybones charged me; so let us turn back that we may lay out his money on somewhat whereby he may profit.” They cried, “We conjure thee, by Allah Almighty turn not back with us; for we have traversed a long distance and a sore, and while so doing we have endured sad hardship and many terrors.” Quoth he, “There is no help for it but we return;” and they said, “Take from us double the profit of the five dirhams, and turn us not back.” He agreed to this and they collected for him an ample sum of money. Thereupon they sailed on, till they came to an island wherein was much people; when they moored thereto and the merchants went ashore, to buy thence a stock of precious metals and pearls and jewels and so forth. Presently Abu al-Muzaffar saw a man seated, with many apes before him, and amongst them one whose hair had been plucked off; and as often as their owner’s attention was diverted from them, the other apes fell upon the plucked one and beat him and threw him on their master; whereupon the man rose and bashed them and bound them and punished them for this; and all the apes were wroth with the plucked ape on this account and tunded him the more. When Shaykh Abu al-Muzaffar saw this, he felt for and took compassion upon the plucked ape and said to his master, “Wilt thou sell me yonder monkey?” Replied the man, “Buy,” and Abu al-Muzaffar rejoined, “I have with me five dirhams, belonging to an orphan lad. Wilt thou sell it me for that sum?” Answered the monkey-merchant, “It is a bargain; and Allah give thee a blessing of him!” So he made over the beast and received his money; and the Shaykh’s slaves took the ape and tied him up in the ship. Then they loosed sail and made for another island, where they cast anchor; and there came down divers, who plunged for precious stones, pearls and other gems; so the merchants hired them to dive for money and they dived. Now when the ape saw them doing this, he loosed himself from his bonds and, jumping off the ship’s side, plunged with them, whereupon quoth Abu al-Muzaffar, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! The monkey is lost to us with the luck of the poor fellow for whom we [168] bought him.” And they despaired of him; but, after a while, the company of divers rose to the surface, and behold, among them was the ape, with his hands full of jewels of price, which he threw down before Abu al-Muzaffar. The Shaykh marvelled at this and said, “There is

much mystery in this monkey!" Then they cast off and sailed till they came to a third island, called the Isle of the Zunúj,[232] who are a people of the blacks, which eat the flesh of the sons of Adam. When the blacks saw them, they boarded them in dug-outs[233] and, taking all in the vessel, pinioned them and carried them to their King, who bade slaughter certain of the merchants. So they slaughtered them by cutting their throats and ate their flesh; and the rest of the traders passed the night in bonds and were in sore concern. But when it was midnight, the ape arose and going up to Abu al-Muzaffar, loosed his bonds; and, as the others saw him free, they said, "Allah grant our deliverance may be at thy hands, O Abu al-Muzaffar!" But he replied, "Know, that he who delivered me, by leave of Allah Almighty, was none other than this monkey"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu al-Muzaffar declared, "None loosed me, by leave of Allah Almighty, save this monkey and I buy my release of him at a thousand dinars;" whereupon the merchants rejoined, "And we likewise, each and every, will pay him a thousand dinars if he 169 release us." With this the ape arose and went up to them and loosed their bonds one by one, till he had freed them all, when they made for the vessel and boarding her, found all safe and nothing missing from her. So they cast off and set sail; and presently Abu al-Muzaffar said to them, "O merchants, fulfil your promise to the monkey." "We hear and we obey," answered they; and each one paid him one thousand dinars, whilst Abu al-Muzaffar brought out to him the like sum of his own monies, so that a great heap of coin was collected for the ape. Then they fared on till they reached Bassorah-city where their friends came out to meet them; and when they had landed the Shaykh said, "Where is Abu Mohammed Lazybones?" The news reached my mother, who came to me as I lay asleep and said to me, "O my son, verily the Shaykh Abu al-Muzaffar hath come back and is now in the city; so rise and go thou to him and salute him and enquire what he hath brought thee; it may be Allah Almighty have opened to thee the door of fortune with somewhat." Quoth I, "Lift me from the ground and prop me up, whilst I go forth and walk to the river-bank." After which I went out and walked on, stumbling over my skirts, till I met the Shaykh, who exclaimed at sight of me, "Welcome to him whose money hath been the means of my release and that of these merchants, by the will of Almighty Allah." Then he continued, "Take this monkey I bought for thee and carry him home and wait till I come to thee." So I took the ape and went off, saying in my mind, "By Allah, this is naught but rare merchandise!" and led it home, where I said to my mother, "Whenever I lie down to sleep, thou biddest me rise and trade; see now this merchandise with thine own eyes." Then I sat me down and as I sat, up came the slaves of Abu al-Muzaffar and said to me, "Art thou Abu Mohammed Lazybones?" "Yes" answered I; and behold, Abu al-Muzaffar appeared behind them.

So I rose up to him and kissed his hands: and he said, “Come with me to my home.” “Hearkening and obedience,” answered I and accompanied him to his house, where he bade his servants bring me what money the monkey had earned for me. So they brought it and he said to me, “O my son, Allah hath blessed thee with this wealth, by way of profit on thy five dirhams.” Then the slaves set down the treasure in chests, which they had carried on their heads, and Abu al-Muzaffar gave me the keys saying, “Go before the slaves to thy house; for in sooth all this wealth is thine.” So I returned to my mother, who rejoiced in this and 170 said to me, “O my son, Allah hath blessed thee with all these riches; so put off thy laziness and go down to the bazar and sell and buy.” At once I shook off my dull sloth, and opened a shop in the bazar, where the ape used to sit on the same divan with me, eating with me when I ate and drinking when I drank. But, every day, he was absent from dawn till noon, when he came back bringing with him a purse of a thousand dinars, which he laid by my side, and sat down; and he ceased not so doing for a great while, till I amassed much wealth, wherewith, O Commander of the Faithful, I purchased houses and lands, and I planted gardens and I bought me white slaves and negroes and concubines. Now it came to pass one day, as I sat in my shop, with the ape sitting at my side on the same carpet, behold, he began to turn right and left, and I said to myself, “What aileth the beast?” Then Allah made the ape speak with a ready tongue, and he said to me, “O Abu Mohammed!” Now when I heard him speak, I was sore afraid; but he said to me, “Fear not; I will tell thee my case. I am a Marid of the Jinn and came to thee because of thy poor estate; but to-day thou knowest not the amount of thy wealth; and now I have need of thee and if thou do my will, it shall be well for thee.” I asked, “What is it?” and he answered, “I have a mind to marry thee to a girl like the full moon.” Quoth I, “How so?”; and quoth he, “To-morrow don thou thy richest dress and mount thy mule, with the saddle of gold, and ride to the Haymarket. There enquire for the shop of the Sharif[1234] and sit down beside him and say to him:—I come to thee as a suitor craving thy daughter’s hand. If he say to thee:—Thou hast neither cash nor rank nor family; pull out a thousand dinars and give them to him, and if he ask more, give him more and tempt him with money.” Whereto I replied, “To hear is to obey; I will do thy bidding, Inshallah!” So on the next morning I donned my richest clothes, mounted my she-mule with trappings of gold and rode to the Haymarket where I asked for the Sharif’s shop; and finding him there seated, alighted and saluted him and seated myself beside him——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Three Hundred and Third Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu Mohammed Lazybones continued:—So I alighted and, saluting him seated myself beside him and my Mamelukes and negro-slaves stood before me. Said the Sharif, “Haply, thou hast

some business with us which we may have pleasure of transacting?" Replied I, "Yes, I have business with thee." Asked he, "And what is it?"; and I answered, "I come to thee as a suitor for thy daughter's hand." So he said, "Thou hast neither cash nor rank nor family;" whereupon I pulled him out a purse of a thousand dinars, red gold, and said to him, "This is my rank[235] and my family"; and he (whom Allah bless and keep!) hath said:—The best of ranks is wealth. And how well quoth the poet:—

Whoso two dirhams hath, his lips have learnt ✿ Speech of all kinds with eloquence bedight:
Draw near[236] his brethren and crave ear of him, ✿ And him thou seest haught in pride-full height:
Were't not for dirhams wherein glories he, ✿ Hadst found him 'mid mankind in sorry plight.
When richard errs in words they all reply, ✿ "Sooth thou hast spoken and hast said aright!."
When pauper speaketh truly all reply ✿ "Thou liest;" and they hold his sayings light.[237]
"Verily dirhams in earth's every stead ✿ Clothe men with rank and make them fair to sight;
Gold is the very tongue of eloquence; ✿ Gold is the best of arms for wight who'd fight!"

Now when the Sharif heard these my words and understood my verse, he bowed his head awhile groundwards then raising it, said, "If it must be so, I will have of thee other three thousand gold pieces." "I hear and I obey," answered I, and sent one of my Mamelukes home for the money. As soon as he came back with it, I handed it to the Sharif who, when he saw it in 172 his hands, rose and bidding his servants shut his shop, invited his brother merchants of the bazar to the wedding; after which he carried me to his house and wrote out my contract of marriage with his daughter saying to me, "After ten days, I will bring thee to pay her the first visit." So I went home rejoicing and, shutting myself up with the ape, told him what had passed; and he said "Thou hast done well." Now when the time appointed by the Sharif drew near, the ape said to me, "There is a thing I would have thee do for me; and thou shalt have of me (when it is done) whatso thou wilt." I asked, "What is that?" and he answered, "At the upper end of the chamber wherein thou shalt meet thy bride, the Sharif's daughter, stands a cabinet, on whose door is a ring-padlock of copper and the keys under it. Take the keys and open the cabinet in which thou shalt find a coffer of iron with four flags, which are talismans, at its corners; and in its midst stands a brazen basin full of money, wherein is tied a white cock with a cleft comb; while on one side of the coffer are eleven serpents and on the other a knife. Take the knife and slaughter the cock; cut away the flags and upset the chest, then go back to the bride and do away her maidenhead. This is what I have to ask of thee." "Hearkening and obedience," answered I, and betook myself to the house of the Sharif. So as soon as I entered the bride-chamber, I looked for the cabinet and found it even as the ape had described it. Then I went in unto the bride and marvelled at her beauty and loveliness and stature and symmetrical grace, for indeed they were such as no tongue can set forth. I rejoiced in her with exceeding joy; and in the middle of the night, when my bride slept, I rose and, taking the keys, opened the cabinet. Then I seized the knife and slew the cock and threw down the flags and upset the coffer, whereupon the girl awoke

and, seeing the closet open and the cock with cut throat, exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! The Marid hath got hold of me!" Hardly had she made an end of speaking, when the Marid swooped down upon the house and, snatching up the bride, flew away with her; whereupon there arose a mighty clamour and behold, in came the Sharif, buffetting his face and crying, "O Abu Mohammed, what is this deed thou hast done? Is it thus thou requitest us? I made this talisman in the cabinet fearing for my daughter from this accursed one who, for these six years, hath sought to steal away the girl, but could not. But 173now there is no more abiding for thee with us; so wend thy ways." Thereupon I went forth and returned to my own house, where I made search for the ape but could not find him nor any trace of him; whereby I knew that it was he who was the Marid, and that he had carried off my wife and had tricked me into destroying the talisman and the cock, the two things which hindered him from taking her, and I repented, rending my raiment and cuffing my face. And there was no land but was straitened upon me; so I made for the desert forthright and ceased not wandering on till night overtook me, for I knew not whither I was going. And whilst I was deep in sad thought behold, I met two serpents, one tawny and the other white, and they were fighting to kill each other. So I took up a stone and with one cast slew the tawny serpent, which was the aggressor; whereupon the white serpent glided away and was absent for a while, but presently she returned accompanied by ten other white serpents which glided up to the dead serpent and tore her in pieces, so that only the head was left. Then they went their ways and I fell prostrate for weariness on the ground where I stood; but as I lay, pondering my case lo! I heard a Voice though I saw no one and the Voice versified with these two couplets:—

Let Fate with slackened bridle fare her pace, ✿ Nor pass the night with mind which cares an ace.

Between eye-closing and its opening, ✿ Allah can foulest change to fairest case.

Now when I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, great concern gat hold of me and I was beyond measure troubled; and behold, I heard a Voice from behind me extemporise these couplets:—

O Moslem! thou whose guide is Alcorán, ✿ Joy in what brought safe peace to thee, O man.

Fear not what Satan haply whispered thee, ✿ And in us see a Truth-believing clan.

Then said I, "I conjure thee, by the truth of Him thou worshippest, let me know who thou art!" Thereupon the Invisible Speaker assumed the form of a man and said, "Fear not; for the report of thy good deed hath reached us, and we are a people of the true-believing Jinn. So, if thou lack aught, let us know it, that we may have the pleasure of fulfilling thy want." Quoth I, "Indeed I am in sore need, for I am afflicted with a grievous 174affliction and no one was ever afflicted as I am!" Quoth he, "Perchance thou art Abu Mohammed Lazybones?" and I replied, "Yes." He rejoined, "I, O Abu Mohammed, am the brother of the white serpent, whose foe thou slewest; we are four brothers by one father and mother, and we are all indebted to thee for thy kindness.

And know thou that he who played this trick on thee in the likeness of an ape, is a Marid of the Marids of the Jinn; and had he not used this artifice, he had never been able to get the girl; for he hath loved her and had a mind to take her this long while, but he was hindered of that talisman; and had it remained as it was, he could never have found access to her. However, fret not thyself for that; we will bring thee to her and kill the Marid; for thy kindness is not lost upon us." Then he cried out with a terrible outcry——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Ifrit continued, "Verily thy kindness is not lost upon us." Then he cried out with a terrible outcry in a horrible voice, and behold, there appeared a troop of the Jinn, of whom he enquired concerning the ape; and one of them said, "I know his abiding-place;" and the other asked "Where abideth he?" Said the speaker "He is in the City of Brass whereon sun riseth not." Then said the first Jinni to me, "O Abu Mohammed, take one of these our slaves, and he will carry thee on his back and teach thee how thou shalt get back the girl; but know that this slave is a Marid of the Marids and beware, whilst he is carrying thee, lest thou utter the name of Allah, or he will flee from thee and thou wilt fall and be destroyed." "I hear and obey," answered I and chose out one of the slaves, who bent down and said to me, "Mount." So I mounted on his back, and he flew up with me into the firmament, till I lost sight of the earth and saw the stars as they were the mountains of earth fixed and firm[238] and heard the angels crying, 175"Praise be to Allah," in heaven while the Marid held me in converse, diverting me and hindering me from pronouncing the name of Almighty Allah.[239] But, as we flew, behold, One clad in green raiment,[240] with streaming tresses and radiant face, holding in his hand a javelin whence flew sparks of fire, accosted me, saying, "O Abu Mohammed, say:—There is no god but *the* God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God; or I will smite thee with this javelin." Now already I felt heart-broken by my forced silence as regards calling on the name of Allah; so I said, "There is no god but *the* God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God." Whereupon the shining One smote the Marid with his javelin and he melted away and became ashes; whilst I was thrown from his back and fell headlong towards the earth, till I dropped into the midst of a dashing sea, swollen with clashing surge. And behold, I fell hard by a ship with five sailors therein, who seeing me, made for me and took me up into the vessel; and they began to speak to me in some speech I knew not; but I signed to them that I understood not their speech. So they fared on till the last of the day, when they cast out a net and caught a great fish and they broiled it and gave me to eat; after which they ceased not sailing on till they reached their city and carried me to their King and set me in his presence. So I kissed ground before him, and he bestowed on me a dress of honour and said to me in Arabic (which he knew well), "I appoint thee one of my officers."

Thereupon I asked him the name of the city, and he replied, “It is called Hanád[241] and is in the land of China.” Then he committed me to his Wazir, bidding him show me the city, which was formerly peopled by Infidels, till Almighty Allah turned them into stones; and there I abode a month’s space, diverting myself with viewing the place, nor saw I ever greater plenty of trees and fruits than there. And when this time had past, one 176 day, as I sat on the bank of a river, behold, there accosted me a horseman, who said to me, “Art thou not Abu Mohammed Lazybones?” “Yes,” answered I; whereupon, he said, “Fear not, for the report of thy good deed hath reached us.” Asked I, “Who art thou?” and he answered, “I am a brother of the white serpent, and thou art hard by the place where is the damsel whom thou seekest.” So saying, he took off his clothes and clad me therein, saying, “Fear not, for the slave who perished under thee was one of our slaves.” Then the horseman took me up behind him and rode on with me to a desert place, when he said, “Dismount now and walk on between these two mountains, till thou seest the City of Brass;[242] then halt afar off and enter it not, ere I return to thee and tell thee how thou shalt do.” “To hear is to obey,” replied I and, dismounting from behind him, walked on till I came to the city, the walls whereof I found of brass. Then I began to pace round about it, hoping to find a gate, but found none; and presently as I persevered behold, the serpent’s brother rejoined me and gave me a charmed sword which should hinder any from seeing me,[243] then went his way. Now he had been gone but a little while, when lo! I heard a noise of cries and found myself in the midst of a multitude of folk whose eyes were in their breasts; and seeing me quoth they, “Who art thou, and what cast thee into this place?” So I told them my story, and they said, “The girl thou seekest is in this city with the Marid; but we know not what he hath done with her. Now we are brethren of the white serpent,” adding, “Go thou to yonder spring and note where the water entereth, and enter thou with it; for it will bring thee into the city.” I did as they bade me, and followed the water-course, till it brought me to a Sardáb, a vaulted room under the earth, from which I ascended and found myself in the midst of the city. Here I saw the damsel seated 177 upon a throne of gold, under a canopy of brocade, girt round by a garden full of trees of gold, whose fruits were jewels of price, such as rubies and chrysolites, pearls and coral. And the moment she saw me, she knew me and accosted me with the Moslem salutation, saying, “O my lord, who guided thee hither?” So I told her all that had passed, and she said, “Know, that the accursed Marid, of the greatness of his love for me, hath told me what bringeth him bane and what bringeth him gain; and that there is here a talisman by means whereof he could, an he would, destroy the city and all that are therein; and whoso possesseth it, the Ifrits will do his commandment in everything. It standeth upon a pillar”—Whereat I asked her, “And where is the pillar?” and she answered, “It is in such a place.” “And what manner of thing may the talisman be?” said I: said she, “It is in the semblance of a vulture[244] and upon it is a writing which I cannot read. So go thou thither and seize

it, and set it before thee and, taking a chafing-dish, throw into it a little musk, whereupon there will arise a smoke which will draw the Ifrits to thee, and they will all present themselves before thee, nor shall one be absent; also they shall be subject to thy word and, whatsoever thou biddest them, that will they do. Arise therefore and fall to this thing, with the blessing of Almighty Allah." I answered, "Hearkening and obedience" and, going to the column, did as she bade me, whereupon the Ifrits all presented themselves before me saying, "Here are we, O our lord! Whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do." Quoth I, "Bind the Marid who brought the damsel hither from her home." Quoth they, "We hear and obey," and off they flew and bound that Marid in straitest bonds and returned after a while, saying, "We have done thy bidding." Then I dismissed them and, repairing to my wife, told her what had happened and said to her, "O my bride, wilt thou go with me?" "Yes," 178 answered she. So I carried her forth of the vaulted chamber whereby I had entered the city and we fared on, till we fell in with the folk who had shown me the way to find her.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that he continued on this wise:— And we fared on till we fell in with the folk who had shown me the way to her. So I said to them, "Point me out a path which shall lead me to my home," and they did accordingly, and brought us a-foot to the sea-shore and set us aboard a vessel which sailed on before us with a fair wind, till we reached Bassorah-city. And when we entered the house of my father-in-law and her people saw my wife, they rejoiced with exceeding joy. Then I fumigated the vulture with musk and lo! the Ifrits flocked to me from all sides, saying, "At thy service; what wilt thou have us do?" So I bade them transport all that was in the City of Brass of monies and noble metals and stones of price to my house in Bassorah, which they did; and I then ordered them to bring me the ape. They brought him before me, abject and contemptible, and I said to him, "O accursed, why hast thou dealt thus perfidiously with me?" Then I commanded the Ifrits to shut him in a brazen vessel;[245] so they put him in a brazen cucurbite and sealed it with lead. But I abode with my wife in joy and delight; and now, O Commander of the Faithful, I have under my hand precious things in such measure and rare jewels and other treasure and monies on such wise as neither reckoning may express nor may limits comprise; and, if thou lust after wealth or aught else, I will command the Jinn at once to do thy desire. But all this is of the bounty of Almighty Allah. Thereupon the Commander of the Faithful wondered greatly and bestowed on him imperial gifts, in exchange for his presents, and entreated him with the favour he deserved. And men also tell the tale of the



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GENEROUS DEALING OF YAHYA BIN KHALID THE BARMECIDE WITH MANSUR.

It is told that Harun al-Rashid, in the days before he became jealous of the Barmecides, sent once for one of his guards, Sálih by name, and said to him, “O Salih, go to Mansúr[246] and say to him:—Thou owest us a thousand thousand dirhams and we require of thee immediate payment of this amount. And I command thee, O Salih, unless he pay it between this hour and sundown, sever his head from his body and bring it to me.” “To hear is to obey,” answered Salih and, going to Mansur, acquainted him with what the Caliph had said; whereupon quoth he, “I am a lost man, by Allah; for all my estate and all my hand owneth, if sold for their utmost value, would not fetch a price of more than an hundred thousand dirhams. Whence then, O Salih, shall I get the other nine hundred thousand?” Salih replied, “Contrive how thou mayst speedily acquit thyself, else thou art a dead man; for I cannot grant thee an eye-twinkling of delay after the time appointed me by the Caliph; nor can I fail of aught which the Prince of True Believers hath enjoined on me. Hasten, therefore, to devise some means of saving thyself ere the time expire.” Quoth Mansur, “O Salih, I beg thee of thy favour to bring me to my house, that I may take leave of my children and family and give my kinsfolk my last injunctions.” Now Salih relateth:—So I went with him to his house where he fell to bidding his family farewell, and the house was filled with a clamour of weeping and lamentations and calling for help on Almighty Allah. Thereupon I said to him, “I have bethought me that Allah may haply vouchsafe thee relief at the hands of the Barmecides. Come, let us go to the house of Yáhyá bin Khálid.” So we went to Yahya’s house, and Mansur told him his case, whereat he was sore concerned and bowed him groundwards for a while; then raising his head, he called his treasurer and said to him, “How much have we in our treasury?” “A matter of five thousand dirhams,” answered the treasurer, and Yahya bade him bring them and sent a messenger to his son, Al-Fazl, saying, “I am offered for sale a splendid estate which may never be laid waste; so send me somewhat of money.” Al-Fazl 180 sent him a thousand thousand dirhams, and he despatched a messenger with a like message to his son Ja’afar, saying, “We have a matter of much moment and for it we want money;” whereupon Ja’afar at once sent him a thousand thousand dirhams; nor did Yahya leave sending to his kinsmen of the Barmecides, till he had collected from them a great sum of money for Mansur. But Salih and the debtor knew not of this; and Mansur said to Yahya, “O my lord, I have laid hold upon thy skirt, for I know not whither to look for the money but to thee, in accordance with thy wonted generosity; so discharge thou the rest of my debt for me and make me thy freed slave.” Thereupon Yahya hung down his head and wept; then he said to a page, “Harkye, boy, the Commander of the Faithful gave our slave-girl Danánír a jewel of great price: go thou to her and bid her send it to us.” The page went out and presently returned with the jewel, whereupon quoth Yahya, “O Mansur, I bought this jewel of the merchant for the Commander of the Faithful, at a price of two hundred thousand dinars,[247] and he gave it to our slave-girl Dananir, the lute-player; and when he sees it

with thee, he will know it and spare thy blood and do thee honour for our sake; and now, O Mansur, verily thy money is complete." (Salih continued) So I took the money and the jewel and carried them to Al-Rashid together with Mansur, but on the way I heard him repeat this couplet, applying it to his own case:—

'Twas not of love that fared my feet to them; ✿ 'Twas that I feared me lest they shoot their shafts!

Now when I heard this, I marvelled at his evil nature and his depravity and mischief-making and his ignoble birth and provenance and, turning upon him, I said, "There is none on the face of the earth better or more righteous than the Barmecides, nor any baser nor more wrongous than thou; for they bought thee off from death and delivered thee from destruction, giving thee what should save thee; yet thou thankest them not nor praisest them, neither acquittest thee after the manner of the noble; nay, thou meetest their benevolence with this speech." Then I went to Al-Rashid and acquainted him with all that had passed——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Salih continued:—So I acquainted the Commander of the Faithful with all that passed and Al-Rashid marvelled at the generosity and benevolence of Yahya and the vileness and ingratitude of Mansur and bade restore the jewel to Yahya, saying, "Whatso we have given it befitteth us not to take again." After that Salih returned to Yahya, and acquainted him with the tale of Mansur and his ill-conduct; whereupon replied he, "O Salih, when a man is in want, sick at heart and sad of thought, he is not to be blamed for aught that falleth from him; for it cometh not from the heart;" and on this wise he took to seeking excuse for Mansur. But Salih wept and exclaimed, "Never shall the revolving heavens bring forth into being the like of thee, O Yahya! Alas, and well-away, that one of such noble nature and generosity should be laid in the dust!" And he repeated these two couplets:—

Haste to do kindness thou dost intend; ✿ Thou canst not always on boons expend:

How many from bounty themselves withheld, ✿ Till means of bounty had come to end!

And men tell another tale of the

GENEROUS DEALING OF YAHYA SON OF KHALID WITH A MAN WHO FORGED A LETTER IN HIS NAME.

There was between Yahyá bin Khálid and Abdullah bin Málik al-Khuzá'i[248] an enmity which they kept secret; the reason of the hatred being that Harun al-Rashid loved Abdullah with exceeding love, so that Yahya and his sons were wont to say that he

had bewitched the Commander of the Faithful. And thus they abode a long while, with rancour in their hearts, till it fell out that the 182 Caliph invested Abdullah with the government of Armenia[249] and despatched him thither. Now soon after he had settled himself in his seat of government, there came to him one of the people of Irak, a man of good breeding and excellent parts and abundant cleverness; but he had lost his money and wasted his wealth and his estate was come to ill case; so he forged a letter to Abdullah bin Malik in the name of Yahya bin Khalid and set out therewith for Armenia. Now when he came to the Governor's gate, he gave the letter to one of the Chamberlains, who took it and carried it to his master. Abdullah opened it and read it and, considering it attentively, knew it to be forged; so he sent for the man, who presented himself before him and called down blessings upon him and praised him and those of his court. Quoth Abdullah to him, "What moved thee to weary thyself on this wise and bring me a forged letter? But be of good heart; for we will not disappoint thy travail." Replied the other, "Allah prolong the life of our lord the Wazir! If my coming annoy thee, cast not about for a pretext to repel me, for Allah's earth is wide and He who giveth daily bread still liveth. Indeed, the letter I bring thee from Yahya bin Khalid is true and no forgery." Quoth Abdullah, "I will write a letter to my agent[250] at Baghdad and command him enquire concerning this same letter. If it be true, as thou sayest, and genuine and not forged by thee, I will bestow on thee the Emir-ship of one of my cities; or, if thou prefer a present, I will give thee two hundred thousand dirhams, besides horses and camels of price and a robe of honour. But, if the letter prove a forgery, I will order thou be beaten with two hundred blows of a stick and thy beard be shaven." So Abdullah bade confine him in a chamber and furnish him therein with all he needed, till his case should be made manifest. Then he despatched a letter to his agent at Baghdad, to the following effect:—"There is come to me a man with a letter purporting to be from Yahya bin Khalid. Now I have my suspicions of this letter: therefore delay thou not in the matter, but go thyself and look carefully into the case and 183 let me have an answer with all speed, in order that we may know what is true and what is untrue." When the letter reached Baghdad, the agent mounted at once——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the agent of Abdullah son of Malik al-Khuza'i, on receipt of the letter at Baghdad, mounted at once and repaired to the house of Yahya bin Khalid, whom he found sitting with his officers and boon-companions. After the usual salute he gave him the letter and Yahya read it and said to the agent, "Come back to me to-morrow for my written answer." Now when the agent had gone away, Yahya turned to his companions and said, "What doth he deserve who forgeth a letter in my name and carrieth it to my foe?" They answered all and each, saying this and that, and every one proposing some kind of punishment; but

Yahya said, “Ye err in that ye say and this your counsel is of the baseness of your spirits and the meanness of your minds. Ye all know the close favour of Abdullah with the Caliph and ye weet of what is between him and us of anger and enmity; and now Almighty Allah hath made this man the means of reconciliation between us; and hath fitted him for such purpose and hath appointed him to quench the fire of ire in our hearts, which hath been growing these twenty years; and by his means our differences shall be adjusted. Wherefore it behoveth me to requite such man by verifying his assertion and amending his estate; so I will write him a letter to Abdullah son of Malik, praying that he may use him with increase of honour and continue to him his liberality.” Now when his companions heard what he said, they called down blessings on him and marvelled at his generosity and the greatness of his magnanimity. Then he called for paper and ink and wrote Abdullah a letter in his own hand, to the following effect:—“In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate! Of a truth thy letter hath reached me (Allah give thee long life!) and I am glad to hear of thy safety and am pleased to be assured of thine immunity and prosperity. It was thy thought that a certain worthy man had forged a letter in my name and that he was not the bearer of any 184 message from the same; but the case is not so, for the letter I myself wrote, and it was no forgery; and I hope, of thy courtesy and consideration and the nobility of thy nature, that thou wilt gratify this generous and excellent man of his hope and wish, and honour him with the honour he deserveth and bring him to his desire and make him the special object of thy favour and munificence. Whatso thou dost with him, it is to me that thou dost the kindness, and I am thankful to thee accordingly.” Then he superscribed the letter and after sealing it, delivered it to the agent, who despatched it to Abdullah. Now when the Governor read it, he was charmed with its contents, and sending for the man, said to him, “Whichever of the two promised boons is the more acceptable to thee that will I give thee.” The man replied, “The money gift were more acceptable to me than aught else,” whereupon Abdullah ordered him two hundred thousand dirhams and ten Arab horses, five with housings of silk and other five with richly ornamented saddles, used in state processions; besides twenty chests of clothes and ten mounted white slaves and a proportionate quantity of jewels of price. Moreover, he bestowed on him a dress of honour and sent him to Baghdad in great splendour. So when he came thither, he repaired to the door of Yahya’s house, before he went to his own folk, and craved permission to enter and have audience. The Chamberlain went in to Yahya and said to him, “O my lord, there is one at the door who craveth speech of thee; and he is a man of apparent wealth, courteous in manner, comely of aspect and attended by many servants.” Then Yahya bade admit him; and, when he entered and kissed the ground before him, Yahya asked him, “Who art thou?” He answered, “Hear me, O my lord, I am he who was done dead by the tyranny of fortune, but thou didst raise me to life again from the grave of calamities and exalt me to the paradise of my desires. I am the man who forged a letter in thy name and carried it to Abdullah bin Malik al-Khuza’i.”

Yahya asked, “How hath he dealt with thee and what did he give thee?”; and the man answered, “He hath given me, thanks to thy hand and thy great liberality and benevolence and to thy comprehensive kindness and lofty magnanimity and thine all-embracing generosity, that which hath made me a wealthy man and he hath distinguished me with his gifts and favours. And now I have brought all that he gave me and here it is at thy door; for it is thine to decide and the command is in thy hand.” Rejoined Yahya, 185“Thou hast done me better service than I did thee and I owe thee a heavy debt of gratitude and every gift the white hand[251] can give, for that thou hast changed into love and amity the hate and enmity that were between me and a man whom I respect and esteem. Wherefore I will give thee the like of what Abdullah bin Malik gave thee.” Then he ordered him money and horses and chests of apparel, such as Abdullah had given him; and thus that man’s fortune was restored to him by the munificence of these two generous ones. And folk also relate the tale of the

CALIPH AL-MAAMUN AND THE STRANGE SCHOLAR

It is said of Al-Maamun that, among the Caliphs of the house of Abbas, there was none more accomplished in all branches of knowledge than he. Now on two days in each week, he was wont to preside at conferences of the learned, when the lawyers and theologians disputed in his presence, each sitting in his several rank and room. One day as he sat thus, there came into the assembly a stranger, clad in ragged white clothes, who took seat in an obscure place behind the doctors of the law. Then the assembly began to speak and debate difficult questions, it being the custom that the various propositions should be submitted to each in turn, and that whoso bethought him of some subtle addition or rare conceit, should make mention of it. So the question went round till it came to the strange man, who spake in his turn and made a goodlier answer than any of the doctors’ replies; and the Caliph approved his speech.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph Al-Maamun approved his speech and ordered him to come up from his low place to a high stead. Now when the second question came to him, he made a still more notable answer, and Al-Maamun ordered him to be preferred to a yet higher seat; and when the third question reached him, he made answer more justly and 186appropriately than on the two previous occasions, and Al-Maamun bade him come up and sit near himself. Presently the discussion ended when water was brought and they washed their hands; after which food was set on and they ate; and the doctors arose and withdrew; but Al-Maamun forbade the stranger to depart with them and, calling him to himself, treated

him with especial favour and promised him honour and profit. Thereupon they made ready the séance of wassail; the fair-faced cup-companions came and the pure wine[252] went round amongst them, till the cup came to the stranger, who rose to his feet and spake thus, “If the Commander of the Faithful permit me, I will say one word.” Answered the Caliph, “Say what thou wilt.” Quoth the man, “Verily the Exalted Intelligence (whose eminence Allah increase!) knoweth that his slave was this day, in the august assembly, one of the unknown folk and of the meanest of the company; and the Commander of the Faithful raised his rank and brought him near to himself, little as were the wit and wisdom he displayed, preferring him above the rest and advancing him to a station and a degree whereto his thought aspired not. But now he is minded to part him from that small portion of intellect which raised him high from his lowness and made him great after his littleness. Heaven forfend and forbid that the Commander of the Faithful should envy his slave what little he hath of understanding and worth and renown! Now, if his slave should drink wine, his reason would depart far from him and ignorance draw near to him and steal away his good breeding; so would he revert to that low and contemptible degree, whence he sprang, and become ridiculous and despicable in the eyes of the folk. I hope, therefore, that the August Intelligence, of his power and bounty and royal generosity and magnanimity, will not despoil his slave of this jewel.” When the Caliph Al-Maamun heard his speech, he praised him and thanked him and making him sit down again in his place, showed him high honour and ordered him a present of an hundred thousand silver pieces. Moreover he mounted him upon a horse and gave him rich apparel; and in every assembly he was wont to exalt him and 187 show him favour over all the other doctors of law and religion till he became the highest of them all in rank. And Allah is All-knowing.[253] Men also tell a tale of

ALI SHAR[254] AND ZUMURRUD.

There lived once in the days of yore and the good old times long gone before, in the land of Khorasan, a merchant called Majd al-Dín, who had great wealth and many slaves and servants, white and black, young and old; but he had not been blessed with a child until he reached the age of threescore, when Almighty Allah vouchsafed him a son, whom he named Alí Shár. The boy grew up like the moon on the night of fulness; and when he came to man’s estate and was endowed with all kinds of perfections, his father fell sick of a death-malady and, calling his son to him, said, “O my son, the fated hour of my decease is at hand, and I desire to give thee my last injunctions.” He asked, “And what are they, O my father?”; and he answered, “O my son, I charge thee, be not over-familiar with any[255] and eschew what leadeth to evil and mischief. Beware lest thou sit in company with the wicked; for he is like the blacksmith; if his fire burn thee not, his smoke shall bother thee: and how excellent is the saying of the poet:[256]—

In thy whole world there is not one,
Whose friendship thou may'st count upon,
Nor plighted faith that will stand true,
When times go hard, and hopes are few.
Then live apart and dwell alone,
Nor make a prop of any one,
I've given a gift in that I've said,
Will stand thy friend in every stead."

188 And what another saith:—

Men are a hidden malady; ✿ Rely not on the sham in them:
For perfidy and treachery ✿ Thou'lt find, if thou examine them.

And yet a third saith:—

Còonverse with men hath scanty weal, except ✿ To while away the time in chat and prate:
Then shun their intimacy, save it be ✿ To win thee lore, or better thine estate.

And a fourth saith:—

If a sharp-witted wight e'er tried mankind, ✿ I've eaten that which only tasted he:[257]
Their amity proved naught but wile and guile, ✿ Their faith I found was but hypocrisy.

Quoth Ali, "O my father, I have heard thee and I will obey thee; what more shall I do?" Quoth he, "Do good whenas thou art able; be ever kind and courteous to men and regard as riches every occasion of doing a good turn; for a design is not always easily carried out"; and how well saith the poet:—

'Tis not at every time and tide unstable, ✿ We can do kindly acts and charitable:
When thou art able hasten thee to act, ✿ Lest thine endeavour prove anon unable!

Said Ali, "I have heard thee and I will obey thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth replied, "I have heard thee and I will obey thee; what more?" And his sire continued, "Be thou, O my son, mindful of Allah, so shall He be mindful of thee. Ward thy wealth and waste it not; for an thou do, thou wilt come to want the least of mankind. Know 189 that the measure of a man's worth is according to that which his right hand hendeth": and how well saith the poet:[258]—

When fails my wealth no friend will deign befriend, ✿ And when it waxeth all men friendship show:
How many a foe for wealth became my friend, ✿ Wealth lost, how many a friend became a foe!

Asked Ali, "What more?" And Majd al-Din answered, "O my son, take counsel of those who are older than thou and hasten not to do thy heart's desire. Have compassion on those who are below thee, so shall those who are above thee have compassion on thee; and oppress none, lest Allah empower one who shall oppress thee. How well saith the poet:—

Add other wit to thy wit, counsel craving, ✿ For man's true course hides not from minds of two:

Man is a mirror which but shows his face, ✿ And by two mirrors he his back shall view.

And as saith another:[259]—

Act on sure grounds, nor hurry fast,
To gain the purpose that thou hast
And be thou kindly to all men
So kindly thou'lt be called again;
For not a deed the hand can try,
Save 'neath the hand of God on high,
Nor tyrant harsh work tyranny,
Uncrushed by tyrant harsh as he.

And as saith yet another:[260]—

Tyrannize not, if thou hast the power to do so; for the tyrannical is in danger of revenges.

Thine eye will sleep while the oppressed, wakeful, will call down curses on thee, and God's eye sleepeth not.

Beware of wine-bibbing, for drink is the root of all evil: it doeth away the reason and bringeth to contempt whoso useth it; and how well saith the poet:—

190 By Allah, wine shall not disturb me, while my soul ✿ Join body, nor while speech the words of me explain:

No day will I be thralled to wine-skin cooled by breeze[261] ✿ Nor choose a friend save those who are of cups unfain.

This, then, is my charge to thee; bear it before thine eyes, and Allah stand to thee in my stead." Then he swooned away and kept silent awhile; and, when he came to himself, he besought pardon of Allah and pronounced the profession of the Faith, and was admitted to the mercy of the Almighty. So his son wept and lamented for him and presently made proper preparation for his burial; great and small walked in his funeral procession and Koran-readers recited Holy Writ about his bier; nor did Ali Shar omit aught of what was due to the dead. Then they prayed over him and committed him to the dust and wrote these two couplets upon his tomb:—

Thou wast create of dust and cam'st to life, ✿ And learned'st in eloquence to place thy trust;

Anon, to dust returning, thou becamest ✿ A corpse, as though ne'er taken from the dust.

Now his son Ali Shar grieved for him with sore grief and mourned him with the ceremonies usual among men of note; nor did he cease to weep the loss of his father till his mother died also, not long afterwards, when he did with her as he had done with his sire. Then he sat in the shop, selling and buying and consorting with none of Almighty Allah's creatures, in accordance with his father's injunction. This wise he continued to do for a year, at the end of which time there came in to him by craft certain whoreson fellows and consorted with him, till he turned after their example to lewdness and swerved from the way of righteousness, drinking wine in flowing bowls and frequenting fair women night and day; for he said to himself, "Of a truth my father amassed this wealth for me, and if I spend it not, to whom shall I leave it? By Allah, I will not do save as saith the poet:—

An through the whole of life ✿ Thou gett'st and gain'st for self;

Say, when shalt thou enjoy ✿ Thy gains and gotten pelf?"

191 And Ali Shar ceased not to waste his wealth all whiles of the day and all watches of the night, till he had made away with the whole of his riches and abode in pauper case and troubled at heart. So he sold his shop and lands and so forth, and after this he sold the clothes off his body, leaving himself but one suit; and, as drunkenness quitted him and thoughtfulness came to him, he fell into grief and sore care. One day, when he had sat from daybreak to mid-afternoon without breaking his fast, he said in his mind, "I will go round to those on whom I spent my monies: perchance one of them will feed me this day." So he went the round of them all; but, as often as he knocked at any one's door of them, the man denied himself and hid from him, till his stomach ached with hunger. Then he betook himself to the bazar of the merchants——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Tenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ali Shar feeling his stomach ache with hunger, betook himself to the merchants' bazar where he found a crowd of people assembled in ring, and said to himself, "I wonder what causeth these folk to crowd together thus? By Allah, I will not budge hence till I see what is within yonder ring!" So he made his way into the ring and found therein a damsel exposed for sale who was five feet tall,[262] beautifully proportioned, rosy of cheek and high of breast; and who surpassed all the people of her time in beauty and loveliness and elegance and grace; even as saith one, describing her:—

As she willèd she was made, and in such a way that when ✿ She was cast in Nature's mould neither short nor long was she:

Beauty woke to fall in love with the beauties of her form, ✿ Where combine with all her coyness her pride and pudency:

192 The full moon is her face[263] and the branchlet is her shape, ✿ And the musk-pod is her scent—what like her can there be?

'Tis as though she were moulded from water of the pearl, ✿ And in every lovely limblet another moon we see!

And her name was Zumurrud—the Smaragdine. So when Ali Shar saw her, he marvelled at her beauty and grace and said, "By Allah, I will not stir hence till I see how much this girl fetcheth, and know who buyeth her!" So he took standing-place amongst the merchants, and they thought he had a mind to buy her, knowing the wealth he had inherited from his parents. Then the broker stood at the damsel's head and said, "Ho, merchants! Ho, ye men of money! Who will open the gate of biddings for this damsel, the mistress of moons, the union pearl, Zumurrud the curtain-maker, the sought of the seeker and the delight of the desirous? Open the biddings' door and on the opener be nor blame nor reproach for evermore." Thereupon quoth one merchant, "Mine for five hundred dinars;" "and ten," quoth another. "Six hundred," cried an old man named Rashíd al-Din, blue of eye[264] and foul of face. "And ten,"

cried another. “I bid a thousand,” rejoined Rashid al-Din; whereupon the rival merchants were tongue-tied, and held their peace and the broker took counsel with the girl’s owner, who said, “I have sworn not to sell her save to whom she shall choose: so consult her.” Thereupon the broker went up to Zumurrud and said to her, “O mistress of moons, this merchant hath a mind to buy thee.” She looked at Rashid al-Din and finding him as we have said, replied, “I will not be sold to a greybeard, whom decrepitude hath brought to such evil plight. Allah inspired his saying who saith:—

I craved of her a kiss one day; but soon as she beheld ✿ My hoary
hairs, though I my luxuries and wealth display’d;

193 She proudly turned away from me, showed shoulders, cried aloud:— ✿ ‘No! no! by Him, whose hest
mankind from nothingness hath made,

For hoary head and grizzled chin I’ve no especial love: ✿ What! stuff my mouth with cotton[265] ere in sepulchre
I’m laid?’”

Now when the broker heard her words he said, “By Allah, thou art excusable, and thy price is ten thousand gold pieces!” So he told her owner that she would not accept of old man Rashid al-Din, and he said, “Consult her concerning another.” Thereupon a second man came forward and said, “Be she mine for what price was offered by the oldster she would have none of;” but she looked at him and seeing that his beard was dyed, said “What be this fashion lewd and base and the blackening of the hoary face?” And she made a great show of wonderment and repeated these couplets:—

Showed me Sir Such-an-one a sight and what a frightful sight! ✿ A neck, by Allah, only made for slipper-sole to
smite:[266]

A beard the meetest racing-ground where gnats and lice contend, ✿ A brow fit only for the ropes thy temples
chafe and bite.[267]

O thou enravisht by my cheek and beauties of my form, ✿ Why so translate thyself to youth and think I deem it
right?

Dyeing disgracefully that white of reverend aged hairs, ✿ And hiding for foul purposes their venerable white!

Thou goest with one beard and comest back with quite another, ✿ Like Punch-and-Judy man who works the
Chinese shades by night.[268]

194 And how well saith another:—

Quoth she, “I see thee dye thy hoariness:”[269] ✿ “To hide, O ears and eyes! from thee,” quoth I:

She roared with laugh and said, “Right funny this; ✿ Thou art so lying e’en thy hair’s a lie!”

Now when the broker heard her verse he exclaimed, “By Allah thou hast spoken sooth!” The merchant asked what she said: so the broker repeated the verses to him; and he knew that she was in the right while he was wrong and desisted from buying her. Then another came forward and said, “Ask her if she will be mine at the same price;” but, when he did so, she looked at him and seeing that he had but one eye, said, “This man is one-eyed; and it is of such as he that the poet saith:[270]—

Consort not with the Cyclops e’en a day; ✿ Beware his falsehood and his mischief fly:

Had this monocular a jot of good, ✿ Allah had ne'er brought blindness to his eye!"

Then said the broker, pointing to another bidder, "Wilt thou be sold to this man?" She looked at him and seeing that he was short of stature[271] and had a beard that reached to his navel, cried, "This is he of whom the poet speaketh:—

I have a friend who hath a beard ✿ Allah to useless length unroll'd:

'Tis like a certain[272] winter night, ✿ Longsome and darksome, drear and cold."

Said the broker, "O my lady, look who pleaseth thee of these 195 that are present, and point him out, that I may sell thee to him." So she looked round the ring of merchants, examining one by one their physiognomies, till her glance fell on Ali Shar,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the girl's glance fell on Ali Shar, she cast at him a look with longing eyes, which cost her a thousand sighs, and her heart was taken with him; for that he was of favour passing fair and pleasanter than zephyr or northern air; and she said, "O broker, I will be sold to none but to this my lord, owner of the handsome face and slender form whom the poet thus describeth:—

Displaying that fair face ✿ The tempted they assailed;

Who, had they wished me safe ✿ That lovely face had veiled!"

For none shall own me but he, because his cheek is smooth and the water of his mouth sweet as Salsabil;[273] his spittle is a cure for the sick and his charms daze and dazzle poet and proser, even as saith one of him:—

His honey-dew of lips is wine; his breath ✿ Musk and those teeth, smile shown, are camphor's hue:

Rizwán[274] hath turned him out o' doors, for fear ✿ The Houris lapse from virtue at the view;

Men blame his bearing for its pride, but when ✿ In pride the full moon sails, excuse is due.

Lord of the curling locks and rose-red cheeks and ravishing look of whom saith the poet:—

The fawn-like one a meeting promised me ✿ And eye expectant waxed and heart upstirred:

His eyelids bade me hold his word as true; ✿ But, in their languish,[275] can he keep his word?

196 And as saith another:—

Quoth they, "Black letters on his cheek are writ! ✿ How canst thou love him and a side-beard see?"

Quoth I, "Cease blame and cut your chiding short; ✿ If those be letters 'tis a forgery:"

Gather his charms all growths of Eden-garth ✿ Whereto those Kausar[276]-lips bear testimony.

When the broker heard the verses she repeated on the charms of Ali Shar, he marvelled at her eloquence, no less than at the brightness of her beauty; but her owner said to him, "Marvel not at her splendour which shameth the noonday sun, nor that her memory is stored with the choicest verses of the poets; for, besides this, she can repeat the glorious Koran, according to the seven readings,[277] and the august

Traditions, after ascription and authentic transmission; and she writeth the seven modes of handwriting[278] and she knoweth more learning and knowledge than the most learned. Moreover, her hands are better than gold and silver; for she maketh silken curtains and selleth them for fifty gold pieces each; and it taketh her but eight days to make a curtain." Exclaimed the broker, "O happy the man who hath her in his house and maketh her of his choicest treasures!"; and her owner said to him, "Sell her to whom she will." So the broker went up to Ali Shar and, kissing his hands, said to him, "O my lord, buy thou this damsel, for she hath made choice of thee."[279] Then he set forth to him all her charms and accomplishments, and added, "I give thee joy if thou buy her, for this be a gift from Him who is no niggard of His giving." Whereupon Ali bowed his head groundwards awhile, laughing at himself and secretly saying, "Up to this hour I have not broken my fast; yet I am ashamed before the merchants to own that I have no money wherewith to buy her." The damsel, seeing him hang down his head, said to the broker, "Take my hand and lead me to him, that I may show my beauty to him and tempt him to buy me; for I will not be sold to any but to him." So the broker took her hand and stationed her before Ali Shar, 197 saying, "What is thy good pleasure, O my lord?" But he made him no answer, and the girl said to him, "O my lord and darling of my heart, what aileth thee that thou wilt not bid for me? Buy me for what thou wilt and I will bring thee good fortune." So he raised his eyes to her and said, "Is buying perforce? Thou art dear at a thousand dinars." Said she, "Then buy me, O my lord, for nine hundred." He cried, "No," and she rejoined, "Then for eight hundred;" and though he again said, "Nay," she ceased not to abate the price, till she came to an hundred dinars. Quoth he, "I have not by me a full hundred." So she laughed and asked, "How much dost thou lack of an hundred?" He answered, "By Allah, I have neither an hundred dinars, nor any other sum; for I own neither white coin nor red cash, neither dinar nor dirham. So look out thou for another and a better customer." And when she knew that he had nothing, she said to him, "Take me by the hand and carry me aside into a by-lane, as if thou wouldst examine me privily." He did so and she drew from her bosom a purse containing a thousand dinars, which she gave him, saying, "Pay down nine hundred to my price and let the hundred remain with thee by way of provision." He did as she bid him and, buying her for nine hundred dinars, paid down the price from her own purse and carried her to his house. When she entered it, she found a dreary desolate saloon without carpets or vessels; so she gave him other thousand dinars, saying, "Go to the bazar and buy three hundred dinars' worth of furniture and vessels for the house and three dinars' worth of meat and drink."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the slave-girl, "Bring us meat and drink for three dinars; furthermore a piece of silk, the size of a curtain, and

bring golden and silvern thread and sewing-silk of seven colours." Thus he did, and she furnished the house and they sat down to eat and drink; after which they went to bed and took their pleasure one of the other. And they lay the night embraced behind the curtain and were even as saith the poet:[280]—

198 Cleave fast to her thou lovest and let the envious rail amain; For calumny and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.

Lo, whilst I slept, in dreams I saw thee lying by my side And, from thy lips the sweetest, sure, of limpid springs did drain.

Yea, true and certain all I saw is, as I will avouch, And 'spite the envier, thereto I surely will attain.

There is no goodlier sight, indeed, for eyes to look upon. Than when one couch in its embrace enfoldeth lovers twain.

Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their twinned delight. Whilst hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain,

Lo, when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire, But on cold iron smite the folk who chide at them in vain.

Thou, that for loving censurest the votaries of love, canst thou assain a heart diseased or heal a cankered brain?

If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true, I rede thee cast the world away and with that one remain.

So they lay together till the morning and love for the other waxed firmly fixed in the heart of each. And on rising, Zumurrud took the curtain and embroidered it with coloured silks and purfled it with silver and gold thread and she added thereto a border depicting round about it all manner birds and beasts; nor is there in the world a feral but she wrought his semblance. This she worked in eight days, till she had made an end of it, when she trimmed it and glazed and ironed it and gave it to her lord, saying, "Carry it to the bazar and sell it to one of the merchants at fifty dinars; but beware lest thou sell it to a passer-by, as this would cause a separation between me and thee, for we have foes who are not unthoughtful of us." "I hear and I obey," answered he and, repairing to the bazar, sold the curtain to a merchant, as she bade him; after which he bought a piece of silk for another curtain and gold and silver and silken thread as before and what they needed of food, and brought all this to her, giving her the rest of the money. Now every eight days she made a curtain, which he sold for fifty dinars, and on this wise passed a whole year. At the end of that time, he went as usual to the bazar with a curtain, which he gave to the broker; and there came up to him a Nazarene who bid him sixty dinars for it; but he refused, and the Christian continued bidding higher and higher, till he came to an hundred dinars and bribed the broker with ten ducats. So the man returned to Ali Shar and told him of the proffered price and urged him to accept the offer and sell the article at the Nazarene's valuation, saying, "O my lord, be not afraid of this Christian for 199 that he can do thee no hurt." The merchants also were urgent with him; so he sold the curtain to the Christian, albeit his heart misgave him; and, taking the money, set off to return home. Presently, as he walked, he found the Christian walking behind him; so he said to him, "O Nazarene,[281] why dost thou follow in my footsteps?" Answered the other "O my lord,

I want a something at the end of the street, Allah never bring thee to want!"; but Ali Shar had barely reached his place before the Christian overtook him; so he said to him, "O accursed, what aileth thee to follow me wherever I go?" Replied the other, "O my lord, give me a draught of water, for I am athirst; and with Allah be thy reward!"[282] Quoth Ali Shar to himself, "Verily, this man is an Infidel who payeth tribute and claimeth our protection[283] and he asketh me for a draught of water; by Allah, I will not baulk him!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth Ali Shar to himself, "This man is a tributary Unbeliever and he asked me for a draught of water; by Allah, I will not baulk him!" So he entered the house and took a gugglet of water; but the slave-girl Zumurrud saw him and said to him, "O my love, hast thou sold the curtain?" He replied, "Yes;" and she asked, "To a merchant or to a passer-by? for my heart presageth a parting." And he answered, "To whom but to a merchant?" 200 Thereupon she rejoined, "Tell me the truth of the case, that I may order my affair; and why take the gugglet of water?" And he, "To give the broker to drink," upon which she exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"; and she repeated these two couplets:[284]—

O thou who seekest separation, act leisurely, and let not the embrace of the beloved deceive thee!
Act leisurely; for the nature of fortune is treacherous, and the end of every union is disjunction.

Then he took the gugglet and, going out, found the Christian within the vestibule and said to him, "How comest thou here and how darest thou, O dog, enter my house without my leave?" Answered he, "O my lord, there is no difference between the door and the vestibule, and I never intended to stir hence, save to go out; and my thanks are due to thee for thy kindness and favour, thy bounty and generosity." Then he took the mug and emptying it, returned it to Ali Shar, who received it and waited for him to rise up and to go; but he did not move. So Ali said to him, "Why dost thou not rise and wend thy way?"; and he answered, "O my lord, be not of those who do a kindness and then make it a reproach, nor of those of whom saith the poet:[285]—

They're gone who when thou stoodest at their door ✿ Would for thy wants so generously cater:
But stand at door of churls who followed them, ✿ They'd make high favour of a draught of water!"

And he continued, "O my lord, I have drunk, and now I would have thee give me to eat of whatever is in the house, though it be but a bit of bread or a biscuit with an onion." Replied Ali Shar, "Begone, without more chaffer and chatter; there is nothing in the house." He persisted, "O my lord, if there be nothing in the house, take these hundred dinars and bring us something from the market, if but a single scone, that bread and salt may pass between us."[286] With this, quoth Ali Shar to himself, "This 201 Christian is surely mad; I will take his hundred dinars and bring him somewhat worth a couple of dirhams and laugh at him." And the Nazarene added, "O

my lord, I want but a small matter to stay my hunger, were it but a dry scone and an onion; for the best food is that which doeth away appetite, not rich viands"; and how well saith the poet:—

Hunger is sated with a bone-dry scone, ✿ How is it then[287] in woes of want I wone?

Death is all-justest, lacking aught regard ✿ For Caliph-king and beggar woebegone.

Then quoth Ali Shar, "Wait here, while I lock the saloon and fetch thee somewhat from the market;" and quoth the Christian, "To hear is to obey." So Ali Shar shut up the saloon and, locking the door with a padlock, put the key in his pocket: after which he went to market and bought fried cheese and virgin honey and bananas[288] and bread, with which he returned to the house. Now when the Christian saw the provision, he said, "O my lord, this is overmuch; 'tis enough for half a score of men and I am alone; but belike thou wilt eat with me." Replied Ali, "Eat by thyself, I am full;" and the Christian rejoined, "O my lord, the wise say, Whoso eateth not with his guest is a son of a whore." Now when Ali Shar heard these words from the Nazarene, he sat down and ate a little with him, after which he would have held his hand;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ali Shar sat down and ate a little with him, after which he would have held his hand; but the Nazarene privily took a banana and peeled it; then, splitting it in twain, put into one half concentrated Bhang, mixed with opium, a drachm whereof would overthrow an elephant; and he dipped it in the honey and gave it to Ali Shar, saying, "O my lord, by the truth of thy religion, I 202 adjure thee to take this." So Ali Shar, being ashamed to make him forsworn, took it and swallowed it; but hardly had it settled well in his stomach, when his head forwent both his feet and he was as though he had been a year asleep. As soon as the Nazarene saw this, he rose to his feet as he had been a scald wolf or a cat-o'-mount[289] at bay and, taking the saloon key, left Ali Shar prostrate and ran off to rejoin his brother. And the cause of his so doing was that the Nazarene's brother was the same decrepit old man who purposed to buy Zumurrud for a thousand dinars, but she would none of him and jeered him in verse. He was an Unbeliever inwardly, though a Moslem outwardly, and had called himself Rashid al-Din;[290] and when Zumurrud mocked him and would not accept of him, he complained to his brother, the aforesaid Christian who played this sleight to take her from her master Ali Shar; whereupon his brother, Barsúm by name, said to him, "Fret not thyself about the business; for I will make shift to seize her for thee, without expending either dinar or dirham." Now he was a skilful wizard, crafty and wicked; so he watched his time and ceased not his practices till he played Ali Shar the trick before related; then, taking the key, he went to his brother and acquainted him with what had passed. Thereupon Rashid al-Din mounted his she-mule and repaired with his brother and his servants to the house of Ali Shar, taking with him a purse of a thousand dinars, wherewith to bribe the Chief

of Police, should he meet him. He opened the saloon-door, and the men who were with him rushed in upon Zumurrud and forcibly seized her, threatening her with death, if she spoke; but they left the place as it was and took nothing therefrom. Lastly, they left Ali Shar lying in the vestibule after they had shut the door on him and laid the saloon key by his side. Then the Christian carried the girl to his own house and setting her amongst his handmaids and concubines, said to her, "O strumpet, 203 I am the old man whom thou didst reject and lampoon; but now I have thee, without paying dinar or dirham." Replied she (and her eyes streamed with tears), "Allah requite thee, O wicked old man, for sundering me and my lord!" He rejoined, "Wanton minx and whore that thou art, thou shalt see how I will punish thee! By the truth of the Messiah and the Virgin, except thou obey me and embrace my faith, I will torture thee with all manner of torture!" She replied, "By Allah, though thou cut my flesh to bits I will not forswear the faith of Al-Islam! It may be Almighty Allah will bring me speedy relief, for He doth even as He is lief, and the wise say:—Better body to scathe than a flaw in faith." Thereupon the old man called his eunuchs and women, saying, "Throw her down!" So they threw her down and he ceased not to beat her with grievous beating, whilst she cried for help and no help came; then she no longer implored aid but fell to saying, "Allah is my sufficiency, and He is indeed all-sufficient!" till her groans ceased and her breath failed her and she fell into a fainting-fit. Now when his heart was soothed by bashing her, he said to the eunuchs, "Drag her forth by the feet and cast her down in the kitchen, and give her nothing to eat." And after quietly sleeping that night, on the morrow the accursed old man sent for her and beat her again, after which he bade the Castrato return her to her place. When the burning of the blows had cooled, she said, "There is no God but *the* God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God! Allah is my sufficiency and excellent is my Guardian!" And she called for succour upon our Lord Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!)——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Zumurrud called for succour upon our Lord Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!). Such was her case; but as regards Ali Shar, he ceased not sleeping till next day, when the Bhang quitted his brain and he opened his eyes, and cried out, "O Zumurrud"; but no one answered him. So he entered the saloon and found the empty air and the fane afar;[291] whereby he knew that it was the Nazarene 204 who had played him this trick. And he groaned and wept and lamented and again shed tears, repeating these couplets:—

O Love thou'rt instant in thy cruellest guise; ✿ Here is my heart 'twixt fears and miseries:
Pity, O lords, a thrall who, felled on way ✿ Of Love, erst wealthy now a beggar lies:
What profits archer's art if, when the foe ✿ Draw near, his bowstring snap ere arrow flies:
And when griefs multiply on generous man ✿ And urge, what fort can fend from destinies?

How much and much I warded parting, but ✿ ‘When Destiny descends she blinds our eyes?’

And when he had ended his verse, he sobbed with loud sobs and repeated also these couplets:—

Enrobes with honour sands of camp her foot-step wandering lone; ✿ Pines the poor mourner as she wins the stead where wont to wone:

She turns to resting-place of tribe, and yearns thereon to view ✿ The spring-camp lying desolate with ruins overstrown:

She stands and questions of the site, but with the tongue of case ✿ The mount replies, ‘There is no path that leads to union, none!

‘Tis as the lightning flash erewhile bright glittered o’er the camp ✿ And died in darkling air no more to be for ever shown.’

And he repented when repentance availed him naught, and wept and rent his raiment. Then he hent in hand two stones and went round about the city, beating his breast with the stones and crying, “O Zumurrud!” whilst the small boys flocked round him, calling out, “A madman! A madman!” and all who knew him wept for him, saying, “This is such an one: what evil hath befallen him?” Thus he continued doing all that day and, when night darkened on him, he lay down in one of the city-lanes and slept till morning. On the morrow, he went round about town with the stones till eventide, when he returned to his saloon to pass therein the night. Presently, one of his neighbours saw him, and this worthy old woman said to him, “O my son, Heaven give thee healing! How long hast thou been mad?” And he answered her with these two couplets:[292]—

205 They said, Thou ravest upon the person thou lovest. And I replied, The sweets of life are only for the mad.

Drop the subject of my madness, and bring her upon whom I rave. If she cure my madness do not blame me.

So his old neighbour knew him for a lover who had lost his beloved and said, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! O my son, I wish thou wouldest acquaint me with the tale of thine affliction. Peradventure Allah may enable me to help thee against it, if it so please Him.” So he told her all that had befallen him with Barsum the Nazarene and his brother the wizard who had named himself Rashid al-Din and, when she understood the whole case, she said, “O my son, indeed thou hast excuse.” And her eyes railed tears and she repeated these two couplets:—

Enough for lovers in this world their ban and bane: ✿ By Allah, lover ne’er in fire of Sakar fries:

For, sure, they died of love-desire they never told ✿ Chastely, and to this truth tradition testifies.[293]

And after she had finished her verse, she said, “O my son, rise at once and buy me a crate, such as the jewel-pedlars carry; buy also bangles and seal-rings and bracelets and ear-rings and other gew-gaws wherein women delight and grudge not the cash. Put all the stock into the crate and bring it to me and I will set it on my head and go round about, in the guise of a huckstress and make search for her in all the houses, till I happen on news of her—Inshallah!” So Ali Shar rejoiced in her words and kissed

her hands, then, going out, speedily brought her all she required; whereupon she rose and donned a patched gown and threw over her head a honey-yellow veil, and took staff in hand and, with the basket on her head, began wandering about the passages and the houses. She ceased not to go from house to house and street to street and quarter to quarter, till Allah Almighty led her to the house of the accursed Rashid al-Din the Nazarene where, hearing groans within, she knocked at the door,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman heard groans within the house, she knocked at the door, whereupon a slave-girl came down and opening to her, saluted her. Quoth the old woman, "I have these trifles for sale: is there any one with you who will buy aught of them?" "Yes," answered the damsel and, carrying her indoors, made her sit down; whereupon all the slave-girls came round her and each bought something of her. And as the old woman spoke them fair and was easy with them as to price, all rejoiced in her, because of her kind ways and pleasant speech. Meanwhile, she looked narrowly at the ins and outs of the place to see who it was she had heard groaning, till her glance fell on Zumurrud, when she knew her and she began to show her customers yet more kindness. At last she made sure that Zumurrud was laid prostrate; so she wept and said to the girls, "O my children, how cometh yonder young lady in this plight?" Then the slave-girls told her all what had passed, adding, "Indeed this matter is not of our choice; but our master commanded us to do thus, and he is now on a journey?" She said, "O my children, I have a favour to ask of you, and it is that you loose this unhappy damsel of her bonds, till you know of your lord's return, when do ye bind her again as she was; and you shall earn a reward from the Lord of all creatures." "We hear and obey," answered they and at once loosing Zumurrud, gave her to eat and drink. Thereupon quoth the old woman, "Would my leg had been broken, ere I entered your house!" And she went up to Zumurrud and said to her, "O my daughter, Heaven keep thee safe; soon shall Allah bring thee relief." Then she privily told her that she came from her lord, Ali Shar, and agreed with her to be on the watch for sounds that night, saying, "Thy lord will come and stand by the pavilion-bench and whistle[294] to thee; and when thou hearest him, do thou 207 whistle back to him and let thyself down to him by a rope from the window, and he will take thee and go away with thee." So Zumurrud thanked the old woman, who went forth and returned to Ali Shar and told him what she had done, saying, "Go this night, at midnight, to such a quarter, for the accursed carle's house is there and its fashion is thus and thus. Stand under the window of the upper chamber and whistle; whereupon she will let herself down to thee; then do thou take her and carry her whither thou wilt." He thanked her for her good offices and with flowing tears repeated these couplets:—

Now with their says and saids[295] no more vex me the chiding race; ✿ My heart is weary and I'm worn to bone by their disgrace:

And tears a truthful legend[296] with a long ascription-chain ✿ Of my desertion and distress the lineage can trace.

O thou heart-whole and free from dole and dolours I endure, ✿ Cut short thy long persistency nor question of my case:

A sweet-lipped one and soft of sides and cast in shapeliest mould ✿ Hath stormed my heart with honied lure and honied words of grace.

No rest my heart hath known since thou art gone, nor ever close ✿ These eyes, nor patience-aloe scape the hopes I dare to trace:

Ye have abandoned me to be the pawn of vain desire, ✿ In squalid state 'twixt enviers and they who blame to face:

As for forgetting you or love 'tis thing I never knew; ✿ Nor in my thought shall ever pass a living thing but you.

And when he ended his verses, he sighed and shed tears and repeated also these couplets:—

Divinely were inspired his words who brought me news of you; ✿ For brought he unto me a gift was music in mine ear:

Take he for gift, if him content, this worn-out threadbare robe, ✿ My heart, which was in pieces torn when parting from my fere.

He waited till night darkened and, when came the appointed time, he went to the quarter she had described to him and saw and recognised the Christian's house; so he sat down on the bench under the gallery. Presently drowsiness overcame him and he slept (Glory be to Him who sleepeth not!), for it was long since he had tasted sleep, by reason of the violence of his passion, 208 and he became as one drunken with slumber. And while he was on this wise——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventeenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that while he lay asleep, behold, a certain thief, who had come out that night and prowled about the skirts of the city to steal somewhat, happened by the decree of Destiny, on the Nazarene's house. He went round about it, but found no way of climbing up into it, and presently on his circuit he came to the bench, where he saw Ali Shar asleep and stole his turband; and, as he was taking it, suddenly Zumurrud looked out and seeing the thief standing in the darkness, took him for her lord; whereupon she let herself down to him by the rope with a pair of saddle-bags full of gold. Now when the robber saw that, he said to himself, "This is a wondrous thing, and there must needs be some marvellous cause to it." Then he snatched up the saddle-bags, and threw Zumurrud over his shoulders and made off with both like the blinding lightning. Quoth she, "Verily, the old woman told me that thou wast weak with illness on my account; and here thou art, stronger than a horse." He made her no reply; so she put her hand to his face and felt a beard like the broom of palm-frond used for the Hammam,[297] as if he were a hog which had

swallowed feathers and they had come out of his gullet; whereat she took fright and said to him, "What art thou?" "O strumpet," answered he, "I am the sharper Jawán[298] the Kurd, of the band of Ahmad al-Danaf; we are forty sharpers, who will all piss our tallow into thy womb this night, from dusk to dawn." When she heard his words, she wept and beat her face, knowing that Fate had gotten the better of her and that she had no resource but resignation and to put her trust in Allah Almighty. So she took patience and submitted herself to the ordinance of the Lord, saying, "There is no god but *the* God! As often as we escape from one woe, we fall into a 209worse." Now the cause of Jawan's coming thither was this: he had said to Calamity-Ahmad, "O Sharper-captain,[299] I have been in this city before and know a cavern without the walls which will hold forty souls; so I will go before you thither and set my mother therein. Then will I return to the city and steal somewhat for the luck of all of you and keep it till you come; so shall you be my guests and I will show you hospitality this day." Replied Ahmad al-Danaf, "Do what thou wilt." So Jawan went forth to the place before them and set his mother in the cave; but, as he came out he found a trooper lying asleep, with his horse picketed beside him; so he cut his throat and, taking his clothes and his charger and his arms, hid them with his mother in the cave, where also he tethered the horse. Then he betook himself to the city and prowled about, till he happened on the Christian's house and did with Ali Shar's turband and Zumurrud and her saddle-bags as we have said. He ceased not to run, with Zumurrud on his back, till he came to the cavern, where he gave her in charge of his mother, saying, "Keep thou watch over her till I return to thee at first dawn of day," and went his ways.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth Kurdish Jawan to his mother, "Keep thou watch over her till I come back to thee at first dawn of day," and went his ways. Now Zumurrud said to herself, "Why am I so heedless about saving my life and wherefore await till these forty men come?: they will take their turns to board me, till they make me like a water-logged ship at sea." Then she turned to the old woman, Jawan's mother, and said to her, "O my aunt, wilt thou not rise up and come without the cave, that I may louse thee in the sun?"[300] Replied the old woman, "Ay, by Allah, O my daughter: this long time have I been out of reach of the bath; for these hogs cease not to carry me from place to place." So they went without the cavern, and Zumurrud combed out her head hair and killed the lice on her locks, till the tickling 210soothed her and she fell asleep; whereupon Zumurrud arose and, donning the clothes of the murthered trooper, girt her waist with his sword and covered her head with his turband, so that she became as she were a man. Then, mounting the horse, after she had taken the saddle bags full of gold she breathed a prayer, "O good Protector, protect me I adjure thee by the glory of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and preserve!)," adding these words in thought, "If I return to the

city belike one of the trooper's folk will see me, and no good will befal me." So she turned her back on the town and rode forth into the wild and the waste. And she ceased not faring forth with her saddle-bags and the steed, eating of the growth of the earth and drinking of its waters, she and her horse, for ten days and, on the eleventh, she came in sight of a city pleasant and secure from dread, and stablished in happy stead. Winter had gone from it with his cold showers, and Prime had come to it with his roses and orange-blossoms and varied flowers; and its blooms were brightly blowing; its streams were merrily flowing and its birds warbled coming and going. And she drew near the dwellings and would have entered the gate when she saw the troops and Emirs and Grandees of the place drawn up, whereat she marvelled seeing them in such unusual case and said to herself, "The people of the city are all gathered at its gate: needs must there be a reason for this." Then she made towards them; but, as she drew near, the soldiery dashed forward to meet her and, dismounting all, kissed the ground between her hands and said, "Aid thee Allah, O our lord the Sultan!" Then the notables and dignitaries ranged themselves before her in double line, whilst the troops ordered the people in, saying, "Allah aid thee and make thy coming a blessing to the Moslems, O Sultan of all creatures! Allah establish thee, O King of the time and union-pearl of the day and the tide!" Asked Zumurrud, "What aileth you, O people of this city?" And the Head Chamberlain answered, "Verily, He hath given to thee who is no niggard in His giving; and He hath been bountiful to thee and hath made thee Sultan of this city and ruler over the necks of all who are therein; for know thou it is the custom of the citizens, when their King deceaseth leaving no son, that the troops should sally forth to the suburbs and sojourn there three days: and whoever cometh from the quarter whence thou hast come, him they make King over them. So praised be Allah who hath sent us of the sons of the Turks a well-favoured man; for had a lesser than thou presented himself, he 211 had been Sultan." Now Zumurrud was clever and well-advised in all she did: so she said, "Think not that I am of the common folk of the Turks! nay, I am of the sons of the great, a man of condition; but I was wroth with my family, so I went forth and left them. See these saddle-bags full of gold which I have brought under me that, by the way, I might give alms thereof to the poor and the needy." So they called down blessings upon her and rejoiced in her with exceeding joy and she also joyed in them and said in herself, "Now that I have attained to this"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

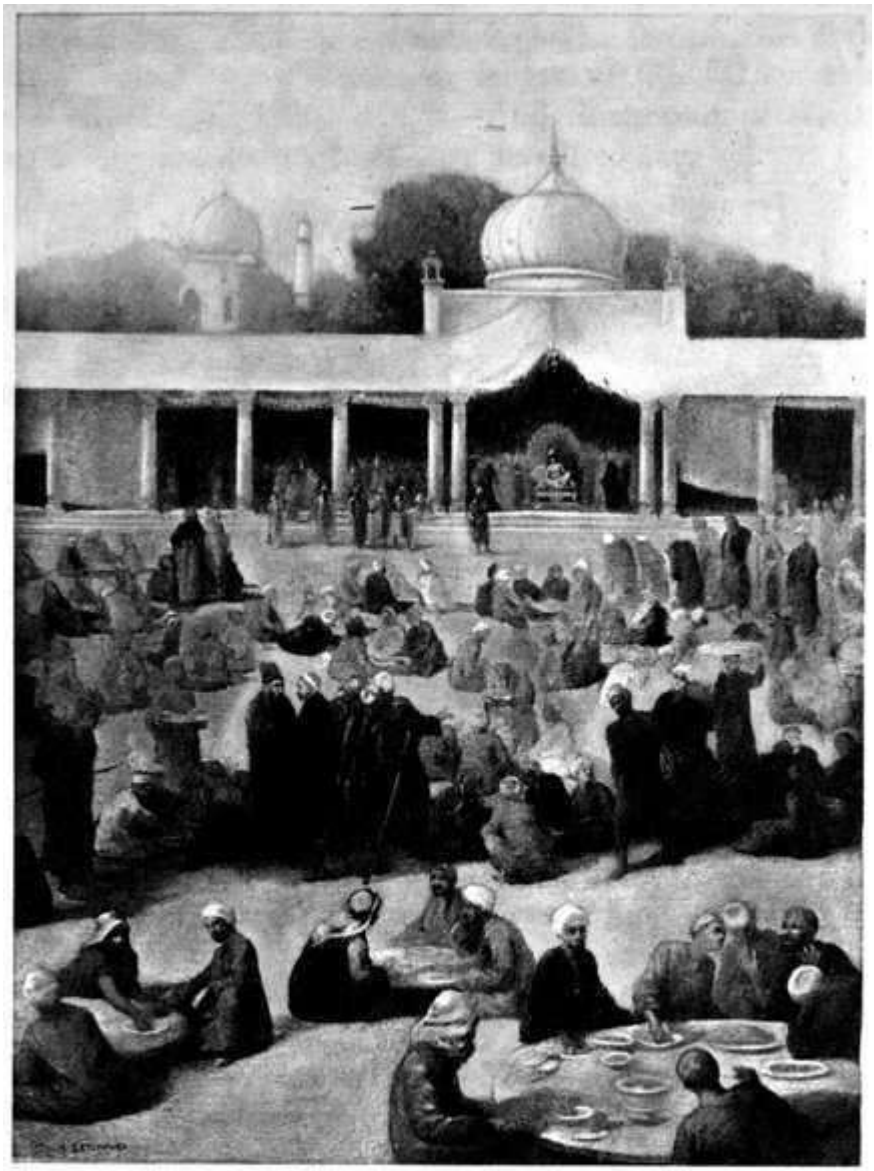
She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth Zumurrud to herself, "Now that I have attained to this case, haply Allah will reunite me with my lord in this place, for He can do whatso He willeth." Then the troops escorted her to the city and, all dismounting, walked before her to the palace. Here she alighted and the Emirs and Grandees, taking her under both armpits,[3011] carried her into the palace and seated

her on the throne; after which they all kissed ground before her. And when duly enthroned she bade them open the treasuries and gave largesse to all the troops, who offered up prayers for the continuance of her reign, and all the townsfolk accepted her rule and all the lieges of the realm. Thus she abode awhile bidding and forbidding, and all the people came to hold her in exceeding reverence and heartily to love her, by reason of her continence and generosity; for taxes she remitted and prisoners she released and grievances she redressed; but, as often as she bethought her of her lord, she wept and besought Allah to reunite her and him; and one night, as she chanced to be thinking of him and calling to mind the days she had passed with him, her eyes ran over with tears and she versified in these two couplets:—

My yearning for thee though long is fresh, ✿ And the tears which chafe these eyelids increase:
When I weep, I weep from the burn of love, ✿ For to lover severance is decease.[302]

212 And when she had ended her verse, she wiped away her tears and repairing to the palace, betook herself to the Harim, where she appointed to the slave-girls and concubines separate lodgings and assigned them pensions and allowances, giving out that she was minded to live apart and devote herself to works of piety. So she applied herself to fasting and praying, till the Emirs said, "Verily, this Sultan is eminently devout;" nor would she suffer any male attendants about her, save two little eunuchs to serve her. And on this wise she held the throne a whole year, during which time she heard no news of her lord, and failed to hit upon his traces, which was exceeding grievous to her; so, when her distress became excessive, she summoned her Wazirs and Chamberlains and bid them fetch architects and builders and make her in front of the palace a horse-course, one parasang long and the like broad. They hastened to do her bidding, and lay out the place to her liking; and, when it was completed, she went down into it and they pitched her there a great pavilion, wherein the chairs of the Emirs were ranged in due order. Moreover, she bade them spread on the racing-plain tables with all manners of rich meats and when this was done she ordered the Grandees to eat. So they ate and she said to them, "It is my will that, on seeing the new moon of each month, ye do on this wise and proclaim in the city that no man shall open his shop, but that all our lieges shall come and eat of the King's banquet, and that whoso disobeyeth shall be hanged over his own door."[303] So they did as she bade them, and ceased not so to do till the first new moon of the second year appeared; when Zumurrud went down into the horse-course and the crier proclaimed aloud, saying, "Ho, ye lieges and people one and all, whoso openeth store or shop or house shall straightway be hanged over his own door; for it behoveth you to come in a body and eat of the King's banquet." And when the proclamation became known, they laid the tables and the subjects came in hosts; so she bade them sit down at the trays and eat their fill of all the dishes. Accordingly they sat down and she took place

on her chair of state, watching them, whilst each who was at meat said to himself, "Verily the King looketh at none save me." Then 213 they fell to eating and the Emirs said to them, "Eat and be not ashamed; for this pleaseth the King." So they ate their fill and went away, blessing the Sovereign and saying, one to the other, "Never in our days saw we a Sultan who loved the poor as doth this Sultan." And they wished him length of life. Upon this Zumurrud returned to her palace,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.





Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Queen Zumurrud returned to her palace, rejoicing in her device and saying to herself, "Inshallah, I shall surely by this means happen on news of my lord Ali Shar." When the first day of the second month came round, she did as before and when they had spread the tables she came down from her palace and took place on her throne and commanded the lieges to sit down and fall to. Now as she sat on her throne, at the head of the tables, watching the people take their places company by company and one by one, behold her eye fell on Barsum, the Nazarene who had bought the curtain of her lord; and she knew him and said in her mind, "This is the first of my joy and the winning of my wish." Then Barsum came up to the table and, sitting down with the rest to eat, espied a dish of sweet rice, sprinkled with sugar; but it was far from him, so he pushed up to it through the crowd and, putting out his hand to it, seized it and set it before himself. His next neighbour said to him, "Why dost thou not eat of what is before thee? Is not this a disgrace to thee? How canst thou reach over for a dish which is distant from thee? Art thou not ashamed?" Quoth Barsum, "I will eat of none save this same." Rejoined the other, "Eat then, and Allah give thee no good of it!" But another man, a Hashish-eater, said, "Let him eat of it, that I may eat with him." Replied his neighbour, "O unluckiest of Hashish-eaters, this is no meat for thee; it is eating for Emirs. Let it be, that it may return to those for whom it is meant and they eat it." But Barsum heeded him not and took a mouthful of the rice and put it in his mouth; and was about to take a second mouthful when the Queen, who was watching him, cried out to certain of 214 her guards, saying, "Bring me yonder man with the dish of sweet rice before him and let him not eat the mouthful he hath ready but throw it from his hand."[304] So four of the guards went up to Barsum and haled him along on his face, after throwing the mouthful of rice from his hand, and set him standing before Zumurrud, whilst all the people left eating and said to one another, "By Allah, he did wrong in not eating of the food meant for the likes of him." Quoth one, "For me I was content with this porridge[305] which is before me." And the Hashish-eater said, "Praised be Allah who hindered me from eating of the dish of sugared rice for I expected it to stand before him and was waiting only for him to have his enjoyment of it, to eat with him, when there befel him what we see." And the general said, one to other, "Wait till we see what shall befal him." Now as they brought him before Queen Zumurrud she cried, "Woe to thee, O blue eyes! What is thy name and why comest thou to our country?" But the accursed called himself out of his name, having a white turband[306] on, and answered, "O King, my name is Ali; I work as a weaver and I came hither to trade." Quoth Zumurrud, "Bring me a table of sand and a pen of brass," and when they brought her what she sought, she took the sand and the pen, and struck a geomantic figure in the likeness of a baboon; then, raising her head, she looked hard at Barsum for an hour or so and said to him, "O dog, how darest thou lie to Kings? Art thou not a

Nazarene, Barsum by name, and comest thou not hither in quest of somewhat? Speak the truth, or by the glory of the Godhead, I will strike off thy head!" At this Barsum was confounded and the Emirs and bystanders said, "Verily, this King understandeth geomancy: blessed be He who hath gifted him!" Then she cried out upon the Christian and said, "Tell me the truth, or I will make an end of thee!" Barsum replied, "Pardon, O King of the age; thou art right as regards the table, for the 215 far one[307] is indeed a Nazarene"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Barsum replied, "Pardon, O King of the age; thou art right as regards the table, for thy slave is indeed a Nazarene." Whereupon all present, gentle and simple, wondered at the King's skill in hitting upon the truth by geomancy, and said, "Verily this King is a diviner, whose like there is not in the world." Thereupon Queen Zumurrud bade flay the Nazarene and stuff his skin with straw and hang it over the gate of the race-course. Moreover, she commanded to dig a pit without the city and burn therein his flesh and bones and throw over his ashes offal and ordure. "We hear and obey," answered they, and did with him all she bade; and, when the folk saw what had befallen the Christian, they said, "Serve him right; but what an unlucky mouthful was that for him!" And another said, "Be the far one's wife divorced if this vow be broken: never again to the end of my days will I eat of sugared rice!"; and the Hashish-eater cried "Praised be Allah, who spared me this fellow's fate by saving me from eating of that same rice!" Then they all went out, holding it thenceforth unlawful to sit over against the dish of sweet rice as the Nazarene had sat. Now when the first day of the third month came, they laid the tables according to custom, and covered them with dishes and chargers, and Queen Zumurrud came down and sat on her throne, with her guards in attendance, as of wont, in awe of her dignity and majesty. Then the townsfolk entered as before and went round about the tables, looking for the place of the dish of sweet rice, and quoth one to another, "Hark ye, O Hájí[308] Khalaf!"; and the other answered, "At thy service, O Hájí Khálid." Said Khálid, "Avoid the dish of sweet rice and look thou eat not thereof; for, if thou do, by early morning thou will be hanged."[309] 216 Then they sat down to meat around the table; and, as they were eating, Queen Zumurrud chanced to look from her throne and saw a man come running in through the gate of the horse-course; and having considered him attentively, she knew him for Jawan the Kurdish thief who murdered the trooper. Now the cause of his coming was this: when he left his mother, he went to his comrades and said to them, "I did good business yesterday; for I slew a trooper and took his horse. Moreover there fell to me last night a pair of saddle-bags, full of gold, and a young lady worth more than the money in pouch; and I have left all that with my mother in the cave." At this they rejoiced and repaired to the cavern at nightfall, whilst Jawan the Kurd walked in front and the rest behind; he

wishing to bring them the booty of which he had boasted. But he found the place clean empty and questioned his mother, who told him all that had befallen her; whereupon he bit his hands for regret and exclaimed, “By Allah, I will assuredly make search for the harlot and take her, wherever she is, though it be in the shell of a pistachio-nut,[310] and quench my malice on her!” So he went forth in quest of her and ceased not journeying from place to place, till he came to Queen Zumurrud’s city. On entering he found the town deserted and, enquiring of some women whom he saw looking from the windows, they told him that it was the Sultan’s custom to make a banquet for the people on the first of each month and that all the lieges were bound to go and eat of it. Furthermore the women directed him to the racing-ground, where the feast was spread. So he entered at a shuffling trot; and, finding no place empty, save that before the dish of sweet rice already noticed, took his seat right opposite it and stretched out his hand towards the dish; whereupon the folk cried out to him, saying, “O our brother, what wouldst thou do?” Quoth he, “I would eat my fill of this dish.” Rejoined one of the people, “If thou eat of it thou wilt assuredly find thyself hanged to-morrow morning.” But Jawan said, “Hold thy tongue and talk not so unpleasantly.” Then he stretched out his hand to the dish and drew it to him; but it so chanced that the Hashish-eater of whom we have spoken, was sitting by him; and when he saw him take the dish, the fumes of the Hashish left his head and he fled from his place and sat down afar off, saying, “I will have nothing to do with yonder dish.” Then Jawan the Kurd put out his hand (which 217 was very like a raven’s claws),[311] scooped up therewith half the dishful and drew out his neave as it were a camel’s hoof——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Jawan the Kurd drew his neave from the dish as it were a camel’s hoof and rolled the lump of rice in the palm of his hand, till it was like a big orange, and threw it ravenously into his mouth; and it rolled down his gullet, with a rumble like thunder and the bottom of the deep dish appeared where said mouthful had been. Thereupon quoth to him one sitting by his side, “Praised be Allah for not making me meat between thy hands; for thou hast cleared the dish at a single mouthful;” and quoth the Hashish-eater, “Let him eat; methinks he hath a hanging face.” Then, turning to Jawan he added, “Eat and Allah give thee small good of it.” So Jawan put out his hand again and taking another mouthful, was rolling it in his palm like the first, when behold, the Queen cried out to the guards saying, “Bring me yonder man in haste and let him not eat the mouthful in his hand.” So they ran and seizing him as he hung over the dish, brought him to her, and set him in her presence, whilst the people exulted over his mishap and said one to the other, “Serve him right, for we warned him, but he would not take warning. Verily, this place is bound to be the death of whoso sitteth therein, and yonder rice bringeth doom to all who eat of it.” Then said Queen Zumurrud to Jawan, “What is thy name and trade and

wherefore comest thou to our city?" Answered he, "O our lord the Sultan, my name is Othman; I work as a gardener and am come hither in quest of somewhat I have lost." Quoth Zumurrud, "Here with a table of sand!" So they brought it, and she took the pen and drawing a geomantic scheme, considered it awhile, then raising her head, exclaimed, "Woe to thee, thou losel! How darest thou lie to Kings? This sand [218] telleth me that of a truth thy name is Jawan the Kurd and that thou art by trade a robber, taking men's goods in the way of unright and slaying those whom Allah hath forbidden to slay save for just cause." And she cried out upon him, saying, "O hog, tell me the truth of thy case or I will cut off thy head on the spot." Now when he heard these words, he turned yellow and his teeth chattered; then, deeming that he might save himself by truth-telling, he replied, "O King, thou sayest sooth; but I repent at thy hands henceforth and turn to Allah Almighty!" She answered, "It were not lawful for me to leave a pest in the way of Moslems;" and cried to her guards, "Take him and skin him and do with him as last month ye did by his like." They obeyed her commandment; and, when the Hashish-eater saw the soldiers seize the man, he turned his back upon the dish of rice, saying, "'Tis a sin to present my face to thee!" And after they had made an end of eating, they dispersed to their several homes and Zumurrud returned to her palace and dismissed her attendants. Now when the fourth month came round, they went to the race-course and made the banquet, according to custom, and the folk sat awaiting leave to begin. Presently Queen Zumurrud entered; and, sitting down on her throne, looked at the tables and saw that room for four people was left void before the dish of rice, at which she wondered. Now as she was looking around, behold, she saw a man come trotting in at the gate of the horse-course; and he stayed not till he stood over the food-trays; and, finding no room, save before the dish of rice, took his seat there. She looked at him and knowing him for the accursed Christian who called himself Rashid al-Din, said in her mind, "How blessed is this device of the food,[312] into whose toils this infidel hath fallen!" Now the cause of his coming was extraordinary, and it was on this wise. When he returned from his travels——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the accursed, who had called himself Rashid Al-Din, returned from travel, his household informed him that Zumurrud was missing [219] and with her a pair of saddle-bags full of money; on hearing which ill tidings he rent his raiment and buffetted his face and plucked out his beard. Then he despatched his brother Barsum in quest of her to lands adjoining and, when he was weary of awaiting news of him, he went forth himself, to seek for him and for the girl, whenas fate led him to the city of Zumurrud. He entered it on the first day of the month and finding the streets deserted and the shops shut and women idling at the windows, he asked them the reason why, and they told him that the King made

a banquet on the first of each month for the people, all of whom were bound to attend it, nor might any abide in his house or shop that day; and they directed him to the racing-plain. So he betook himself thither and found the people crowding about the food, and there was never a place for him save in front of the rice-dish now well-known. Here then he sat and put forth his hand to eat thereof, whereupon Zumurrud cried out to her guards, saying, "Bring me him who sitteth over against the dish of rice." So they knew him by what had before happened and laid hands on him and brought him before Queen Zumurrud, who said to him, "Out on thee! What is thy name and trade, and what bringeth thee to our city?" Answered he, "O King of the age, my name is Rustam[313] and I have no occupation, for I am a poor dervish." Then said she to her attendants, "Bring me table of sand and pen of brass." So they brought her what she sought, as of wont; and she took the pen and made the dots which formed the figure and considered it awhile, then raising her head to Rashid al-Din, she said, "O dog, how darest thou lie to Kings? Thy name is Rashid al-Din the Nazarene, thou art outwardly a Moslem, but a Christian at heart, and thine occupation is to lay snares for the slave-girls of the Moslems and make them captives. Speak the truth, or I will smite off thy head." He hesitated and stammered, then replied, "Thou sayest sooth, O King of the age!" Whereupon she commanded to throw him down and give him an hundred blows with a stick on each sole and a thousand stripes with a whip on his body; after which she bade flay him and stuff his skin with hards of flax and dig a pit without the city, wherein they should burn his corpse and cast on his ashes offal and ordure. They did as she bade them and she gave 220 the people leave to eat. So they ate and when they had eaten their fill they went their ways, while Queen Zumurrud returned to her palace, saying, "I thank Allah for solacing my heart of those who wronged me." Then she praised the Creator of the earth and the heavens and repeated these couplets:—

They ruled awhile and theirs was harsh tyrannic rule, ✿ But soon that rule went by as though it never were:
If just they had won justice; but they sinned, and so ✿ The world collected all its bane for them to bear:
So died they and their case's tongue declares aloud ✿ This is for that; so of the world your blaming spare.

And when her verse was ended she called to mind her lord Ali Shar and wept flowing tears; but presently recovered herself and said, "Haply Allah, who hath given mine enemies into my hand, will vouchsafe me the speedy return of my beloved;" and she begged forgiveness of Allah (be He extolled and exalted!),——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen begged forgiveness of Allah (be He extolled and exalted!), and said, "Haply He will vouchsafe me speedy reunion with my beloved Ali Shar for He can do what He willeth and to His servants showeth grace, ever mindful of their case!" Then she praised Allah and again

besought forgiveness of Him, submitting herself to the decrees of destiny, assured that each beginning hath his end, and repeating the saying of the poet:—

Take all things easy; for all worldly things ✿ In Allah's hand are ruled by Destiny:

Ne'er shall befal thee aught of things forbidden, ✿ Nor what is bidden e'er shall fail to thee!

And what another saith:—

Roll up thy days[314] and easy shall they roll ✿ Through life, nor haunt the house of grief and dole:

Full many a thing, which is o'er hard to find, ✿ Next hour shall bring thee to delight thy soul.

221 And what a third saith[315]:—

Be mild what time thou 'rt ta'en with anger and despite ✿ And patient, if there fall misfortune on thy head.

Indeed, the nights are quick and great with child by Time ✿ And of all wondrous things are hourly brought to bed.

And what a fourth saith:—

Take patience which breeds good if patience thou can learn; ✿ Be calm-souled, scaping anguish-draughts that gripe and bren:

Know, that if patience with good grace thou dare refuse, ✿ With ill-graced patience thou shalt bear what wrote the Pen.

After which she abode thus another whole month's space, judging the folk and bidding and forbidding by day, and by night weeping and bewailing her separation from her lord Ali Shar. On the first day of the fifth month, she bade them spread the banquet on the race-plain, according to custom, and sat down at the head of the tables, whilst the lieges awaited the signal to fail to, leaving the place before the dish of rice vacant. She sat with eyes fixed upon the gate of the horse-course, noting all who entered and saying in her soul, "O Thou who restoredest Joseph to Jacob and diddest away the sorrows of Job,[316] vouchsafe of Thy might and Thy majesty to restore me my lord Ali Shar; for Thou over all things art Omnipotent, O Lord of the Worlds! O Guide of those who go astray! O Hearer of those that cry! O Answerer of those who pray, answer Thou my prayer, O Lord of all creatures." Now hardly had she made an end of her prayer and supplication when behold, she saw entering the gate of the horse-plain a young man, in shape like a willow branch, the comeliest of youths and the most accomplished, save that his face was wan and his form wasted by weariness. Now as he entered and came up to the tables, he found no seat vacant save that over against the dish of 222 sweet rice so he sat down there; and, when Zumurrud looked upon him, her heart fluttered and, observing him narrowly, she knew him for her lord Ali Shar, and was like to have cried out for joy, but restrained herself, fearing disgrace before the folk; and, albeit her bowels yearned over him and her heart beat wildly, she hid what she felt. Now the cause of his coming thither was on this wise. After he fell asleep upon the bench and Zumurrud let herself down to him and Jawan the Kurd seized her, he presently awoke and found himself lying with his head bare, so he knew that some one had come upon him and had robbed him of his turband whilst he slept. So he spoke the saying which shall never shame its sayer and, which is, "Verily,

we are Allah's and to Him are we returning!" and, going back to the old woman's house, knocked at the door. She came out and he wept before her, till he fell down in a fainting fit. Now when he came to himself, he told her all that had passed, and she blamed him and chid him for his foolish doings saying, "Verily thine affliction and calamity come from thyself." And she gave not over reproaching him, till the blood streamed from his nostrils and he again fainted away. When he recovered from his swoon——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ali Shar recovered from his swoon he saw the old woman bewailing his griefs and weeping over him; so he complained of his hard lot and repeated these two couplets:—

How bitter to friends is a parting, ✿ And a meeting how sweet to the lover!

Allah join all the lovers He parteth, ✿ And save me who of love ne'er recover.[317]

The old woman mourned over him and said to him, "Sit here, whilst I go in quest of news for thee and return to thee in haste." "To hear is to obey," answered he. So she left him on her good errand and was absent till midday, when she returned and said to him, "O Ali, I fear me thou must die in thy grief; thou wilt never 223 see thy beloved again save on the bridge Al-Sirát;[318] for the people of the Christian's house, when they arose in the morning, found the window giving on the garden torn from its hinges and Zumurrud missing, and with her a pair of saddle-bags full of the Christian's money. And when I came thither, I saw the Chief of Police standing at the door, he and his many, and there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Now, as Ali Shar heard these words, the light in his sight was changed to the darkness of night and he despaired of life and made sure of death; nor did he leave weeping, till he lost his senses. When he revived, love and longing were sore upon him; there befel him a grievous sickness and he kept his house a whole year; during which the old woman ceased not to bring him doctors and ply him with ptisanes and diet-drinks and make him savoury broths till, after the twelve-month ended, his life returned to him. Then he recalled what had passed and repeated these couplets:—

Severance-grief nighmost, union done to death, ✿ Down-railing tear-drops, heart fire tortureth!

Redoubleth pine in one that hath no peace ✿ For love and wake and woe he suffereth:

O Lord, if there be thing to joy my soul ✿ Deign Thou bestow it while I breathe my breath.

When the second year began, the old woman said to him, "O my son, all this thy weeping and wailing will not bring thee back thy mistress. Rise, therefore, gird the loins of resolution and seek for 224 her in the lands: peradventure thou shalt light on some news of her." And she ceased not to exhort and hearten him, till he took courage and she carried him to the Hammam. Then she made him drink strong wine and eat white meats, and thus she did with him for a whole month, till he regained strength;

and setting out, journeyed without ceasing till he arrived at Zumurrud's city, where he went to the horse-course, and sat down before the dish of sweet rice and put out his hand to eat of it. Now when the folk saw this, they were concerned for him and said to him, "O young man, eat not of that dish, for whoso eateth thereof, misfortune befalleth him." Answered he, "Leave me to eat of it, and let them do with me what they will, so haply shall I be at rest from this wearying life." Accordingly he ate a first mouthful, and Zumurrud was minded to have him brought before her; but then she bethought her that belike he was anhungered and said to herself, "It were properer to let him eat his fill." So he went on eating, whilst the folk looked at him in astonishment, waiting to see what would betide him; and, when he had satisfied himself, Zumurrud said to certain of her eunuchry, "Go to yonder youth who eateth of the rice and bring him to me in courteous guise, saying:—Answer the summons of the King who would have a word with thee on some slight matter." They replied, "We hear and obey," and going straightways up to Ali Shar, said to him, "O my lord, be pleased to answer the summons of the King and let thy heart be at ease." Quoth he, "Hearkening and obedience;" and followed the eunuchs,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ali Shar rejoined, "Hearkening and obedience;" and followed the eunuchs, whilst the people said to one another, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I wonder what the King will do with him!" And others said, "He will do him naught but good: for had he intended to harm him, he had not suffered him to eat his fill." Now when the Castratos set him in presence of Zumurrud he saluted and kissed the earth before her, whilst she returned his salutation and received him with honour. Then she asked him, "What may be thy name and trade, and what brought thee to our city?"; and he answered, "O 225 King my name is Ali Shar; I am of the sons of the merchants of Khorasan; and the cause of my coming hither is to seek for a slave-girl whom I have lost for she was dearer to me than my hearing and my seeing, and indeed my soul cleaveth to her, since I lost her; and such is my tale." So saying he wept, till he swooned away; whereupon she bade them sprinkle rose-water on his face, which they did till he revived, when she said, "Here with the table of sand and the brass pen." So they brought them and she took the pen and struck a geomantic scheme which she considered awhile; and then cried, "Thou hast spoken sooth, Allah will grant thee speedy reunion with her; so be not troubled." Upon this she commanded her head-chamberlain to carry him to the bath and afterwards to clothe him in a handsome suit of royal apparel, and mount him on one of the best of the King's horses and finally bring him to the palace at the last of the day. So the Chamberlain, after saying "I hear and I obey," took him away; whilst the folk began to say to one another, "What maketh the King deal thus courteously with yonder youth?" And quoth one, "Did I

not tell you that he would do him no hurt?; for he is fair of aspect; and this I knew, ever since the King suffered him to eat his fill." And each said his say; after which they all dispersed and went their ways. As for Zumurrud, she thought the night would never come, that she might be alone with the beloved of her heart. As soon as it was dark, she withdrew to her sleeping-chamber and made her attendants think her overcome with sleep; and it was her wont to suffer none to pass the night with her save those two little eunuchs who waited upon her. After a while when she had composed herself, she sent for her dear Ali Shar and sat down upon the bed, with candles burning over her head and feet, and hanging lamps of gold lighting up the place like the rising sun. When the people heard of her sending for Ali Shar, they marvelled thereat and each man thought his thought and said his say; but one of them declared, "At all events the King is in love with this young man, and to-morrow he will make him generalissimo of the army."[319] Now when they 226 brought him into her, he kissed the ground between her hands and called down blessings on her, and she said in her mind, "There is no help for it but that I jest with him awhile, before I make myself known to him."[320] Then she asked him, "O Ali, say me, hast thou been to the Hammam?"[321] and he answered, "Yes, O my lord." Quoth she, "Come, eat of this chicken and meat, and drink of this wine and sherbet of sugar; for thou art weary; and after that come thou hither." "I hear and I obey," replied he, and did as she commanded him do. Now when he had made an end of eating and drinking, she said to him, "Come up with me on the couch and shampoo[322] my feet." So he fell to rubbing feet and kneading calves, and found them softer than silk. Then said she, "Go higher with the massage;" and he, "Pardon me, O my lord, to the knee but no farther!" Whereupon quoth she, "Durst thou disobey me?: it shall be an ill-omened night for thee!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Zumurrud cried to her lord, Ali Shar, "Durst thou disobey me?: it shall be an ill-omened night for thee! Nay, but it behoveth thee to do my bidding and I will make thee my minion and appoint thee one of my Emirs." Asked Ali Shar, "And in what must I do thy bidding, O King of the age?" and she answered, "Doff thy trousers and lie down on thy face." Quoth he, "That is a thing in my life I never did; and if thou force me thereto, verily I will accuse thee thereof before Allah on Resurrection-day. Take everything thou hast given me and let me go from thy city." And he wept and lamented; but she said, "Doff thy trousers and 227 lie down on thy face, or I will strike off thy head." So he did as she bade him and she mounted upon his back; and he felt what was softer than silk and smoother than cream and said in himself, "Of a truth, this King is nicer than all the women!" Now for a time she abode on his back, then she turned over on the bed, and he said to himself, "Praised be Allah! It seemeth his yard is not standing." Then

said she, “O Ali, it is of the wont of my prickle that it standeth not, except they rub it with their hands; so, come, rub it with thy hand, till it be at stand, else will I slay thee.” So saying, she lay down on her back and taking his hand, set it to her parts, and he found these same parts softer than silk; white, plumply-rounded, protuberant, resembling for heat the hot room of the bath or the heart of a lover whom love-longing hath wasted. Quoth Ali in himself, “Verily, our King hath a coynte; this is indeed a wonder of wonders!” And lust gat hold on him and his yard rose and stood upright to the utmost of its height; which when Zumurrud saw, she burst out laughing and said to him, “O my lord, all this happeneth and yet thou knowest me not!” He asked “And who art thou, O King?”; and she answered, “I am thy slave-girl Zumurrud.” Now whenas he knew this and was certified that she was indeed his very slave-girl, Zumurrud, he kissed her and embraced her and threw himself upon her as the lion upon the lamb. Then he sheathed his steel rod in her scabbard and ceased not to play the porter at her door and the preacher in her pulpit and the priest[323] at her prayer-niche, whilst she with him ceased not from inclination and prostration and rising up and sitting down, accompanying her ejaculations of praise and of “Glory to Allah!” with passionate movements and wrigglings and claspings of his member[324] and other amorous gestures, till the two little eunuchs heard the noise. So they came and peeping from behind the curtains saw the King lying on his back and upon him Ali Shar, thrusting and slashing whilst she 228 puffed and blew and wriggled. Quoth they, “Verily, this be no man’s wriggle: belike this King is a woman.”[325] But they concealed their affair and discovered it to none. And when the morrow came, Zumurrud summoned all the troops and the lords of the realm and said to them, “I am minded to journey to this man’s country; so choose you a viceroy, who shall rule over you till I return to you.” And they answered, “We hear and we obey.” Then she applied herself to making ready the wants of the way, to wit provaunt and provender, monies and rarities for presents, camels and mules and so forth; after which she set out from her city with Ali Shar, and they ceased not faring on, till they arrived at his native place, where he entered his house and gave many gifts to his friends and alms and largesse to the poor. And Allah vouchsafed him children by her, and they both lived the gladdest and happiest of lives, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies and the Garnerer of graves. And glorified be He the Eternal without cease, and praised be He in every case! And amongst other tales they tell one of

THE LOVES OF JUBAYR BIN UMAYR AND THE LADY BUDUR.

It is related that the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid was uneasy[326] one night and could not sleep; so that he ceased not to toss from side to side for very restlessness, till, growing weary of this, he called Masrur and said to him, "Ho, Masrur, find me some one who may solace me in this my wakefulness." He answered, "O Prince of True Believers, wilt thou walk in the palace-garden and divert thyself with the sight of its blooms and gaze upon the stars and constellations and note the beauty of their ordinance 229 and the moon among them rising in sheen over the water?" Quoth the Caliph, "O Masrur, my heart inclineth not to aught of this." Quoth he, "O my lord, there are in thy palace three hundred concubines, each of whom hath her separate chamber. Do thou bid all and every retire into her own apartment and then do thou go thy rounds and amuse thyself with gazing on them without their knowledge." The Caliph replied, "O Masrur, the palace is my palace and the girls are my property: furthermore my soul inclineth not to aught of this." Then Masrur rejoined, "O my lord, summon the doctors of law and religion and the sages of science and poets, and bid them contend before thee in argument and disputation and recite to thee songs and verses and tell thee tales and anecdotes." Replied the Caliph, "My soul inclineth not to aught of this;" and Masrur rejoined, "O my lord, bid pretty boys and the wits and the cup-companions attend thee and solace thee with witty sallies." "O Masrur," ejaculated the Caliph, "indeed my soul inclineth not to aught of this." "Then, O my lord," cried Masrur, "strike off my head;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Masrur cried out to the Caliph, "O my lord, strike off my head; haply that will dispel thine unease and do away the restlessness that is upon thee." So Al-Rashid laughed at his saying and said, "See which of the boon-companions is at the door." Thereupon he went out and returning, said, "O my lord, he who sits without is Ali bin Mansur of Damascus, the Wag."[327] "Bring him to me," quoth Harun: and Masrur went out and returned with Ibn Mansur, who said, on entering, "Peace be with thee, O Commander of the Faithful!" The Caliph returned his salutation and said to him, "O Ibn Mansur, tell us some of thy stories." Said the other, "O Commander of the Faithful, shall I tell thee what I have seen with my eyes or what I have only heard tell?" Replied the Caliph, "If thou have seen aught worth telling, let us hear it; for hearing is not like seeing." Said Ibn Mansur, "O Commander of the 230 Faithful, lend me thine ear and thy heart;" and he answered, "O Ibn Mansur, behold, I am listening to thee with mine ears and looking at thee with mine eyes and attending to thee with my heart." So Ibn Mansur began:—Know then, O Commander of the Faithful, that I receive a yearly allowance from Mohammed bin Sulaymán al-Háshimi, Sultan of Bassorah; so I went to him, once upon a time, as usual, and found him ready to ride out hunting and birding. I saluted him and he returned my salute, and said, "O son of Mansur, mount and come with us

to the chase:" but I said, "O my lord, I can no longer ride; so do thou station me in the guest-house and give thy chamberlains and lieutenants charge over me." And he did so and departed for his sport. His people entreated me with the utmost honour and entertained me with the greatest hospitality; but said I to myself, "By Allah, it is a strange thing that for so long I have been in the habit of coming from Baghdad to Bassorah, yet know no more of this town than from palace to garden and from garden to palace; When shall I find an occasion like this to view the different parts and quarters of Bassorah? I will rise forthwith and walk forth alone and divert myself and digest what I have eaten." Accordingly I donned my richest dress and went out a-walking about Bassorah. Now it is known to thee, O Commander of the Faithful, that it hath seventy streets, each seventy leagues[328] long, the measure of Irak; and I lost myself in its by-streets and thirst overcame me. Presently, as I went along, O Prince of True Believers, behold, I came to a great door, whereon were two rings of brass,[329] with curtains of red brocade drawn before it. And on either side of the door was a stone bench and over it was a trellis, covered with a creeping vine that hung down and shaded the doorway. I stood still to gaze upon the place, and presently heard a sorrowful voice, proceeding from a heart which did not rejoice, singing melodiously and chanting these cinquains:—

My body bides the sad abode of grief and malady, ✿ Caused by a fawn whose land and home are in a far countrie:
O ye two Zephyrs of the wold which caused such pain in me ✿ By Allah, Lord of you! to him my heart's desire, go ye
And chide him so perchance ye soften him I pray.
231 And tell us all his words if he to hear your speech shall deign, ✿ And unto him the tidings bear of lovers 'twixt you twain:
And both vouchsafe to render me a service free and fain, ✿ And lay my case before him showing how I e'er complain:
And say, "What ails thy bounden thrall this wise to drive away,
Without a fault committed and without a sin to show; ✿ Or heart that leans to other wight or would thy love forego:
Or treason to our plighted troth or causing thee a throe?" ✿ And if he smile then say ye twain in accents soft and slow,
"An thou to him a meeting grant 'twould be the kindest way!
For he is gone distraught for thee, as well indeed, he might. ✿ His eyes are wakeful and he weeps and wails the livelong night:"
If seem he satisfied by this why then 'tis well and right, ✿ But if he show an angry face and treat ye with despite,
Trick him and "Naught we know of him!" I beg you both to say.[330]

Quoth I to myself, "Verily, if the owner of this voice be fair, she conjoineth beauty of person and eloquence and sweetness of voice." Then I drew near the door, and began raising the curtain little by little, when lo! I beheld a damsel, white as a full moon when it mooneth on its fourteenth night, with joined eyebrows twain and languorous lids of eyne, breasts like pomegranates twin and dainty lips like double carnelian, a

mouth as it were the seal of Solomon, and teeth ranged in a line that played with the reason of proser and rhymer, even as saith the poet:—

O pearly mouth of friend, who set those pretty pearls in line, ✿ And filled thee full of whitest chamomile and reddest wine?
Who lent the morning-glory in thy smile to shimmer and shine ✿ Who with that ruby-padlock dared thy lips to seal and sign!
Who looks on thee at early morn with stress of joy and bliss ✿ Goes mad for aye, what then of him who wins a kiss of thine?

And as saith another:—

O pearl-set mouth of friend ✿ Pity poor Ruby's cheek;
Boast not o'er one who owns ✿ Thee, union and unique.

In brief she comprised all varieties of loveliness and was a seduction to men and women, nor could the gazer satisfy himself with the sight of her charms; for she was as the poet hath said of her:—

232 When comes she, slays she; and when back she turns, ✿ She makes all men regard with loving eyes:
A very sun! a very moon! but still ✿ From hurt and harmful ills her nature flies.
Opes Eden's garden when she shows herself; ✿ And full moon see we o'er her necklace rise.

Now as I was looking at her through an opening of the curtain, behold, she turned; and, seeing me standing at the door, said to her handmaid, "See who is at the door." So the slave-girl came up to me and said, "O Shaykh, hast thou no shame, or do impudent airs suit hoary hairs?" Quoth I, "O my mistress, I confess to the hoary hairs, but as for impudent airs, I think not to be guilty of unmannerliness." Then the mistress broke in, "And what can be more unmannerly than to intrude thyself upon a house other than thy house and gaze on a Harim other than thy Harim?" I pleaded, "O my lady, I have an excuse;" and when she asked, "And what is thine excuse?" I answered, "I am a stranger and so thirsty that I am well-nigh dead of thirst." She rejoined, "We accept thine excuse,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young lady rejoined, "We accept thine excuse," and calling one of her slave-maids, said to her, "O Lutf,[331] give him to drink in the golden tankard." So she brought me a tankard of red gold, set with pearls and gems of price, full of water mingled with virgin musk and covered with a napkin of green silk; and I addressed myself to drink and was long about my drinking, for I stole glances at her the while, till I could prolong my stay no longer. Then I returned the tankard to the girl, but did not offer to go; and she said to me, "O Shaykh, wend thy way." But I said, "O my lady, I am troubled in mind." She asked me "For what?" and I answered, "For the turns of Time and the change of things." Replied she,

"Well mayst thou be troubled thereat for Time breedeth wonders. But what hast thou seen of such surprises that thou shouldst muse 233 upon them?" Quoth I, "I was thinking of the whilom owner of this house, for he was my intimate in his lifetime." Asked she, "What was his name?"; and I answered, "Mohammed bin Ali the Jeweller and he was a man of great wealth. Tell me did he leave any children?" Said she, "Yes, he left a daughter, Budur by name, who inherited all his wealth?." Quoth I, "Meseemeth thou art his daughter?" "Yes," answered she, laughing; then added, "O Shaykh, thou hast talked long enough; now wend thy ways." Replied I, "Needs must I go, but I see thy charms are changed by being out of health; so tell me thy case; it may be Allah will give thee comfort at my hands." Rejoined she, "O Shaykh, if thou be a man of discretion, I will discover to thee my secret; but first tell me who thou art, that I may know whether thou art worthy of confidence or not; for the poet saith:[332]—

None keepeth a secret but a faithful person: with the best of mankind it remaineth concealed.
I have kept my secret in a house with a lock, whose key is lost and whose door is sealed."

Thereto I replied, "O my lady, an thou wouldest know who I am, I am Ali bin Mansúr of Damascus, the Wag, cup-companion to the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid." Now when she heard my name, she came down from her seat and saluting me, said, "Welcome, O Ibn Mansur! Now will I tell thee my case and entrust thee with my secret. I am a lover separated from her beloved." I answered, "O my lady, thou art fair and shouldest be on love-terms with none but the fair. Whom then dost thou love?" Quoth she, "I love Jubayr bin Umayr al-Shaybáni, Emir of the Banú Shaybán;[333]" and she described to me a young man than whom there was no prettier fellow in Bassorah. I asked, "O my lady, have interviews or letters passed between you?" and she answered, "Yes, but our love was tongue-love, not heart and soul-love; for he kept not his trust nor was he faithful to his troth." Said I, "O my lady, and what was the cause of your separation?"; and she replied, "I was sitting one day whilst my handmaid here combed my hair. When she had made an end of combing it, she plaited my tresses, and my beauty and loveliness charmed her; so 234 she bent over me and kissed my cheek.[334] At that moment he came in unawares, and, seeing the girl kiss my cheek, straightways turned away in anger, vowing eternal separation and repeating these two couplets:—

If another share in the thing I love, ✿ I abandon my love and live lorn of love.
My beloved is worthless if aught she will, ✿ Save that which her lover doth most approve.

And from the time he left me to this present hour, O Ibn Mansur, he hath neither written to me nor answered my letters." Quoth I, "And what purposest thou to do?" Quoth she, "I have a mind to send him a letter by thee. If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me five hundred gold pieces; and if not, then an hundred for thy trouble in going and coming." I answered, "Do what seemeth good to thee; I

hear and I obey thee." Whereupon she called to one of her slave-girls, "Bring me inkcase and paper," and she wrote thereon these couplets:—

Beloved, why this strangeness, why this hate? ✿ When shall thy pardon reunite us two?
Why dost thou turn from me in severance? ✿ Thy face is not the face I am wont to know.
Yes, slanderers falsed my words, and thou to them ✿ Inclining, madest spite and envy grow.
An hast believed their tale, the Heavens forbid ✿ Now thou believe it when dost better trow!
By thy life tell what hath reached thine ear; ✿ Thou know'st what said they and so justice show.
An it be true I spoke the words, my words ✿ Admit interpreting and change allow:
Given that the words of Allah were revealed, ✿ Folk changed the Torah[335] and still changing go:
What slanders told they of mankind before! ✿ Jacob heard Joseph blamed by tongue of foe.
Yea, for myself and slanderer and thee ✿ An awful day of reckoning there shall be.

235 Then she sealed the letter and gave it to me; and I took it and carried it to the house of Jubayr bin Umayr, whom I found absent a-hunting. So I sat down to wait for him; and behold, he returned from the chase; and when I saw him, O Prince of True Believers, come riding up, my wit was confounded by his beauty and grace. As soon as he sighted me sitting at the house-door, he dismounted and coming up to me embraced me and saluted me; and meseemed I embraced the world and all therein. Then he carried me into his house and, seating me on his own couch, called for food. They brought a table of Khalanj-wood of Khorasan with feet of gold, whereon were all manners of meats, fried and roasted and the like. So I seated myself at the table and examining it with care found these couplets engraved upon it:[336]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ali son of Mansur continued:— So I seated myself at the table of Jubayr bin Umayr al-Shaybani and, examining it with care, found these couplets engraven upon it:—

On these which once were chicks,
Your mourning glances fix,
Late dwellers in the mansion of the cup,
Now nearly eaten up!
Let tears bedew
The memory of that stew,
Those partridges, once roast,
Now lost!
The daughters of the grouse in plaintive strain;
Bemourn, and still bemourn, and mourn again!
The children of the fry,
We lately saw
Half smothered in pilau,
With buttery mutton fritters smoking by!
Alas! my heart, the fish!
Who filled his dish,

236 With flaky form in varying colours spread
On the round pastry cake of household bread!
Heaven sent us that kabob!
For no one could
(Save heaven he should rob)
Produce a thing so excellently good,
Or give us roasted meat
With basting oil so savourily replete!
But, oh! mine appetite, alas! for thee!
Who on that furmeaty
So sharpset wast a little while ago—
That furmeaty, which mashed by hands of snow,
A light reflection bore,
Of the bright bracelets that those fair hands wore;
Again remembrance glads my sense
With visions of its excellence!
Again I see the cloth unrolled
Rich worked in many a varied fold!
Be patient, oh! my soul, they say
Fortune rules all that's new and strange,
And though she pinches us to-day,
To-morrow brings full rations, and a change![337]

Then said Jubayr, "Put forth thy hand to our food and ease our heart by eating of our victual." Answered I, "By Allah, I will not eat a mouthful, till thou grant me my desire." He asked, "What is thy desire?"; so I brought out the letter and gave it to him; but, when he had read it and mastered its contents, he tore it in pieces and throwing it on the floor, said to me, "O Ibn Mansur, I will grant thee whatever thou askest save thy desire which concerneth the writer of this letter, for I have no answer to her." At this I rose in anger; but he caught hold of my skirts, saying, "O Ibn Mansur, I will tell thee what she said to thee, albeit I was not present with you." I asked, "And what did she say to me?"; and he answered, "Did not the writer of this letter say to thee, If thou bring me back an answer, thou shalt have of me five hundred ducats; and if not, an hundred for thy pains?" "Yes," replied I; and he rejoined, "Abide with me this day and eat and drink and enjoy thyself and make merry, and thou shalt have thy five hundred ducats." So I sat with him and ate and drank and made 237 merry and enjoyed myself and entertained him with talk deep into the night;[338] after which I said to him, "O my master, is there no music in thy house." He answered, "Verily for many a day we have drunk without music." Then he called out, saying, "Ho, Shajarat al-Durr!" Whereupon a slave-girl answered him from her chamber and came in to us, with a lute of Hindu make, wrapped in a silken bag. And she sat down and, laying the lute in her lap, preluded in one-and-twenty modes; then, returning to the first, she sang to a lively measure these couplets:—

Whoso ne'er tasted of Love's sweets and bitter draught, ✿ No difference kens 'twixt presence-bliss and absence-stress;

And so, who hath declined from Love's true road, ✿ No difference kens 'twixt smooth and ruggedness:
I ceased not to oppose the votaries of love, ✿ Till I had tried its sweets and bitters not the less:
How many a night my pretty friend conversed with me ✿ And sipped I from his lips honey of love-liesse:
Now have I drunk its cup of bitterness, until ✿ To bondman and to freedman I have proved me base.
How short-aged was the night together we enjoyed, ✿ When seemed it day break came on nightfall's heel to press!
But Fate had vowed to disunite us lovers twain, ✿ And she too well hath kept her vow, that votaress.
Fate so decreed it! None her sentence can withstand: ✿ Where is the wight who dares oppose his Lord's command?

Hardly had she finished her verses, when her lord cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fit; whereupon exclaimed the damsel, "May Allah not punish thee, O old man! This long time have we drunk without music, for fear the like of this falling sickness befal our lord. But now go thou to yonder chamber and there sleep." So I went to the chamber which she showed me and slept till the morning, when behold, a page brought me a purse of five hundred dinars and said to me, "This is what my master promised thee; but return thou not to the damsel who sent thee, and let it be as though neither thou nor we had ever heard of this matter." "Hearkening and obedience," answered I and taking the 238 purse, went my way. Still I said to myself, "The lady must have expected me since yesterday; and by Allah there is no help but I return to her and tell her what passed between me and him: otherwise she will revile me and revile all who come from my country." So I went to her and found her standing behind the door; and when she saw me she said, "O Ibn Mansur, thou hast done nothing for me!" I asked, "Who told thee of this?"; and she answered, "O Ibn Mansur, yet another thing hath been revealed to me;[339] and it is that, when thou handedst him the letter, he tore it in pieces and throwing it on the floor, said to thee:—O Ibn Mansur, I will grant thee whatever thou askest save thy desire which concerneth the writer of this letter; for I have no answer to her missive. Then didst thou rise from beside him in anger; but he laid hold of thy skirts, saying:—O son of Mansur, abide with me to-day, for thou art my guest, and eat and drink and make merry; and thou shalt have thy five hundred ducats. So thou didst sit with him, eating and drinking and making merry, and entertainedst him with talk deep into the night and a slave-girl sang such an air and such verses, whereupon he fell down in a fit." So, O Commander of the Faithful, I asked her "Wast thou then with us?"; and she answered, "O Ibn Mansur, hast thou not heard the saying of the poet:—

The hearts of lovers have eyes I ken, ✿ Which see the unseen by vulgar men.

However, O Ibn Mansur, the night and day shift not upon anything but they bring to it change."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lady exclaimed, "O Ibn Mansur, the night and the day shift not upon anything but they bring to it change!" Then she raised her glance to heaven and said, "O my God and my Leader and my Lord, like as Thou hast afflicted me with love of Jubayr bin Umayr, even so do Thou afflict him with love of me, and transfer the passion from my heart to his heart!"[340] Then she gave me an 239 hundred sequins for my trouble in going and coming and I took it and returned to the palace, where I found the Sultan come home from the chase; so I got my pension of him and fared back to Baghdad. And when next year came, I repaired to Bassorah, as usual, to seek my pension, and the Sultan paid it to me; but, as I was about to return to Baghdad, I bethought me of the Lady Budur and said to myself, "By Allah, I must needs go to her and see what hath befallen between her and her lover!" So I went to her house and finding the street before her door swept and sprinkled and eunuchs and servants and pages standing before the entrance, said to myself, "Most like grief hath broken the lady's heart and she is dead, and some Emir or other hath taken up his abode in her house." So I left it and went on to the house of Jubayr, son of Umayr the Shaybani, where I found the benches of the porch broken down and ne'er a page at the door, as of wont, and said to myself, "Haply he too is dead." Then I stood still before the door of his house and with my eyes running over with tears, bemoaned it in these couplets:—

O Lords of me, who fared but whom my heart e'er followeth; ✿ Return; and so my festal days with you shall be renewed!

I stand before the home of you, bewailing your abode; ✿ Quiver mine eyelids and my eyes with tears are ever dewed:

I ask the house and its remains that seem to weep and wail, ✿ "Where is the man who whilom wont to lavish goods and good?"

It saith, "Go, wend thy way; those friends like travellers have fared ✿ From Springtide-camp, and buried lie of earth and worms the food!"

Allah ne'er desolate us so we lose their virtues' light ✿ In length and breadth, but ever be the light in spirit viewed!

As I, O Prince of True Believers, was thus keening over the folk of the house,[341] behold, out came a black slave therefrom and said to me, "Hold thy peace, O Shaykh! May thy mother be reft of thee! Why do I see thee bemoaning the house on this wise?" Quoth I, "I frequented it of yore, when it belonged to a good friend of mine." Asked the slave, "What was his name?"; and I answered, "Jubayr bin Umayr the Shaybani." Rejoined he, "And what hath befallen him? Praised be Allah, he is yet here with us in the enjoyment of property and rank and prosperity, 240 except that Allah hath stricken him with love of a damsel called the Lady Budur; and he is so whelmed by his love of her and his longing for her, that he is like a great rock cumbering the ground. If he hunger, he saith not, Give me meat; nor, if he thirst, doth he say, Give me drink." Quoth I, "Ask leave for me to go in to him." Said the slave, "O my lord, wilt thou go in to one who understandeth or to one who understandeth

not?"; and I said, "There is no help for it but I see him whatever be the case." Accordingly he went in to ask and presently returned with permission for me to enter, whereupon I went in to Jubayr and found him like a rock that cumbereth the ground, understanding neither sign nor speech; and when I spoke to him he answered me not. Then said one of his servants, "O my lord, if thou remember aught of verse, repeat it and raise thy voice; and he will be aroused by this and speak with thee." So I versified in these two couplets:—

Hast quit the love of Moons[342] or dost persist? ✿ Dost wake o' nights or close in sleep thine eyes?
If aye thy tears in torrents flow, then learn ✿ Eternal thou shalt dwell in Paradise.[342]

When he heard these verses he opened his eyes and said, "Welcome, O son of Mansur! Verily, the jest is become earnest." Quoth I, "O my lord, is there aught thou wouldst have me do for thee?" Answered he, "Yes, I would fain write her a letter and send it to her by thee. If thou bring me back her answer, thou shalt have of me a thousand dinars; and if not, two hundred for thy pains." So I said, "Do what seemeth good to thee;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ibn Mansur continued:—So I said, "Do what seemeth good to thee;" whereupon he called to one of his slave-girls, "Bring me ink case and paper;" and wrote these couplets:—

241 I pray in Allah's name, O Princess mine, be light ✿ On me, for Love hath robbed me of my reason's sight!
'Slaved me this longing and enthralled me love of you; ✿ And clad in sickness garb, a poor and abject wight.
I wont ere this to think small things of Love and hold, ✿ O Princess mine, twas silly thing and over-slight.
But when it showed me swelling surges of its sea, ✿ To Allah's hest I bowed and pitied lovers' plight.
An will you, pity show and deign a meeting grant; ✿ An will you, kill me still forget not good requite.[343]

Then he sealed the letter and gave it to me. So I took it and, repairing to Budur's house, raised the door-curtain little by little, as before, and looking in behold, I saw ten damsels, high-bosomed virgins, like moons, and the Lady Budur as she were the full moon among the stars, sitting in their midst, or the sun, when it is clear of clouds and mist; nor was there on her any trace of pain or care. And as I looked and marvelled at her case, she turned her glance upon me and, seeing me standing at the door, said to me, "Well come, and welcome and all hail to thee, O Ibn Mansur! Come in." So I entered and saluting her gave her the letter; and she read it and when she understood it, she said laughingly to me, "O Ibn Mansur," the poet lied not when he sang:—

Indeed I'll bear my love for thee with firmest soul, ✿ Until from thee to me shall come a messenger.

"Look'ye, O Ibn Mansur, I will write thee an answer, that he may give thee what he promised thee." And I answered, "Allah requite thee with good!" So she called out to a handmaid, "Bring inkcase and paper," and wrote these couplets:—

How comes it I fulfilled my vow the while that vow broke you? ✿ And, seen me lean to equity, iniquity wrought you?
'Twas you initiated wrongous dealing and despite: ✿ You were the treachetour and treason came from only you!
I never ceased to cherish mid the sons of men my troth; ✿ And keep your honour brightest bright and swear by name of you,
Until I saw with eyes of me what evil you had done; ✿ Until I heard with ears of me what foul report spread you.
242 Shall I bring low my proper worth while raising yours so high? ✿ By Allah, had you honoured me eke I had honoured you!
But now uprooting severance I will fain console my heart, ✿ And wring my fingers clean of you for evermore to part!

Quoth I, "By Allah, O my lady, between him and death there is but the reading of this letter!" So I tore it in pieces and said to her, "Write him other than these lines." "I hear and obey," answered she and wrote the following couplets—

Indeed I am consolèd now and sleep without a tear, ✿ And all that happened slandering tongues have whispered in mine ear:
My heart obeyed my hest and soon forgot thy memory, ✿ And learnt mine eyelids 'twas the best to live in severance sheer:
He lied who said that severance is a bitterer thing than gall: ✿ It never disappointed me; like wine I find it cheer:
I learnt to hate all news of thee, e'en mention of thy name, ✿ And turn away and look thereon with loathing pure and mere:
Lookye! I cast thee out of heart and far from vitals mine; ✿ Then let the slanderer wot this truth and see I am sincere.

Quoth I, "By Allah, O my lady, when he shall read these verses, his soul will depart his body!" Quoth she, "O Ibn Mansur, is passion indeed come to such a pass with him that thou sayest this saying?" Quoth I, "Had I said more than this verily it were but the truth: but mercy is of the nature of the noble." Now when she heard this her eyes brimmed over with tears and she wrote him a note, I swear by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, there is none in thy Chancery could write the like of it; and therein were these couplets:—

How long shall I thy coyness and thy great aversion see? ✿ Thou hast satisfied my censurers and pleased their enmity:
I did amiss and wot it not; so deign to tell me now ✿ Whatso they told thee, haply 'twas the merest calumny.
I wish to welcome thee, dear love, even as welcome I ✿ Sleep to these eyes and eyelids in the place of sleep to be.
And since 'tis thou hast made me drain th' unmixèd cup of love, ✿ If me thou see with wine bemused heap not thy blame on me!

And when she had written the missive,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Budur had written the missive, she sealed it and gave it to me; and I said, "O my lady, in good sooth this thy letter will make the sick man whole and ease the thirsting soul." Then I took it and went from her, when she called me back and said to me, "O son of Mansur, say to him:—She will be thy guest this night." At this I joyed with exceeding great joy and carried the letter to Jubayr, whom I found with his eyes fixed intently on the door, expecting the reply and as soon as I gave him the letter and he opened and read it and understood it, he uttered a great cry and fell down in a fainting fit. When he came to himself, he said to me, "O Ibn Mansur, did she indeed write this note with her hand and feel it with her fingers?" Answered I, "O my lord, do folk write with their feet?" And by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I had not done speaking these words, when we heard the tinkle-tinkle of her anklets in the vestibule and she entered. And seeing her he sprang to his feet as though nothing pained or ailed him and embraced her like the letter L embraceth the letter A;[344] and the infirmity, that erst would not depart at once left him.[345] Then he sat down, but she abode standing and I said to her, "O my lady, why dost thou not sit?" Said she, "O Ibn Mansur, save on a condition that is between us, I will not sit." I asked, "And what is that?"; and she answered, "None may know lovers' secrets," and putting her mouth to Jubayr's ear whispered to him; whereupon he replied, "I hear and I obey." Then he rose and said somewhat in a whisper to one of his slaves, who went out and returned in a little while with a Kazi and two witnesses. Thereupon Jubayr stood up and taking a bag containing an hundred thousand dinars, said, "O Kazi, marry me to this young lady and write this sum to her marriage-settlement." Quoth the Kazi 244 to her, "Say thou, I consent to this." "I consent to this," quoth she, whereupon he drew up the contract of marriage and she opened the bag; and, taking out a handful of gold, gave it to the Kazi and the witnesses and handed the rest to Jubayr. Thereupon the Kazi and the witnesses withdrew, and I sat with them, in mirth and merriment, till the most part of the night was past, when I said in my mind, "These are lovers and they have been this long while separated. I will now arise and go sleep in some place afar from them and leave them to their privacy, one with other." So I rose, but she caught hold of my skirts, saying, "What thinkest thou to do?" "Nothing but so and so," answered I; upon which she rejoined, "Sit thee down; and when we would be rid of thee, we will send thee away." So I sat down with them till near daybreak, when she said to me, "O Ibn Mansur, go to yonder chamber; for we have furnished it for thee and it is thy sleeping-place." Thereupon I arose and went thither and slept till morning, when a page brought me basin and ewer, and I made the ablution and prayed the dawn-prayer. Then I sat down and presently, behold, Jubayr and his beloved came out of the bath in the house, and I saw them both wringing their locks.[346] So I wished them good

morning and gave them joy of their safety and reunion, saying to Jubayr, "That which began with constraint and conditions hath ended in cordial contentment." He answered, "Thou sayest well, and indeed thou deservest thy honorarium;" and he called his treasurer, and said, "Bring hither three thousand dinars." So he brought a purse containing the gold pieces and Jubayr gave it to me, saying, "Favour us by accepting this." But I replied, "I will not accept it till thou tell me the manner of the transfer of love from her to thee, after so huge an aversion." Quoth he, "Hearkening and obedience! Know that we have a festival called New Year's day,[347] when all the people fare forth and 245 take boat and go a-pleasuring on the river. So I went out with my comrades, and saw a skiff, wherein were ten damsels like moons and amongst them, the Lady Budur lute in hand." She preluded in eleven modes, then, returning to the first, sang these two couplets:—

Fire is cooler than fires in my breast, ✿ Rock is softer than heart of my lord,
Marvel I that he's formèd to hold ✿ In water-soft frame heart rock-hard!

"Said I to her:—Repeat the couplets and the air! But she would not;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Jubayr continued, "So cried I to her:—Repeat the couplets and the air! But she would not; whereupon I bade the boatmen pelt her with oranges, and they pelted her till we feared her boat would founder. Then she went her way, and this is how the love was transferred from her heart to mine." So I wished them joy of their union; and, taking the purse with its contents, I returned to Baghdad. Now when the Caliph heard Ibn Mansur's story his heart was lightened and the restlessness and oppression from which he suffered forsook him. And they also tell the tale of

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326. Lane (ii. 494) relates from Al-Makrizi, that when Khamárawayh, Governor of the Egypt (ninth century), suffered from insomnia his physician ordered a pool of quicksilver, 50 by 50 cubits, to be laid out in front of his palace, now the Rumaylah square. "At the corners of the pool were silver pegs to which were attached by silver rings, strong bands of silk, and a bed of skins, inflated with air, being thrown upon the pool and secured by the bands remained in a continual state of agreeable vacillation." We are not told that the Prince was thereby salivated like the late Colonel Sykes when boiling his mercury for thermometric experiments.

327. The name seems now unknown. "Al-Khalí'a" is somewhat stronger than "Wag," meaning at least a "wicked wit." Properly it is the Span. "perdido," a youth cast off (Khala') by his friends; though not so strong a term as "Harfúsh" = a blackguard.

328. Arab. "Farsakh" = parasang.

329. Arab. “Nahás asfar” = yellow copper, brass as opposed to Nahás ahmar = copper. The reader who cares to study the subject will find much about it in my “Book of The Sword,” chapt. iv.

330. Lane (ii. 479) translates one stanza of this mukhammas (pentastich) and speaks of “five more,” which would make six.

331. A servile name, Delicacy, Elegance.

332. These verses have occurred twice: (Night ix. etc.) so I give Lane’s version (ii. 482).

333. A Badawi tribe to which belonged the generous Ma’an bin Za’idah, often mentioned in The Nights.

334. Wealthy harems, I have said, are hot-beds of Sapphism and Tribadism. Every woman past her first youth has a girl whom she calls her “Myrtle” (in Damascus). At Agbome, capital of Dahome, I found that a troop of women was kept for the use of the “Amazons” (Mission to Gelele, ii. 73). Amongst the wild Arabs, who ignore Socratic and Sapphic perversions, the lover is always more jealous of his beloved’s girl-friends than of men rivals. In England we content ourselves with saying that women corrupt women more than men do.

335. The Hebrew Pentateuch; Roll of the Law.

336. I need hardly notice the brass trays, platters and table-covers with inscriptions which are familiar to every reader: those made in the East for foreign markets mostly carry imitation inscriptions lest infidel eyes fall upon Holy Writ.

337. These six distichs are in Night xiii. I borrow Torrens (p. 125) to show his peculiar treatment of spinning out 12 lines to 38.

338. Arab. “Musámirah” = chatting at night. Easterns are inordinately fond of the practice and the wild Arabs often sit up till dawn, talking over the affairs of the tribe, indeed a Shaykh is expected to do so. “Early to bed and early to rise” is a civilised not a savage or a barbarous saying. Samír is a companion in night talk; Rafík of the road; Rahíb in riding horse or camel; Ká’id in sitting; Sharíb and Rafís at drink, and Nadím at table: Ahíd is an ally, and Sharík a partner—all on the model of “Fa’íl.”

339. In both lover and beloved the excess of love gave them this clairvoyance.

340. The prayer will be granted for the excess (not the purity) of her love.

341. This wailing over the Past is one of the common-places of Badawi poetry. The traveller cannot fail, I repeat, to notice the chronic melancholy of peoples dwelling under the brightest skies.

342. Moons = Budúr: in Paradise as a martyr.

343. *i.e.* to intercede for me in Heaven; as if the young woman were the Prophet.

344. The comparison is admirable as the two letters are thus written ﻻ or ﻷ. It occurs in Al-Hariri (Ass. of Ramlah)

So I embraced him close as Lám cleaves to Alif;

And again:—

She laid aside reluctance and I embraced her close
As if I were Lám and my love Alif.

The Lomad-Olaph in Syraic is similarly colligated.

345. Here is a double entendre "and the infirm letters (viz. a, w and y) not subject to accidence, left him." The three make up the root "Awi" = pitying, condoling.

346. Showing that consummation had taken place. It was a sign of good breeding to avoid all "indecent hurry" when going to bed. In some Moslem countries the bridegroom does not consummate the marriage for seven nights; out of respect for (1) father (2) mother (3) brother and so forth. If he hurry matters he will be hooted as an "impatient man" and the wise will quote, "Man is created of precipitation" (Koran chapt. xxi. 38), meaning hasty and inconsiderate. I remark with pleasure that the whole of this tale is told with commendable delicacy. O si sic omnia!

347. Pers. Nauroz (= nau roz, new day): here used in the Arab. plur. "Nawáriz" as it lasted six days. There are only four universal festivals; the solstices and the equinoxes; and every successive religion takes them from the sun and perverts them to its own private purposes. Lane (ii. 496) derives the venerable Nauroz whose birth is hid in the outer glooms of antiquity from "the Jewish Passover" (!)

THE MAN OF AL-YAMAN AND HIS SIX SLAVE-GIRLS.

The Caliph Al-Maamun was sitting one day in his palace, surrounded by his Lords of the realm and Officers of state, and there were present also before him all his poets and cup-companions, amongst the rest one named Mohammed of Bassorah. Presently the Caliph turned and said to him, "O Mohammed, I wish thee forthwith to tell me something that I have never before heard." He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, dost thou wish me to tell thee a thing I have heard with my ears or a thing I have seen with my eyes?" Quoth Al-Maamun, "Tell me whichever is the rarer;" so Mohammed Al-Basri began:—Know, then, O Commander of the Faithful, that there lived once upon a time a 246 wealthy man, who was a native of Al-Yaman; but he emigrated from his native land and came to this city of Baghdad, whose sojourn so pleased him that he transported hither his family and possessions. Now he had six slave-girls, like moons one and all; the first white, the second brown, the third fat, the fourth lean, the fifth yellow and the sixth lamp-black; and all six were comely of countenance and

perfect in accomplishments and skilled in the arts of singing and playing upon musical instruments. Now it so chanced that, one day, he sent for the girls and called for meat and wine; and they ate and drank and were mirthful and made merry. Then he filled the cup and, taking it in his hand, said to the blonde girl, "O new-moon face, let us hear somewhat of thy pleasant songs." So she took the lute and tuning it, made music thereon with such sweet melody that the place danced with glee; after which she played a lively measure and sang these couplets:—

I have a friend, whose form is fixed within mine eyes,[348] ✿ Whose name deep buried in my very vitals lies:
Whenas remembers him my mind all heart am I, ✿ And when on him my gaze is turned I am all eyes.
My censor saith, "Forswear, forget, the love of him," ✿ "Whatso is not to be, how shall't be?" My reply is.
Quoth I, "O Censor mine, go forth from me, avaunt! ✿ And make not light of that on humans heavy lies."

Hereat their master rejoiced and, drinking off his cup, gave the damsels to drink, after which he said to the berry-brown girl, "O brasier-light[349] and joy of the sprite, let us hear thy lovely voice, whereby all that hearken are ravished with delight." So she took the lute and thereon made harmony till the place was moved to glee; then, captivating all hearts with her graceful swaying, she sang these couplets:—

I swear by that fair face's life, I'll love but thee ✿ Till death us part; nor other love but thine I'll see;
O full moon, with thy loveliness mantilla'd o'er, ✿ The loveliest of our earth beneath thy banner be:
Thou, who surpassest all the fair in pleasantness ✿ May Allah, Lord of worlds, be everywhere with thee!

247 The master rejoiced and drank off his cup and gave the girls to drink; after which he filled again; and, taking the goblet in his hand, signed to the fat girl and bade her sing and play a different motive. So she took the lute and striking a grief-dispelling measure, sang these couplets:—

An thou but deign consent, O wish to heart affied! ✿ I care not wrath and rage to all mankind betide.
And if thou show that fairest face which gives me life, ✿ I reck not an diminished heads the Kings go hide.
I seek thy favours only from this 'versal world: ✿ O thou in whom all beauty doth firm-fixt abide!

The man rejoiced and, emptying his cup, gave the girls to drink. Then he signed to the thin girl and said to her, "O Houri of Paradise, feed thou our ears with sweet words and sounds." So she took the lute; and, tuning it, preluded and sang these two couplets:—

Say me, on Allah's path[350] hast death not dealt to me, ✿ Turning from me while I to thee turn patiently:
Say me, is there no judge of Love to judge us twain, ✿ And do me justice wronged, mine enemy, by thee?

Their lord rejoiced and, emptying the cup, gave the girls to drink. Then filling another he signed to the yellow girl and said to her, "O sun of the day, let us hear some nice verses." So she took the lute and, preluding after the goodliest fashion, sang these couplets:—

I have a lover and when drawing him, ✿ He draws on me a sword-blade glancing grim:
Allah avenge some little of his wrongs, ✿ Who holds my heart yet wreaks o'erbearing whim:

Oft though I say, “Renounce him, heart!” yet heart ✿ Will to none other turn excepting him.
He is my wish and will of all men, but ✿ Fate’s envious hand to me’s aye grudging him.

The master rejoiced and drank and gave the girls to drink; then he filled the cup and taking it in hand, signed to the black girl, saying, “O pupil of the eye, let us have a taste of thy quality, 248 though it be but two words.” So she took the lute and tuning it and tightening the strings, preluded in various modes, then returned to the first and sang to a lively air these couplets:—

Ho ye, mine eyes, let prodigal tears go free; ✿ This ecstasy would see my being unbe:[351]
All ecstasies I dree for sake of friend ✿ I fondle, maugre enviers’ jealousy:
Censors forbid me from his rosy cheek, ✿ Yet e’er inclines my heart to rosery:
Cups of pure wine, time was, went circuiting ✿ In joy, what time the lute sang melody,
While kept his troth the friend who madded me, ✿ Yet made me rising star of bliss to see:
But—with Time, turned he not by sin of mine; ✿ Than such a turn can aught more bitter be?
Upon his cheek there grows and glows a rose, ✿ Nay two, whereof grant Allah one to me!
An were prostration[352] by our law allowed ✿ To aught but Allah, at his feet I had bowed.

Thereupon rose the six girls and, kissing the ground before their lord, said to him, “Do thou justice between us, O our lord!” So he looked at their beauty and loveliness and the contrast of their colours and praised Almighty Allah and glorified Him. Then said he, “There is none of you but hath learnt the Koran by heart, and mastered the musical art and is versed in the chronicles of yore and the doings of peoples which have gone before; so it is my desire that each one of you rise and, pointing finger at her opposite, praise herself and dispraise her co-concubine; that is to say, let the blonde point to the brunette, the plump to the slender and the yellow to the black girl; after which the rivals, each in her turn, shall do the like with the former; and be this illustrated with citations from Holy Writ and somewhat of anecdotes and verse, so as to show forth your fine breeding and elegance of your pleading.” And they answered him, “We hear and we obey!”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the handmaids answered the man of Al-Yaman, “We hear and we obey!” Accordingly the blonde rose first and, pointing at the black girl, said to her:—Out on thee, blackamoor! It is told by tradition that whiteness saith:—I am the shining light, I am the rising moon of the fourteenth night. My hue is patent and my brow is resplendent and of my beauty quoth the poet:—

White girl with softly rounded polished cheeks ✿ As if a pearl concealed by Beauty’s boon:
Her stature Alif-like;[353] her smile like Mím[354] ✿ And o’er her eyes two brows that bend like Núm.[355]
‘Tis as her glance were arrow, and her brows ✿ Bows ever bent to shoot Death-dart eftsoon:

If cheek and shape thou view, there shalt thou find ✿ Rose, myrtle, basil and Narcissus wone.
Men wont in gardens plant and set the branch; ✿ How many garths thy stature-branch doth own!

So my colour is like the hale and healthy day and the newly-culled orange-spray and the star of sparkling ray;[356] and indeed quoth Almighty Allah, in His precious Book, to his prophet Moses (on whom be peace!):—Put thy hand into thy bosom; it shall come forth white, without hurt.[357] And again He saith:—But they whose faces shall become white, shall be in the mercy of Allah; therein shall they remain for ever.[358] My colour is a sign, a miracle, and my loveliness supreme and my beauty a term extreme. It is on the like of me that raiment showeth fair and fine and to the like of me that hearts incline. Moreover, in whiteness are many excellences; for instance, the snow falleth white from 250 heaven, and it is traditional that the beautifullest of colours is white. The Moslems also glory in white turbands; but I should be tedious, were I to tell all that may be told in praise of white; little and enough is better than too much of unfilling stuff. So now I will begin with thy dispraise, O black, O colour of ink and blacksmith's dust, thou whose face is like the raven which bringeth about the parting of lovers. Verily, the poet saith in praise of white and blame of black:—

Seest not that pearls are prized for milky hue, ✿ But with a dirham buy we coals in load?
And while white faces enter Paradise, ✿ Black faces crowd Gehenna's black abode.

And indeed it is told in certain histories, related on the authority of devout men, that Noah (on whom be peace!) was sleeping one day, with his sons Cham and Shem seated at his head, when a wind sprang up and, lifting his clothes, uncovered his nakedness; whereat Cham looked and laughed and did not cover him: but Shem arose and covered him. Presently, their sire awoke and learning, what had been done by his sons, blessed Shem and cursed Cham. So Shem's face was whitened and from him sprang the prophets and the orthodox Caliphs and Kings; whilst Cham's face was blackened and he fled forth to the land of Abyssinia, and of his lineage came the blacks.[359] All people are of one mind in affirming the lack of understanding of the blacks, even as saith the adage, "How shall one find a black with a mind?" Quoth her master, "Sit thee down, thou hast given us sufficient and even excess." Thereupon he signed to the negress, who rose and, pointing her finger at the blonde, said:—Dost thou not know that in the Koran sent down to His prophet and apostle, is transmitted the saying of God the Most High, "By the night when it covereth all things with darkness; by the day when it shineth forth!"[360] If the night were not the more illustrious, verily Allah had not sworn by it nor had given it precedence of the day. And indeed all men of wit and wisdom accept this. Knowest thou not that black is the ornament of 251 youth and that, when hoariness descendeth upon the head, delights pass away and the hour of death draweth in sight? Were not black the most illustrious of things, Allah had not set it in the core of the heart[361] and the pupil of the eye; and how excellent is the saying of the poet:—

I love not black girls but because they show ✿ Youth's colour, tinct of eye and heart-core's hue;
Nor are in error who unlove the white, ✿ And hoary hairs and winding-sheet eschew.

And that said of another:—

Black[362] girls, not white, are they ✿ All worthy love I see:
Black girls wear dark-brown lips;[363] ✿ Whites, blotch of leprosy.

And of a third:—

Black girls in acts are white, and 'tis as though ✿ Like eyes, with purest shine and sheen they show;
If I go daft for her, be not amazed; ✿ Black bile[364] drives melancholic-mad we know:
'Tis as my colour were the noon of night; ✿ For all no moon it be, its splendours glow.

Moreover, is the foregathering of lovers good but in the night? Let this quality and profit suffice thee. What protecteth lovers from spies and censors like the blackness of night's darkness; and what causeth to them to fear discovery like the whiteness of the 252 dawn's brightness? So, how many claims to honour are there not in blackness and how excellent is the saying of the poet!—

I visit them, and night-black lendeth aid to me ✿ Seconding love, but dawn-white is mine enemy.

And that of another:—

How many a night I've passed with the beloved of me, ✿ While gloom with dusky tresses veilèd our desires:
But when the morn-light showed it caused me sad affright; ✿ And I to Morning said, "Who worship light are liars!"[365]

And saith a third:—

He came to see me, hiding neath the skirt of night, ✿ Hasting his steps as wended he in cautious plight.
I rose and spread my cheek upon his path like rug, ✿ Abject, and trailed my skirt to hide it from his sight;
But rose the crescent moon and strave its best to show ✿ The world our loves, like nail-slice raying radiant light:[366]
Then what befel befel: I need not aught describe; ✿ But think thy best, and ask me naught of wrong or right.
Meet not thy lover save at night for fear of slander ✿ The Sun's a tittle-tattler and the Moon's a pander.

And a fifth:—

I love not white girls blown with fat who puff and pant; ✿ The maid for me is young brunette embonpoint-scant.
I'd rather ride a colt that's dark upon the day ✿ Of race, and set my friends upon the elephant.

And a sixth:—

My lover came to me one night, ✿ And clipt we both with fond embrace;
And lay together till we saw ✿ The morning come with swiftest pace.
Now I pray Allah and my Lord ✿ To reunite us of His grace;
And make night last me long as he ✿ Lies in the arms that tightly lace.

Were I to set forth all the praises of blackness, my tale would be tedious; but little and enough is better than too much of unfilling 253 stuff. As for thee, O blonde, thy colour

is that of leprosy and thine embrace is suffocation,[367] and it is of report that hoar-frost and icy cold[368] are in Gehenna for the torment of the wicked. Again, of things black and excellent is ink, wherewith is written Allah's word; and were it not for black ambergris and black musk, there would be no perfumes to carry to Kings. How many glories I may not mention dwell in blackness, and how well saith the poet:—

Seest not that musk, the nut-brown musk, e'er claims the highest price, ✿ Whilst for a load of whitest lime none more than dirham bids?
And while white speck upon the eye deforms the loveliest youth, ✿ Black eyes discharge the sharpest shafts in lashes from their lids.

Quoth her master, "Sit thee down: this much sufficeth." So she sat down and he signed to the fat girl, who rose——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the man of Al-Yaman, the master of the handmaids, signed to the fat girl who rose and, pointing her finger at the slim girl, bared her calves and wrists and uncovered her stomach, showing its dimples and the plump rondure of her navel. Then she donned a shift of fine stuff, that exposed her whole body, and said:—Praised be Allah who created me, for that He beautified my face and made me fat and fair of the fattest and fairest; and likened me to branches laden with fruit, and bestowed upon me abounding beauty and brightness: and praised be He no less, for that He hath given me the precedence and honoured me, when He mentioneth me in His holy Book! Quoth the Most High, "And he brought a fatted 254 calf."[369] And He hath made me like unto a vergier full of peaches and pomegranates. In very sooth even as the townsfolk long for fat birds and eat of them and love not lean birds, so do the sons of Adam desire fat meat and eat of it. How many vauntful attributes are there not in fatness, and how well saith the poet:—

Farewell thy love, for see, the Cafilah's[370] on the move: ✿ O man, canst bear to say adieu and leave thy love?
'Tis as her going were to seek her neighbour's tent, ✿ The gait of fat fair maid, whom hearts shall all approve.

Sawest thou ever one stand before a flesher's stall but sought of him fat flesh? The wise say, "Joyance is in three things, eating meat and riding meat and putting meat into meat."[371] As for thee, O thin one, thy calves are like the shanks of sparrows or the pokers of furnaces; and thou art a cruciform plank or a piece of flesh poor and rank; there is naught in thee to gladden the heart; even as saith the poet:—

With Allah take I refuge from whatever driveth me ✿ To bed with one like footrasp[372] or the roughest ropery:
In every limb she hath a horn that butteth me whene'er ✿ I fain would rest, so morn and eve I wend me wearily.

Quoth her master, "Sit thee down: this much sufficeth." So she sat down and he signed to the slender girl, who rose, as she were a willow-wand, or a rattan-frond or a stalk of sweet basil, and said:—Praised be Allah who created me and beautified me

and made my embraces the end of all desire and likened me to the branch, whereto all hearts incline. If I rise, I rise lightly; if I sit, I sit prettily; I am nimble-witted at a jest and merrier-souled than mirth itself. Never heard I one describe his mistress, saying, "My beloved is the bigness of an elephant or like a 255 mountain long and broad;" but rather, "My lady hath a slender waist and a slim shape."[373] Furthermore a little food filleth me and a little water quencheth my thirst; my sport is agile and my habit active; for I am sprightlier than the sparrow and lighter-skipping than the starling. My favours are the longing of the lover and the delight of the desirer; for I am goodly of shape, sweet of smile and graceful as the bending willow-wand or the rattan-cane[374] or the stalk of the basil-plant; nor is there any can compare with me in loveliness, even as saith one of me:—

Thy shape with willow branch I dare compare, ✿ And hold thy figure as my fortunes fair:
I wake each morn distraught, and follow thee, ✿ And from the rival's eye in fear I fare.

It is for the like of me that amourists run mad and that those who desire me wax distracted. If my lover would draw me to him, I am drawn to him; and if he would have me incline to him, I incline to him and not against him. But now, as for thee, O fat of body, thine eating is the feeding of an elephant, and neither much nor little filleth thee. When thou liest with a man who is lean, he hath no ease of thee; nor can he anyways take his pleasure of thee; for the bigness of thy belly holdeth him off from going in unto thee and the fatness of thy thighs hindereth him from coming at thy slit. What goodness is there in thy grossness, and what courtesy or pleasantness in thy coarseness? Fat flesh is fit for naught but the flesher, nor is there one point therein that pleadeth for praise. If one joke with thee, thou art angry; if one sport with thee, thou art sulky; if thou sleep, thou snorest; if thou walk, thou lollest out thy tongue! if thou eat, thou art never filled. Thou art heavier than mountains and fouler than corruption and crime. Thou hast in thee nor agility nor benedicite nor thinkest thou of aught save meat and sleep. When thou pissest thou swishest; if thou turd thou gruntest like a bursten wine-skin or an elephant transmogrified. If thou go to the water-closet, thou needest one to wash thy gap and pluck out 256 the hairs which overgrow it; and this is the extreme of sluggishness and the sign, outward and visible, of stupidity.[375] In short, there is no good thing about thee, and indeed the poet saith of thee:—

Heavy and swollen like an urine-bladder blown, ✿ With hips and thighs like mountain propping piles of stone;
Whene'er she walks in Western hemisphere, her tread ✿ Makes the far Eastern world with weight to moan and groan.

Quoth her master, "Sit thee down, this sufficeth;" so she sat down and he signed to the yellow girl, who rose to her feet and praised Allah Almighty and magnified His name, calling down peace and blessing on Mohammed the best of His creatures; after which she pointed her finger at the brunette and said to her,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the yellow girl stood up and praised Almighty Allah and magnified His name; after which she pointed her finger at the brown girl and said to her:—I am the one praised in the Koran, and the Compassionate hath described my complexion and its excellence over all other hues in His manifest Book, where Allah saith, "A yellow, pure yellow, whose colour gladdeneth the beholders."[376] Wherefore my colour is a sign and portent and my grace is supreme and my beauty a term extreme; for that my tint is the 257 tint of a ducat and the colour of the planets and moons and the hue of ripe apples. My fashion is the fashion of the fair, and the dye of saffron outvieth all other dyes; so my semblance is wondrous and my colour marvellous. I am soft of body and of high price, comprising all qualities of beauty. My colour is essentially precious as virgin gold, and how many boasts and glories doth it not unfold! Of the like of me quoth the poet:—

Her golden yellow is the sheeny sun's; ✿ And like gold sequins she delights the sight:
Saffron small portion of her glance can show; ✿ Nay,[377] she outvies the moon when brightest bright.

And I shall at once begin in thy dispraise, O berry-brown girl! Thy tincture is that of the buffalo, and all souls shudder at thy sight. If thy colour be in any created thing, it is blamed; if it be in food, it is poisoned; for thy hue is the hue of the dung-fly; it is a mark of ugliness even in dogs; and among the colours it is one which strikes with amazement and is of the signs of mourning. Never heard I of brown gold or brown pearls or brown gems. If thou enter the privy, thy colour changeth, and when thou comest out, thou addest ugliness to ugliness. Thou art a non-descript; neither black, that thou mayst be recognised, nor white, that thou mayst be described; and in thee there is no good quality, even as saith the poet:—

The hue of dusty motes is hers; that dull brown hue of hers ✿ Is mouldy, like the dust and mud by Cossid's foot upthrown:[378]
I never look upon her brow, e'en for eye-twinkling's space, ✿ But in brown study fall I and my thoughts take browner tone.

Quoth her master, "Sit thee down; this much sufficeth;" so she sat down and he signed to the brunette. Now she was a model of beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace; soft of skin, slim of shape, of stature rare, and coal-black hair; with cheeks rosy-pink, eyes black-rimmed by nature's hand, face fair, and eloquent tongue; moreover slender-waisted and heavy-hipped. So she rose and said:—Praise be to Allah who hath created me 258 neither leper-white nor bile-yellow nor charcoal-black, but hath made my colour to be beloved of men of wit and wisdom; for all the poets extol berry-brown maids in every tongue and exalt their colour over all other colours. To "brown of hue (they say) praise is due;" and Allah bless him who singeth:—

And in brunettes is mystery, could'st thou but read it right, ✿ Thy sight would never dwell on others, be they red or white:

Free-flowing conversation, amorous coquettishness ✿ Would teach Hárut himself a mightier spell of magic might.

And saith another:—

Give me brunettes, so limber, lissom, lithe of sway, ✿ Brunettes tall, slender, straight like Samhar's nut-brown lance;[379]
Languid of eyelids and with silky down on either cheek, ✿ Who fixed in lover's heart work to his life mischance.

And yet another:—

Now, by my life, brown hue hath point of comeliness ✿ Leaves whiteness nowhere and high o'er the Moon takes place;
But an of whiteness aught it borrowed self to deck, ✿ 'Twould change its graces and would pale for its disgrace:
Not with his must[380] I'm drunken, but his locks of musk ✿ Are wine inebriating all of human race.
His charms are jealous each of each, and all desire ✿ To be the down that creepeth up his lovely face.

And again another:—

Why not incline me to that show of silky down, ✿ On cheeks of dark brunette, like bamboo spiring brown?
Whenas high rank in beauty poets sing, they say ✿ Brown ant-like specklet worn by nenuphar in crown.
And see I sundry lovers tear out others' eyne ✿ For the brown mole beneath that jetty pupil shown,
Then why do censors blame me for one all a mole? ✿ Allah I pray demolish each molesting clown![381]

259 My form is all grace and my shape is built on heavy base; Kings desire my colour which all adore, rich and poor. I am pleasant, active, handsome, elegant, soft of skin and prized for price: eke I am perfect in seemlihead and breeding and eloquence; my aspect is comely and my tongue witty; my temper is bright and my play a pretty sight. As for thee, thou art like unto a mallow growing about the Lúk Gate;[382] in hue sallow and streaked-yellow and made all of sulphur. Aroynt thee, O copper-worth of jaundiced sorrel, O rust of brass-pot, O face of owl in gloom, and fruit of the Hell-tree Zakkúm;[383] whose bedfellow, for heart-break, is buried in the tomb. And there is no good thing in thee, even as saith the poet of the like of thee:—

Yellowness, tincturing her tho' nowise sick or sorry, ✿ Straitens my hapless heart and makes my head sore ache;
An thou repent not, Soul! I'll punish thee with kissing[384] ✿ Her lower face that shall mine every grinder break!

And when she ended her lines, quoth her master, "Sit thee down, this much sufficeth!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the yellow girl ended her recitation, quoth her master, "Sit thee down; this much sufficeth!" Then he made peace between them and clad them all in sumptuous robes of honour and hanselled them with precious jewels of land and sea. And never have I seen, O Commander of the Faithful, any when or any where, aught fairer than these six damsels fair. Now when Al-Maamun heard this story from Mohammed of Bassorah, he turned to him

and said, 260"O Mohammed, knowest thou the abiding-place of these damsels and their master, and canst thou contrive to buy them of him for us?" He answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, indeed I have heard that their lord is wrapped up in them and cannot bear to be parted from them." Rejoined the Caliph, "Take thee ten thousand gold pieces for each girl, that is sixty thousand for the whole purchase; and carry the coin to his house and buy them of him." So Mohammed of Bassorah took the money and, betaking himself to the Man of Al-Yaman, acquainted him with the wish of the Prince of True Believers. He consented to part with them at that price to pleasure the Caliph; and despatched them to Al-Maamun, who assigned them an elegant abode and therein used to sit with them as cup-companions; marvelling at their beauty and loveliness, at their varied colours and at the excellence of their conversation. Thus matters stood for many a day; but, after awhile, when their former owner could no longer bear to be parted from them, he sent a letter to the Commander of the Faithful complaining to him of his own ardent love-longing for them and containing, amongst other contents, these couplets:—

Captured me six, all bright with youthful blee; ✿ Then on all six be best salams from me!
They are my hearing, seeing, very life; ✿ My meat, my drink, my joy, my jollity:
I'll ne'er forget the favours erst so charmed ✿ Whose loss hath turned my sleep to insomny:
Alack, O longsome pining and O tears! ✿ Would I had farewelled all humanity:
Those eyes, with bowed and well arched eyebrows[385] dight, ✿ Like bows have struck me with their archery.

Now when the letter came to the hands of Al-Maamun, he robed the six damsels in rich raiment; and, giving them threescore thousand dinars, sent them back to their lord who joyed in them with exceeding joy,[386] (more especially for the monies they brought him) and abode with them in all the comfort and pleasance of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies. And men also recount the tale of

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348. Again the "babes" of the eyes.

349. *i.e.* whose glance is as the light of the glowing braise or (embers). The Arab. "Mikbás" = pan or pot full of small charcoal, is an article well known in Italy and Southern Europe. The word is apparently used here because it rhymes with "Anfás" (souls, spirits).

350. *i.e.* martyrdom; a Koranic term "fi sabíli 'llahi" = on the way of Allah.

351. These rhymes in -y, -ee and -ie are purposely affected, to imitate the cadence of the Arabic.

352. Arab. Sujúd, the ceremonial prostration, touching the ground with the forehead. So in the Old Testament "he bowed (or fell down) and worshipped" (Gen. xxiv., 26: Mat. ii., 11), of which our translation gives a wrong idea.

353. Thus written lhence as has been seen, a girl is called Alfiyyah = A-shaped.

354. *i.e.* the medial form of m =

355. *i.e.* the inverted n.

356. It may also mean a "Sevigné of pearls."

357. Koran xxvii. 12. This was one of the nine "signs" to wicked "Pharaoh." The "hand of Moses" is a symbol of power and ability (Koran vii. 105). The whiteness was supernatural beauty, not leprosy of the Jews (Exod. iv. 6); but brilliancy, after being born red or black: according to some commentators, Moses was a negro.

358. Koran iii. 103; the other faces become black. This explains, I have noticed, the use of the phrases in blessing and cursing.

359. Here we have the naked legend of the negro's origin; one of those nursery tales in which the ignorant of Christendom still believe. But the deduction from the fable and the testimony to the negro's lack of intelligence, though unpleasant to our ignorant negrophils, are factual and satisfactory.

360. Koran, xcii. 1, 2: an oath of Allah to reward and punish with Heaven and Hell.

361. Alluding to the "black drop" in the heart: it was taken from Mohammed's by the Archangel Gabriel. The fable seems to have arisen from the verse "Have we not opened thy breast?" (Koran, chapt. xciv. 1). The popular tale is that Halímah, the Badawi nurse of Mohammed, of the Banu Sa'ad tribe, once saw her son, also a child, running towards her and asked him what was the matter. He answered, "My little brother was seized by two men in white who stretched him on the ground and opened his belly!" For a full account and deductions see the Rev. Mr. Badger's article, "Muhammed" (p. 959) in vol. iii. "Dictionary of Christian Biography."

362. Arab, "Sumr," lit. brown (as it is afterwards used), but politely applied to a negro: "Yá Abu Sumrah!" O father of brownness.

363. Arab. "Lumá" = dark hue of the inner lips admired by the Arabs and to us suggesting most unpleasant ideas. Mr. Chenery renders it "dark red" and "ruddy," altogether missing the idea.

364. Arab. "Saudá," feminine of aswad (black), and meaning black bile (melancholia) as opposed to leucocholia.

365. *i.e.* the Magians, Sabians, Zoroastrians.

366. The "Unguinum fulgor" of the Latins who did not forget to celebrate the shining of the nails although they did not Henna them like Easterns. Some, however, have suggested that Ῥοδοδάκτυλος alludes to colouring matter.

367. Women with white skins are supposed to be heating and unwholesome: hence the Hindu Rajahs slept with dark girls in the hot season.

368. Moslems sensibly have a cold as well as a hot Hell, the former called Zamharir (lit. "intense cold") or Al-Barahút, after a well in Hazramaut; as Gehenna (Arab. Jahannam) from the furnace-like ravine East of Jerusalem (Night cccxxv). The icy Hell is necessary *in terrorem* for peoples who inhabit cold regions and who in a hot Hell only look forward to an eternity of "coals and

candles" gratis. The sensible missionaries preached it in Iceland till foolishly forbidden by Papal Bull.

369. Koran ii. 26; speaking of Abraham when he entertained the angels unawares.

370. Arab "Rakb," usually applied to a fast-going caravan of dromedary riders (Pilgrimage ii. 329). The "Cafilah" is Arab.: "Caravan" is a corruption of the Pers. Karwán.

371. A popular saying. It is interesting to contrast this dispute between fat and thin with the Shakespearean humour of Falstaff and Prince Henry.

372. Arab. "Dalak" vulg Hajar al-Hammam (Hammam-stone). The comparison is very apt: the rasps are of baked clay artificially roughened (see illustrations in Lane M. E. chapt. xvi.) The rope is called "Masad," a bristling line of palm-fibre like the coir now familiarly known in England.

373. Although the Arab's ideal of beauty, as has been seen and said, corresponds with ours, the Egyptians (Modern) the Maroccans and other negrofied races like "walking tun-butts" as Clapperton called his amorous widow.

374. Arab. "Khayzar" or "Khayzarán" the rattan-palm. Those who have seen this most graceful "palmijuncus" in its native forest will recognise the neatness of the simile.

375. This is the popular idea of a bushy "veil of nature" in women: it is always removed by depilatories and vellication. When Bilkis Queen of Sheba discovered her legs by lifting her robe (Koran xxvii.), Solomon was minded to marry her, but would not do so till the devils had by a depilatory removed the hair. The popular preparation (called Núrah) consists of quicklime 7 parts, and Zirník or orpiment, 3 parts: it is applied in the Hammam to a perspiring skin, and it must be washed off immediately the hair is loosened or it burns and discolours. The rest of the body-pile (Sha'arat opp. to Sha'ar = hair) is eradicated by applying a mixture of boiled honey with turpentine or other gum, and rolling it with the hand till the hair comes off. Men I have said remove the pubes by shaving, and pluck the hair of the armpits, one of the vestages of pre-Adamite man. A good depilatory is still a desideratum, the best perfumers of London and Paris have none which they can recommend. The reason is plain: the hair-bulb can be eradicated only by destroying the skin.

376. Koran, ii. 64: referring to the heifer which the Jews were ordered to sacrifice.

377. Arab. "kallá," a Koranic term possibly from Kull (all) and lá (not) = prorsus non—altogether not!

378. "Habáb" or "Habá," the fine particles of dust, which we call motes. The Cossid (Arab. Kásid) is the Anglo-Indian term for a running courier (mostly under Government), the Persian "Shátir" and the Guebre Rávand.

379. Arab. "Samhari" a very long thin lance so called after Samhar, the maker, or the place of making. See vol. ii. p. 1. It is supposed to cast, when planted in the ground, a longer shadow in proportion to its height, than any other thing of the kind.

380. Arab. "Suláfah;" properly *ptisane* which flows from the grapes before pressure. The plur. "Sawálif" also means tresses of hair and past events: thus there is a "triple entendre." And again "he" is used for "she."

381. There is a pun in the last line, “Khálun (a mole) khallauni” (rid me), etc.

382. Of old Fustát, afterwards part of Southern Cairo, a proverbially miserable quarter, hence the saying, “They quoted Misr to Káhirah (Cairo), whereon Bab al-Luk rose with its grass,” in derision of nobodies who push themselves forward. Burckhardt, Prov. 276.

383. Its fruits are the heads of devils; a true Dantesque fancy. Koran, chapt. xvii. 62, “the tree cursed in the Koran” and in chapt. xxxvii, 60, “is this better entertainment, or the tree of Al-Zakkúm?” Commentators say that it is a thorn bearing a bitter almond which grows in the Tehamah and was therefore promoted to Hell.

384. Arab. “Lasm” (lathm) as opposed to Bausah or boseh (a buss) and Kublah (a kiss, generic).

385. Arab. “Jufún” (plur. of Jafn) which may mean eyebrows or eyelashes and only the context can determine which.

386. Very characteristic of Egyptian manners is the man who loves six girls equally well, who lends them, as it were, to the Caliph; and who takes back the goods as if in no wise damaged by the loan.

261

HARUN AL-RASHID AND THE DAMSEL AND ABU NOWAS.

The Caliph, Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, being one night exceedingly restless and thoughtful with sad thought, rose from his couch and walked about the by-ways of his palace, till he came to a chamber, over whose doorway hung a curtain. He raised that curtain and saw, at the upper end of the room, a bedstead whereon lay something black, as it were a man asleep, with a wax taper on his right hand and another on his left; and as the Caliph stood wondering at the sight, behold, he remarked a flagon full of old wine whose mouth was covered by the cup. The Caliph wondered even more at this, saying, “How came this black by such wine-service?” Then, drawing near the bedstead, he found that it was a girl lying asleep there, curtained by her hair; so he uncovered her face and saw that it was like the moon, on the night of his fulness.[387] So the Caliph filled himself a cup of wine and drank it to the roses of her cheeks; and, feeling inclined to enjoy her, kissed a mole on her face, whereupon she started up from sleep, and cried out, “O Trusted of Allah,[388] what may this be?” Replied he, “A guest who knocketh at thy door, hoping that thou wilt give him hospitality till the dawn;” and she answered; “Even so! I will serve him with my hearing and my sight.” So she brought forward the wine and they drank together, after which she took the lute and tuning the strings, preluded in one-

and-twenty modes, then returning to the first, played a lively measure and sang these couplets:—

The tongue of love from heart bespeaks my sprite, ✿ Telling I love thee with love infinite:
262 I have an eye bears witness to my pain, ✿ And fluttering heart sore hurt by parting-plight.
I cannot hide the love that harms my life; ✿ Tears ever roll and growth of pine I sight:
I knew not what love was ere loving thee; ✿ But Allah's destiny to all is dight.

And when her verses were ended she said, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have been wronged!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel cried, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have been wronged!" Quoth he, "How so, and who hath wronged thee?" Quoth she "Thy son bought me awhile ago, for ten thousand dirhams, meaning to give me to thee; but thy wife, the daughter of thine uncle, sent him the said price and bade him shut me up from thee in this chamber." Whereupon said the Caliph. "Ask a boon of me," and she, "I ask thee to lie with me to-morrow night." Replied the Caliph, "Inshallah!" and leaving her, went away. Now as soon as it was morning, he repaired to his sitting-room and called for Abu Nowás, but found him not and sent his chamberlain to ask after him. The chamberlain found him in a tavern, pawned and pledged for a score of a thousand dirhams, which he had spent on a certain beardless youth, and questioned him of his case. So he told him what had betided him with the comely boy and how he had spent upon him a thousand silver pieces; whereupon quoth the chamberlain, "Show him to me; and if he be worth this, thou art excused." He answered, "Patience, and thou shalt see him presently." As they were talking together, up came the lad, clad in a white tunic, under which was another of red and under this yet another black. Now when Abu Nowas saw him, he sighed a loud sigh and improvised these couplets:—

He showed himself in shirt of white, ✿ With eyes and eyelids languor-dight.
Quoth I, "Dost pass and greet me not? ✿ Though were thy greeting a delight?
Blest He who clothed in rose thy cheeks, ✿ Creates what wills He by His might!"
Quoth he, "Leave prate, forsure my Lord ✿ Of works is wondrous infinite:
My garment's like my face and luck; ✿ All three are white on white on white."

263 When the beardless one heard these words, he doffed the white tunic and appeared in the red; and when Abu Nowas saw him he redoubled in expressions of admiration and repeated these couplets:—

He showed in garb anemone-red, ✿ A foeman "friend" entitulèd:
Quoth I in marvel, "Thou'rt full moon ✿ Whose weed shames rose however red:
Hath thy cheek stained it red, or hast ✿ Dyed it in blood by lovers bled?"
Quoth he, "Sol gave me this for shirt ✿ When hasting down the West to bed:

So garb and wine and hue of cheek ✿ All three are red on red on red."

And when the verses came to an end, the beardless one doffed the red tunic and stood in the black; and, when Abu Nowas saw him, he redoubled in attention to him and versified in these couplets:—

He came in sable-huèd sacque ✿ And shone in dark men's heart to rack:
Quoth I, "Dost pass and greet me not? ✿ Joying the hateful envious pack?
Thy garment's like thy locks and like ✿ My lot, three blacks on black on black."

Seeing this state of things and understanding the case of Abu Nowas and his love-longing, the Chamberlain returned to the Caliph and acquainted him therewith; so he bade him pouch a thousand dirhams and go and take him out of pawn. Thereupon the Chamberlain returned to Abu Nowas and, paying his score, carried him to the Caliph, who said, "Make me some verses containing the words, O Trusted of Allah, what may this be?" Answered he, "I hear and I obey, O Commander of the Faithful."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu Nowas answered, "I hear and I obey, O Commander of the Faithful!" and forthwith he improvised these couplets:—

Long was my night for sleepless misery; ✿ Weary of body and of thought ne'er free:
I rose and in my palace walked awhile, ✿ Then wandered thro' the halls of Haremry:
264 Till chanced I on a blackness, which I found ✿ A white girl hid in hair for napery:
Here to her for a moon of brightest sheen! ✿ Like willow-wand and veiled in pudency:
I quaffed a cup to her; then drew I near, ✿ And kissed the beauty-spot on cheek had she:
She woke astart, and in her sleep's amaze, ✿ Swayed as the swaying branch in rain we see;
Then rose and said to me, "O Trusted One ✿ Of Allah, O Amin, what may this be?"
Quoth I, "A guest that cometh to thy tents ✿ And craves till morn thy hospitality."
She answered, "Gladly I, my lord, will grace ✿ And honour such a guest with ear and eye."

Cried the Caliph, "Allah strike thee dead! it is as if thou hadst been present with us."[389] Then he took him by the hand and carried him to the damsel and, when Abu Nowas saw her clad in a dress and veil of blue, he expressed abundant admiration and improvised these couplets:—

Say to the pretty one in veil of blue, ✿ "By Allah, O my life, have ruth on dole!
For, when the fair entreats her lover foul, ✿ Sighs rend his bosom and bespeak his soul:
By charms of thee and whitest cheek I swear thee, ✿ Pity a heart for love lost all control:
Bend to him, be his stay 'gainst stress of love, ✿ Nor aught accept what saith the ribald fool."

Now when he ended his verse, the damsel set wine before the Caliph; and, taking the lute, played a lively measure and sang these couplets:—

Wilt thou be just to others in thy love, and do ✿ Unright, and put me off, and take new friend in lieu?

Had lovers Kazi unto whom I might complain ✿ Of thee, he'd peradventure grant the due I sue:
If thou forbid me pass your door, yet I afar ✿ Will stand, and viewing you waft my salams to you!

265 The Caliph bade her ply Abu Nowas with wine, till he lost his right senses; thereupon he gave him a full cup, and he drank a draught of it and held the cup in his hand till he slept. Then the Commander of the Faithful bade the girl take the cup from his grasp and hide it; so she took it and set it between her thighs; moreover he drew his scymitar and, standing at the head of Abu Nowas, pricked him with the point; whereupon he awoke and saw the drawn sword and the Caliph standing over him. At this sight the fumes of the wine fled from his head and the Caliph said to him, "Make me some verses and tell me therein what is become of thy cup; or I will cut off thy head." So he improvised these couplets:—

My tale, indeed, is tale unlief; ✿ 'Twas yonder fawn who play'd the thief!
She stole my cup of wine, before ✿ The sips and sups had dealt relief;
And hid it in a certain place, ✿ My heart's desire and longing grief.
I name it not, for dread of him ✿ Who hath of it command-in-chief.

Quoth the Caliph, "Allah strike thee dead![390] How knewest thou that? But we accept what thou sayst." Then he ordered him a dress of honour and a thousand dinars, and he went away rejoicing. And among tales they tell is one of

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387. The moon is masculine possibly by connection with the Assyrian Lune-god "Sin"; but I can find no cause for the Sun (Shams) being feminine.

388. Arab. "Al-Amin," a title of the Prophet. It is usually held that this proud name, "The honest man," was applied by his fellow-citizens to Mohammed in early life; and that in his twenty-fifth year, when the Eighth Ka'abah was being built, it induced the tribes to make him their umpire concerning the distinction of placing in position the "Black Stone" which Gabriel had brought from Heaven to be set up as the starting-post for the seven circuitings. He distributed the honour amongst the clans and thus gave universal satisfaction. His Christian biographers mostly omit to record an anecdote which speaks so highly in Mohammed's favour (Pilgrimage iii. 192.)

389. The idea is that Abu Nowas was a thought-reader—such being the prerogative of inspired poets in the East. His drunkenness and debauchery only added to his power. I have already noticed that "Allah strike thee dead" (Kátala-k Allah) is like our phrase, "Confound the fellow, how clever he is."

390. Again said facetiously, "Devil take you!"

THE MAN WHO STOLE THE DISH OF GOLD WHEREIN THE DOG ATE.

Some time erst there was a man, who had accumulated debts, and his case was straitened upon him, so that he left his people and family and went forth in distraction; and he ceased not wandering on at random till he came after a time to a city tall of walls and firm of foundations. He entered it in a state of despondency and despair, harried by hunger and worn with the weariness of his way. As he passed through one of the main streets, he saw a company of the great going along; so he followed them till they reached a house like to a royal palace. He entered with them, and they stayed not faring forwards till they came in presence of a person seated at the upper end of a saloon, a man of the most dignified and majestic aspect, surrounded by pages and eunuchs, as he were of 266 the sons of the Wazirs. When he saw the visitors, he rose to greet them and received them with honour; but the poor man aforesaid was confounded at his own boldness, when beholding——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the poor man aforesaid was confounded at his own boldness, when beholding the goodliness of the place and the crowd of servants and attendants; so drawing back, in perplexity and fear for his life sat down apart in a place afar off, where none should see him. Now it chanced that whilst he was sitting, behold, in came a man with four sporting-dogs, whereon were various kinds of raw silk and brocade[391] and wearing round their necks collars of gold with chains of silver, and tied up each dog in a place set privy for him; after which he went out and presently returned with four dishes of gold, full of rich meats, which he set severally before the dogs, one for each. Then he went away and left them, whilst the poor man began to eye the food, for stress of hunger, and longed to go up to one of the dogs and eat with him; but fear of them withheld him. Presently, one of the dogs looked at him and Allah Almighty inspired the dog with a knowledge of his case; so he drew back from the platter and signed to the man, who came and ate till he was filled. Then he would have withdrawn, but the dog again signed to him to take for himself the dish and what food was left in it, and pushed it towards him with his fore-paw. So the man took the dish and leaving the house, went his way, and none followed him. Then he journeyed to another city where he sold the dish and buying with the price a stock-in-trade, returned to his own town. There he sold his goods and paid his debts; and he throve and became affluent and rose to perfect prosperity. He abode in his own land; but after some years had passed he said to himself, “Needs must I repair to the city of the owner of the dish, and' carry him a fit and handsome present and pay him the money-value of that which his dog bestowed upon me.” So he took the price of the dish and a suitable gift; and, setting out, journeyed 267 day and night, till he came to that city; he entered it and sought the place where the man lived; but he found there naught save ruins mouldering in row and croak of crow, and house

and home desolate and all conditions in changed state. At this, his heart and soul were troubled, and he repeated the saying of him who saith:—

Void are the private rooms of treasury: ✿ As void were hearts of fear and piety:
Changed is the Wady nor are its gazelles ✿ Those fawns, nor sand-hills those I wont to see.

And that of another:—

In sleep came Su'adá's[392] shade and wakened me ✿ Near dawn, when comrades all a-sleeping lay:
But waking found I that the shade was fled, ✿ And saw air empty and shrine far away.

Now when the man saw these mouldering ruins and witnessed what the hand of time had manifestly done with the place, leaving but traces of the substantial things that erewhiles had been, a little reflection made it needless for him to enquire of the case; so he turned away. Presently, seeing a wretched man, in a plight which made him shudder and feel goose-skin, and which would have moved the very rock to ruth, he said to him, "Ho thou! What have time and fortune done with the lord of this place? Where are his lovely faces, his shining full moons and splendid stars; and what is the cause of the ruin that is come upon his abode, so that nothing save the walls thereof remain?" Quoth the other, "He is the miserable thou seest mourning that which hath left him naked." But knowest thou not the words of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and keep!), wherein is a lesson to him who will learn by it and a warning to whoso will be warned thereby and guided in the right way, "Verily it is the way of Allah Almighty to raise up nothing of this world, except He cast it down again?"[393] "If 268 thou question of the cause of this accident, indeed it is no wonder, considering the chances and changes of Fortune. I was the lord of this place and I builded it and founded it and owned it; and I was the proud possessor of its full moons lucent and its circumstance resplendent and its damsels radiant and its garniture magnificent, but Time turned and did away from me wealth and servants and took from me what it had lent (not given); and brought upon me calamities which it held in store hidden. But there must needs be some reason for this thy question: so tell it me and leave wondering." Thereupon, the man who had waxed wealthy being sore concerned, told him the whole story, and added, "I have brought thee a present, such as souls desire, and the price of thy dish of gold which I took; for it was the cause of my affluence after poverty, and of the replenishment of my dwelling-place, after desolation, and of the dispersion of my trouble and straitness." But the man shook his head, and weeping and groaning and complaining of his lot answered, "Ho thou! methinks thou art mad; for this is not the way of a man of sense. How should a dog of mine make generous gift to thee of a dish of gold and I meanly take back the price of what a dog gave? This were indeed a strange thing! Were I in extremest unease and misery, by Allah, I would not accept of thee aught; no, not the worth of a nail-paring! So return whence thou camest in health and safety."[394] Whereupon the merchant

kissed his feet and taking leave of him, returned whence he came, praising him and reciting this couplet:—

Men and dogs together are all gone by; ✿ So peace be with all of them! dogs and men!

And Allah is All-knowing! Again men tell the tale of

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391. In all hot-damp countries it is necessary to clothe dogs, morning and evening especially: otherwise they soon die of rheumatism and loin disease.

392. = Beatrice. A fragment of these lines is in Night cccxv. See also Night dcclxxxi.

393. The Moslems borrowed the horrible idea of a "jealous God" from their kinsmen, the Jews. Every race creates its own Deity after the fashion of itself: Jehovah is distinctly a Hebrew; the Christian Theos is originally a Judæo-Greek and Allah a half-Badawi Arab. In this tale Allah, despotic and unjust, brings a generous and noble-minded man to beggary, simply because he fed his dogs off gold plate. Wisdom and morality have their infancy and youth: the great value of such tales as these is to show and enable us to measure man's development.

394. In Trébutien (Lane ii. 501) the merchant says to ex-Dives, "Thou art wrong in charging Destiny with injustice. If thou art ignorant of the cause of thy ruin I will acquaint thee with it. Thou feddest the dogs in dishes of gold and leftest the poor to die of hunger." A superstition, but intelligible.

269

THE SHARPER OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE CHIEF OF POLICE.

There was once in the coast-fortress of Alexandria, a Chief of Police, Husám al-Din hight, the sharp Scymitar of the Faith. Now one night as he sat in his seat of office, behold, there came in to him a trooper-wight who said, "Know, O my lord the Chief, that I entered your city this night and alighted at such a khan and slept there till a third part of the night was past, when I awoke and found my saddle-bags sliced open and a purse of a thousand gold pieces stolen from them." No sooner had he done speaking than the Chief summoned his chief officials and bade them lay hands on all in the khan and clap them in limbo till the morning; and on the morrow, he caused bring the rods and whips used in punishment; and, sending for the prisoners, was about to flog them till they confessed in the presence of the owner of the stolen money when, lo! a man broke through the crowd till he came up to the Chief of Police,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Chief was about to flog them when lo! a man broke through the crowd till he came up to the Chief of Police and the trooper and said, “Ho! Emir, let these folk go, for they are wrongously accused. It was I who robbed this trooper, and see, here is the purse I stole from his saddle-bags.” So saying, he pulled out the purse from his sleeve and laid it before Husam' al-Din, who said to the soldier, “Take thy money and pouch it; thou now hast no ground of complaint against the people of the khan.” Thereupon these folk and all who were present fell to praising the thief and blessing him; but he said, “Ho! Emir, the skill is not in that I came to thee in person and brought thee the purse; the cleverness was in taking it a second time from this trooper.” Asked the Chief, “And how didst thou do to take it, O sharper?”; and the 270 robber replied, “O Emir, I was standing in the Shroff’s[395] bazar at Cairo, when I saw this soldier receive the gold in change and put it in yonder purse; so I followed him from by-street to by-street, but found no occasion of stealing it. Then he travelled from Cairo and I followed him from town to town, plotting and planning by the way to rob him, but without avail, till he entered this city and I dogged him to the khan. I took up my lodging beside him and watched him till he fell asleep and I heard him sleeping; when I went up to him softly, softly; and I slit open his saddle-bags with this knife, and took the purse in the way I am now taking it.” So saying, he put out his hand and took the purse from before the Chief of Police and the trooper both of whom, together with the folk, drew back watching him and thinking he would show them how he took the purse from the saddle-bags. But, behold! he suddenly broke into a run and threw himself into a pool of standing water[396] hard by. So the Chief of the Police shouted to his officers, “Stop thief!” and many made after him; but before they could doff their clothes and descend the steps, he had made off; and they sought for him, but found him not; for that the by-streets and lanes of Alexandria all communicate. So they came back without bringing the purse; and the Chief of Police said to the trooper, “Thou hast no demand upon the folk; for thou foundest him who robbed thee and receivedst back thy money, but didst not keep it.” So the trooper went away, having lost his money, whilst the folk were delivered from his hands and those of the Chief of Police; and all this was of the favour of Almighty Allah.[397] And they also tell the tale of

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395. Arab. “Sarráf” = a money-changer.

396. Arab. “Birkah,” a common feature in the landscapes of Lower Egypt; it is either a natural pool left by the overflow of the Nile; or, as in the text, a built-up tank, like the “Táláb” for which India is famous. Sundry of these Birkahs are or were in Cairo itself; and some are mentioned in The Nights.

397. This sneer at the “military” and the “police” might come from an English convict’s lips.

271

AL-MALIK AL-NASIR AND THE THREE CHIEFS OF POLICE.

Once upon a time Al-Malik al-Násir[398] sent for the Wális or Chiefs of Police of Cairo, Bulak, and Fostat[399] and said to them, "I desire each of you to recount me the marvellousest thing that hath befallen him during his term of office."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth Al-Malik al-Nasir to the three Walis, "I desire each of you to recount me the marvellousest thing which hath befallen him during his term of office." So they answered, "We hear and we obey." Then said the Chief of the Police of Cairo, "Know thou, O our lord the Sultan, the most wonderful thing that befel me, during my term of office, was on this wise:" and he began

THE STORY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE OF CAIRO.

There were in this city two men of good repute fit to bear witness[400] in matters of murder and wounds; but they were both secretly addicted to intrigues with low women and to wine-bibbing and to dissolute doings, nor could I succeed (do what I would) in bringing them to book; and I began to despair of success. So I charged 272 the taverners and confectioners and fruiterers and candle-chandlers and the keepers of brothels and bawdy houses to acquaint me of these two good men whenever they should anywhere be engaged in drinking or other debauchery, or together or apart; and ordered that, if they both or if either of them bought at their shops aught for the purpose of wassail and carousal, the vendors should not conceal it from me. And they replied, "We hear and obey." Presently it chanced that one night, a man came to me and said, "O my master, know that the two just men, the two witnesses, are in such a street in such a house, engaged in abominable wickedness." So I disguised myself, I and my body-servant, and ceased not trudging till I came to the house and knocked at the door, whereupon a slave-girl came out and opened to me, saying, "Who art thou?" I entered without answering her and saw the two legal witnesses and the house-master sitting, and lewd women by their side and before them great plenty of wine. When they saw me, they rose to receive me, and made much of me, seating me in the place of honour and saying to me, "Welcome for an illustrious guest and well come for a pleasant cup-companion!" And on this wise they

met me without showing a sign of alarm or trouble. Presently, the master of the house arose from amongst us and went out and returned after a while with three hundred dinars, when the men said to me, without the least fear, “Know, O our lord the Wali, it is in thy power to do even more than disgrace and punish us; but this will bring thee in return nothing but weariness: so we reck thou wouldest do better to take this much money and protect us; for Almighty Allah is named the Protector and loveth those of His servants who protect their Moslem neighbours; and thou shalt have thy reward in this world and due recompense in the world to come.” So I said to myself, “I will take the money and protect them this once; but, if ever again I have them in my power, I will take my wreak of them;” for, you see, the money had tempted me. Thereupon I took it and went away thinking that no one would know it; but, next day, on a sudden one of the Kazi’s messengers came to me and said to me, “O Wali, be good enough to answer the summons of the Kazi who wanteth thee.” So I arose and accompanied him, knowing not the meaning of all this; and when I came into the judge’s presence, I saw the two witnesses and the master of the house, who had given me the money, sitting by his side. Thereupon this man rose and sued me for three hundred dinars, nor was it in my power to deny the debt; for he 273 produced a written obligation and his two companions, the legal witnesses, testified against me that I owed the amount. Their evidence satisfied the Kazi and he ordered me to pay the sum; nor did I leave the Court till they had of me the three hundred gold pieces. So I went away, in the utmost wrath and shame, vowing mischief and vengeance against them and repenting that I had not punished them. Such, then is the most remarkable event which befel me during my term of office. Thereupon rose the Chief of the Bulak Police and said, “As for me, O our lord the Sultan, the most marvellous thing that happened to me, since I became Wali, was as follows:” and he began

THE STORY OF THE CHIEF OF THE BULAK POLICE.

I was once in debt to the full amount of three hundred thousand gold pieces;[401] and, being distressed thereby, I sold all that was behind me and what was before me and all I hent in hand, but I could collect no more than an hundred thousand dinars——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wali of Bulak continued:—So I sold all that was behind and before me, but could collect no more than an hundred thousand dinars and remained in great perplexity. Now one night, as I sat at home in this state, behold, there came a knocking; so I said to one of my servants, “See who is at the door.” He went out and returned, wan of face, changed in countenance and with his side-muscles a-quivering; so I asked him, “What aileth thee?”; and he answered, “There is a man at the door; he is half naked, clad in skins,

with sword in hand and knife in girdle, and with him are a company of the same fashion and he asketh for thee." So I took my sword and going out to see who these were, behold, I found them 274as the boy had reported and said to them, "What is your business?" They replied, "Of a truth we be thieves and have done fine work this night; so we appointed the swag to thy use, that thou mayst pay therewith the debts which sadden thee and deliver thee from thy distress." Quoth I, "Where is the plunder?"; and they brought me a great chest, full of vessels of gold and silver; which when I saw, I rejoiced and said to myself, "Herewith I will settle all claims upon me and there will remain as much again." So I took the money and going inside said in my mind, "It were ignoble to let them fare away empty-handed." Whereupon I brought out the hundred thousand dinars I had by me and gave it to them, thanking them for their kindness; and they pouched the monies and went their way, under cover of the night so that none might know of them. But when morning dawned I examined the contents of the chest, and found them copper and tin[402] washed with gold worth five hundred dirhams at the most; and this was grievous to me, for I had lost what monies I had and trouble was added to my trouble. Such, then, is the most remarkable event which befel me during my term of office. Then rose the Chief of the Police of Old Cairo and said, "O our lord the Sultan, the most marvellous thing that happened to me, since I became Wali, was on this wise;" and he began

THE STORY OF THE CHIEF OF THE OLD CAIRO POLICE.

I once hanged ten thieves each on his own gibbet, and especially charged the guards to watch them and hinder the folk from taking any one of them down. Next morning when I came to look at them, I found two bodies hanging from one gallows and said to the guards, "Who did this, and where is the tenth gibbet?" But they denied all knowledge of it, and I was about to beat them till they owned the truth, when they said, "Know, O Emir, that we fell asleep last night, and when we awoke, we found that some one had stolen one of the bodies, gibbet and all; so we were alarmed and feared thy wrath. But, behold, up came a peasant-fellow driving his ass; whereupon we laid hands on him and killed him and hanged his body upon this gallows, in the stead of the thief who 275had been stolen."[403] Now when I heard this, I marvelled and asked them, "What had he with him?"; and they answered, "He had a pair of saddle-bags on the ass." Quoth I, "What was in them?"; quoth they, "We know not." So I said, "Bring them hither;" and when they brought them to me I bade open them, behold, therein was the body of a murdered man, cut in pieces. Now as soon as I saw this, I marvelled at the case and said in myself, "Glory to God! The cause of the hanging of this peasant was none other but his crime against this murdered man; and thy Lord is not unjust towards His servants."[404] And men also tell the tale of

398. Lit. “The conquering King;” a dynastic title assumed by Saláh al-Dín (Saladin) and sundry of the Ayyúbi (Eyoubite) sovereigns of Egypt, whom I would call the “Soldans.”

399. “Káhirah” (*i.e.* City of Mars—the Planet) is our Cairo: Bulak is the port-suburb on the Nile, till 1858 wholly disjoined from the City; and Fostat is the outlier popularly called Old Cairo. The latter term is generally translated “town of leathern tents;” but in Arabic “fustát” is an abode of Sha’ar = hair, such as horse-hair, in fact any hair but “Wabar” = soft hair, as the camel’s. See Lane, Lex.

400. Arab. “Adl” = just: a legal witness to whose character there is no tangible objection—a prime consideration in Moslem law. Here “Adl” is evidently used ironically for a hypocritical rascal.

401. Lane (ii. 503) considers three thousand dinars (the figure in the Bres. Edit) “a more probable sum.” Possibly: but, I repeat, exaggeration is one of the many characteristics of The Nights.

402. Calc. Edit. “Kazír”: the word is generally written “Kazdír,” Sansk. Kastira, both probably from the Greek κασσιτέρος.

403. This would have passed for a peccadillo in the “good old days.” As late as 1840 the Arnaut soldiers used to “pot” any peasant who dared to ride (instead of walking) past their barracks. Life is cheap in hot countries.

404. Koran, xli. 46—a passage expounding the doctrine of free will: “He who doth right, doth it to the advantage of his own soul; and he who doth evil, doth it against the same; for thy Lord,” etc.

THE THIEF AND THE SHROFF.

A certain Shroff, bearing a bag of gold pieces, once passed by a company of thieves, and one of these sharpers said to the others, “I, and I only, have the power to steal yonder purse.” So they asked, “How wilt thou do it?”; and he answered, “Lookye all!”; and followed the money-changer, till he entered his house, when he threw the bag on a shelf[405] and, being affected with diabetes, went into the chapel of ease to do his want, calling to the slave-girl, “Bring me an ewer of water.” She took the ewer and followed him to the privy, leaving the door open, whereupon the thief entered and, seizing the money-bag, made off with it to his companions, to whom he told what had passed.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the thief took the money-bag and made off with it to his companions to 276 whom he told what had passed. Said they, “By Allah, thou hast played a clever trick! ‘tis not every one could do it; but, presently the money-changer will come out of the privy; and, missing the bag of

money, he will beat the slave-girl and torture her with grievous torture. 'Tis as though thou hast at present done nothing worthy of praise; so, if thou be indeed a sharper, return and save the girl from being beaten and questioned." Quoth he, "Inshallah! I will save both girl and purse." Then the prig went back to the Shroff's house and found him punishing the girl because of the purse; so he knocked at the door and the man said, "Who is there?" Cried the thief, "I am the servant of thy neighbour in the Exchange;" whereupon he came out to him and said, "What is thy business?" The thief replied, "My master saluteth thee and saith to thee:—Surely thou art deranged and thoroughly so, to cast the like of this bag of money down at the door of thy shop and go away and leave it. Had a stranger hit upon it he had made off with it and, except my master had seen it and taken care of it, it had assuredly been lost to thee." So saying, he pulled out the purse and showed it to the Shroff who on seeing it said, "That is my very purse," and put out his hand to take it; but the thief said, "By Allah, I will not give thee this same, till thou write me a receipt declaring that thou hast received it! for indeed I fear my master will not believe that thou hast recovered the purse, unless I bring him thy writing to that effect, and sealed with thy signet-seal." The money-changer went in to write the paper required; and in the meantime the thief made off with the bag of money and thus was the slave-girl saved her beating. And men also tell a tale of

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405. Arab. "Suffah"; whence our Sofa. In Egypt it is a raised shelf generally of stone, about four feet high and headed with one or more arches. It is an elaborate variety of the simple "Ták" or niche, a mere hollow in the thickness of the wall. Both are used for such articles as basin, ewer and soap; coffee-cups, water-bottles, etc.

THE CHIEF OF THE KUS POLICE AND THE SHARPER.

It is related that Alá al-Dín, Chief of Police at Kús,[406] was sitting one night in his house, when behold, a personage of handsome appearance and dignified aspect came to the door, accompanied by a servant bearing a chest upon his head and, standing there 277 said to one of the Wali's young men, "Go in and tell the Emir that I would have audience of him on some privy business." So the servant went in and told his master, who bade admit the visitor. When he entered, the Emir saw him to be a man of handsome semblance and portly presence; so he received him with honour and high distinction, seating him beside himself, and said to him, "What is thy wish?" Replied the stranger, "I am a highwayman and am minded to repent at thy hands and turn to Almighty Allah; but I would have thee help me to this, for that I am in thy district and

under thine inspection. Now I have here a chest, wherein are matters worth some forty thousand dinars; and none hath so good a right to it as thou; so do thou take it and give me in exchange a thousand dinars, of thine own monies lawfully gotten, that I may have a little capital, to aid me in my repentance,[407] and save me from resorting to sin for my subsistence; and with Allah Almighty be thy reward!" Speaking thus he opened the chest and showed the Wali that it was full of trinkets and jewels and bullion and ring-gems and pearls, whereat he was amazed and rejoiced with great joy. So he cried out to his treasurer, saying, "Bring hither a certain purse containing a thousand dinars,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wali cried out to his treasurer, saying, "Bring hither a certain purse containing a thousand dinars"; and gave it to the highwayman, who took it and thanking him, went his way under cover of the night. Now when it was the morrow, the Emir sent for the chief of the goldsmiths and showed him the chest and what was therein; but the goldsmith found it nothing but tin and brass, and the jewels and bezel-stones and pearls all of glass; whereat the Wali was sore chagrined and sent in quest of the highwayman; but none could come at him. And men also tell the tale of

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406. In Upper Egypt (Apollinopolis Parva) pronounced "Goos," the Coptic Kos-Birbir, once an emporium of the Arabian trade.

407. This would appeal strongly to a pious Moslem.

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IBRAHIM BIN AL-MAHDI AND THE MERCHANT'S SISTER.

The Caliph Al-Maamún once said to his uncle Ibrahim bin Al-Mahdí, "Tell us the most remarkable thing that thou hast ever seen." Answered he:—I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful. Know that I rode out one day, a-pleasuring, and my ride brought me to a place where I smelt the reek of food. So my soul longed for it and I halted, O Prince of True Believers, perplexed and unable either to go on or to go in. Presently, I raised my eyes and lo! I espied a lattice-window and behind it a wrist, than which I never beheld aught lovelier. The sight turned my brain and I forgot the smell of the food and began to plan and plot how I should get access to the house.

After awhile, I observed a tailor hard by and going up to him, saluted him. He returned my salam and I asked him, "Whose house is that?" And he answered, "It belongeth to a merchant called such an one, son of such an one, who consorteth with none save merchants." As we were talking, behold, up came two men, of comely aspect with intelligent countenances, riding on horseback; and the tailor told me that they were the merchant's most intimate friends and acquainted me with their names. So I urged my beast towards them and said to them, "Be I your ransom! Abu Fulán[408] awaiteth you!"; and I rode with them both to the gate, where I entered and they also. Now when the master of the house saw me with them he doubted not but I was their friend; so he welcomed me and seated me in the highest stead. Then they brought the table of food and I said in myself, "Allah hath granted me my desire of the food; and now there remain the hand and the wrist." After awhile, we removed for carousal to another room, which I found tricked out with all manner of rarities; and the host paid me particular attention, addressing his talk to me, for that he took 279 me to be a guest of his guests; whilst in like manner these two made much of me, taking me for a friend of their friend the house-master. Thus I was the object of politest attentions till we had drunk several cups of wine and there came into us a damsel as she were a willow-wand of the utmost beauty and elegance, who took a lute and playing a lively measure, sang these couplets:—

Is it not strange one house us two contain ✿ And still thou draw'st not near, or talk we twain?
Only our eyes tell secrets of our souls, ✿ And broken hearts by lovers' fiery pain;
Winks with the eyelids, signs the eyebrow knows; ✿ Languishing looks and hand saluting fain.

When I heard these words my vitals were stirred, O Commander of the Faithful, and I was moved to delight, for her excessive loveliness and the beauty of the verses she sang; and I envied her her skill and said, "There lacketh somewhat to thee, O damsel!" Whereupon she threw the lute from her hand in anger, and cried, "Since when are ye wont to bring ill-mannered louts into your assemblies?" Then I repented of what I had done, seeing the company vexed with me, and I said in my mind, "My hopes are lost by me"; and I weeted no way of escaping blame but to call for a lute, saying, "I will show you what escaped her in the air she played." Quoth the folk, "We hear and obey"; so they brought me a lute and I tuned the strings and sang these verses:—

This is thy friend perplexed for pain and pine, ✿ Th' enamoured, down whose breast course drops of brine:
He hath this hand to the Compassionate raised ✿ For winning wish, and that on hearts is lien:
O thou who seest one love-perishing, ✿ His death is caused by those hands and eyne![409]

Whereupon the damsel sprang up and throwing herself at my feet, kissed them and said, "It is thine to excuse, O my Master! By Allah, I knew not thy quality nor heard I ever the like of this performance!" And all began extolling me and making much of me, being beyond measure delighted, and at last they besought me 280 to sing again.

So I sang a merry air, whereupon they all became drunken with music and wine, their wits left them and they were carried off to their homes, while I abode alone with the host and the girl. He drank some cups with me and then said, “O my lord, my life hath been lived in vain for that I have not known the like of thee till the present. Now, by Allah, tell me who thou art, that I may ken who is the cup-companion whom Allah hath bestowed on me this night.” At first I returned him evasive answers and would not tell him my name; but he conjured me till I told him who I was; whereupon he sprang to his feet——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ibrahim son of Al-Mahdi continued:—Now when the house-master heard my name he sprang to his feet and said, “Indeed I wondered that such gifts should belong to any but the like of thee; and Fortune hath done me a good turn for which I cannot thank her too much. But, haply, this is a dream; for how could I hope that one of the Caliphate house should visit my humble home and carouse with me this night?” I conjured him to be seated; so he sat down and began to question me as to the cause of my visit in the most courteous terms. So I told him the whole affair, first and last, hiding naught, and said to him, “Now as to the food I have had my will, but of the hand and wrist I have still to win my wish.” Quoth he, “Thou shalt have thy desire of the hand and wrist also, Inshallah!” Then said he to the slave-girl, “Ho, such an one, bid such an one come down.” And he called his slave-girls down, one by one and showed them to me; but I saw not my mistress among them, and he said, “O my lord, there is none left save my mother and sister; but, by Allah, I must needs have them also down and show them to thee.” So I marvelled at his courtesy and large-heartedness and said, “May I be thy sacrifice! Begin with the sister;” and he answered, “With joy and goodwill.” So she came down and he showed me her hand and behold, she was the owner of the hand and wrist. Quoth I, “Allah make me thy ransom! this is the damsel whose hand and wrist I saw at the lattice.” Then he sent his servants without stay or delay for 281 witnesses and bringing out two myriads[410] of gold pieces, said to the witnesses, “This our lord and master, Ibrahim son of Al-Mahdi, paternal uncle of the Commander of the Faithful, seeketh in marriage my sister such an one; and I call you to witness that I give her in wedlock to him and that he hath settled upon her ten thousand dinars.” And he said to me, “I give thee my sister in marriage, at the portion aforesaid.” “I consent,” answered I, “and am herewith content.” Whereupon he gave one of the bags to her and the other to the witnesses, and said to me, “O our lord, I desire to adorn a chamber for thee, where thou mayst sleep with thy wife.” But I was abashed at his generosity and was ashamed to lie with her in his house; so I said, “Equip her and send her to my place.” “And by thy being, O Commander of the Faithful, he sent me with her such an equipage that my house, for all its greatness,

was too strait to hold it! And I begot on her this boy that standeth in thy presence." Then Al-Maamun marvelled at the man's generosity and said, "Gifted of Allah is he! Never heard I of his like." And he bade Ibrahim bin al-Mahdi bring him to court, that he might see him. He brought him and the Caliph conversed with him; and his wit and good breeding so pleased him that he made him one of his chief officers. And Allah is the Giver, the Bestower! Men also relate the tale of

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408. *i.e.* "the father of a certain person"; here the merchant whose name may have been Abu'l Hasan, etc. The useful word (thingumbob, what d'ye call him, donchah, etc.) has been bodily transferred into Spanish and Portugese—Fulano. It is of old genealogy, found in the Heb. Fuluní which applies to a person only in Ruth iv. 1; but is constantly so employed by Rabbinic writers. The Greek use ὁ δεῖνα.

409. Lit. "by his (*i.e.* her) hand," etc. Hence Lane (ii. 507) makes nonsense of the line.

410. Arab. "Badrah," as has been said, is properly a weight of 10,000 dirhams or drachmas; but popularly used for largesse thrown to the people at festivals.

THE WOMAN WHOSE HANDS WERE CUT OFF FOR GIVING ALMS TO THE POOR.

A certain King once made proclamation to the people of his realm saying, "If any of you give alms of aught, I will verily and assuredly cut off his hand;" wherefore all the people abstained from alms-deed, and none could give anything to any one. Now it chanced that one day a beggar accosted a certain woman (and indeed hunger was sore upon him), and said to her, "Give me an alms"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that, quoth the beggar to the woman, "Give me an alms however small." But she answered him, "How can I give thee aught, when the King cutteth off the hands of all who give alms?" Then he said, "I conjure thee by Allah Almighty, give me an alms;" so when he adjured her by the Holy Name of Allah, she had ruth on him and gave him two scones. The King heard of this; whereupon he called her before him and cut off her hands, after which she returned to her house. Now it chanced after a while that the King said to his mother, "I have a mind to take a wife; so do thou marry me to a fair woman." Quoth she,

"There is among our female slaves one who is unsurpassed in beauty; but she hath a grievous blemish." The King asked, "What is that?" and his mother answered, "She hath had both her hands cut off." Said he, "Let me see her." So she brought her to him, and he was ravished by her and married her and went in unto her; and begat upon her a son. Now this was the woman who had given two scones as an alms to the asker, and whose hands had been cut off therefor; and when the King married her, her fellow-wives envied her and wrote to the common husband that she was an unchaste, having just given birth to the boy; so he wrote to his mother, bidding her carry the woman into the desert and leave her there. The old Queen obeyed his commandment and abandoned the woman and her son in the desert; whereupon she fell to weeping for that which had befallen her and wailing with exceeding sore wail. As she went along, she came to a river and knelt down to drink, being overcome with excess of thirst, for fatigue of walking and for grief; but, as she bent her head, the child which was at her neck fell into the water. Then she sat weeping bitter tears for her child, and as she wept, behold came up two men, who said to her, "What maketh thee weep?" Quoth she, "I had a child at my neck, and he hath fallen into the water." They asked, "Wilt thou that we bring him out to thee?" and she answered, "Yes." So they prayed to Almighty Allah, and the child came forth of the water to her, safe and sound. Then said they, "Wilt thou that Allah restore thee thy hands as they were?" "Yes," replied she: whereupon they prayed to Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) 283 and her hands were restored to her, goodlier than before. Then said they, "Knowest thou who we are?" and she replied, "Allah is all-knowing;"[411] and they said, "We are thy two Scones of Bread, which thou gavest in alms to the asker and which were the cause of the cutting off of thy hands.[412] So praise thou Allah Almighty for that He hath restored to thee thy hands and thy child." Then she praised Almighty Allah and glorified Him. And men relate a tale of

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411. Arab. "Allaho A'alam"; (God knows!) here the popular phrase for our, "I know not;" when it would be rude to say bluntly "M'adri" = "don't know."

412. There is a picturesque Moslem idea that good deeds become incarnate and assume human shapes to cheer the doer in his grave, to greet him when he enters Paradise and so forth. It was borrowed from the highly imaginative faith of the Guebre, the Zoroastrian. On Chinavad or Chanyud-pul (Sirát), the Judgement bridge 37 rods (*rasan*) long, straight and 37 fathoms broad for the good, and crooked and narrow as sword-edge for the bad, a nymph-like form will appear to the virtuous and say, "I am the personification of thy good deeds!" In Hell there will issue from a fetid gale a gloomy figure with head like a minaret, red eyeballs, hooked nose, teeth like pillars, spear-like fangs, snaky locks etc., and when asked who he is he will reply, "I am the personification of thine evil acts!" (Dabistan i. 285.) The Hindus also personify everything.

THE DEVOUT ISRAELITE.

There was once a devout man of the children of Israel,[413] whose family span cotton-thread; and he used every day to sell the yarn and buy fresh cotton, and with the profit he laid in daily bread for his household. One morning he went out and sold the day's yarn as wont, when there met him one of his brethren, who complained to him of need; so he gave him the price of the thread and returned, empty-handed, to his family, who said to him, "Where is the cotton and the food?" Quoth he, "Such an one met me and complained to me of want; whereupon I gave him the price of the yarn." And they said, "How shall we do? We have nothing to sell." Now they had a cracked trencher[414] and a jar; so he took 284 them to the bazar but none would buy them of him. However presently, as he stood in the market, there passed by a man with a fish—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the man took the trencher and jar to the bazar, but none would buy them of him. However there presently passed by a man with a fish which was so stinking and so swollen that no one would buy it of him, and he said to the Jew, "Wilt thou sell me thine unsaleable ware for mine?" "Yes," answered the Jew; and, giving him the wooden trencher and jar, took the fish and carried it home to his family, who said, "What shall we do with this fish?" Quoth he, "We will broil it and eat it, till it please Allah to provide bread for us." So they took it and ripping open its belly, found therein a great pearl and told the head of the household who said, "See ye if it be pierced: if so, it belongeth to some one of the folk; if not, 'tis a provision of Allah for us." So they examined it and found it unpierced. Now when it was the morrow, the Jew carried it to one of his brethren which was an expert in jewels, and the man asked, "O such an one! whence haddest thou this pearl?"; whereto the Jew answered, "It was a gift of Almighty Allah to us," and the other said, "It is worth a thousand dirhams and I will give thee that; but take it to such an one, for he hath more money and skill than I." So the Jew took it to the jeweller, who said, "It is worth seventy thousand dirhams and no more." Then he paid him that sum and the Jew hired two porters to carry the money to his house. As he came to his door, a beggar accosted him, saying, "Give me of that which Allah hath given thee." Quoth the Jew to the asker, "But yesterday we were even as thou; take thee half this money:" so he made two parts of it, and each took his half. Then said the beggar, "Take back thy money and Allah bless and prosper thee in it; I am a Messenger,[415] whom thy Lord hath sent to try thee." Quoth the 285 Jew, "To Allah be the praise and the thanks!" and abode in all delight of life he and his household till death. And men recount this story of

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413. Arab. "Banú Israíl;" applied to the Jews when theirs was the True Faith *i.e.* "before the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, whose mission completed that of Moses and made it obsolete

(Matrúk) even as the mission of Jesus was completed and abrogated by that of Mohammed." The term "Yahúd" = Jew is applied scornfully to the Chosen People after they rejected the Messiah, but as I have said "Israelite" is used on certain occasions, Jew on others.

414. Arab. "Kasa'ah," a wooden bowl, a porringer; also applied to a saucer.

415. Arab. "Rasúl" = one sent, an angel, an "apostle;" not to be translated, as by the vulgar, "prophet." Moreover Rasul is higher than Nabí (prophet), such as Abraham Isaac, etc., depositaries of Al-Islam, but with a succession restricted to their own families. Nabi-mursil (Prophet-apostle) is the highest of all, one sent with a book: of these are now only four, Moses, David, Jesus and Mohammed, the writings of the rest having perished. In Al-Islam also angels rank below men, being only intermediaries (= ἄγγελοι, nuncii, messengers) between the Creator and the Created. This knowledge once did me a good turn at Harar, not a safe place in those days (First Footsteps in East Africa, p. 349).

ABU HASSAN AL-ZIYADI AND THE KHORASAN MAN.

Quoth Abú Hassán al-Ziyádi[416]:—I was once in straitened case and so needy that the grocer, the baker and other tradesmen dunned and importuned me; and my misery became extreme, for I knew of no resource nor what to do. Things being on this wise there came to me one day certain of my servants and said to me, "At the door is a pilgrim wight, who seeketh admission to thee." Quoth I, "Admit him." So he came in and behold, he was a Khorasání. We exchanged salutations and he said to me, "Tell me, art thou Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi?"; and I replied, "Yes, what is thy wish?" Quoth he, "I am a stranger and am minded to make the pilgrimage; but I have with me a great sum of money, which is burdensome to bear: so I wish to deposit these ten thousand dirhams with thee whilst I make my pilgrimage and return. If the caravan march back and thou see me not, then know that I am dead, in which case the money is a gift from me to thee; but if I come back, it shall be mine." I answered, "Be it as thou wilt, an thus please Allah Almighty." So he brought out a leather bag and I said to the servant, "Fetch the scales;" and when he brought them the man weighed out the money and handed it to me, after which he went his way. Then I called the purveyors and paid them my liabilities——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi:—I called the purveyors and paid them my liabilities and spent freely and amply, saying to myself, "By the 286time he returns, Allah will have relieved me with one or other of the bounties He hath by Him." However, on the very next day. the servant came in

to me and said, “Thy friend the Khorasan man is at the door.” “Admit him,” answered I. So he came in and said to me, “I had purposed to make the pilgrimage; but news hath reached me of the decease of my father, and I have resolved to return; so give me the monies I deposited with thee yesterday.” When I heard this, I was troubled and perplexed beyond measure of perplexity known to man and wotted not what reply to make him; for, if I denied it, he would put me on my oath, and I should be disgraced in the world to come; whilst, if I told him that I had spent the money, he would make an outcry and dishonour me before men. So I said to him, “Allah give thee health! This my house is no stronghold nor site of safe custody for this money. When I received thy leather bag, I sent it to one with whom it now is; so do thou return to us to-morrow and take thy money, Inshallah!”[417] So he went away and I passed the night in great concern, because of his return to me; sleep visited me not nor could I close my eyes; so I rose and bade the boy saddle me the she-mule. Answered he, “O my lord, it is yet but the first third of the night and indeed we have hardly had time to rest.” I returned to my bed, but sleep was forbidden to me and I ceased not to awaken the boy, and he to put me off, till break of day, when he saddled me the mule, and I mounted and rode out, not knowing whither to go. I threw the reins on the mule’s shoulders and gave myself up to regrets and melancholy thoughts, whilst she fared on with me to the eastward of Baghdad. Presently, as I went along, behold, I saw a number of people approaching me and turned aside into another path to avoid them; but seeing that I wore a turband in preacher-fashion,[418] they followed me and hastening up to me, said, “Knowest thou the lodging of Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi?” “I am he,” answered I; and they rejoined, “Obey the summons of the Commander of the Faithful.” Then they carried me before Al-Maamun, who said to me, “Who 287 art thou?” Quoth I, “An associate of the Kazi Abu Yúsuf and a doctor of the law and traditions.” Asked the Caliph, “By what surname art thou known?”[419] and I answered, “Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi;” whereupon quoth he, “Expound to me thy case.” So I recounted to him my case and he wept sore and said to me, “Out on thee!” The Apostle of Allah (whom Allah bless and assain!) would not let me sleep this night, because of thee; for in early darkness[420] he appeared to me and said, “Succour Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi.” Whereupon I awoke and, knowing thee not, went to sleep again; but he came to me a second time and said to me, “Woe to thee! Succour Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi.” I awoke a second time, but knowing thee not I went to sleep again; and he came to me a third time and still I knew thee not and went to sleep again. Then he came to me once more and said, “Out on thee! Succour Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi!” “After that I dared not sleep any more, but watched the rest of the night and aroused my people and sent them on all sides in quest of thee.” Then he gave me one myriad of dirhams, saying, “This is for the Khorasani,” and other ten thousand, saying, “Spend freely of this and amend thy case therewith, and set thine affairs in order.” Moreover, he presented me with thirty thousand dirhams, saying, “Furnish thyself with this, and when the Procession-day[421] is being kept, come thou to me, that I may

invest thee with some office." So I went forth from him with the money and returned home, where I prayed the dawn-prayer; and behold, presently came the Khorasani, so I carried him into the house and brought out to him one myriad of dirhams, saying, "Here is thy money." Quoth he, "It is not my very money; how cometh this?" So I told him the whole story, and he wept and said, "By Allah, haddest thou told me the fact at first, I had not pressed thee!; and now, by Allah, I will not accept aught of this money"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the Khorasani to Al-Ziyadi, "By Allah, haddest thou told me the fact at first, I had not pressed thee!; and now, by Allah, I will not accept aught of this money and thou art lawfully quit of it." So saying, he went away and I set my affairs in order and repaired on the Procession-day to Al-Maamun's Gate, where I found him seated. When he saw me present myself he called me to him and, bringing forth to me a paper from under his prayer-carpet, said to me, "This is a patent, conferring on thee the office of Kazi of the western division of Al-Medinah, the Holy City, from the Bab-al Salám[422] to the furthest limit of the township; and I appoint thee such and such monthly allowances. So fear Allah (to whom be honour and glory!) and be mindful of the solicitude of His Apostle (whom may He bless and keep!) on thine account." Then the folk marvelled at the Caliph's words and asked me their meaning; whereupon I told them the story from beginning to end and it spread abroad amongst the people. "And" (quoth he who telleth the tale) "Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi ceased not to be Kazi of Al-Medinah, the Holy City, till he died in the days of Al-Maamun—the mercy of Allah be on him!" And among the tales men tell is one of

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416. A doctor of law in the reign of Al-Maamun.

417. Here the exclamation is = D.V.; and it may be assumed generally to have that sense.

418. Arab. "Taylasán," a turban worn hood-fashion by the "Khatib" or preacher. I have sketched it in my Pilgrimage and described it (iii. 315). Some Orientalists derive Taylasan from Atlas = satin, which is peculiarly inappropriate. The word is apparently barbarous and possibly Persian like Kalansuwah, the Dervish-cap. "Thou son of a Taylasán" = a barbarian (De Sacy, Chrest. Arab. ii. 269).

419. Arab. Kinyah vulg. "Kunyat" = patronymic or matronymic; a name beginning with "Abu" (father) or with "Umm" (mother). There are so few proper names in Al-Islam that such surnames, which, as will be seen, are of infinite variety, become necessary to distinguish individuals. Of these sobriquets I shall give specimens further on.

420. "Whoso seeth me in his sleep, seeth me truly; for Satan cannot assume my semblance," said (or is said to have said) Mohammed. Hence the vision is true although it comes in early night and not before dawn. See Lane M. E., chapt. ix.

421. Arab. "Al-Maukab;" the day when the pilgrims march out of the city; it is a holiday for all, high and low.

422. "The Gate of Salutation;" at the S. Western corner of the Mosque where Mohammed is buried (Pilgrimage ii. 60 and plan). Here "Visitation" (Ziyárah) begins.

THE POOR MAN AND HIS FRIEND IN NEED.

There was once a rich man who lost all he had and became destitute, whereupon his wife advised him to ask aid and assistance of one of his intimates. So he betook himself to a certain friend of his and acquainted him with his necessities; and he lent him five hundred dinars to trade withal. Now in early life he had been a jeweller; so he took the gold and went to the jewel-bazar, where he opened a shop to buy and sell. Presently, as he sat in his shop three men accosted him and asked for his father, and when he told them that he was deceased, they said, "Say, did he leave issue?" Quoth the jeweller, "He left the slave who is before you." They asked, "And who knoweth thee for his son?"; and 289 he answered, "The people of the bazar," whereupon they said, "Call them together, that they may testify to us that thou art his very son." So he called them and they bore witness of this; whereupon the three men delivered to him a pair of saddle-bags, containing thirty thousand dinars, besides jewels and bullion of high value, saying, "This was deposited with us in trust by thy father." Then they went away; and presently there came to him a woman, who sought of him certain of the jewels, worth five hundred dinars which she bought and paid him three thousand for them. Upon this he arose and took five hundred dinars and carrying them to his friend who had lent him the money, said to him, "Take the five hundred dinars I borrowed of thee; for Allah hath opened to me the gate of prosperity." Quoth the other, "Nay; I gave them to thee outright, for the love of Allah; so do thou keep them. And take this paper, but read it not till thou be at home, and do according to that which is therein." So he took the money and the paper and returned home, where he opened the scroll and found therein inscribed these couplets:—

Kinsmen of mine were those three men who came to thee; ✿ My sire and uncles twain and Sálih bin Ali
So what for cash thou soldest, to my mother 'twas ✿ Thou soldest it, and coin and gems were sent by me.
Thus doing I desired not any harm to thee ✿ But in my presence spare thee and thy modesty.

And they also recount the story of

THE RUINED MAN WHO BECAME RICH AGAIN THROUGH A DREAM.[423]

There lived once in Baghdad a wealthy man and made of money, who lost all his substance and became so destitute that he could earn his living only by hard labour. One night, he lay down to sleep, dejected and heavy hearted, and saw in a dream a Speaker[424] who said to him, "Verily thy fortune is in Cairo; go thither and 290 seek it." So he set out for Cairo; but when he arrived there, evening overtook him and he lay down to sleep in a mosque. Presently, by decree of Allah Almighty, a band of bandits entered the mosque and made their way thence into an adjoining house; but the owners, being aroused by the noise of the thieves, awoke and cried out; whereupon the Chief of Police came to their aid with his officers. The robbers made off; but the Wali entered the mosque and, finding the man from Baghdad asleep there, laid hold of him and beat him with palm-rods so grievous a beating that he was well-nigh dead. Then they cast him into jail, where he abode three days; after which the Chief of Police sent for him and asked him, "Whence art thou?"; and he answered, "From Baghdad." Quoth the Wali, "And what brought thee to Cairo?"; and quoth the Baghdadi, "I saw in a dream One who said to me, Thy fortune is in Cairo; go thither to it. But when I came to Cairo the fortune which he promised me proved to be the palm-rods thou so generously gavest to me." The Wali laughed till he showed his wisdom-teeth and said, "O man of little wit, thrice have I seen in a dream one who said to me:—There is in Baghdad a house in such a district and of such a fashion and its courtyard is laid out garden-wise, at the lower end whereof is a jetting-fountain and under the same a great sum of money lieth buried. Go thither and take it. Yet I went not; but thou, of the briefness of thy wit, hast journeyed from place to place, on the faith of a dream, which was but an idle galimatias of sleep." Then he gave him money saying, "Help thee back herewith to thine own country;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wali gave the Baghdad man some silvers, saying, "Help thee back herewith to thine own country;" and he took the money and set out upon his homewards march. Now the house the Wali had described was the man's own house in Baghdad; so the wayfarer returned thither and, digging underneath the fountain in his garden, discovered a great treasure. And thus Allah gave him abundant fortune; and a marvellous coincidence occurred. And a story is also current of

423. The tale is told by Al-Isháki in the reign of Al-Maamun.

424. The speaker in dreams is the Heb. “Waggid,” which the learned and angry Graetz (Geschichte, etc. vol. ix.) absurdly translates “Traum-souffleur.”

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CALIPH AL-MUTAWAKKIL AND HIS CONCUBINE MAHBUBAH.

There were in the palace of the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil ala’llah[425] four thousand concubines, whereof two thousand were Greeks and other two thousand slave-born Arabians[426] and Abyssinians; and ‘Obayd ibn Táhir[427] had given him two hundred white girls and a like number of Abyssinian and native girls. Among these slave-borns was a girl of Bassorah, hight Mahbúbah, the Beloved, who was of surpassing beauty and loveliness, elegance and voluptuous grace. Moreover, she played upon the lute and was skilled in singing and making verses and wrote a beautiful hand; so that Al-Mutawakkil fell passionately in love with her and could not endure from her a single hour. But when she saw this affection, she presumed upon his favour to use him arrogantly, wherefore he waxed exceeding wroth with her and forsook her, forbidding the people of the palace to speak with her. She abode on this wise some days, but the Caliph still inclined to her; and he arose one morning and said to his courtiers, “I dreamt, last night, that I was reconciled to Mahbubah.” They answered, “Would Allah this might be on wake!”; and as they were talking, behold, in came one of the Caliph’s maidservants and whispered him; so he rose from his throne and entered the Serraglio; for the whisper had said, “Of a truth we heard singing and lute-playing in Mahbubah’s chamber and we knew not what this meant.” So he went straight to her apartment, where he heard her playing upon the lute and singing the following verses:—

I wander through the palace, but I sight there not a soul ✿ To whom I may complain or will ‘change a word with me.
It is as though I’d done so grievous rebel-deed ✿ Wherefrom can no contrition e’er avail to set me free.
292 Have we no intercessor here to plead with King, who came ✿ In sleep to me and took me back to grace and amity;
But when the break of day arose and showed itself again, ✿ Then he departing sent me back to dree my privacy?

Now when the Caliph heard her voice, he marvelled at the verse and yet more at the strange coincidence of their dreams and entered the chamber. As soon as she perceived him, she hastened to rise and throw herself at his feet, and kissing them, said, “By Allah, O my lord, this hap is what I dreamt last night; and, when I awoke, I made the couplets thou hast heard.” Replied Al-Mutawakkil, “By Allah, I also dreamt

the like!" Then they embraced and made friends and he abode with her seven days with their nights. Now Mahbubah had written upon her cheek, in musk, the Caliph's name, which was Ja'afar: and when he saw this, he improvised the following:—

One wrote upon her cheek with musk, his name was Ja'afar hight; ✿ My soul for hers who wrote upon her cheek the name I sight!
If an her fingers have inscribed one line upon her cheek, ✿ Full many a line in heart of mine those fingers did indite:
O thou, whom Ja'afar sole of men possesseth for himself, ✿ Allah fill Ja'afar[428] stream-full draught, the wine of thy delight!

When Al-Mutawakkil died, his host of women forgot him, all save Mahbubah—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Al-Mutawakkil died, his host of women forgot him all save Mahbubah who ceased not to mourn for him, till she deceased and was buried by his side, the mercy of Allah be on them both! And men also tell the tale of

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425. Tenth Abbaside. A.D. 849-861.

426. Arab. "Muwallad" (fem. "Muwalladah"); a rearling, a slave born in a Moslem land. The numbers may appear exaggerated, but even the petty King of Ashanti had, till the last war, 3333 "wives."

427. The Under-prefect of Baghdad.

428. "Ja'afar," our old Giaffar (which is painfully like "Gaffer," *i.e.* good father) means either a rushing river or a rivulet.

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WARDAN[429] THE BUTCHER HIS ADVENTURE WITH THE LADY AND THE BEAR.

There lived once in Cairo, in the days of the Caliph Al-Hákim bi´ Amri´llah, a butcher named Wardán, who dealt in sheep's flesh; and there came to him every day a lady and gave him a dinar, whose weight was nigh two and a half Egyptian dinars, saying, "Give me a lamb." So he took the money and gave her the lamb, which she delivered

to a porter she had with her; and he put it in his crate and she went away with him to her own place. Next day she came in the forenoon and this went on for a long time, the butcher gaining a dinar by her every day, till at last he began to be curious about her case and said to himself, "This woman buyeth of me a ducat-worth of meat every morning, paying ready money, and never misseth a single day. Verily, this is a strange thing!" So he took an occasion of questioning the porter, in her absence, and asked him, "Whither goest thou every day with yonder woman?"; and he answered, "I know not what to make of her for surprise; inasmuch as every day, after she hath taken the lamb of thee, she buyeth necessaries of the table, fresh and dried fruits and wax-candles a dinar's worth, and taketh of a certain person, which is a Nazarene, two flagons of wine, worth another dinar; and then she leadeth me with the whole and I go with her to the Wazir's Gardens, where she blindfoldeth me, so that I cannot see on what part of earth I set my feet; and, taking me by the hand, she leadeth me I know not whither. Presently, she sayeth, "Set down here;" and when I have done so, she giveth me an empty crate she hath ready and, taking my hand, leadeth me back to the Wazir's Gardens, the place where she bound my eyes, and there removeth the bandage and giveth me ten silver bits." "Allah be her helper!" quoth Wardan; but he redoubled in curiosity about her case; disquietude increased upon him and he passed the night in exceeding restlessness. And quoth the butcher:—Next morning she came to me as of custom and taking the lamb, for which she paid the dinar, delivered it to the porter and went away. So 294 I gave my shop in charge to a lad and followed her without her seeing me;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Wardan the butcher continued:—So I gave my shop in charge to a lad and followed her without her seeing me; nor did I cease to keep her in sight, hiding behind her, till she left Cairo and came to the Wazir's Gardens. Then I hid myself whilst she bandaged the porter's eyes and followed her again from place to place till she came to the mountain[430] and stopped at a spot where there was a great stone. Here she made the porter set down his crate, and I waited whilst she conducted him back to the Wazir's Gardens, after which she returned and, taking out the contents of the basket, instantly disappeared. Then I went up to that stone and wrenching it up entered the hole and found behind the stone an open trap-door of brass and a flight of steps leading downwards. So I descended, little by little, till I came to a long corridor, brilliantly lighted, and followed it, till I made a closed door, as it were the door of a saloon. I looked about the wall-sides near the doorway till I discovered a recess, with steps therein; then climbed up and found a little niche with a bulls-eye giving upon a saloon. Thence I looked inside and saw the lady cut off the choicest parts of the lamb and laying them in a saucepan, throw the rest to a great big bear, who ate it all to the last bite. Now when she had made an end

of cooking, she ate her fill, after which she set on the fruits and confections and brought out the wine and fell to drinking a cup herself and giving the bear to drink in a basin of gold. And as soon as she was heated with wine, she put off her petticoat-trousers and lay down on her back; whereupon the bear arose and came up to her and stroked her, whilst she gave him the best of what belongeth to the sons of Adam till he had made an end, when he sat down and rested. Presently, he sprang upon her and rogered her again; and when he ended he again sat down to rest; and he ceased not so doing till he had futtered her ten times and they both fell to the ground in a fainting-fit and lay without motion. Then quoth I to 295 myself, "Now is my opportunity," and taking a knife I had with me, that would cut bones before flesh,[431] went down to them and found them motionless, not a muscle of them moving for their hard swinking and swiving. So I put my knife to the bear's gullet and pressed upon it, till I finished him by severing his head from his body, and he gave a great snort like thunder, whereat the lady started up in alarm; and, seeing the bear slain and me standing whittle in hand, she shrieked so loud a shriek that I thought the soul had left her body. Then she asked, "O Wardan, is this how thou requitest me my favours?" And I answered, "O enemy of thine own soul, is there a famine of men[432] that thou must do this damnable thing?" She made no answer but bent down over the bear, and looked fondly upon him; then finding his head divided from his body, said to me, "O Wardan, which of the two courses wouldst thou take; either obey me in what I shall say and be the means of thine own safety"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the lady, "O Wardan, which of the two courses wouldst thou take; either obey me in what I shall say and be the means of thine own safety and competency to the end of thy days, or gainsay me and so cause thine own destruction?"[433] Answered I, "I choose rather to hearken unto thee: say what thou wilt." Quoth she, "Then slay me, as thou hast slain this bear, and take thy need of this hoard and wend thy ways." Quoth I, "I am better than this bear: so return thou to Allah Almighty and repent, and I will marry thee, and we will live on this treasure the rest of our lives." She rejoined, "O Wardan, far be it from me! How shall I live after him? By Allah, an thou slay me not I will assuredly do away thy life! So leave bandying words with me, or thou art a lost man: this is all I have to say to thee and peace be with thee!" Then said I, "I will kill thee, and thou shalt go to the curse of Allah." So saying, I caught her by the hair and cut her throat; and she went to the curse of Allah and of the angels and of all 296 mankind. And after so doing I examined the place and found there gold and bezel-stones and pearls, such as no one king could bring together. So I filled the porter's crate with as much as I could carry and covered it with the clothes I had on me. Then I shouldered it and, going up out of the under-ground treasure-chamber, fared homewards and ceased not faring on, till I

came to the gate of Cairo, where behold, I fell in with ten of the body-guard of Al-Hakim bi´ Amri´llah[434] followed by the Prince himself, who said to me, "Ho, Wardan!" "At thy service, O King," replied I; when he asked, "Hast thou killed the bear and the lady?" and I answered, "Yes." Quoth he, "Set down the basket from thy head and fear naught, for all the treasure thou hast with thee is thine, and none shall dispute it with thee." So I set down the crate before him, and he uncovered it and looked at it; then said to me, "Tell me their case, albe I know it, as if I had been present with you." So I told him all that had passed and he said, "Thou hast spoken the truth," adding, "O Wardan, come now with me to the treasure." So I returned with him to the cavern, where he found the trap-door closed and said to me, "O Wardan, lift it; none but thou can open the treasure, for it is enchanted in thy name and nature."[435] Said I, "By Allah, I cannot open it;" but he said, "Go up to it, trusting in the blessing of Allah." So I called upon the name of Almighty Allah and, advancing to the trap-door, put my hand to it; whereupon it came up as it had been of the lightest. Then said the Caliph, "Go down and bring hither what is there; for none but one of thy name and semblance and nature hath gone down thither since the place was made, and the slaying of the bear and the woman was appointed to be at thy hand. This was chronicled with me and I was awaiting its fulfilment."[436] Accordingly (quoth Wardan) I went down and brought 297 up all the treasure, whereupon the Caliph sent for beasts of burden and carried it away, after giving me my crate, with what was therein. So I bore it home and opened me a shop in the market. "And" (saith he who telleth the tale) "this market is still extant and is known as Wardan's Market." And I have heard recount another story of

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429. A regular Fellah's name also that of a village (Pilgrimage i. 43) where a pleasant story is told about one Haykal.

430. The "Mountain" means the rocky and uncultivated ground South of Cairo; such as Jabal al-Ahmar and the geological sea-coast flanked by the old Cairo-Suez highway.

431. A popular phrase = our "sharp as a razor."

432. *i.e.* are men so few; a favourite Persian phrase.

433. She is a woman of rank who would cause him to be assassinated.

434. This is not Al-Hakim bi´ Amri´llah the famous or infamous founder of the Druze (Durúz) faith and held by them to be, not an incarnation of the Godhead, but the Godhead itself in propriâ personâ, who reigned A.D. 926-1021: our Hakim is the orthodox Abbaside Caliph of Egypt who dated from two centuries after him (A.D. 1261). Had the former been meant, it would have thrown back this part of The Nights to an earlier date than is generally accepted. But in a place still to come I shall again treat of the subject.

435. For an account of a similar kind which was told to me during the last few years see "Midian Revisited," i. 15. These hiding-places are innumerable in lands of venerable antiquity like Egypt; and, if there were any contrivance for detecting hidden treasure, it would make the discoverer many times a millionaire.

436. *i.e.* it had been given to him or his in writing, like the book left to the old woman before quoted in "Midian," etc.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER AND THE APE.

There was once a Sultan's daughter, whose heart was taken with love of a black slave: he abated her maidenhead and she became passionately addicted to futtering, so that she could not do without it a single hour and complained of her case to one of her body-women, who told her that no thing poketh and stroketh more abundantly than the baboon.[437] Now it so chanced one day, that an ape-leader passed under her lattice, with a great ape; so she unveiled her face and looking upon the ape, signed to him with her eyes, whereupon he broke his bonds and chain and climbed up to the Princess, who hid him in a place with her, and night and day he abode there, eating and drinking and copulating. Her father heard of this and would have killed her;—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Sultan heard of this work he would have slain his daughter; but she smoked his design; and, disguising herself in Mameluke's dress, mounted horse after loading a mule with gold and bullion, and precious stuffs past all account; then carrying with her the ape, she fled to Cairo, where she took up her abode in one of the houses without the city and upon the verge of the Suez-desert. Now, every day, she used to buy meat of a young man, a butcher, but she came not to him till after noonday; and then she was so 298 yellow and disordered in face that he said in his mind, "There must indeed hang some mystery by this slave." Accordingly (quoth the butcher) one day when she came to me as usual, I went out after her secretly, and ceased not to follow her from place to place, so as she saw me not, till she came to her lodging on the edge of her waste and entered; and I looked in upon her through a cranny, and saw her as soon as she was at home, kindle a fire and cook the meat, of which she ate enough and served up the rest to a baboon she had by her and he did the same. Then she put off the slave's habit and donned the richest of women's apparel; and so I knew that she was a lady. After this she set on wine and drank and gave the ape to drink; and he stroked her nigh half a score times without drawing till she swooned away, when he spread over her a silken coverlet and returned to his place. Then I went down in the midst of the place and the ape, becoming aware of me, would have torn me in pieces; but I made haste to pull

out my knife and slit his paunch and his bowels fell out. The noise aroused the young lady, who awoke terrified and trembling; and, when she saw the ape in this case, she shrieked such a shriek that her soul well nigh fled her body. Then she fell down in a fainting-fit and when she came to herself, she said to me, "What moved thee to do thus? Now Allah upon thee, send me after him!" But I spoke her fair for a while and pledged myself to stand in the ape's stead in the matter of much poking, till her trouble subsided and I took her to wife. But when I came to perform my promise I proved a failure and I fell short in this matter and could not endure such hard labour: so I complained of my case and mentioned her exorbitant requirements to a certain old woman who engaged to manage the affair and said to me, "Needs must thou bring me a cooking-pot full of virgin vinegar and a pound of the herb pellitory called wound-wort."[438] So I brought her what she sought, and she laid the pellitory in the pot with the vinegar and set it on the fire, till it was thoroughly boiled. Then she bade me futter the girl, and I futtered her till she fainted away, when the old woman took her up (and she unconscious), and set her parts to the mouth of the cooking-pot. The steam of the pot entered her slit and there fell from it somewhat which I 299 examined; and behold, it was two small worms, one black and the other yellow. Quoth the old woman, "The black was bred of the strokings of the negro and the yellow of stroking with the baboon." Now when she recovered from her swoon she abode with me, in all delight and solace of life, and sought not swiving as before, for Allah had done away from her this appetite; whereat I marvelled——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man continued:—In truth Allah had done away from her this appetite; whereat I marvelled and acquainted her with the case. Thereupon I lived with her and she took the old woman to be to her in the stead of her mother, "and" (said he who told me the tale) "the old woman and the young man and his wife abode in joy and cheer till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies; and glory be to the Ever-living One, who dieth not and in whose hand is Dominion of the world visible and invisible!"[439] And another tale they tell is that of

14- THE EBONY HORSE.[1]

There was once in times of yore and ages long gone before, a great and puissant King, of the Kings of the Persians, Sábúr by name, who was the richest of all the Kings in store of wealth and dominion and surpassed each and every in wit and wisdom. He was generous, open handed and beneficent, and he gave to those who sought him and repelled not those who resorted to him; and he comforted the broken-hearted and honourably entreated those who fled to him for refuge. Moreover, he loved the poor and was hospitable to strangers and did the oppressed justice upon the oppressor. He had three daughters, like full moons of shining light or flower-gardens blooming bright; and a son as he were the moon; and it was his wont to keep two festivals in the twelvemonth, those of the Nau-Roz, or New Year, and Mihrgán the Autumnal Equinox,[2] on which occasions he threw open his palaces and gave largesse and made proclamation of safety and security and promoted his chamberlains and viceroys; and the people of his realm came in to him and saluted him and gave him joy of the holy day, bringing him gifts and servants and eunuchs. Now he loved science and geometry, and one festival-day as he sat on his kingly throne there came in to him three wise men, cunning artificers and past masters in all manner of craft and inventions, skilled in making things curious and rare, such as confound the wit; and versed in the knowledge of occult truths and perfect in mysteries and subtleties. And they were of three different tongues and countries, the first a Hindi or Indian,[3] the second a Roumi or Greek and the third a Farsi or Persian. The Indian came forwards and, prostrating himself before the King, wished him joy of the festival and laid before him a present befitting his dignity; that is to say, a man of gold, set with precious gems and jewels 2of price and hending in hand a golden trumpet. When Sabur[4] saw this, he asked, “O sage, what is the virtue of this figure?”; and the Indian answered, “O my lord, if this figure be set at the gate of thy city, it will be a guardian over it; for, if an enemy enter the place, it will blow this clarion against him and he will be seized with a palsy and drop down dead.” Much the King marvelled at this and cried, “By Allah, O sage, an this thy word be true, I will grant thee thy wish and thy desire.” Then came forward the Greek and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a basin of silver, in whose midst was a peacock of gold, surrounded by four-and-twenty chicks of the same metal. Sabur looked at them and turning to the Greek, said to him, “O sage, what is the virtue of this peacock?” “O my lord,” answered he, “as often as an hour of the day or night passeth, it pecketh one of its young and crieth out and flappeth its wings, till the four-and-twenty hours are accomplished; and when the month cometh to an end, it will open its mouth and thou shalt see the crescent therein.” And the King said, “An thou speak sooth, I will bring

thee to thy wish and thy desire." Then came forward the Persian sage and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a horse[5] of the blackest ebony-wood inlaid with gold and jewels, and ready harnessed with saddle, bridle and stirrups such as befit Kings; which when Sabur saw, he marvelled with exceeding marvel and was confounded at the beauty of its form and the ingenuity of its fashion. So he asked, "What is the use of this horse of wood, and what is its virtue and what the secret of its movement?"; and the 3Persian answered, "O my lord, the virtue of this horse is that, if one mount him, it will carry him whither he will and fare with its rider through the air and cover the space of a year in a single day." The King marvelled and was amazed at these three wonders, following thus hard upon one another on the same day, and turning to the sage, said to him, "By Allah the Omnipotent, and our Lord the Beneficent, who created all creatures and feedeth them with meat and drink, an thy speech be veritable and the virtue of thy contrivance appear, I will assuredly give thee whatsoever thou lustest for and will bring thee to thy desire and thy wish!"[6] Then he entertained the sages three days, that he might make trial of their gifts; after which they brought the figures before him and each took the creature he had wroughten and showed him the mystery of its movement. The trumpeter blew the trump; the peacock pecked its chicks and the Persian sage mounted the ebony horse, whereupon it soared with him high in air and descended again. When King Sabur saw all this, he was amazed and perplexed and felt like to fly for joy and said to the three sages, "Now I am certified of the truth of your words and it behoveth me to quit me of my promise. Ask ye, therefore, what ye will, and I will give you that same." Now the report of the King's daughters had reached the sages, so they answered, "If the King be content with us and accept of our gifts and allow us to prefer a request to him, we crave of him that he give us his three daughters in marriage, that we may be his sons-in-law; for that the stability of Kings may not be gainsaid." Quoth the King, "I grant you that which you wish and you desire," and bade summon the Kazi forthright, that he might marry each of the sages to one of his daughters. Now it fortuned that the Princesses were behind a curtain, looking on; and when they heard this, the youngest considered her husband to be and behold, he was an old man,[7] an hundred years of age, with hair frosted, forehead drooping, eyebrows mangy, ears slitten, beard and mustachios stained and 4dyed; eyes red and goggle; cheeks bleached and hollow; flabby nose like a brinjall, or egg-plant[8]; face like a cobbler's apron, teeth overlapping and lips like camel's kidneys, loose and pendulous; in brief a terror, a horror, a monster, for he was of the folk of his time the unsightliest and of his age the fright-fullest; sundry of his grinders had been knocked out and his eye-teeth were like the tusks of the Jinni who frighteneth poultry in hen-houses. Now the girl was the fairest and most graceful of her time, more elegant than the gazelle however tender, than the gentlest zephyr blander and brighter than the moon at her full; for amorous fray right suitable; confounding in graceful sway the waving bough and outdoing in swimming gait the

pacing roe; in fine she was fairer and sweeter by far than all her sisters. So, when she saw her suitor, she went to her chamber and strewed dust on her head and tore her clothes and fell to buffeting her face and weeping and wailing. Now the Prince, her brother, Kamar al-Akmár, or the Moon of Moons hight, was then newly returned from a journey and, hearing her weeping and crying came in to her (for he loved her with fond affection, more than his other sisters) and asked her, "What aileth thee? What hath befallen thee? Tell me and conceal naught from me." So she smote her breast and answered, "O my brother and my dear one, I have nothing to hide. If the palace be straitened upon thy father, I will go out; and if he be resolved upon a foul thing, I will separate myself from him, though he consent not to make provision for me; and my Lord will provide." Quoth he, "Tell me what meaneth this talk and what hath straitened thy breast and troubled thy temper." "O my brother and my dear one," answered the Princess, "Know that my father hath promised me in marriage to a wicked magician who brought him, as a gift, a horse of black wood, and hath bewitched him with his craft and his egromancy; but, as for me, I will none of him, and would, because of him, I had never come into this world!" Her brother soothed her and solaced her, then fared to his sire and said, "What be this wizard to whom thou hast given 5 my youngest sister in marriage, and what is this present which he hath brought thee, so that thou hast killed[9] my sister with chagrin? It is not right that this should be." Now the Persian was standing by and, when he heard the Prince's words, he was mortified and filled with fury and the King said, "O my son, an thou sawest this horse, thy wit would be confounded and thou wouldst be amated with amazement." Then he bade the slaves bring the horse before him and they did so; and, when the Prince saw it, it pleased him. So (being an accomplished cavalier) he mounted it forthright and struck its sides with the shovel-shaped stirrup-irons; but it stirred not and the King said to the Sage, "Go show him its movement, that he also may help thee to win thy wish." Now the Persian bore the Prince a grudge because he willed not he should have his sister; so he showed him the pin of ascent on the right side of the horse and saying to him, "Trill this," left him. Thereupon the Prince trilled the pin and lo! the horse forthwith soared with him high in ether, as it were a bird, and gave not overflying till it disappeared from men's espying, whereat the King was troubled and perplexed about his case and said to the Persian, "O sage, look how thou mayst make him descend." But he replied, "O my lord, I can do nothing, and thou wilt never see him again till Resurrection-day, for he, of his ignorance and pride, asked me not of the pin of descent and I forgot to acquaint him therewith." When the King heard this, he was enraged with sore rage; and bade bastinado the sorcerer and clap him in jail, whilst he himself cast the crown from his head and beat his face and smote his breast. Moreover, he shut the doors of his palaces and gave himself up to weeping and keening, he and his wife and daughters and all the folk of the city; and thus their joy was turned to annoy and their gladness changed into sore affliction and sadness. Thus far concerning them; but as regards the Prince, the horse gave not over soaring

with him till he drew near the sun, whereat he gave himself up for lost and saw death in the skies, and was confounded at his case, repenting him of having mounted the horse and saying to himself, “Verily, this was a device of the Sage to destroy me on account of my youngest sister; but there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I am lost without recourse; but I wonder, did not he who made the ascent-pin make also a descent-pin?” 6 Now he was a man of wit and knowledge and intelligence; so he fell to feeling all the parts of the horse, but saw nothing save a screw, like a cock’s head, on its right shoulder and the like on the left, when quoth he to himself, “I see no sign save these things like buttons.” Presently he turned the right-hand pin, whereupon the horse flew heavenwards with increased speed. So he left it and looking at the sinister shoulder and finding another pin, he wound it up and immediately the steed’s upwards motion slowed and ceased and it began to descend, little by little, towards the face of the earth, while the rider became yet more cautious and careful of his life.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.





Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Prince wound up the sinister screw, the steed's upward motion slowed and ceased, and it began to descend, little by little, towards the earth while the rider became yet more cautious and careful of his life. And when he saw this and knew the uses of the horse, his heart was filled with joy and gladness and he thanked Almighty Allah for that He had deigned deliver him from destruction. Then he began to turn the horse's head whithersoever he would, making it rise and fall at pleasure, till he had gotten complete mastery over its every movement. He ceased not to descend the whole of that day, for that the steed's ascending flight had borne him afar from the earth; and, as he descended, he diverted himself with viewing the various cities and countries over which he passed and which

he knew not, never having seen them in his life. Amongst the rest, he descried a city ordered after the fairest fashion in the midst of a verdant and riant land, rich in trees and streams, with gazelles pacing daintily over the plains; whereat he fell a-musing and said to himself, “Would I knew the name of yon town and in what land it is!” And he took to circling about it and observing it right and left. By this time, the day began to decline and the sun drew near to its downing; and he said in his mind, “Verily I find no goodlier place to night in than this city; so I will lodge here and early on the morrow I will return to my kith and kin and my kingdom; and tell my father and family what hath passed and acquaint him with what mine 7 eyes have seen.” Then he addressed himself to seeking a place wherein he might safely bestow himself and his horse and where none should descry him, and presently behold, he espied a-middle-most of the city a palace rising high in upper air surrounded by a great wall with lofty crenelles and battlements, guarded by forty black slaves, clad in complete mail and armed with spears and swords, bows and arrows. Quoth he, “This is a goodly place,” and turned the descent-pin, whereupon the horse sank down with him like a weary bird, and alighted gently on the terrace-roof of the palace. So the Prince dismounted and ejaculating “Alhamdolillah”—praise be to Allah[10]—he began to go round about the horse and examine it, saying, “By Allah, he who fashioned thee with these perfections was a cunning craftsman, and if the Almighty extend the term of my life and restore me to my country and kinsfolk in safety and reunite me with my father, I will assuredly bestow upon him all manner bounties and benefit him with the utmost beneficence.” By this time night had overtaken him and he sat on the roof till he was assured that all in the palace slept; and indeed hunger and thirst were sore upon him, for that he had not tasted food nor drunk water since he parted from his sire. So he said within himself, “Surely the like of this palace will not lack of victual;” and, leaving the horse above, went down in search of somewhat to eat. Presently, he came to a staircase and descending it to the bottom, found himself in a court paved with white marble and alabaster, which shone in the light of the moon. He marvelled at the place and the goodliness of its fashion, but sensed no sound of speaker and saw no living soul and stood in perplexed surprise, looking right and left and knowing not whither he should wend. Then said he to himself, “I may not do better than return to where I left my horse and pass the night by it; and as soon as day shall dawn I will mount and ride away.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the king’s son to himself, “I may not do better than pass the night 8 by my horse; and as soon as day shall dawn I will mount and ride away.” However, as he tarried talking to himself, he espied a light within the palace, and making towards it, found that it came from a candle that stood before a door of the Harim, at the head of a sleeping eunuch, as he were one of

the Ifrits of Solomon or a tribesman of the Jinn, longer than lumber and broader than a bench. He lay before the door, with the pommel of his sword gleaming in the flame of the candle, and at his head was a bag of leather[11] hanging from a column of granite. When the Prince saw this, he was affrighted and said, "I crave help from Allah the Supreme! O mine Holy One, even as Thou hast already delivered me from destruction, so vouchsafe me strength to quit myself of the adventure of this palace!" So saying, he put out his hand to the budget and taking it, carried it aside and opened it and found in it food of the best. He ate his fill and refreshed himself and drank water, after which he hung up the provision-bag in its place and drawing the eunuch's sword from its sheath, took it, whilst the slave slept on, knowing not whence destiny should come to him. Then the Prince fared forwards into the palace and ceased not till he came to a second door, with a curtain drawn before it; so he raised the curtain and behold, on entering he saw a couch of the whitest ivory, inlaid with pearls and jacinths and jewels, and four slave-girls sleeping about it. He went up to the couch, to see what was thereon, and found a young lady lying asleep, chemised with her hair[12] as she were the full moon rising[13] over the Eastern horizon, with flower-white brow and shining hair-parting and cheeks like blood-red anemones and dainty moles thereon. He was amazed at her as she lay in her beauty and loveliness, her symmetry and grace, and he recked no more of death. So he went up to her, trembling in every nerve and, shuddering with pleasure, kissed her on the right cheek; whereupon she awoke forthright and opened her eyes, and seeing the Prince standing at her head, said to him, "Who art thou and whence comest thou?" Quoth he, "I am thy slave and thy 9lover." Asked she, "And who brought thee hither?" and he answered, "My Lord and my fortune." Then said Shams al-Nahár[14] (for such was her name), "Haply thou art he who demanded me yesterday of my father in marriage and he rejected thee, pretending that thou wast foul of favour. By Allah, my sire lied in his throat when he spoke this thing, for thou art not other than beautiful." Now the son of the King of Hind had sought her in marriage, but her father had rejected him, for that he was ugly and uncouth, and she thought the Prince was he. So, when she saw his beauty and grace (for indeed he was like the radiant moon) the syntheism[15] of love gat hold of her heart as it were a flaming fire, and they fell to talk and converse. Suddenly, her waiting-women awoke and, seeing the Prince with their mistress, said to her, "Oh my lady, who is this with thee?" Quoth she, "I know not; I found him sitting by me, when I woke up: haply 'tis he who seeketh me in marriage of my sire." Quoth they, "O my lady, by Allah the All-Father, this is not he who seeketh thee in marriage, for he is hideous and this man is handsome and of high degree. Indeed, the other is not fit to be his servant."[16] Then the handmaidens went out to the eunuch, and finding him slumbering awoke him, and he started up in alarm. Said they, "How happeneth it that thou art on guard at the palace and yet men come in to us, whilst we are asleep?" When the black heard this, he sprang in haste to his sword, but found it not; and fear took him and trembling. Then he went in, confounded, to his mistress and seeing the

Prince sitting at talk with her, said to him, “O my lord, art thou man or Jinni?” Replied the Prince, “Woe to thee, O 10 unluckiest of slaves: how darest thou even the sons of the royal Chosroes[17] with one of the unbelieving Satans?” And he was as a raging lion. Then he took the sword in his hand and said to the slave, “I am the King’s son-in-law, and he hath married me to his daughter and bidden me go in to her.” And when the eunuch heard these words he replied, “O my lord, if thou be indeed of kind a man as thou avouchest, she is fit for none but for thee, and thou art worthier of her than any other.” Thereupon the eunuch ran to the King, shrieking loud and rending his raiment and heaving dust upon his head; and when the King heard his outcry, he said to him, “What hath befallen thee?: speak quickly and be brief; for thou hast fluttered my heart.” Answered the eunuch, “O King, come to thy daughter’s succour; for a devil of the Jinn, in the likeness of a King’s son, hath got possession of her; so up and at him!” When the King heard this, he thought to kill him and said, “How camest thou to be careless of my daughter and let this demon come at her?” Then he betook himself to the Princess’s palace, where he found her slave-women standing to await him and asked them, “What is come to my daughter?” “O King,” answered they, “slumber overcame us and, when we awoke, we found a young man sitting upon her couch in talk with her, as he were the full moon; never saw we aught fairer of favour than he. So we questioned him of his case and he declared that thou hadst given him thy daughter in marriage. More than this we know not, nor do we know if he be a man or a Jinni; but he is modest and well bred, and doth nothing unseemly or which leadeth to disgrace.” Now when the King heard these words, his wrath cooled and he raised the curtain little by little and looking in, saw sitting at talk with his daughter a Prince of the goodliest with a face like the full moon for sheen. At this sight he could not contain himself, of his jealousy for his daughter’s honour; and, putting aside the curtain, rushed in upon them drawn sword in hand like a furious Ghul. Now when the Prince saw him he asked the Princess, “Is this thy sire?”; and she answered, “Yes.”—

—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

11

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Prince saw the King rushing in upon them, drawn sword in hand, like a furious Ghul he asked the Princess, “Is this thy sire?”; and she answered, “Yes.” Whereupon he sprang to his feet and, seizing his sword, cried out at the King with so terrible a cry that he was confounded. Then the youth would have fallen on him with the sword; but the King seeing that the Prince was doughtier than he, sheathed his scymitar and stood till the young man came up to him, when he accosted him courteously and said to him, “O youth, art thou a man or a Jinni?” Quoth the Prince, “Did I not respect thy right as mine host and thy daughter’s honour, I would spill thy blood! How darest thou fellow me with devils, me that am a Prince of the sons of the royal Chosroes who, had they wished to

take thy kingdom, could shake thee like an earthquake from thy glory and thy dominions and spoil thee of all thy possessions?" Now when the King heard his words, he was confounded with awe and bodily fear of him and rejoined, "If thou indeed be of the sons of the Kings, as thou pretendest, how cometh it that thou enterest my palace without my permission, and smirchest mine honour, making thy way to my daughter and feigning that thou art her husband and claiming that I have given her to thee to wife, I that have slain Kings and King's sons, who sought her of me in marriage? And now who shall save thee from my might and majesty when, if I cried out to my slaves and servants and bade them put thee to the vilest of deaths they would slay thee forthright? Who shall deliver thee out of my hand?" When the Prince heard this speech of the King he answered, "Verily, I wonder at thee and at the shortness and denseness of thy wit! Say me, canst covet for thy daughter a mate comelier than myself, and hast ever seen a stouter hearted man or one better fitted for a Sultan or a more glorious in rank and dominion than I?" Rejoined the King, "Nay, by Allah! but I would have had thee, O youth, act after the custom of Kings and demand her from me to wife before witnesses, that I might have married her to thee publicly; and now, even were I to marry her to thee privily, yet hast thou dishonoured me in her person." Rejoined the Prince, "Thou sayest sooth, O King, but if thou summon thy slaves and thy soldiers and they fall upon me and slay me, as thou pretendest, 12 thou wouldst but publish thine own disgrace, and the folk would be divided between belief in thee and disbelief in thee. Wherefore, O King, thou wilt do well, meseemeth, to turn from this thought to that which I shall counsel thee." Quoth the King, "Let me hear what thou hast to advise;" and quoth the Prince, "What I have to propose to thee is this: either do thou meet me in combat singular, I and thou; and he who slayeth his adversary shall be held the worthier and having a better title to the kingdom; or else, let me be this night and, whenas dawns the morn, draw out against me thy horsemen and footmen and servants; but first tell me their number." Said the King, "They are forty thousand horse, besides my own slaves and their followers,[18] who are the like of them in number." Thereupon said the Prince, "When the day shall break, do thou array them against me and say to them"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the Prince, "When day shall break, do thou array them against me and say to them:—This man is a suitor to me for my daughter's hand, on condition that he shall do battle single-handed against you all; for he pretendeth that he will overcome you and put you to the rout, and indeed that ye cannot prevail against him. After which, leave me to do battle with them: if they slay me, then is thy secret the surer guarded and thine honour the better warded; and if I overcome them and see their backs, then is it the like of me a King should covet to his son-in-law." So the King approved of his opinion and accepted his

proposition, despite his awe at the boldness of his speech and amaze at the pretensions of the Prince to meet in fight his whole host, such as he had described it to him, being at heart assured that he would perish in the fray and so he should be quit of him and freed from the fear of dishonour. Thereupon he called the eunuch and bade him go to his Wazir without stay and delay and command him to assemble the whole of the 13army and cause them don their arms and armour and mount their steeds. So the eunuch carried the King's order to the Minister, who straightway summoned the Captains of the host and the Lords of the realm and bade them don their harness of derring-do and mount horse and sally forth in battle array. Such was their case; but as regards the King, he sat a long while conversing with the young Prince, being pleased with his wise speech and good sense and fine breeding. And when it was daybreak he returned to his palace and, seating himself on his throne, commanded his merry men to mount and bade them saddle one of the best of the royal steeds with handsome selle and housings and trappings and bring it to the Prince. But the youth said, "O King, I will not mount horse, till I come in view of the troops and review them." "Be it as thou wilt," replied the King. Then the two repaired to the parade-ground, where the troops were drawn up, and the young Prince looked upon them and noted their great number; after which the King cried out to them, saying, "Ho, all ye men, there is come to me a youth who seeketh my daughter in marriage; and in very sooth never have I seen a goodlier than he; no, nor a stouter of heart nor a doughtier of arm, for he pretendeth that he can overcome you, single-handed, and force you to flight and that, were ye an hundred thousand in number, yet for him would ye be but few. Now when he chargeth down on you, do ye receive him upon point of pike and sharp of sabre; for, indeed, he hath undertaken a mighty matter." Then quoth the King to the Prince, "Up, O my son, and do thy devoir on them." Answered he, "O King, thou dealest not justly and fairly by me: how shall I go forth against them, seeing that I am afoot and the men be mounted?" The King retorted, "I bade thee mount, and thou refusedst; but choose thou which of my horses thou wilt." Then he said, "Not one of thy horses pleaseth me, and I will ride none but that on which I came." Asked the King, "And where is thy horse?" "Atop of thy palace." "In what part of my palace?" "On the roof." Now when the King heard these words, he cried, "Out on thee! this is the first sign thou hast given of madness. How can the horse be on the roof? But we shall at once see if thou speak truth or lies." Then he turned to one of his chief officers and said to him, "Go to my palace and bring me what thou findest on the roof." So all the people marvelled at the young Prince's words, saying one to other, "How can a horse come down the steps from the roof? Verily this is a thing whose 14like we never heard." In the mean time the King's messenger repaired to the palace and mounting to the roof, found the horse standing there and never had he looked on a handsomer; but when he drew near and examined it, he saw that it was made of ebony and ivory. Now the officer was accompanied by other high officers, who also looked on and they

laughed to one another, saying, “Was it of the like of this horse that the youth spake? We cannot deem him other than mad; however, we shall soon see the truth of his case.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the high officials looked upon the horse, they laughed one to other and said, “Was it of the like of this horse that the youth spake? We cannot deem him other than mad; however, we shall soon see the truth of his case. Peradventure herein is some mighty matter, and he is a man of high degree.” Then they lifted up the horse bodily and, carrying it to the King, set it down before him, and all the lieges flocked round to look at it, marvelling at the beauty of its proportions and the richness of its saddle and bridle. The King also admired it and wondered at it with extreme wonder; and he asked the Prince, “O youth, is this thy horse?” He answered, “Yes, O King, this is my horse, and thou shalt soon see the marvel it showeth.” Rejoined the King, “Then take and mount it,” and the Prince retorted, “I will not mount till the troops withdraw afar from it.” So the King bade them retire a bowshot from the horse; whereupon quoth its owner, “O King, see thou; I am about to mount my horse and charge upon thy host and scatter them right and left and split their hearts asunder.” Said the King, “Do as thou wilt; and spare not their lives, for they will not spare thine.” Then the Prince mounted, whilst the troops ranged themselves in ranks before him, and one said to another, “When the youth cometh between the ranks, we will take him on the points of our pikes and the sharps of our sabres.” Quoth another, “By Allah, this is a mere misfortune: how shall we slay a youth so comely of face and shapely of form?” And a third continued, “Ye will have hard work to get the better of him; for the youth had not done this, but for what he knew of his own 15prowess and pre-eminence of valour.” Meanwhile, having settled himself in his saddle, the Prince turned the pin of ascent; whilst all eyes were strained to see what he would do, whereupon the horse began to heave and rock and sway to and fro and make the strangest of movements steed ever made, till its belly was filled with air and it took flight with its rider and soared high into the sky. When the King saw this, he cried out to his men, saying, “Woe to you! catch him, catch him, ere he ‘scape you!” But his Wazirs and Viceroys said to him, “O King, can a man overtake the flying bird? This is surely none but some mighty magician or Mar¡d of the Jinn or devil, and Allah save thee from him. So praise thou the Almighty for deliverance of thee and of all thy host from his hand.” Then the King returned to his palace after seeing the feat of the Prince and, going in to his daughter, acquainted her with what had befallen them both on the parade-ground. He found her grievously afflicted for the Prince and bewailing her separation from him; wherefore she fell sick with violent sickness and took to her pillow. Now when

her father saw her on this wise, he pressed her to his breast and kissing her between the eyes, said to her, “O my daughter, praise Allah Almighty and thank Him for that He hath delivered us from this crafty enchanter, this villain, this low fellow, this thief who thought only of seducing thee!” And he repeated to her the story of the Prince and how he had disappeared in the firmament; and he abused him and cursed him knowing not how dearly his daughter loved him. But she paid no heed to his words and did but redouble in her tears and wails, saying to herself, “By Allah, I will neither eat meat nor drain drink, till Allah reunite me with him!” Her father was greatly concerned for her case and mourned much over her plight; but, for all he could do to soothe her, love-longing only increased on her.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King mourned much over his daughter’s plight but, for all he could do to soothe her, love-longing only increased on her. Thus far concerning the King and Princess Shams al-Nahár; but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, when he had risen high in air, he turned 16 his horse’s head towards his native land, and being alone mused upon the beauty of the Princess and her loveliness. Now he had enquired of the King’s people the name of the city and of its King and his daughter; and men had told him that it was the city of Sana’á.[19] So he journeyed with all speed, till he drew near his father’s capital and, making an airy circuit about the city, alighted on the roof of the King’s palace, where he left his horse, whilst he descended into the palace and seeing its threshold strewn with ashes, thought that one of his family was dead. Then he entered, as of wont, and found his father and mother and sisters clad in mourning raiment of black, all pale of faces and lean of frames. When his sire descried him and was assured that it was indeed his son, he cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fit, but after a time coming to himself, threw himself upon him and embraced him, clipping him to his bosom and rejoicing in him with exceeding joy and extreme gladness. His mother and sisters heard this; so they came in and seeing the Prince, fell upon him, kissing him and weeping, and joying with exceeding joyance. Then they questioned him of his case; so he told them all that had past from first to last, and his father said to him, “Praised be Allah for thy safety, O coolth of my eyes and core of my heart!” Then the King bade hold high festival, and the glad tidings flew through the city. So 17 they beat drums and cymbals and, doffing the weed of mourning, they donned the gay garb of gladness and decorated the streets and markets; whilst the folk vied with one another who should be the first to give the King joy, and the King proclaimed a general pardon and opening the prisons, released those who were therein prisoned. Moreover, he made banquets for the people, with great abundance of eating and drinking, for seven days and nights and all creatures were gladsomest; and he took horse with his son and rode out with him, that the folk might see him and rejoice.

After awhile the Prince asked about the maker of the horse, saying, “O my father, what hath fortune done with him?”; and the King answered, “Allah never bless him nor the hour wherein I set eyes on him! For he was the cause of thy separation from us, O my son, and he hath lain in gaol since the day of thy disappearance.” Then the King bade release him from prison and, sending for him, invested him in a dress of satisfaction and entreated him with the utmost favour and munificence, save that he would not give him his daughter to wife; whereat the Sage raged with sore rage and repented of that which he had done, knowing that the Prince had secured the secret of the steed and the manner of its motion. Moreover, the King said to his son, “I reck thou wilt do well not to go near the horse henceforth and more especially not to mount it after this day; for thou knowest not its properties, and belike thou art in error about it.” Now the Prince had told his father of his adventure with the King of Sana’a and his daughter and he said, “Had the King intended to kill thee, he had done so; but thine hour was not yet come.” When the rejoicings were at an end, the people returned to their places and the King and his son to the palace, where they sat down and fell to eating and drinking and making merry. Now the King had a handsome handmaiden who was skilled in playing the lute; so she took it and began to sweep the strings and sing thereto before the King and his son of separation of lovers, and she chanted the following verses:—

Deem not that absence breeds in me aught of forgetfulness; ✿ What should remember I did you fro’ my remembrance wane?

Time dies but never dies the fondest love for you we bear; ✿ And in your love I’ll die and in your love I’ll arise again.[20]

18 When the Prince heard these verses, the fires of longing flamed up in his heart and pine and passion redoubled upon him. Grief and regret were sore upon him and his bowels yearned in him for love of the King’s daughter of Sana’a; so he rose forthright and, escaping his father’s notice, went forth the palace to the horse and mounting it, turned the pin of ascent, whereupon birdlike it flew with him high in air and soared towards the upper regions of the sky. In early morning his father missed him and, going up to the pinnacle of the palace, in great concern, saw his son rising into the firmament; whereat he was sore afflicted and repented in all penitence that he had not taken the horse and hidden it; and he said to himself, “By Allah, if but my son return to me, I will destroy the horse, that my heart may be at rest concerning my son.” And he fell again to weeping and bewailing himself——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that the King again fell to weeping and bewailing himself for his son. Such was his case; but as regards the Prince, he ceased not flying on through air till he came to the city of Sana’a and alighted on the roof as before. Then he crept down stealthily and, finding the eunuch asleep, as of

wont, raised the curtain and went on little by little, till he came to the door of the Princess's alcove[21]-chamber and stopped to listen; when lo! he heard her shedding plenteous tears and reciting verses, whilst her women slept round her. Presently, overhearing her weeping and wailing quoth they, "O our mistress, why wilt thou mourn for one who mourneth not for thee?" Quoth she, "O ye little of wit, is he for whom I mourn of those who forget or who are forgotten?" And she fell again to wailing and weeping, till sleep overcame her. Hereat the Prince's heart melted for her and his gall-bladder was like to burst, so he entered and, seeing her lying asleep without covering,[22] touched her with his hand; 19 whereupon she opened her eyes and espied him standing by her. Said he, "Why all this crying and mourning?" And when she knew him, she threw herself upon him, and took him around the neck and kissed him and answered, "For thy sake and because of my separation from thee." Said he, "O my lady, I have been made desolate by thee all this long time!" But she replied, "'Tis thou who hast desolated *me*; and hadst thou tarried longer, I had surely died!" Rejoined he, "O my lady, what thinkest thou of my case with thy father and how he dealt with me? Were it not for my love of thee, O temptation and seduction of the Three Worlds, I had certainly slain him and made him a warning to all beholders; but, even as I love thee, so I love him for thy sake." Quoth she, "How couldst thou leave me: can my life be sweet to me after thee?" Quoth he, "Let what hath happened suffice: I am now hungry, and thirsty." So she bade her maidens make ready meat and drink, and they sat eating and drinking and conversing till night was well nigh ended; and when day broke he rose to take leave of her and depart, ere the eunuch should awake. Shams al-Nahar asked him, "Whither goest thou?"; and he answered, "To my father's house, and I plight thee my troth that I will come to thee once in every week." But she wept and said, "I conjure thee, by Allah the Almighty, take me with thee whereso thou wendest and make me not taste anew the bitter-gourd[23] of separation from thee." Quoth he, "Wilt thou indeed go with me?" and quoth she, "Yes." "Then," said he, "arise that we depart." So she rose forthright and going to a chest, arrayed herself in what was richest and dearest to her of her trinkets of gold and jewels of price, and she fared forth her handmaids recking naught. So he carried her up to the roof of the palace and, mounting the ebony horse, took her up behind him and made her fast to himself, binding her with strong bonds; after which he 20 turned the shoulder-pin of ascent, and the horse rose with him high in air. When her slave-women saw this, they shrieked aloud and told her father and mother, who in hot haste ran to the palace-roof and looking up, saw the magical horse flying away with the Prince and Princess. At this the King was troubled with ever-increasing trouble and cried out, saying, "O King's son, I conjure thee, by Allah, have ruth on me and my wife and bereave us not of our daughter!" The Prince made him no reply; but, thinking in himself that the maiden repented of leaving father and mother, asked her, "O ravishment of the age, say me, wilt thou that I restore thee to thy mother and

father?": whereupon she answered, "By Allah, O my lord, that is not my desire: my only wish is to be with thee, wherever thou art; for I am distracted by the love of thee from all else, even from my father and mother." Hearing these words the Prince joyed with great joy, and made the horse fly and fare softly with them, so as not to disquiet her; nor did they stay their flight till they came in sight of a green meadow, wherein was a spring of running water. Here they alighted and ate and drank; after which the Prince took horse again and set her behind him, binding her in his fear for her safety; after which they fared on till they came in sight of his father's capital. At this, the Prince was filled with joy and bethought himself to show his beloved the seat of his dominion and his father's power and dignity and give her to know that it was greater than that of her sire. So he set her down in one of his father's gardens without the city where his parent was wont to take his pleasure; and, carrying her into a domed summer-house prepared there for the King, left the ebony horse at the door and charged the damsel keep watch over it, saying, "Sit here, till my messenger come to thee; for I go now to my father, to make ready a palace for thee and show thee my royal estate." She was delighted when she heard these words and said to him, "Do as thou wilt;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the maiden was delighted when she heard these words and said to him, "Do as thou wilt;" for she thereby understood that she should not enter the city but with due honour and worship, as became her rank. [21] Then the Prince left her and betook himself to the palace of the King his father, who rejoiced in his return and met him and welcomed him; and the Prince said to him, "Know that I have brought with me the King's daughter of whom I told thee; and have left her without the city in such a garden and come to tell thee, that thou mayst make ready the procession of estate and go forth to meet her and show her thy royal dignity and troops and guards." Answered the King, "With joy and gladness"; and straightway bade decorate the town with the goodliest adornment. Then he took horse and rode out in all magnificence and majesty, he and his host, high officers and household, with drums and kettledrums, fifes and clarions and all manner instruments; whilst the Prince drew forth of his treasuries jewellery and apparel and what else of the things which Kings hoard and made a rare display of wealth and splendour: moreover he got ready for the Princess a canopied litter of brocades, green, red and yellow, wherein he set Indian and Greek and Abyssinian slave-girls. Then he left the litter and those who were therein and preceded them to the pavilion where he had set her down; and searched but found naught, neither Princess nor horse. When he saw this, he beat his face and rent his raiment and began to wander round about the garden, as he had lost his wits; after which he came to his senses and said to himself, "How could she have come at the secret of this horse, seeing I told her nothing of it?

Maybe the Persian sage who made the horse hath chanced upon her and stolen her away, in revenge for my father's treatment of him." Then he sought the guardians of the garden and asked them if they had seen any pass the precincts; and said, "Hath any one come in here? Tell me the truth and the whole truth or I will at once strike off your heads." They were terrified by his threats; but they answered with one voice, "We have seen no man enter save the Persian sage, who came to gather healing herbs." So the Prince was certified that it was indeed he that had taken away the maiden——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Prince heard their answer, he was certified that the Sage had taken 22 away the maiden and abode confounded and perplexed concerning his case. And he was abashed before the folk and, turning to his sire, told him what had happened and said to him, "Take the troops and march them back to the city. As for me, I will never return till I have cleared up this affair." When the King heard this, he wept and beat his breast and said to him, "O my son, calm thy choler and master thy chagrin and come home with us and look what King's daughter thou wouldst fain have, that I may marry thee to her." But the Prince paid no heed to his words and farewelling him departed, whilst the King returned to the city and their joy was changed into sore annoy. Now, as Destiny issued her decree, when the Prince left the Princess in the garden-house and betook himself to his father's palace, for the ordering of his affair, the Persian entered the garden to pluck certain simples and, scenting the sweet savour of musk and perfumes that exhaled from the Princess and impregnated the whole place, followed it till he came to the pavilion and saw standing at the door the horse which he had made with his own hands. His heart was filled with joy and gladness, for he had bemourned its loss much since it had gone out of his hand: so he went up to it and, examining its every part, found it whole and sound; whereupon he was about to mount and ride away, when he bethought himself and said, "Needs must I first look what the Prince hath brought and left here with the horse." So he entered the pavilion and, seeing the Princess sitting there, as she were the sun shining sheen in the sky serene, knew her at the first glance to be some high-born lady and doubted not but the Prince had brought her thither on the horse and left her in the pavilion, whilst he went to the city, to make ready for her entry in state procession with all splendour. Then he went up to her and kissed the earth between her hands, whereupon she raised her eyes to him and, finding him exceedingly foul of face and favour, asked, "Who art thou?"; and he answered, "O my lady, I am a messenger sent by the Prince who hath bidden me bring thee to another pleasance nearer the city; for that my lady the Queen cannot walk so far and is unwilling, of her joy in thee, that another should forestall her with thee." Quoth she, "Where is the Prince?"; and quoth the Persian, "He is in the city, with his sire and

forthwith he shall come for thee in great state." Said she, "O thou! say me, could he find none handsomer to send to me?"; whereat loud laughed the Sage and said, "Yea verily, he hath not a Mameluke as ugly as I am; but, O my lady, let not the ill-favour [23] of my face and the foulness of my form deceive thee. Hadst thou profited of me as hath the Prince, verily thou wouldst praise my affair. Indeed, he chose me as his messenger to thee, because of my uncomeliness and loathsomeness in his jealous love of thee: else hath he Mamelukes and negro slaves, pages, eunuchs and attendants out of number, each goodlier than other." Whenas she heard this, it commended itself to her reason and she believed him; so she rose forthright——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Persian sage acquainted the Princess with the case of the King's son, she believed him; so she rose forthright; and, putting her hand in his, said, "O my father, what hast thou brought me to ride?" He replied, "O my lady, thou shalt ride the horse thou camest on;" and she, "I cannot ride it by myself." Whereupon he smiled and knew that he was her master and said, "I will ride with thee myself." So he mounted and, taking her up behind him bound her to himself with firm bonds, while she knew not what he would with her. Then he turned the ascent-pin, whereupon the belly of the horse became full of wind and it swayed to and fro like a wave of the sea, and rose with them high in air nor slackened in its flight, till it was out of sight of the city. Now when Shams al-Nahar saw this, she asked him, "Ho thou! what is become of that thou toldest me of my Prince, making me believe that he sent thee to me?" Answered the Persian, "Allah damn the Prince! he is a mean and skin-flint knave." She cried, "Woe to thee! How darest thou disobey thy lord's commandment?" Whereto the Persian replied, "He is no lord of mine: knowest thou who I am?" Rejoined the Princess, "I know nothing of thee save what thou toldest me;" and retorted he, "What I told thee was a trick of mine against thee and the King's son: I have long lamented the loss of this horse which is under us; for I constructed it and made myself master of it. But now I have gotten firm hold of it and of thee too, and I will burn his heart even as he hath burnt mine; nor shall he ever have the horse again; no, never! So be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; for I can be of more [24] use to thee than he; and I am generous as I am wealthy; my servants and slaves shall obey thee as their mistress; I will robe thee in finest raiment and thine every wish shall be at thy will." When she heard this, she buffeted her face and cried out, saying, "Ah, well-away! I have not won my beloved and I have lost my father and mother!" And she wept bitter tears over what had befallen her, whilst the Sage fared on with her, without ceasing, till he came to the land of the Greeks[24] and alighted in a verdant mead, abounding in streams and trees.

Now this meadow lay near a city wherein was a King of high puissance, and it chanced that he went forth that day to hunt and divert himself. As he passed by the meadow, he saw the Persian standing there, with the damsel and the horse by his side; and, before the Sage was ware, the King's slaves fell upon him and carried him and the lady and the horse to their master who, noting the foulness of the man's favour and his loathsomeness and the beauty of the girl and her loveliness, said, "O my lady, what kin is this oldster to thee?" The Persian made haste to reply, saying, "She is my wife and the daughter of my father's brother." But the lady at once gave him the lie and said, "O King, by Allah, I know him not, nor is he my husband; nay, he is a wicked magician who hath stolen me away by force and fraud." Thereupon the King bade bastinado the Persian and they beat him till he was well-nigh dead; after which the King commanded to carry him to the city and cast him into jail; and, taking from him the damsel and the ebony horse (though he knew not its properties nor the secret of its motion), set the girl in his serraglio and the horse amongst his hoards. Such was the case with the Sage and the lady; but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, he garbed himself in travelling gear and taking what he needed of money, set out tracking their trail in very sorry plight; and journeyed from country to country and city to city seeking the Princess and enquiring after the ebony horse, whilst all who heard him marvelled at him and deemed his talk extravagant. Thus he continued doing a long while; but, for all his enquiry and quest, he could hit on no news of her. At last he came to her father's city of Sana'a and there asked for her, but could get no tidings of her and found her father mourning her loss. So he turned back and made for the land of the Greeks, continuing to 25 enquire concerning the twain as he went——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King's son made for the land of the Greeks, continuing to enquire concerning the two as he went along, till, as chance would have it, he alighted at a certain Khan and saw a company of merchants sitting at talk. So he sat down near them and heard one say, "O my friends, I lately witnessed a wonder of wonders." They asked, "What was that?" and he answered, "I was visiting such a district in such a city (naming the city wherein was the Princess), and I heard its people chatting of a strange thing which had lately befallen. It was that their King went out one day hunting and coursing with a company of his courtiers and the lords of his realm; and, issuing from the city, they came to a green meadow where they espied an old man standing, with a woman sitting hard by a horse of ebony. The

man was foulest-foul of face and loathly of form, but the woman was a marvel of beauty and loveliness and elegance and perfect grace; and as for the wooden horse, it was a miracle, never saw eyes aught goodlier than it nor more gracious than its make." Asked the others, "And what did the King with them?"; and the merchant answered, "As for the man the King seized him and questioned him of the damsel and he pretended that she was his wife and the daughter of his paternal uncle; but she gave him the lie forthright and declared that he was a sorcerer and a villain. So the King took her from the old man and bade beat him and cast him into the trunk-house. As for the ebony horse, I know not what became of it." When the Prince heard these words, he drew near to the merchant and began questioning him discreetly and courteously touching the name of the city and of its King; which when he knew, he passed the night full of joy. And as soon as dawned the day he set out and travelled sans surcease till he reached that city; but, when he would have entered, the gatekeepers laid hands on him, that they might bring him before the King to question him of his condition and the craft in which he skilled and the cause of his coming thither—such being the usage and custom of their ruler. Now it was supper-time when he entered the city, and it was then 26 impossible to go in to the King or take counsel with him respecting the stranger. So the guards carried him to the jail, thinking to lay him by the heels there for the night; but, when the warders saw his beauty and loveliness, they could not find it in their hearts to imprison him: they made him sit with them without the walls; and, when food came to them, he ate with them what sufficed him. As soon as they had made an end of eating, they turned to the Prince and said, "What countryman art thou?" "I come from Fars," answered he, "the land of the Chosroës." When they heard this they laughed and one of them said, "O Chosroan,[25] I have heard the talk of men and their histories and I have looked into their conditions; but never saw I or heard I a bigger liar than the Chosroan which is with us in the jail." Quoth another, "And never did I see aught fouler than his favour or more hideous than his visnomy." Asked the Prince, "What have ye seen of his lying?"; and they answered, "He pretendeth that he is one of the wise! Now the King came upon him, as he went a-hunting, and found with him a most beautiful woman and a horse of the blackest ebony, never saw I a handsomer. As for the damsel, she is with the King, who is enamoured of her and would fain marry her; but she is mad, and were this man a leach as he claimeth to be, he would have healed her, for the King doth his utmost to discover a cure for her case and a remedy for her disease, and this whole year past hath he spent treasures upon physicians and astrologers, on her account; but none can avail to cure her. As for the horse, it is in the royal hoard-house, and the ugly man is here with us in prison; and as soon as night falleth, he weepeth and bemoaneth himself and will not let us sleep."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the warders had recounted the case of the Persian egromancer they [27]held in prison and his weeping and wailing, the Prince at once devised a device whereby he might compass his desire; and presently the guards of the gate, being minded to sleep, led him into the jail and locked the door. So he overheard the Persian weeping and bemoaning himself, in his own tongue, and saying, "Alack, and alas for my sin, that I sinned against myself and against the King's son, in that which I did with the damsel; for I neither left her nor won my will of her! All this cometh of my lack of sense, in that I sought for myself that which I deserved not and which befitted not the like of me; for whoso seeketh what suiteth him not at all, falleth with the like of my fall." Now when the King's son heard this, he accosted him in Persian, saying, "How long will this weeping and wailing last? Say me, thinkest thou that hath befallen thee that which never befel other than thou?" Now when the Persian heard this, he made friends with him and began to complain to him of his case and misfortunes. And as soon as the morning morrowed, the warders took the Prince and carried him before their King, informing him that he had entered the city on the previous night, at a time when audience was impossible. Quoth the King to the Prince, "Whence comest thou and what is thy name and trade and why hast thou travelled hither?" He replied, "As to my name I am called in Persian Harjah;[26] as to my country I come from the land of Fars; and I am of the men of art and especially of the art of medicine and healing the sick and those whom the Jinns drive mad. For this I go round about all countries and cities, to profit by adding knowledge to my knowledge, and whenever I see a patient I heal him and this is my craft."[27] Now when the King heard this, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and said, "O excellent Sage, thou hast indeed come to us at a time when we need thee." Then he acquainted him with the case of the Princess, adding, "If thou cure her and recover her from her madness, thou shalt have of me everything thou seekest." Replied the Prince, [28]"Allah save and favour the King: describe to me all thou hast seen of her insanity and tell me how long it is since the access attacked her; also how thou camest by her and the horse and the Sage." So the King told him the whole story, from first to last, adding, "The Sage is in gaol." Quoth the Prince, "O auspicious King, and what hast thou done with the horse?" Quoth the King, "O youth, it is with me yet, laid up in one of my treasure-chambers," whereupon said the Prince within himself, "The best thing I can do is first to see the horse and assure myself of its condition. If it be whole and sound, all will be well and end well; but, if its motor-works be destroyed, I must find some other way of delivering my beloved." Thereupon he turned to the King and said to him, "O King, I must see the horse in question: haply I may find in it somewhat that will serve me for the recovery of the damsel." "With all my heart," replied the King, and taking him by the hand, showed him into the place where the horse was. The Prince went round about it, examining its condition, and found it whole and sound, whereat he rejoiced greatly and said to the King, "Allah save and

exalt the King! I would fain go in to the damsel, that I may see how it is with her; for I hope in Allah to heal her by my healing hand through means of the horse." Then he bade them take care of the horse and the King carried him to the Princess's apartment, where her lover found her wringing her hands and writhing and beating herself against the ground, and tearing her garments to tatters as was her wont; but there was no madness of Jinn in her, and she did this but that none might approach her. When the Prince saw her thus, he said to her, "No harm shall betide thee, O ravishment of the three worlds;" and went on to soothe her and speak her fair, till he managed to whisper, "I am Kamar al-Akmar;" whereupon she cried out with a loud cry and fell down fainting for excess of joy; but the King thought this was epilepsy[28] brought on by her fear of him, and by her suddenly being startled. Then the Prince put his mouth to her ear and said to her, "O Shams al-Nahar, O seduction of the universe, have a care for thy life and mine and be patient and constant; for this our position needeth sufferance and skilful contrivance to make shift for our delivery from this tyrannical King. My first move will be now to go out to him and tell him that thou 29 art possessed of a Jinn and hence thy madness; but that I will engage to heal thee and drive away the evil spirit, if he will at once unbind thy bonds. So when he cometh in to thee, do thou speak him smooth words, that he may think I have cured thee, and all will be done for us as we desire." Quoth she, "Hearkening and obedience;" and he went out to the King in joy and gladness, and said to him, "O august King, I have, by thy good fortune, discovered her disease and its remedy, and have cured her for thee. So now do thou go in to her and speak her softly and treat her kindly, and promise her what may please her; so shall all thou desirest of her be accomplished to thee."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Prince feigned himself a leach and went in to the damsel and made himself known to her and told her how he purposed to deliver her, she cried "Hearkening and obedience!" He then fared forth from her and sought the King and said, "Go thou in to her and speak her softly and promise her what may please her; so shall all thou desirest of her be accomplished to thee." Thereupon the King went in to her and when she saw him, she rose and kissing the ground before him, bade him welcome and said, "I admire how thou hast come to visit thy handmaid this day;" whereat he was ready to fly for joy and bade the waiting-women and the eunuchs attend her and carry her to the Hammam and make ready for her dresses and adornment. So they went in to her and saluted her, and she returned their salams with the goodliest language and after the pleasantest fashion; whereupon they clad her in royal apparel and, clasping a collar of jewels about her neck, carried her to the bath and served her there. Then they brought her forth, as she were the full moon; and, when she came into the King's presence, she saluted him and kissed ground before him; whereupon he joyed in her with joy exceeding and said to

the Prince, “O Sage, O philosopher, all this is of thy blessing. Allah increase to us the benefit of thy healing breath!”[29] The Prince 30 replied, “O King, for the completion of her cure it behoveth that thou go forth, thou and all thy troops and guards, to the place where thou foundest her, not forgetting the beast of black wood which was with her; for therein is a devil; and, unless I exorcise him, he will return to her and afflict her at the head of every month.” “With love and gladness,” cried the King, “O thou Prince of all philosophers and most learned of all who see the light of day.” Then he brought out the ebony horse to the meadow in question and rode thither with all his troops and the Princess, little weeting the purpose of the Prince. Now when they came to the appointed place, the Prince, still habited as a leach, bade them set the Princess and the steed as far as eye could reach from the King and his troops, and said to him, “With thy leave, and at thy word, I will now proceed to the fumigations and conjurations, and here imprison the adversary of mankind, that he may never more return to her. After this, I shall mount this wooden horse which seemeth to be made of ebony, and take the damsel up behind me; whereupon it will shake and sway to and fro and fare forwards, till it come to thee, when the affair will be at an end; and after this thou mayst do with her as thou wilt.” When the King heard his words, he rejoiced with extreme joy; so the Prince mounted the horse, and, taking the damsel up behind him, whilst the King and his troops watched him, bound her fast to him. Then he turned the ascending-pin and the horse took flight and soared with them high in air, till they disappeared from every eye. After this the King abode half the day, expecting their return; but they returned not. So when he despaired of them, repenting him greatly of that which he had done and grieving sore for the loss of the damsel, he went back to the city with his troops. He then sent for the Persian who was in prison and said to him, “O thou traitor, O thou villain, why didst thou hide from me the mystery of the ebony horse? And now a sharper hath come to me and hath carried it off, together with a slave-girl whose ornaments are worth a mint of money, and I shall never see anyone or anything of them again!” So the Persian related to him all his past, first and last, and the 31 King was seized with a fit of fury which well-nigh ended his life. He shut himself up in his palace for a while, mourning and afflicted; but at last his Wazirs came in to him and applied themselves to comfort him, saying, “Verily, he who took the damsel is an enchanter, and praised be Allah who hath delivered thee from his craft and sorcery!” And they ceased not from him, till he was comforted for her loss. Thus far concerning the King; but as for the Prince, he continued his career towards his father’s capital in joy and cheer, and stayed not till he alighted on his own palace, where he set the lady in safety; after which he went in to his father and mother and saluted them and acquainted them with her coming, whereat they were filled with solace and gladness. Then he spread great banquets for the towns-folk——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King's son spread great banquets for the towns-folk and they held high festival a whole month, at the end of which time he went in to the Princess and they took their joy of each other with exceeding joy. But his father brake the ebony horse in pieces and destroyed its mechanism for flight; moreover the Prince wrote a letter to the Princess's father, advising him of all that had befallen her and informing him how she was now married to him and in all health and happiness, and sent it by a messenger, together with costly presents and curious rarities. And when the messenger arrived at the city which was Sana'a and delivered the letter and the presents to the King, he read the missive

and rejoiced greatly thereat and accepted the presents, honouring and rewarding the bearer handsomely. Moreover, he forwarded rich gifts to his son-in-law by the same messenger, who returned to his master and acquainted him with what had passed; whereat he was much cheered. And after this the Prince wrote a letter every year to his father-in-law and sent him presents till, in course of time, his sire King Sabur deceased and he reigned in his stead, ruling justly over his lieges and conducting himself well and righteously towards them, so that the land submitted to him and his subjects did him loyal service; and Kamar al-Akmar and his wife Shams al-Nahar abode in the enjoyment of all satisfaction and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Sunderer of societies; the Plunderer of palaces, the Caterer for cemeteries and the Garnerer of graves. And now glory be to the Living One who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the worlds visible and invisible! Moreover I have heard tell the tale of

15- UNS AL-WUJUD AND THE WAZIR'S DAUGHTER AL-WARD FI'L-AKMAM OR ROSE-IN-HOOD.[30]

There was once, in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, a King of great power and lord of glory and dominion galore; who had a Wazir Ibrahim hight, and this Wazir's daughter was a damsel of extraordinary beauty and loveliness, gifted with passing brilliancy and the perfection of grace, possessed of abundant wit, and in all good breeding complete. But she loved wassail and wine and the human face divine and choice verses and rare stories; and the delicacy of her inner gifts invited all hearts to love, even as saith the poet, describing her:—

Like moon she shines amid the starry sky, ✿ Robing in tresses blackest ink outvie.
The morning-breezes give her boughs fair drink, ✿ And like a branch she sways with supple ply:
She smiles in passing us. O thou that art ✿ Fairest in yellow robed, or cramoisie,
Thou playest with my wit in love, as though ✿ Sparrow in hand of playful boy were I.[31]

Her name was Rose-in-Hood and she was so named for her young and tender beauty and the freshness of her brilliancy; and the King loved her in his cups because of her accomplishments and fine manners. Now it was the King's custom yearly to gather together all the nobles of his realm and play with the ball.[32] So 32 when the day came round whereon the folk assembled for ball-play, the Minister's daughter seated herself at her lattice, to divert herself by looking on at the game; and, as they were at play, her glance fell upon a youth among the guards than whom never was seen a comelier face nor a goodlier form; for he was bright of favour showing white teeth when he smiled, tall-statured and broad-shouldered. She looked at him again and again and could not take her fill of gazing; and presently said to her nurse, "What is the name of yonder handsome young man among the troops?" Replied the nurse, "O my daughter, the dear fellows are all handsome. Which of them dost thou mean?" Said Rose-in-Hood, "Wait till he come past and I will point him out to thee." So she took an apple and as he rode by dropped it on him, whereupon he raised his head, to see who did this, and espied the Wazir's daughter at the window, as she were the moon of fullest light in the darkness of the night; nor did he withdraw his eyes, till his heart was utterly lost to her, and he recited these lines:—

Was't archer shot me, or was't thine eyes ✿ Ruined lover's heart that thy charms espies?

Was the notchèd shaft[33] from a host outshot, ✿ Or from latticed window in sudden guise?

When the game was at an end, and all had left the ground, she asked her nurse, "What is the name of that youth I showed thee?"; and the good woman answered, "His name is Uns al-Wujud;" whereat Rose-in-Hood shook her head and lay down on her couch, with thoughts a-fire for love. Then, sighing deeply, she improvised these couplets:—

He missed not who dubbed thee, "World's delight," ✿ A world's love conjoining to bounty's light:[34]

O thou, whose favour the full moon favours, ✿ Whose charms make life and the living bright!

Thou hast none equal amongst mankind; ✿ Sultan of Beauty, and proof I'll cite:

33 Thine eyebrows are likest a well-formed Nún,[35] ✿ And thine eyes a Sád,[36] by His hand indite;

Thy shape is the soft, green bough that gives ✿ When asked to all with all-gracious sprite:

Thou excellest knights of the world in stowre, ✿ With delight and beauty and bounty dight.

When she had finished her verses, she wrote them on a sheet of paper, which she folded in a piece of gold-embroidered silk and placed under her pillow. Now one of her nurses had seen her; so she came up to her and held her in talk till she slept, when she stole the scroll from under her pillow; and, after reading it, knew that she had fallen in love with Uns al-Wujud. Then she returned the scroll to its place and when her mistress awoke, she said to her, "O my lady, indeed I am to thee a true counsellor and am tenderly anxious on thy account. Know that love is a tyrant and the hiding it melteth iron and entaileth sickness and unease; nor for whoso confesseth it is there aught of reproach." Rejoined Rose-in-Hood, "And what is the medicine of passion, O nurse mine?" Answered the nurse, "The medicine of passion is enjoyment." Quoth she, "And how may one come by enjoyment?" Quoth the other, "By letters and messages, my lady; by whispered words of compliment and by greetings before the world;[37] all this bringeth lovers together and makes hard matters easy. So if thou have aught at heart, mistress mine, I am the fittest to keep thy secret and do thy desires and carry thy letters." Now when the damsel heard this, her reason flew and fled for joy; but she restrained herself from speech till she should see the issue of the matter, saying within herself, "None knoweth this thing of me, nor will I trust this one with my secret, till I have tried her." Then said the woman, "O my lady, I saw in my sleep as though a man came to me and said:—Thy mistress and Uns al-Wujud love each other; so do thou serve their case by carrying their 34 messages and doing their desires and keeping their secrets; and much good shall befal thee. So now I have told thee my vision and it is thine to decide." Quoth Rose-in-Hood, after she heard of the dream,—

—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that Rose-in-Hood asked her nurse after hearing of the dream, "Tell me, canst thou keep a secret, O my nurse?"; whereto

she answered, “And how should I not keep secrecy, I that am of the flower of the free?”[38] Then the maiden pulled out the scroll, whereon she had written the verses and said, “Carry me this my letter to Uns al-Wujud and bring me his reply.” The nurse took the letter and, repairing to Uns al-Wujud, kissed his hands and greeted him right courteously, then gave him the paper; and he read it and, comprehending the contents, wrote on the back these couplets:—

I soothe my heart and my love repel; ✿ But my state interprets my love too well:
When tears flow I tell them mine eyes are ill, ✿ Lest the censor see and my case foretell,
I was fancy-free and unknew I Love; ✿ But I fell in love and in madness fell.
I show you my case and complain of pain, ✿ Pine and ecstasy that your ruth compel:
I write you with tears of eyes, so belike ✿ They explain the love come my heart to quell;
Allah guard a face that is veiled with charms, ✿ Whose thrall is Moon and the Stars as well:
In her beauty I never beheld the like; ✿ From her sway the branches learn sway and swell:
I beg you, an ‘tis not too much of pains, ✿ To call;[39] ‘twere boon without parallel.
I give you a soul you will haply take. ✿ To which Union is Heaven, Disunion Hell.

Then he folded the letter and kissing it, gave it to the go-between 35 and said to her, “O nurse, incline thy lady’s heart to me.” “To hear is to obey,” answered she and carried the script to her mistress, who kissed it and laid it on her head, then she opened it and read it and understood it and wrote at the foot of it these couplets:—

O whose heart by our beauty is captive ta’en, ✿ Have patience and all thou shalt haply gain!
When we knew that thy love was a true affect, ✿ And what pained our heart to thy heart gave pain,
We had granted thee wished-for call and more; ✿ But hindered so doing the chamberlain.
When the night grows dark, through our love’s excess ✿ Fire burns our vitals with might and main:
And sleep from our beds is driven afar, ✿ And our bodies are tortured by passion-bane.
“Hide Love!” in Love’s code is the first command; ✿ And from raising his veil thy hand restrain:
I fell love-fulfillèd by yon gazelle: ✿ Would he never wander from where I dwell!

Then she folded the letter and gave it to the nurse, who took it and went out from her mistress to seek the young man; but, as she would fare forth, the chamberlain met her and said to her, “Whither away?” “To the bath,” answered she; but in her fear and confusion, she dropped the letter, without knowing it, and went off unrecking what she had done; when one of the eunuchs, seeing it lying in the way, picked it up. When the nurse came without the door, she sought for it, but found it not, so turned back to her mistress and told her of this and what had befallen her. Meanwhile, the Wazir came out of the Harim and seated himself on his couch; whereupon behold, the eunuch, who had picked up the letter, came in to him, hending it in hand and said, “O my lord, I found this paper lying upon the floor and picked it up.” So the Minister took it from his hand, folded as it was, and opening it, read the verses as above set down. Then, after mastering the meaning, he examined the writing and knew it for his daughter’s hand; whereupon he went to her mother, weeping so abundant tears that

his beard was wetted. His wife asked him, "What maketh thee weep, O my lord?"; and he answered, "Take this letter and see what is therein." So she took it and found it to be a love-letter from her daughter Rose-in-Hood to Uns al-Wujud: whereupon the ready drops sprang to her eyes; but she composed 36 her mind, and, gulping down her tears, said to her husband, "O my lord, there is no profit in weeping: the right course is to cast about for a means of keeping thine honour and concealing the affair of thy daughter." And she went on to comfort him and lighten his trouble; but he said, "I am fearful for my daughter by reason of this new passion. Knowest thou not that the Sultan loveth Uns al-Wujud with exceeding love? And my fear hath two causes. The first concerneth myself; it is, that she is my daughter: the second is on account of the King; for that Uns al-Wujud is a favourite with the Sultan and peradventure great troubles shall come out of this affair. What deemest thou should be done?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir, after recounting the affair of his daughter, asked his wife, "What deemest thou should be done?" And she answered, "Have patience whilst I pray the prayer for right direction." So she prayed a two-bow prayer according to the prophetic[40] ordinance for seeking divine guidance; after which she said to her husband, "In the midst of the Sea of Treasures[41] standeth a mountain named the Mount of the Bereaved Mother (the cause of which being so called shall presently follow in its place, Inshallah!); and thither can none have access, save with pains and difficulty and distress: do thou make that same her abiding-place." Accordingly the Minister and his wife agreed to build on that mountain a virgin castle and lodge their daughter therein with the necessary provision to be renewed year by year and attendants to cheer and to serve her. Accordingly he collected carpenters, builders and architects, 37 and despatched them to the mountain, where they builded her an impregnable castle, never saw eyes the like thereof. Then he made ready vivers and carriage for the journey and, going in to his daughter by night, bade her prepare to set out on a pleasure-excursion. Thereupon her heart presaged the sorrows of separation and, when she went forth and saw the preparations for the journey, she wept with sore weeping and wrote that upon the door which might acquaint her lover with what had passed and with the transports of passion and grief that were upon her, transports such as would make the flesh to shiver and hair to stare, and melt the hardest stone with care, and tear from every eye a tear. And what she wrote were these couplets:—

By Allah, O thou house, if my beloved a morn go by, ✿ And greet with signs and signals lover e'er is wont to fly,
I pray thee give him our salams in pure and fragrant guise, ✿ For he indeed may never know where we this eve shall lie.

I wot not whither they have fared, thus bearing us afar ✿ At speed, and lightly-quipt, the lighter from one love to fly:

When starkens night, the birds in brake or branches snugly perched ✿ Wail for our sorrow and announce our hapless destiny:

The tongue of their condition saith, "Alas, alas for woe, ✿ And heavy brunt of parting-blow two lovers must aby":

When viewed I separation-cups were fillèd to the brim ✿ And us with merest sorrow-wine Fate came so fast to ply,

I mixed them with becoming share of patience self to excuse, ✿ But Patience for the loss of you her solace doth refuse.

Now when she ended her lines, she mounted and they set forward with her crossing and cutting over wold and wild and riant dale and rugged hill, till they came to the shore of the Sea of Treasures here they pitched their tents and built her a great ship, wherein they went down with her and her suite and carried them over to the mountain. The Minister had ordered them, on reaching the journey's end, to set her in the castle and to make their way back to the shore, where they were to break up the vessel. So they did his bidding and returned home, weeping over what had befallen. Such was their case; but as regards Uns al-Wujud, he arose from sleep and prayed the dawn-prayer, after which he took horse and rode forth to attend upon the Sultan. On his way, he passed by the Wazir's house, thinking perchance to see some of his followers as of wont; but he saw no one and, looking upon the door, he read written thereon the verses aforesaid. At this sight, his senses 38 failed him; fire was kindled in his vitals and he returned to his lodging, where he passed the day in trouble and transports of grief, without finding ease or patience, till night darkened upon him, when his yearning and love-longing redoubled. Thereupon, by way of concealment, he disguised himself in the ragged garb of a Fakir,[42] and set out wandering at random through the glooms of night, distracted and knowing not whither he went. So he wandered on all that night and next day, till the heat of the sun waxed fierce and the mountains flamed like fire and thirst was grievous upon him. Presently, he espied a tree, by whose side was a thin thread of running water; so he made towards it and sitting down in the shade, on the bank of the rivulet, essayed to drink, but found that the water had no taste in his mouth;[43] and, indeed his colour had changed and his face had yellowed, and his feet were swollen with travel and travail. So he shed copious tears and repeated these couplets:—

The lover is drunken with love of friend; ✿ On a longing that groweth his joys depend:

Love-distracted, ardent, bewildered, lost ✿ From home, nor may food aught of pleasure lend:

How can life be delightsome to one in love, ✿ And from lover parted, 'twere strange, unkenned!

I melt with the fire of my pine for them, ✿ And the tears down my cheek in a stream descend.

Shall I see them, say me, or one that comes ✿ From the camp, who th' afflicted heart shall tend?

And after thus reciting he wept till he wetted the hard dry ground; but anon without loss of time he rose and fared on again over waste and wold, till there came out upon him a lion, with a neck buried in tangled mane, a head the bigness of a dome, a mouth wider than the door thereof and teeth like elephants' tusks. Now when Uns al-Wujud saw him, he gave himself up for lost and, turning[44] towards the Temple of Meccah, pronounced the professions of the faith and prepared for death. He had read in 39books that whoso will flatter the lion, beguileth him,[45] for that he is readily duped by smooth speech and gentled by being glorified; so he began and said, "O Lion of the forest! O Lord of the waste! O terrible Leo! O father of fighters! O Sultan of wild beasts! Behold, I am a lover in longing, whom passion and severance have been wronging; since I parted from my dear, I have lost my reasoning gear; wherefore, to my speech do thou give ear and have ruth on my passion and hope and fear." When the lion heard this, he drew back from him and sitting down on his hind-quarters, raised his head to him and began to frisk tail and paws; which when Uns al-Wujud saw, he recited these couplets:—

Lion of the wold wilt thou murther me, ✿ Ere I meet her who doomed me to slavery?

I am not game and I bear no fat; ✿ For the loss of my love makes me sickness dree;

And estrangement from her hath so worn me down ✿ I am like a shape in a shroud we see.

O thou sire of spoils,[46] O thou lion of war, ✿ Give not my pains to the blamer's gree.

I burn with love, I am drowned in tears ✿ For a parting from lover, sore misery!

And my thoughts of her in the murk of night ✿ For love hath made my being unbe.

As he had finished his lines the lion rose——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that as Uns al-Wujud ended his lines, the lion arose and stalked slowly up to him, with eyes tear-railing and licked him with his tongue, then walked on before him, signing to him as though saying, "Follow 40me." So he followed him, and the beast ceased not leading him on for a while till he brought him up a mountain, and guided him to the farther side, where he came upon the track of a caravan over the desert, and knew it to be that of Rose-in-Hood and her company. Then he took the trail and, when the lion saw that he knew the track for that of the party which escorted her, he turned back and went his way; whilst Uns al-Wujud walked along the foot-marks day and night, till they brought him to a dashing sea, swollen with clashing surge. The trail led down to the sandy shore and there broke off; whereby he knew that they had taken ship and had continued their journey by water. So he lost hope of finding his lover and with hot tears he repeated these couplets:—

Far is the fane and patience faileth me; ✿ How can I seek them[47] o'er the abysmal sea;

Or how be patient, when my vitals burn ✿ For love of them, and sleep waxed insomny?
Since the sad day they left the home and fled, ✿ My heart's consumèd by love's ardency:
Sayhun, Jayhun,[48] Euphrates-like my tears, ✿ Make flood no deluged rain its like can see:
Mine eyelids chafed with running tears remain, ✿ My heart from fiery sparks is never free;
The hosts of love and longing pressèd me ✿ And made the hosts of patience break and flee.
I've risked my life too freely for their love; ✿ And risk of life the least of ills shall be.
Allah ne'er punish eye that saw those charms ✿ Enshrined, and passing full moon's brillancy!
I found me felled by fair wide-opened eyes, ✿ Which pierced my heart with stringless archery:
And soft, lithe, swaying shape enraptured me ✿ As sway the branches of the willow-tree:
Wi' them I covet union that I win, ✿ O'er love-pains cark and care, a mastery.
For love of them aye, morn and eve I pine, ✿ And doubt all came to me from evil eyne.

And when his lines were ended he wept, till he swooned away, and abode in his swoon a long while; but as soon as he came to himself, 41 he looked right and left and seeing no one in the desert, he became fearful of the wild beasts; so he clomb to the top of a high mountain, where he heard the voice of a son of Adam speaking within a cave. He listened and lo! they were the accents of a devotee, who had forsworn the world and given himself up to pious works and worship. He knocked thrice at the cavern-door, but the hermit made him no answer, neither came forth to him; wherefore he groaned aloud and recited these couplets:—

What pathway find I my desire t'obtain, ✿ How 'scape from care and cark and pain and bane?
All terrors join to make me old and hoar ✿ Of head and heart, ere youth from me is ta'en:
Nor find I any aid my passion, nor ✿ A friend to lighten load of bane and pain.
How great and many troubles I've endured! ✿ Fortune hath turned her back I see unfain.
Ah mercy, mercy on the lover's heart, ✿ Doomed cup of parting and desertion drain!
A fire is in his heart, his vitals waste, ✿ And severance made his reason vainest vain.
How dread the day I came to her abode ✿ And saw the writ they wrote on doorway lain!
I wept, till gave I earth to drink my grief; ✿ But still to near and far[49] I did but feign:
Then strayed I till in waste a lion sprang ✿ On me, and but for flattering words had slain:
I soothed him: so he spared me and lent me aid, ✿ He too might haply of love's taste complain.
O devotee, that idlest in thy cave, ✿ Meseems eke thou hast learned Love's might and main;
But if, at end of woes, with them I league, ✿ Straight I'll forget all suffering and fatigue.

Hardly had he made an end of these verses when, behold! the door of the cavern opened and he heard one say, "Alas, the pity of it!"[50] So he entered and saluted the devotee, who returned his salam and asked him, "What is thy name?" Answered the young man, "Uns al-Wujud." "And what caused thee to come hither?" quoth the hermit. So he told him his story in its entirety, omitting naught of his misfortunes; whereat he wept and said,

42 "O Uns al-Wujud, these twenty years have I passed in this place, but never beheld I any man here, until yesterday, when I heard a noise of weeping and lamentation and, looking forth in the direction of the sound, saw many people and tents pitched on the sea-shore; and the party at once proceeded to build a ship, in which certain of them embarked and sailed over the waters. Then some of the crew returned with the ship and breaking it up, went their way; and I suspect that those who embarked in the ship and returned not, are they whom thou seekest. In that case, O Uns al-Wujud, thy grief must needs be great and sore and thou art excusable, though never yet was lover but suffered love-longing." Then he recited these couplets:—

Uns al-Wujud, dost deem me fancy-free, ✿ When pine and longing slay and quicken me?
I have known love and yearning from the years ✿ Since mother-milk I drank, nor e'er was free.
Long struggled I with Love, till learnt his might; ✿ Ask thou of him, he'll tell with willing gree.
Love-sick and pining drank I passion-cup, ✿ And well-nigh perished in mine agony.
Strong was I, but my strength to weakness turned, ✿ And eye-sword brake through Patience armoury:
Hope not to win love-joys, without annoy; ✿ Contrary ever links with contrary.
But fear not change from lover true; be true ✿ Unto thy wish, some day thine own 'twill be.
Love hath forbidden to his votaries ✿ Relinquishment as deadliest heresy.

The eremite, having ended his verse, rose and, coming up to Uns al-Wujud, embraced him,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the eremite, having ended his verse, rose and coming up to Uns al-Wujud embraced him, and they wept together, till the hills rang with their cries and they fell down fainting. When they revived, they swore brotherhood[51] in Allah Almighty; after which said Uns al-Wujud, "This very night will I pray to God and seek of Him direction[52] 43 anent what thou shouldst do to attain thy desire." Thus it was with them; but as regards Rose-in-Hood, when they brought her to the mountain and set her in the castle and she beheld its ordering, she wept and exclaimed, "By Allah, thou art a goodly place, save that thou lackest in thee the presence of the beloved!"[53] Then seeing birds in the island, she bade her people set snares for them and put all they caught in cages within the castle; and they did so. But she sat at a lattice and bethought her of what had passed, and desire and passion and distraction redoubled upon her, till she burst into tears and repeated these couplets:—

O to whom now, of my desire complaining sore, shall I ✿ Bewail my parting from my fere compellèd thus to fly?
Flames rage within what underlies my ribs, yet hide them I ✿ In deepest secret dreading aye the jealous hostile spy:

I am grown as lean, attenuate as any pick of tooth,[54] ✿ By sore estrangement, absence, ardour, ceaseless sob and sigh.

Where is the eye of my beloved to see how I'm become ✿ Like tree stripped bare of leafage left to linger and to die.

They tyrannisèd over me whom they confined in place ✿ Whereto the lover of my heart may never draw him nigh:

I beg the Sun for me to give greetings a thousandfold, ✿ At time of rising and again when setting from the sky,

To the belovèd one who shames a full moon's loveliness, ✿ When shows that slender form that doth the willow-branch outvie.

If Rose herself would even with his cheek, I say of her ✿ "Thou art not like it if to me my portion thou deny:"[55]

44 His honey-dew of lips is like the grateful water draught ✿ Would cool me when a fire in heart upflameth fierce and high:

How shall I give him up who is my heart and soul of me, ✿ My malady my wasting cause, my love, sole leach of me?

Then, as the glooms of night closed around her, her yearning increased and she called to mind the past and recited also these couplets:—

'Tis dark: my transport and unease now gather might and main, ✿ And love-desire provoketh me to wake my wonted pain:

The pang of parting takes for ever place within my breast, ✿ And pining makes me desolate in destitution lain.

Ecstasy sore maltreats my soul and yearning burns my sprite, ✿ And tears betray love's secresy which I would lief contain:

I weet no way, I know no case that can make light my load, ✿ Or heal my wasting body or cast out from me this bane.

A hell of fire is in my heart upflames with lambent tongue ✿ And Lazá's furnace-fires within my liver place have ta'en.

O thou, exaggerating blame for what befel, enough ✿ I bear with patience whatsoe'er hath writ for me the Pen!

I swear, by Allah, ne'er to find aught comfort for their loss; ✿ 'Tis oath of passion's children and their oaths are ne'er in vain.

O Night! Salams of me to friends and let to them be known ✿ Of thee true knowledge how I wake and waking ever wone.

Meanwhile, the hermit said to Uns al-Wujud, "Go down to the palm-grove in the valley and fetch some fibre."[56] So he went and returned with the palm-fibre, which the hermit took and, twisting into ropes, made therewith a net,[57] such as is used for carrying straw; after which he said, "O Uns al-Wujud, in the heart of the valley groweth a gourd, which springeth up and drieth upon its roots. Go down there and fill this sack therewith; then tie it together and, casting it into the water, embark thereon and make for the midst of the sea, so haply thou shalt win thy wish; for whoso never ventureth shall not have what he seeketh." "I hear 45 and obey," answered Uns al-Wujud. Then he bade the hermit farewell after the holy man had prayed for him; and, betaking himself to the sole of the valley, did as his adviser had counselled him; made the sack, launched it upon the water, and pushed from shore. Then there arose a wind,

which drave him out to sea, till he was lost to the eremite's view; and he ceased not to float over the abysses of the ocean, one billow tossing him up and another bearing him down (and he beholding the while the dangers and marvels of the deep), for the space of three days. At the end of that time Fate cast him upon the Mount of the Bereft Mother, where he landed, giddy and tottering like a chick unfledged, and at the last of his strength for hunger and thirst; but, finding there streams flowing and birds on the branches cooing and fruit-laden trees in clusters and singly growing, he ate of the fruits and drank of the rills. Then he walked on till he saw some white thing afar off, and making for it, found that it was a strongly fortified castle. So he went up to the gate and seeing it locked, sat down by it; and there he sat for three days when behold, the gate opened and an eunuch came out, who finding Uns al-Wujud there seated, said to him, "Whence camest thou and who brought thee hither?" Quoth he, "From Ispahan and I was voyaging with merchandise when my ship was wrecked and the waves cast me upon the farther side of this island." Whereupon the eunuch wept and embraced him, saying, "Allah preserve thee, O thou friendly face! Ispahan is mine own country and I have there a cousin, the daughter of my father's brother, whom I loved from my childhood and cherished with fond affection; but a people stronger than we fell upon us in foray and taking me among other booty, cut off my yard[58] and sold me for a castrato, whilst I was yet a lad; and this is how I came to be in such case."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

46

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the eunuch who came forth from the castle, where Rose-in-Hood was confined, told Uns al-Wujud all his tale and said:—"The raiders who captured me cut off my yard and sold me for a castrato; and this is how I came to be in such case."[59] And after saluting him and wishing him long life, the eunuch carried him into the courtyard of the castle, where he saw a great tank of water, surrounded by trees, on whose branches hung cages of silver, with doors of gold, and therein birds were warbling and singing the praises of the Requiting King. And when he came to the first cage he looked in and lo! a turtle dove, on seeing him, raised her voice and cried out, saying, "O Thou Bounty-fraught!" Whereat he fell down fainting and after coming to himself, he sighed heavily and recited these couplets:—

O turtle dove, like me art thou distraught? ✿ Then pray the Lord and sing "O Bounty-fraught!"
Would I knew an thy moan were sign of joy, ✿ Or cry of love-desire in heart inwrought,—
An moan thou pining for a lover gone ✿ Who left thee woe begone to pine in thought,—
Or if like me hast lost thy fondest friend, ✿ And severance long desire to memory brought?

O Allah, guard a faithful lover's lot ✿ I will not leave her though my bones go rot!

Then, after ending his verses, he fainted again; and, presently reviving he went on to the second cage, wherein he found a ringdove. When it saw him, it sang out, "O Eternal, I thank thee!" and he groaned and recited these couplets:—

I heard a ringdove chanting plaintively, ✿ "I thank Thee, O Eternal for this misery!"
Haply, perchance, may Allah, of His grace, ✿ Send me by this long round my love to see.
Full oft[60] she comes with honeyed lips dark red, ✿ And heaps up lowe upon love's ardency.
47 Quoth I (while longing fires flame high and fierce ✿ In heart, and wasting life's vitality,
And tears like gouts of blood go railing down ✿ In torrents over cheeks now pale of blee),
"None e'er trod earth that was not born to woe, ✿ But I will patient dree mine agony,
So help me Allah! till that happy day ✿ When with my mistress I unite shall be:
Then will I spend my good on lover-wights, ✿ Who're of my tribe and of the faith of me;
And loose the very birds from jail set free, ✿ And change my grief for gladdest gree and glee!"

Then he went on to the third cage, wherein he found a mocking-bird[61] which, when it saw him, set up a song, and he recited the following couplets:—

Pleaseth me yon Hazár of mocking strain ✿ Like voice of lover pained by love in vain.
Woe's me for lovers! Ah how many men ✿ By nights and pine and passion low are lain!
As though by stress of love they had been made ✿ Morn-less and sleep-less by their pain and bane.
When I went daft for him who conquered me ✿ And pined for him who proved of proudest strain,
My tears in streams down trickled and I cried ✿ "These long-linkt tears bind like an adamant-chain:"
Grew concupiscence, severance long, and I ✿ Lost Patience' hoards and grief waxed sovereign:
If Justice bide in world and me unite ✿ With him I love and Allah veil us deign,
I'll strip my clothes that he my form shall sight ✿ With parting, distance, grief, how poor of plight!

Then he went to the fourth cage, where he found a Bulbul[62] which, at sight of him, began to sway to and fro and sing its plaintive descant; and when he heard its complaint, he burst into tears and repeated these couplets:—

The Bulbul's note, whenas dawn is nigh, ✿ Tells the lover from strains of strings to fly:
Complaineth for passion Uns al-Wujud, ✿ For pine that would being to him deny.
48 How many a strain do we hear, whose sound ✿ Softens stones and the rock can mollify:
And the breeze of morning that sweetly speaks ✿ Of meadows in flowerèd greenery.
And scents and sounds in the morning-tide ✿ Of birds and zephyrs in fragrance vie;
But I think of one, of an absent friend, ✿ And tears rail like rain from a showery sky;
And the flamy tongues in my breast uprise ✿ As sparks from gleed that in dark air fly.
Allah deign vouchsafe to a lover distraught ✿ Someday the face of his dear to descry!
For lovers, indeed, no excuse is clear, ✿ Save excuse of sight and excuse of eye.

Then he walked on a little and came to a goodly cage, than which was no goodlier there, and in it a culver of the forest, that is to say, a wood-pigeon,[63] the bird

renowned among birds as the minstrel of love-longing, with a collar of jewels about its neck marvellous fine and fair. He considered it awhile and, seeing it absently brooding in its cage, he shed tears and repeated these couplets:—

O culver of copse,[64] with salams I greet; ✿ O brother of lovers who woe must weet!
I love a gazelle who is slender-slim, ✿ Whose glances for keenness the scymitar beat:
For her love are my heart and my vitals a-fire, ✿ And my frame consumes in love's fever-heat.
The sweet taste of food is unlawful for me, ✿ And forbidden is slumber, unlawfullest sweet.
Endurance and solace have travelled from me, ✿ And love homes in my heart and grief takes firm seat:
How shall life deal joy when they flee my sight ✿ Who are joy and gladness and life and sprite?

As soon as Uns al-Wujud had ended his verse——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

49

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that as soon as Uns al-Wujud had ended his verse, the wood-culver awoke from its brooding and cooed a reply to his lines and shrilled and trilled with its thrilling notes till it all but spake with human speech;[65] and the tongue of the case talked for it and recited these couplets:—

O lover, thou bringest to thought a tide ✿ When the strength of my youth first faded and died;
And a friend of whose form I was 'namourèd, ✿ Seductive and dight with beauty's pride;
Whose voice, as he sat on the sandhill-tree, ✿ From the Nay's[66] sweet sound turned my heart aside;
A fowler snared him in net, the while ✿ "O that man would leave me at large!" he cried:
I had hoped he might somewhat of mercy show ✿ When a hapless lover he so espied;
But Allah smite him who tore me away, ✿ In his hardness of heart, from my lover's side;
But aye my desire for him groweth more, ✿ And my heart with the fires of disjunction is fried:
Allah guard a true lover, who strives with love, ✿ And hath borne the torments I still abide!
And, seeing me bound in this cage, with mind ✿ Of ruth, release me my love to find.

Then Uns al-Wujud turned to his companion, the Ispahahi, and said, "What palace is this? Who built it and who abideth in it?" Quoth the eunuch, "The Wazir of a certain King built it to guard his daughter, fearing for her the accidents of Time and the incidents of Fortune, and lodged her herein, her and her attendants; nor do we open it save once in every year, when their provision cometh to them." And Uns al-Wujud said to himself, "I have gained my end, though I may have long to wait." Such was his case; but as 50 regards Rose-in-Hood, of a truth she took no pleasure in eating or drinking, sitting or sleeping; but her desire and passion and distraction redoubled on her, and she went wandering about the castle-corners, but could find no issue; wherefore she shed tears and recited these couplets:—

They have cruelly ta'en me from him, my beloved, ✿ And made me taste anguish in prison ta'en:

They have fired my heart with the flames of love, ✿ Barred all sight of him whom to see I'm fain:
In a lofty palace they prisoned me ✿ On a mountain placed in the middle main.
If they'd have me forget him, right vain's their wish, ✿ For my love is grown of a stronger strain.
How *can* I forget him whose face was cause ✿ Of all I suffer, of all I 'plain?
The whole of my days in sorrow's spent, ✿ And in thought of him through the night I'm lain.
Remembrance of him cheers my solitude, ✿ While I lorn of his presence and lone remain.
Would I knew if, after this all, my fate ✿ To oblige the desire of my heart will deign.

When her verses were ended, she ascended to the terrace-roof of the castle after donning her richest clothes and trinkets and throwing a necklace of jewels around her neck. Then binding together some dresses of Ba'albak[67] stuff by way of rope, she tied them to the crenelles and let herself down thereby to the ground. And she fared on over wastes and waterless wilds, till she came to the shore, where she saw a fisherman plying here and there over the sea, for the wind had driven him on to the island. When he saw her, he was affrighted[68] and pushed off again, flying from her; but she cried out and made pressing signs to him to return, versifying with these couplets:—

O fisherman no care hast thou to fear, ✿ I'm but an earth-born maid in mortal sphere;
I pray thee linger and my prayer grant ✿ And to my true unhappy tale give ear:
51 Pity (so Allah spare thee!) warmest love; ✿ Say, hast thou seen him—my beloved fere?
I love a lovely youth whose face excels ✿ Sunlight, and passes moon when clearest clear:
The fawn, that sees his glance, is fain to cry ✿ "I am his thrall" and own himself no peer:
Beauty hath written, on his winsome cheek, ✿ Rare lines of pregnant sense for every seer;
Who sights the light of love his soul is saved; ✿ Who strays is Infidel to Hell anear:
An thou in mercy show his sight, O rare![69] ✿ Thou shalt have every wish, the dearest dear,
Of rubies and what likest are to them ✿ Fresh pearls and unions new, the sea-shell's tear:
My friend, thou wilt forsure grant my desire ✿ Whose heart is melted in love's hottest fire.

When the fisherman heard her words, he wept and made moan and lamented; then, recalling what had betided himself in the days of his youth, when love had the mastery over him and longing and desire and distraction were sore upon him and the fires of passion consumed him, replied with these couplets:—

What fair excuse is this my pining plight, ✿ With wasted limbs and tears' unceasing blight;
And eyelids open in the nightly murk, ✿ And heart like fire-stick[70] ready fire to smite;
Indeed love burdened us in early youth, ✿ And true from false coin soon we learned aright:
Then did we sell our soul on way of love, ✿ And drunk of many a well[71] to win her sight;
Venturing very life to gain her grace, ✿ And make high profit perilling a mite.
'Tis Love's religion whoso buys with life ✿ His lover's grace, with highest gain is dight.

And when he ended his verse, he moored his boat to the beach and said to her, "Embark, so may I carry thee whither thou wilt." 52 Thereupon she embarked and he put off with her; but they had not gone far from land, before there came out a stern-

wind upon the boat and drove it swiftly out of sight of shore. Now the fisherman knew not whither he went, and the strong wind blew without ceasing three days, when it fell by leave of Allah Almighty, and they sailed on and ceased not sailing till they came in sight of a city sitting upon the sea-shore,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the fisherman's craft, carrying Rose-in-Hood, made the city sitting upon the sea shore, the man set about making fast to the land. Now the King of the city was a Prince of pith and puissance named Dirbás, the Lion; and he chanced at that moment to be seated, with his son, at a window in the royal palace giving upon the sea; and happening to look out seawards, they saw the fishing-boat make the land. They observed it narrowly and espied therein a young lady, as she were the full moon overhanging the horizon-edge, with pendants in her ears of costly balass-rubies and a collar of precious stones about her throat. Hereby the King knew that this must indeed be the daughter of some King or great noble and, going forth of the sea-gate of the palace, went down to the boat, where he found the lady asleep and the fisherman busied in making fast to shore. So he went up to her and aroused her, whereupon she awoke, weeping; and he asked her, "Whence comest thou and whose daughter art thou and what be the cause of thy coming hither?"; and she answered, "I am the daughter of Ibrahim, Wazir to King Shámikh; and the manner of my coming hither is wondrous and the cause thereof marvellous." And she told him her whole story first and last, hiding naught from him; then she groaned aloud and recited these couplets:—

Tear-drops have chafed mine eyelids and rail down in wondrous wise, ✿ For parting pain that fills my sprite and turns to springs mine eyes,

For sake of friend who ever dwells within my vitals homed, ✿ And I may never win my wish of him in any guise.

He hath a favour fair and bright, and brilliant is his face, ✿ Which every Turk and Arab wight in loveliness outvies:

The Sun and fullest Moon lout low whenas his charms they sight, ✿ And lover-like they bend to him whene'er he deigneth rise.

53 A wondrous spell of gramarye like Kohl bedecks his eyne, ✿ And shows thee bow with shaft on string made ready ere it flies:

O thou, to whom I told my case expecting all excuse, ✿ Pity a lover-wight for whom Love-shafts such fate devise!

Verily, Love hath cast me on your coast despite of me ✿ Of will now weak, and fain I trust mine honour thou wilt prize:

For noble men, whenas perchance alight upon their bounds, ✿ Grace-worthy guests, confess their worth and raise to dignities.

Then, O thou hope of me, to lovers' folly veil afford ✿ And be to them reunion cause, thou only liefest lord!

And when she had ended her verses, she again told the King her sad tale and shed plenteous tears and recited these couplets bearing on her case:—

We lived till saw we all the marvels Love can bear; ✿ Each month to thee we hope shall fair as Rajab[72] fare:

Is it not wondrous, when I saw them march amorn ✿ That I with water o' eyes in heart lit flames that flare?

That these mine eyelids rain fast dropping gouts of blood? ✿ That now my cheek grows gold where rose and lily were?

As though the safflower hue, that overspread my cheeks, ✿ Were Joseph's coat made stain of lying blood to wear.

Now when the King heard her words he was certified of her love and longing and was moved to ruth for her; so he said to her, "Fear nothing and be not troubled; thou hast come to the term of thy wishes; for there is no help but that I win for thee thy will and bring thee to thy desire." And he improvised these couplets:—

Daughter of nobles, who thine aim shalt gain; ✿ Hear gladdest news nor fear aught hurt or bane!

This day I'll pack up wealth, and send it on ✿ To Shámikh, guarded by a champion-train;

Fresh pods of musk I'll send him and brocades, ✿ And silver white and gold of yellow vein:

Yes, and a letter shall inform him eke ✿ That I of kinship with that King am fain:

54 And I this day will lend thee bestest aid, ✿ That all thou covetest thy soul assain.

I, too, have tasted love and know its taste ✿ And can excuse whoso the same cup drain.[73]

Then, ending his verse, he went forth to his troops and summoned his Wazir; and, causing him to pack up countless treasure, commanded him carry it to King Shamikh and say to him, "Needs must thou send me a person named Uns al-Wujud;" and say moreover "The King is minded to ally himself with thee by marrying his daughter to Uns al-Wujud, thine officer. So there is no help but thou despatch him to me, that the marriage may be solemnized in her father's kingdom." And he wrote a letter to King Shamikh to this effect, and gave it to the Minister, charging him strictly to bring back Uns al-Wujud and warning him, "An thou fail thou shalt be deposed and degraded." Answered the Wazir, "I hear and obey;" and, setting out forthright with the treasures, in due course arrived at the court of King Shamikh whom he saluted in the name of King Dirbas and delivered the letter and the presents. Now when King Shamikh read the letter and saw the name of Uns al-Wujud, he burst into tears and said to the Wazir "And where, oh where, is Uns al-Wujud?; he went from us and we know not his place of abiding; only bring him to me, and I will give thee double the presents thou hast brought me." And he wept and groaned and lamented, saying these couplets:—

To me restore my dear; ✿ I want not wealth untold:

Nor crave I gifts of pearls ✿ Or gems or store of gold:

He was to us a moon ✿ In beauty's heavenly fold.

Passing in form and soul; ✿ With roe compare withhold!

His form a willow-wand, ✿ His fruit, lures manifold;

But willow lacketh power ✿ Men's hearts to have and hold.

I reared him from a babe ✿ On cot of coaxing roll'd;
And now I mourn for him ✿ With woe in soul ensoul'd.

Then, turning to the Wazir who had brought the presents and the missive, he said, "Go back to thy liege and acquaint him that Uns al-Wujud hath been missing this year past, and his lord knoweth 55 not whither he is gone nor hath any tidings of him." Answered the Minister of King Dirbas, "O my lord, my master said to me:—An thou fail to bring him back, thou shalt be degraded from the Wazirate and shalt not enter my city. How then can I return without him?" So King Shamikh said to his Wazir Ibrahim, "Take a company and go with him and make ye search for Uns al-Wujud everywhere." He replied, "Hearkening and obedience;" and, taking a body of his own retainers, set out accompanied by the Wazir of King Dirbas seeking Uns al-Wujud.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ibrahim, Wazir to King Shamikh, took him a body of his retainers and, accompanied by the Minister of King Dirbas, set out seeking Uns al-Wujud. And as often as they fell in with wild Arabs or others they asked of the youth, saying, "Tell us have ye seen a man whose name is so and so and his semblance thus and thus?" But they all answered, "We know him not." Still they continued their quest enquiring in city and hamlet and seeking in fertile plain and stony hall and in the wild and in the wold, till they made the Mountain of the Bereaved Mother; and the Wazir of King Dirbas said to Ibrahim, "Why is this mountain thus called?" He answered, "Once of old time, here sojourned a Jinniyah, of the Jinn of China, who loved a mortal with passionate love; and, being in fear of her life from her own people, searched all the earth over for a place, where she might hide him from them, till she happened on this mountain and, finding it cut off from both men and Jinn, there being no access to it, carried off her beloved and lodged him therein. There, when she could escape notice of her kith and kin, she used privily to visit him, and continued so doing till she had borne him a number of children; and the merchants, sailing by the mountain, in their voyages over the main, heard the weeping of the children, as it were the wailing of a woman bereft of her babes, and said:—Is there here a mother bereaved of her children? For which reason the place was named the Mountain of the Bereaved Mother." And the Wazir of King Dirbas marvelled at his words. Then they landed and, making for the castle, knocked at the gate which was opened to them by an eunuch, who knew 56 the Wazir Ibrahim and kissed his hands. The Minister entered and found in the courtyard, among the serving-men, a Fakir, which was Uns al-Wujud, but he knew him not and said, "Whence cometh yonder wight?" Quoth they, "He is a merchant, who hath lost his goods, but saved himself; and he is an ecstatic."[74] So the Wazir left him and went on into the castle,

where he found no trace of his daughter and questioned her women, who answered, "We wot not how or whither she went; this place misliked her and she tarried in it but a short time." Whereupon he wept sore and repeated these couplets:—

Ho thou, the house, whose birds were singing gay, ✿ Whose sills their wealth and pride were wont display!
Till came the lover wailing for his love, ✿ And found thy doors wide open to the way;
Would Heaven I knew where is my soul that erst ✿ Was homed in house, whose owners fared away!
'Twas stored with all things bright and beautiful, ✿ And showed its porters ranged in fair array:
They clothed it with brocades a bride become;[175] ✿ Would I knew whither went its lords, ah, say!

After ending his verses he again shed tears, and groaned and bemoaned himself, exclaiming, "There is no deliverance from the destiny decreed by Allah; nor is there any escape from that which He hath predestined!" Then he went up to the roof and found the strips of Ba'albak stuff tied to the crenelles and hanging down to the ground, and thus it was he knew that she had descended 57 thence and had fled forth, as one distracted and demented with desire and passion. Presently, he turned and seeing there two birds, a gor-crow and an owl he justly deemed this an omen of ill; so he groaned and recited these couplets:—

I came to my dear friends' door, of my hopes the goal, ✿ Whose sight mote assuage my sorrow and woes of soul:
No friends found I there, nor was there another thing ✿ To find, save a corby-crow and an ill-omened owl.
And the tongue o' the case to me seemed to say, "Indeed ✿ This parting two lovers fond was cruel and foul!"
"So taste thou the sorrow thou madest them taste and live ✿ In grief: wend thy ways and now in thy sorrow prowl!"

Then he descended from the castle-roof, weeping, and bade the servants fare forth and search the mount for their mistress; so they sought for her, but found her not. Such was their case; but as regards Uns al-Wujud, when he was certified that Rose-in-Hood was indeed gone, he cried with a great cry and fell down in a fainting-fit, nor came to himself for a long time, whilst the folk deemed that his spirit had been withdrawn by the Compassionating One; and that he was absorbed in contemplation of the splendour, majesty and beauty of the Requiting One. Then, despairing of finding Uns al-Wujud, and seeing that the Wazir Ibrahim was distracted for the loss of his daughter, the Minister of King Dirbas addressed himself to return to his own country, albeit he had not attained the object of his journey, and while bidding his companion adieu, said to him, "I have a mind to take the Fakir with me; it may be Allah Almighty will incline the King's heart to me by his blessing, for that he is a holy man; and thereafter, I will send him to Ispahan, which is near our country." "Do as thou wilt," answered Ibrahim. So they took leave of each other and departed, each for his own mother land, the Wazir of King Dirbas carrying with him Uns al-Wujud——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir of King Dirbas carried with him Uns al-Wujud who was still insensible. They bore him with them on mule-back (he unknowing if he were carried or not) for three days, when he came to 58 himself and said, "Where am I?" "Thou art in company with the Minister of King Dirbas," replied they and went and gave news of his recovering to the Wazir, who sent him rose-water and sherbet of sugar, of which they gave him to drink and restored him. Then they ceased not faring on till they drew near King Dirbas's capital and the King, being advised of his Wazir's coming, wrote to him, saying, "If Uns al-Wujud be not with thee, come not to me ever." Now when the Wazir read the royal mandate, it was grievous to him, for he knew not that Rose-in-Wood was with the King, nor why he had been sent in quest of Uns al-Wujud, nor the King's reason for desiring the alliance; whilst Uns al-Wujud also knew not whither they were bearing him or that the Wazir had been sent in quest of him; nor did the Wazir know that the Fakir he had with him was Uns al-Wujud himself. And when the Minister saw that the sick man was whole, he said to him, "I was despatched by the King on an errand, which I have not been able to accomplish. So, when he heard of my return, he wrote to me, saying:—Except thou have fulfilled my need enter not my city." "And what is the King's need?" asked Uns al-Wujud. So the Wazir told him the whole tale, and he said, "Fear nothing, but go boldly to the King and take me with thee; and I will be surety to thee for the coming of Uns al-Wujud." At this the Wazir rejoiced and cried, "Is this true which thou sayest?" "Yes," replied he; whereupon the Wazir mounted and carried him to King Dirbas who, after receiving their salutations said to him, "Where is Uns al-Wujud?" Answered the young man, "O King, I know where he is." So the King called him to him and said, "Where?" Returned Uns al-Wujud, "He is nearhand and very near; but tell me what thou wouldst with him, and I will fetch him into thy presence." The King replied, "With joy and good gree, but the case calleth for privacy." So he ordered the folk to withdraw and, carrying Uns al-Wujud into his cabinet, told him the whole story; whereupon quoth the youth, "Robe me in rich raiment, and I will forthright bring Uns al-Wujud to thee." So they brought him a sumptuous dress, and he donned it and said, "I am Uns al-Wujud, the World's Delight, and to the envious a despite"; and presently he smote with his glances every sprite, and began these couplets to recite:—

My loved one's name in cheerless solitude aye cheereth me ✿ And driveth off my desperance and long despondency:

59 I have no helper[761] but my tears that ever flow in fount, ✿ And as they flow, they lighten woe and force my grief to flee.

My longing is so violent naught like it ere was seen; ✿ My love-tale is a marvel and my love a sight to see:

I spend the night with lids of eye that never close in sleep, ✿ And pass in passion twixt the Hells and Edens heavenly.

I had of patience fairish store, but now no more have I; ✿ And love's sole gift to me hath been aye-growing misery:

My frame is wasted by the pain of parting from my own, ✿ And longing changed my shape and form and made me other be.

Mine eyelids by my torrent tears are chafed, and ulcerate, ✿ The tears, whose flow to stay is mere impossibility.

My manly strength is sore impaired for I have lost my heart; ✿ How many griefs upon my griefs have I been doomed to dree!

My heart and head are like in age with similar hoariness ✿ By loss of Beauty's lord,[77] of lords the galaxy:

Despite our wills they parted us and doomed us parted wone, ✿ While they (our lords) desire no more than love in unity.

Then ah, would Heaven that I wot if stress of parting done, ✿ The world will grant me sight of them in union fain and free—

Roll up the scroll of severance which others would unroll— ✿ Efface my trouble by the grace of meeting's jubilee!

And shall I see them homed with me and in cup-company, ✿ And change my melancholic mood for joy and jollity?

And when he ended his verses the King cried aloud, "By Allah, ye are indeed a pair of lovers true and fain and in Beauty's heaven of shining stars a twain: your story is wondrous and your case marvellous." Then he told him all that had befallen Rose-in-Hood; and Uns al-Wujud said, "Where is she, O King of the age?" "She is with me now," answered Dirbas and, sending for the Kazi and the witnesses, drew up the contract of marriage between her and him. Then he honoured Uns al-Wujud with favours and bounties and sent to King Shamikh acquainting him with what had befallen, whereat this King joyed with exceeding joy and wrote back to the following purport. "Since the ceremony of contract hath been performed at thy court, it behoveth that the marriage and its consummation be at mine." Then he made ready camels, horses and men and sent them in quest of the pair; and when the embassy reached King Dirbas, he gave the 60 lovers much treasure and despatched them to King Shamikh's court with a company of his own troops. The day of their arrival was a notable day, never was seen a grander; for the King gathered together all the singing-women and players on instruments of music and made wedding banquets and held high festival seven days; and on each day he gave largesse to the folk and bestowed on them sumptuous robes of honour. Then Uns al-Wujud went in to Rose-in-Hood and they embraced and sat weeping for excess of joy and gladness, whilst she recited these couplets:—

Joyance is come, dispelling cark and care; ✿ We are united, enviers may despair.

The breeze of union blows, enquickening ✿ Forms, hearts and vitals, fresh with fragrant air:

The splendour of delight with scents appears, ✿ And round us[78] flags and drums show gladness rare.

Deem not we're weeping for our stress of grief; ✿ It is for joy our tears as torrents fare:

How many fears we've seen that now are past! ✿ And bore we patient what was sore to bear:

One hour of joyance made us both forget ✿ What from excess of terror grey'd our hair.

And when the verses were ended, they again embraced and ceased not from their embrace, till they fell down in a swoon,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Uns al-Wujud and Rose-in-Hood embraced when they foregathered and ceased not from their embrace, till they fell down in a swoon for the delight of reunion; and when they came to themselves, Uns al-Wujud recited these couplets:—

How joyously sweet are the nights that unite, ✿ When my dearling deigns keep me the troth she did plight;
When union conjoins us in all that we have, ✿ And parting is severed and sundered from sight,
61 To us comes the world with her favour so fair, ✿ After frown and aversion and mighty despight!
Hath planted her banner Good Fortune for us, ✿ And we drink of her cup in the purest delight.
We have met and complained of the pitiful Past, ✿ And of nights a full many that doomed us to blight.
But now, O my lady, the Past is forgot; ✿ The Compassionate pardon the Past for unright!
How sweet is existence, how glad is to be! ✿ This union my passion doth only incite.

And when he ended his verses they once more embraced, drowned in the sea of passion; and lay down together in the private apartment carousing and conversing and quoting verses and telling pleasant tales and anecdotes. On this wise seven days passed over them whilst they knew not night from day and it was to them, for very stress of gaiety and gladness, pleasure and possession, as if the seven days were but one day with ne'er a morrow. Nor did they know the seventh day,[79] but by the coming of the singers and players on instruments of music; whereat Rose-in-Hood beyond measure wondered and improvised these couplets:—

In spite of enviers' jealousy, at end ✿ We have won all we hoped of the friend:
We've crowned our meeting with a close embrace ✿ On quilts where new brocades with sendal blend;
On bed of perfumed leather, which the spoils ✿ Of downy birds luxuriously distend.
But I abstain me from unneeded wine, ✿ When honey-dews of lips sweet must can lend:
Now from the sweets of union we unknow ✿ Time near and far, if slow or fast it wend,
The seventh night hath come and gone, O strange! ✿ How went the nights we never reckt or kenned;
Till, on the seventh wishing joy they said, ✿ "Allah prolong the meet of friend with friend!"

When she had finished her song, Uns al-Wujud kissed her, more than an hundred times, and recited these couplets:—

62 O day of joys to either lover fain! ✿ The loved one came and freed from lonely pain:
She blest me with all inner charms she hath; ✿ And companied with inner grace deep lain:
She made me drain the wine of love till I, ✿ Was faint with joys her love had made me drain:
We toyed and joyed and on each other lay; ✿ Then fell to wine and soft melodious strain:
And for excess of joyance never knew, ✿ How went the day and how it came again.
Fair fall each lover, may he union win ✿ And gain of joy like me the amplest gain;

Nor weet the taste of severance' bitter fruit ✿ And joys assain them as they us assain!

Then they went forth and distributed to the folk alms and presents of money and raiment and rare gifts and other tokens of generosity; after which Rose-in-Hood bade clear the bath for her[80] and, turning to Uns al-Wujud said to him, "O coolth of my eyes, I have a mind to see thee in the Hammam, and therein we will be alone together." He joyfully consented to this, and she let scent the Hammam with all sorts of perfumed woods and essences, and light the wax-candles. Then of the excess of her contentment she recited these couplets:—

O who didst win my love in other date ✿ (And Present e'er must speak of past estate);

And, oh! who art my sole sufficiency, ✿ Nor want I other friends with me to mate:

Come to the Hammam, O my light of eyes, ✿ And enter Eden through Gehenna-gate!

We'll scent with ambergris and aloes-wood ✿ Till float the heavy clouds with fragrant freight;

And to the World we'll pardon all her sins ✿ And sue for mercy the Compassionate;

And I will cry, when I descry thee there, ✿ "Good cheer, sweet love, all blessings on thee wait!"[81]

Whereupon they arose and fared to the bath and took their pleasure therein; after which they returned to their palace and there abode in the fulness of enjoyment, till there came to them 63 the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies; and glory be to Him who changeth not neither ceaseth, and to whom everything returneth! And they also tell a tale of

16- ABU NOWAS WITH THE THREE BOYS AND THE CALIPH HARUN AL-RASHID.[82]

Abu Nowas one day shut himself up and, making ready a richly-furnished feast, collected for it meats of all kinds and of every colour that lips and tongue can desire. Then he went forth, to seek a minion worthy of such entertainment, saying, "Allah, my Lord and my Master, I beseech Thee to send me one who befitteth this banquet and who is fit to carouse with me this day!" Hardly had he made an end of speaking when he espied three youths handsome and beardless, as they were of the boys of Paradise,[83] differing in complexion but fellows in incomparable beauty; and all hearts yearned with desire to the swaying of their bending shapes, even to what saith the poet:—

I passed a beardless pair without compare ✿ And cried, "I love you, both you ferly fair!"

"Money'd?" quoth one: quoth I, "And lavish too;" ✿ Then said the fair pair, *Père, c'est notre affaire*.

Now Abu Nowas was given to these joys and loved to sport and make merry with fair boys and cull the rose from every brightly blooming cheek, even as saith the bard:—

Full many a reverend Shaykh feels sting of flesh, ✿ Loves pretty faces, shows at Pleasure's depot:

Awakes in Mosul,[84] land of purity; ✿ And all the day dreams only of Aleppo.[85]

So he accosted them with the salutation, and they returned his 64greeting with civility and all honour and would have gone their several ways, but he stayed them, repeating these couplets:—

Steer ye your steps to none but me ✿ Who hath a mine of luxury:—

Old wine that shines with brightest blee ✿ Made by the monk in monastery;

And mutton-meat the toothsomest ✿ And birds of all variety.

Then eat of these and drink of those ✿ Old wines that bring you jollity:

And have each other, turn by turn, ✿ Shampooing this my tool you see.[86]

Thereupon the youths were beguiled by his verses and consented to his wishes—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abu Nowas beguiled the youths with his verse, they consented to his wishes, saying, "We hear and obey;" and accompanied him to his lodging, where they found all ready that he had set forth in his couplets. They sat down and ate and drank and made merry awhile, after which they appealed to Abu Nowas to decide which of them was handsomest of face and shapeliest of form. So he pointed to one of them and, having kissed him twice over, recited the following verses:—

I'll ransom that beauty-spot with my soul; ✿ Where's it and where is a money-dole?[87]

Praise Him who hairless hath made that cheek ✿ And bid Beauty bide in that mole, that mole!

Then he pointed to another and, kissing his lips, repeated these couplets:—

And loveling weareth on his cheek a mole ✿ Like musk, which virgin camphor ne'er lets off it:

My peepers marvel such a contrast seeing; ✿ And cried the Mole to me, "Now bless the Prophet."[88]

65 Then he pointed to the third and, after kissing him half a score times repeated these couplets:—

Melted pure gold in silvern bowl to drain ✿ The youth, whose fingers wore a winey stain:

He with the drawers[89] served one cup of wine, ✿ And served his wandering eyes the other twain.

A loveling, of the sons of Turks,[90] a fawn ✿ Whose waist conjoins the double Mounts Honayn.[91]

Could Eve's corrupting daughters[92] tempt my heart ✿ Content with two-fold lure 'twould bear the bane.

Unto Diyar-i-Bakr ("maid-land"[93]) this one lures; ✿ That lures to two-mosqued cities of the plain.[94]

Now each of the youths had drunk two cups, and when it came to the turn of Abu Nowas, he took the goblet and repeated these couplets:—

Drink not strong wine save at the slender dearling's hand; ✿ Each like to other in all gifts the spirit grace:

For wine can never gladden toper's heart and soul, ✿ Unless the cup-boy show a bright and sparkling face.

Then he drank off his cup and the bowl went round, and when it came to Abu Nowas again, joyance got the mastery of him and he repeated these couplets:—

For cup-friends cup succeeding cup assign, ✿ Brimming with grape-juice, brought in endless line,

By hand of brown-lipped[95] Beauty who is sweet ✿ At wake as apple or musk finest fine.[96]

Drink not the wine except from hand of fawn ✿ Whose cheek to kiss is sweeter than the wine.

Presently the drink got into his noddle, drunkenness mastered him and he knew not hand from head, so that he lolled from 66 side to side in joy and inclined to the youths one and all, anon kissing them and anon embracing them leg overlying leg. And he showed no sense of sin or shame, but recited these couplets:—

None wotteth best joyance but generous youth ✿ When the pretty ones deign with him company keep:

This sings to him, sings to him that, when he wants ✿ A pick-me-up[97] lying there all of a heap:

And when of a loveling he needeth a kiss, ✿ He takes from his lips or a draught or a nip;

Heaven bless them! How sweetly my day with them sped; ✿ A wonderful harvest of pleasure I reap:
Let us drink our good liquor both watered and pure, ✿ And agree to swive all who dare slumber and sleep.

While they were in this deboshed state behold, there came a knocking at the door; so they bade him who knocked enter, and behold, it was the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid. When they saw him, they all rose and kissed ground before him; and Abu Nowas threw off the fumes of the wine for awe of the Caliph, who said to him, "Holla, Abu Nowas!" He replied, "Adsum, at thy service, O Commander of the Faithful, whom Allah preserve!" The Caliph asked, "What state is this?" and the poet answered, "O Prince of True Believers, my state indubitably dispenseth with questions." Quoth the Caliph, "O Abu Nowas, I have sought direction of Allah Almighty and have appointed thee Kazi of pimps and panders." Asked he, "Dost thou indeed invest me with that high office, O Commander of the Faithful?" and the Caliph answered "I do;" whereupon Abu Nowas rejoined, "O Commander of the Faithful, hast thou any suit to prefer to me?" Hereat the Caliph was wroth and presently turned away and left them, full of rage, and passed the night sore an-angered against Abu Nowas, who amid the party he had invited spent the merriest of nights and the jolliest and joyousest. And when daybreak dawned and the star of morn appeared in sheen and shone, he broke up the sitting and, dismissing the youths, donned his court-dress and leaving his house set out for the palace of the Caliph. Now it was the custom of the Commander of the Faithful, when the Divan broke up, to withdraw [67] to his sitting-saloon and summon thither his poets and cup-companions and musicians, each having his own place, which he might not overpass. So it happened that day, he retired to his saloon, and the friends and familiars came and seated themselves, each in his rank and degree. Presently, in walked Abu Nowas and was about to take his usual seat, when the Caliph cried to Masrur, the sworder, and bade him strip the poet of his clothes and bind an ass's packsaddle on his back and a halter about his head and a crupper under his rump and lead him round to all the lodgings of the slave-girls,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph commanded Masrur, the sworder, to strip Abu Nowas of his court-suit and bind an ass's packsaddle on his back and a halter about his head, and a crupper under his rump and lead him round to all the lodgings of the slave-girls, and the chambers of the Harim, that the women might make mock of him; then cut off his head and bring it to him. "Hearkening and obedience," replied Masrur and, doing with Abu Nowas as the Caliph had bidden him, led him round all the chambers whose number equalled the days of the year; but Abu Nowas was a funny fellow, so he made all the girls laugh with his buffooneries and each gave him something whereby he returned not save with a pocketful of

money. And while this was going on behold, Ja'afar the Barmecide, who had been absent on an important business for the Commander of the Faithful, entered and recognising the poet, albeit in this plight, said to him, "Holla, Abu Nowas!" He said, "Here at thy service, O our lord." Ja'afar asked, "What offence hast thou committed to bring this punishment on thee?" Thereupon he answered, "None whatsoever, except that I made our lord the Caliph a present of the best of my poetry and he presented me, in return, with the best of his raiment." When the Prince of True Believers heard this, he laughed, from a heart full of wrath,[98] and pardoned Abu Nowas, and also gave him a myriad of money. And they also recount the tale of

ABDALLAH BIN MA'AMAR WITH THE MAN OF BASSORAH AND HIS SLAVE-GIRL.

A certain man of Bassorah once bought a slave-girl and reared and educated her right well. Moreover, he loved her very dearly and spent all his substance in pleasuring and merry-making with her, till he had naught left and extreme poverty was sore upon him. So she said to him, "O my master, sell me; for thou needest my price and it maketh my heart ache to see thy sorry and want-full plight. If thou vend me and make use of my value, 'twill be better for thee than keeping me by thee, and haply Almighty Allah will ample thee and amend thy fortune." He agreed to this for the straitness of his case, and carried her to the bazar, where the broker offered her for sale to the Governor of Bassorah, by name Abdallah bin Ma'amar al-Taymi, and she pleased him. So he bought her, for five hundred dinars and paid the sum to her master; but when he took the money and was about to go away, the girl burst into tears and repeated these two couplets:—

May coins thou gainest joy in heart instil; ✿ For me remaineth naught save saddest ill:

I say unto my soul which sorely grieves, ✿ "Thy friend departeth an thou will or nill."

And when her master heard this, he groaned and replied in these couplets:—

Albeit this thy case lack all resource, ✿ Nor findest aught but death's doom, pardon still:

Evening and morning, thoughts of thee will dole ✿ Comfort to heart all woes and griefs full fill:

Peace be upon thee! meet we now no more ✿ Nor pair except at Ibn Ma'amar's will.

Now when Abdullah bin Ma'amar heard these verses and saw their affection, he exclaimed, "By Allah, I will not assist fate in separating you; for it is evident to me that ye two indeed love each other. So take the money and the damsel, O man, and Allah bless thee in both; for verily parting be grievous to lovers." So they kissed his hand and going away, ceased not to dwell together, till death did them part; and glory be to Him whom death over-taketh not! And amongst stories is that of

THE LOVERS OF THE BANU[99] OZRAH.

There was once, among the Banu 'Ozrah, a handsome and accomplished man, who was never a single day out of love, and it chanced that he became enamoured of a beauty of his own tribe and sent her many messages; but she ceased not to entreat him with cruelty and disdain; till, for stress of love and longing and desire and distraction, he fell sick of a sore sickness and took to his pillow and murdered sleep. His malady redoubled on him and his torments increased and he was well nigh dead when his case became known among the folk and his passion notorious——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the man took to his pillow and murdered sleep. So his case became known among the folk and his passion notorious; and his infirmity grew upon him and his pains redoubled till he was well nigh dead. His family and hers were urgent with her to visit him, but she refused, till he was at the point of death when, being told of this, she relented towards him and vouchsafed him a visit. As soon as he saw her, his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated from a broken heart:—

An, by thy life, pass thee my funeral train, ✿ A bier upborne upon the necks of four,

Wilt thou not follow it, and greet the grave ✿ Where shall my corpse be graved for evermore?

Hearing this, she wept with sore weeping and said to him, "By Allah, I suspected not that passion had come to such a pass with thee, as to cast thee into the arms of death! Had I wist of this, I had been favourable to thy wish, and thou shouldst have 70 had thy will." At this his tears streamed down even as the clouds rail rain, and he repeated this verse:—

She drew near whenas death was departing us, ✿ And deigned union grant when 'twas useless all.

Then he groaned one groan and died. So she fell on him, kissing him and weeping and ceased not weeping till she swooned away; and when she came to herself, she charged her people to bury her in his grave and with streaming eyes recited these two couplets:-

We lived on earth a life of fair content; ✿ And tribe and house and home of us were proud;

But Time in whirling flight departed us, ✿ To join us now in womb of earth and shroud.[100]

Then she fell again to weeping, nor gave over shedding tears and lamenting till she fainted away; and she lay three days, senseless. Then she died and was buried in his grave. This is one of the strange chances of love.[101] And I have heard related a tale of the

WAZIR OF AL-YAMAN AND HIS YOUNG BROTHER.

It is said that Badr al-Din, Wazir of Al-Yaman, had a young brother of singular beauty and kept strait watch over him; so he applied himself to seek a tutor for him and, coming upon a Shaykh of dignified and reverend aspect, chaste and religious, lodged him in a house next his own. This lasted a long time, and he used to come daily from his dwelling to that of Sáhib[102] Badr al-Din and teach the young brother. After a while, the old man's heart was taken with love for the youth, and longing grew upon him and his vitals were troubled, till one day, he bemoaned his case to the boy, who said, "What can I do, seeing that I 71 may not leave my brother night or day? and thou thyself seest how careful he is over me." Quoth the Shaykh, "My lodging adjoineth thine; so there will be no difficulty, when thy brother sleepeth, to rise and entering the privy, feign thyself asleep. Then come to the parapet[103] of the terrace-roof and I will receive thee on the other side of the wall; so shalt thou sit with me an eye-twinkling and return without thy brother's knowledge." "I hear and obey," answered the lad; and the tutor began to prepare gifts suitable to his degree. Now when a while of the night was past, he entered the water-closet and waited till his brother lay down on his bed and took patience till he was drowned in sleep, when he rose and going to the parapet of the terrace-roof, found standing there to await him the old man, who gave him his hand and carried him to the sitting-chamber, where he had made ready various dainties for his entertainment, and they sat down to carouse. Now it was the night of the full moon and, as they sat with the wine-cup going round, her rays shone upon them, and the governor fell to singing. But, whilst they were thus in joy and jollity and mirth and merriment, such as confoundeth the wit and the sight and defieth description, lo! the Wazir awoke and, missing his brother, arose in affright and found the door open. So he went up to the roof and hearing a noise of talk, climbed over the parapet to the adjoining terrace and saw a light shining from the lodging. He looked in from behind the wall, and espied his brother and his tutor sitting at carouse: but the Shaykh became aware of him and sang cup in hand, to a lively measure these couplets:—

He made me drain his wine of honeyed lips, ✿ Toasting with cheeks which rose and myrtle smother:

Then nighted in embrace, cheek to my cheek, ✿ A loveling midst mankind without another.

When the full moon arose on us and shone ✿ Pray she traduce us not to the big brother.

And it proved the perfect politeness of the Wazir Badr al-Din that, when he heard this, he said, "By Allah, I will not betray you!" And he went away and left them to their diversions. They also tell a tale concerning

THE LOVES OF THE BOY AND GIRL AT SCHOOL.

A free boy and a slave-girl once learnt together in school, and the boy fell passionately in love with the girl.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lad fell passionately in love with the slave-lass: so one day, when the other boys were heedless, he took her tablet[104] and wrote on it these two couplets:—

What sayest thou of him by sickness waste, ✿ Until he's clean distraught for love of thee?

Who in the transport of his pain complains, ✿ Nor can bear load of heart in secrecy?

Now when the girl took her tablet, she read the verses written thereon and understanding them, wept for ruth of him; then she wrote thereunder these two couplets:—

An if we behold a lover love-fordone ✿ Desiring us, our favours he shall see:

Yea, what he wills of us he shall obtain, ✿ And so befal us what befalling be.

Now it chanced that the teacher came in on them and taking the tablet, unnoticed, read what was written thereon. So he was moved to pity of their case and wrote on the tablet beneath those already written these two couplets addressed to the girl:—

73 Console thy lover, fear no consequence; ✿ He is daft with loving lowe's insanity;

But for the teacher fear not aught from him; ✿ Love-pain he learnèd long before learnt ye.

Presently it so happened that the girl's owner entered the school about the same time and, finding the tablet, read the above verses indited by the boy, the girl and the schoolmaster; and wrote under them these two couplets:—

May Allah never make you parting dree ✿ And be your censurer shamèd wearily!

But for the teacher ne'er, by Allah, eye ✿ Of mine beheld a bigger pimp than he!

Then he sent for the Kazi and witnesses and married them on the spot. Moreover, he made them a wedding-feast and treated them with exceeding munificence; and they ceased not abiding together in joy and happiness, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies. And equally pleasant is the story of

AL-MUTALAMMIS AND HIS WIFE UMAYMAH.

It is related that Al-Mutalammis[105] once fled from Al-Nu'uman bin Munzir[106] and was absent so long that folk deemed him dead. Now he had a beautiful wife, Umaymah by name, and her family urged her to marry again; but she refused, for that she loved her

husband Al-Mutalammis very dearly. However, they were urgent with her, because of the multitude of her suitors, and importuned her till she at last consented, albe reluctantly; and they espoused her to a man of her own tribe. Now on the night of the wedding, Al-Mutalammis came back and, hearing in the camp a noise of pipes and tabrets and seeing signs of a wedding festival, asked 74 some of the children what was the merry making, to which they replied, "They have married Umaymah wife of Al-Mutalammis, to such an one, and he goes in to her this night." When he heard this, he planned to enter the house amongst the mob of women and saw the twain seated on the bridal couch.[1071] By and by, the bridegroom came up to her, whereupon she sighed heavily and weeping, recited this couplet:—

Would Heaven I knew (but many are the shifts of joy and woe) ✿ In what far distant land thou art, my Mutalammis, oh!

Now Al-Mutalammis was a renowned poet; so he answered her saying:—

Right near at hand, Umaymah mine! whene'er the caravan ✿ Halted, I never ceased for thee to pine, I would thou know.

When the bridegroom heard this, he guessed how the case stood and went forth from among them in haste improvising:—

I was in bestest luck, but now my luck goes contrary: ✿ A hospitable house and room contain your loves, you two!

And he returned not but left the twain to their privacy. So Al-Mutalammis and his wife abode together in all comfort and solace of life and in all its joys and jollities till death parted them. And glory be to Him at whose command the earth and the heavens shall arise! And among other tales is that of

THE CALIPH HARUN AL-RASHID AND QUEEN ZUBAYDAH IN THE BATH.

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid loved the Lady Zubaydah with exceeding love and laid out for her a pleasaunce, wherein he made a great tank and set thereabouts a screen of trees and led thither water from all sides; hence the trees grew and interlaced over the basin so densely, that one could go in and wash, without being 75 seen of any, for the thickness of the leafage. It chanced, one day, that Queen Zubaydah entered the garden and, coming to the swimming-bath,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Queen Zubaydah entered the garden one day and, coming to the swimming-bath, gazed upon its goodliness; and the sheen of the water and the overshading of the trees pleased her. Now it was a day of exceeding heat; so she doffed her clothes and, entering the tank, which was not deep enough to cover the whole person, fell to pouring the water over herself from an ewer

of silver. It also happened that the Caliph heard she was in the pool; so he left his palace and came down to spy upon her through the screen of the foliage. He stood behind the trees and espied her mother-nude, showing everything that is kept hidden. Presently, she became aware of him and turning, saw him behind the trees and was ashamed that he should see her naked. So she laid her hands on her parts, but the Mount of Venus escaped from between them, by reason of its greatness and plumpness; and the Caliph at once turned and went away, wondering and reciting this couplet:—

I looked on her with loving eyne ✿ And grew anew my old repine:

But he knew not what to say next; so he sent for Abu Nowas and said to him, "Make me a piece of verse commencing with this line." "I hear and obey," replied the poet and in an eye-twinkling extemporised these couplets:—

I looked on her with longing eyne ✿ And grew anew my old repine

For the gazelle, who captured me ✿ Where the two lotus-trees incline:

There was the water poured on it ✿ From ewer of the silvern mine;

And seen me she had hidden it ✿ But 'twas too plump for fingers fine.

Would Heaven that I were on it, ✿ An hour, or better two hours, li'en.[108]

76 Thereupon the Commander of the Faithful smiled and made him a handsome present and he went away rejoicing. And I have heard another story of

HARUN AL-RASHID AND THE THREE POETS.

The Prince of True Believers, Caliph Harun al-Rashid, was exceeding restless one night; so he rose and walked about his palace, till he happened on a handmaid overcome with wine. Now he was prodigiously enamoured of this damsel; so he played with her and pulled her to him, whereupon her zone fell down and her petticoat-trousers were loosed and he besought her of amorous favour. But she said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful wait till to-morrow night, for I am unprepared for thee, knowing not of thy coming." So he left her and went away. But, when the morrow showed its light and the sun shone bright, he sent a page to her saying, "The Commander of the Faithful is about to visit thine apartment;" but she replied, "Day doth away with the promise of night." So he said to his courtiers, make me somewhat of verse, introducing these words, "The promise of Night is effaced by Day." Answered they, "We hear and obey," and Al-Rakáshi[109] came forward and recited the following couplets:—

By Allah, couldst thou but feel my pain, ✿ Thy rest had turned and had fled away.

77 Hath left me in sorrow and love distraught, ✿ Unseen and unseeing, that fairest may:

She promised me grace, then jilted and said, ✿ "The promise of night is effaced by day!"

Then Abu Mus'ab came forward and recited these couplets:—

When wilt thou be wise and love-heat allay ✿ That from food and sleeping so leads astray?
Suffices thee not ever weeping eye, ✿ And vitals on fire when thy name they say?
He must smile and laugh and in pride must cry ✿ "The promise of Night is effaced by Day."

Last came Abu Nowas and recited the following couplets:—

As love waxt longer less met we tway ✿ And fell out, but ended the useless fray;
One night in the palace I found her fou'; ✿ Yet of modesty still there was some display:
The veil from her shoulders had slipt; and showed ✿ Her loosened trousers Love's seat and stay:
And rattled the breezes her huge hind cheeks ✿ And the branch where two little pomegranates lay:
Quoth I, "Give me tryst;" whereto quoth she ✿ "To-morrow the fane shall wear best array:"
Next day I asked her, "Thy word?" Said she ✿ "The promise of Night is effaced by Day."

The Caliph bade give a myriad of money each to Al-Rakashi and Abu Mus'ab, but bade strike off the head of Abu Nowas, saying, "Thou wast with us yesternight in the palace." Said he, "By Allah, I slept not but in my own house! I was directed to what I said by thine own words as to the subject of the verse; and indeed quoth Almighty Allah (and He is the truest of all speakers):—As for poets (devils pursue them!) dost thou not see that they rove as bereft of their senses through every valley and that they say that which they do not?"[110] So the Caliph forgave him and gave him two myriads of money. And another tale is that of

MUS'AB BIN AL-ZUBAYR AND AYISHAH DAUGHTER OF TALHAH.

It is told of Mus'ab bin al-Zubayr[111] that he met in Al-Medinah Izzah, who was one of the shrewdest of women, and said to her, "I have a mind to marry Ayishah[112] daughter of Talhah, and I should like thee to go her-wards and spy out for me how she is made." So she went away and returning to Mus'ab, said, "I have seen her, and her face is fairer than health; she hath large and well-opened eyes and under them a nose straight and smooth as a cane; oval cheeks and a mouth like a cleft pomegranate, a neck as a silver ewer and below it a bosom with two breasts like twin-pomegranates and further down a slim waist and a slender stomach with a navel therein as it were a casket of ivory, and back parts like a hummock of sand; and plumply rounded thighs and calves like columns of alabaster; but I saw her feet to be large, and thou wilt fall short with her in time of need." Upon this report he married her——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Izzah this wise reported of Ayishah bint Talhah, Mus'ab married her and went in to her. And presently Izzah

invited Ayishah and the women of the tribe Kuraysh to her house, when Ayishah sang these two couplets with Mus'ab standing by:—

And the lips of girls, that are perfume sweet; ✿ So nice to kiss when with smiles they greet:

Yet ne'er tasted I them, but in thought of him; ✿ And by thought the Ruler rules worldly seat.

The night of Mus'ab's going in unto her, he departed not from her, till after seven bouts; and on the morrow, a freedwoman of his met him and said to him, "May I be thy sacrifice! Thou 79art perfect, even in this." And a certain woman said, "I was with Ayishah, when her husband came in to her, and she lusted for him; so he fell upon her and she snarked and snorted and made use of all manner of wondrous movements and marvellous new inventions, and I the while within hearing." So, when he came out from her, I said to her, "How canst thou do thus with thy rank and nobility and condition, and I in thy house?" Quoth she, "Verily a woman should bring her husband all of which she is mistress, by way of excitement and rare buckings and wrigglings and motitations.[113] What dislikest thou of this?" And I answered "I would have this by nights." Rejoined she, "Thus is it by day and by night I do more than this; for when he seeth me, desire stirreth him up and he falleth in heat; so he putteth it out to me and I obey him, and it is as thou seest." And there also hath reached me an account of

ABU AL-ASWAD AND HIS SLAVE-GIRL.

Abu al-Aswad bought a native-born slave-girl, who was blind of an eye, and she pleased him; but his people decried her to him; whereat he wondered and, turning the palms of his hands upwards,[114] recited these two couplets:—

They find me fault with her where I default ne'er find, ✿ Save haply that a speck in either eye may show:

But if her eyes have fault, of fault her form hath none, ✿ Slim-built above the waist and heavily made below.

And this is also told of

HARUN AL-RASHID AND THE TWO SLAVE-GIRLS.

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid lay one night between two slave-girls, one from Al-Medinah and the other from Cufa and the Cufite rubbed his hands, whilst the Medinite rubbed his feet and made his concern[115] stand up. Quoth the Cufite, "I see thou wouldst keep the whole of the stock-in-trade to thyself; give me my share of it." And the other answered, "I have been told by Málik, on the authority of Hishám ibn Orwah,[116] who had it of his (grand) father, that the Prophet said, "Whoso quickeneth the dead, the dead belongeth to him and is his."" But the Cufite took her unawares and, pushing her away, seized it all in her own hand and said, "Al-A'amash telleth us, on the authority of Khaysamah, who had it of Abdallah bin Mas'úd, that the Prophet declared, Game belongeth to him who taketh it, not to him who raiseth it." And this is also related of

THE CALIPH HARUN AL-RASHID AND THE THREE SLAVE-GIRLS.

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid once slept with three slave-girls, a Meccan, a Medinite and an Irakite. The Medinah girl put her hand to his yard and handled it, whereupon it rose and the Meccan sprang up and drew it to herself. Quoth the other, "What is this unjust aggression? A tradition was related to me by Málik[117] after Al-Zuhri, after Abdallah ibn Sálim, after Sa'íd bin Zayd, that the Apostle of Allah (whom Allah bless and keep!) said:—Whoso enquickeneth a dead land, it is his." And the Meccan answered, "It is related to us by Sufyán, from Abu 81 Zanád, from Al-A'araj, from Abu Horayrah, that the Apostle of Allah said:—"The quarry is his who catcheth it, not his who starteth it."" But the Irak girl pushed them both away and taking it to herself, said, "This is mine, till your contention be decided." And they tell a tale of

THE MILLER AND HIS WIFE.

There was a miller, who had an ass to turn his mill; and he was married to a wicked wife, whom he loved, while she hated him because she was sweet upon a neighbour, who misliked her and held aloof from her. One night, the miller saw, in his sleep, one who said to him, "Dig in such a spot of the ass's round in the mill, and thou shalt find a hoard." When he awoke, he told his wife the vision and bade her keep the secret; but she told her neighbour——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the miller's wife told the secret to the neighbour whom she loved, thinking to win his favour; and he agreed with her to come to her by night. So he came and they dug in the mill and found the treasure and took it forth. Then he asked her, "How shall we do with this?" and she answered; "We will divide it into two halves and will share it equally between us, and do thou leave thy wife and I will cast about to rid me of my husband. Then shalt thou marry me and, when we are conjoined, we will join the two halves of the treasure one to other, and all will be in our hands." Quoth he, "I fear lest Satan seduce thee and thou take some man other than myself; for gold in the house is like the sun in the world. I reck, therefore, it were right that the money be all in my hands, so thou give thy whole mind to getting free of thy husband and coming to me." Quoth she, "I fear even as thou fearest, nor will I yield up my part to thee; for it was I directed thee to it." When he heard this, greed of gain prompted 82 him to kill her; so he slew her and threw her body into the empty hoard-hole; but day overtook him and hindered him from covering it up; he therefore took the money and went his way. Now after a while

the miller awoke and, missing his wife, went into the mill, where he fastened the ass to the beam and shouted to it. It went on a little, then stopped; whereupon he beat it grievously; but the more he bashed it, the more it drew back; for it was affrighted at the dead woman and could not go forward. Thereupon the Miller, unknowing what hindered the donkey, took out a knife and goaded it again and again, but still it would not budge. Then he was wroth with it, knowing not the cause of its obstinacy, and drove the knife into its flanks, and it fell down dead. But when the sun rose, he saw his donkey lying dead and likewise his wife in the place of the treasure, and great was his rage and sore his wrath for the loss of his hoard and the death of his wife and his ass. All this came of his letting his wife into his secret and not keeping it to himself.[118] And I have heard this tale of

THE SIMPLETON AND THE SHARPER.

A certain simpleton was once walking along, haling his ass after him by the halter, when a pair of sharpers saw him and one said to his fellow, "I will take that ass from yonder wight." Asked the other, "How wilt thou do that?" "Follow me and I will show thee how," answered the first. So the cony-catcher went up to the ass and, loosing it from the halter, gave the beast to his fellow; then he haltered his own head and followed Tom Fool till he knew the other had got clean off with the ass, when he stood still. The oaf haled at the halter, but the rascal stirred not; so he turned and seeing the halter on a man's neck, said to him, "What art thou?" Quoth the sharper, "I am thine ass and my story is a wondrous one and 'tis this. Know that I have a pious old mother and came in to her one day, drunk; and she said to 83 me:—O my son, repent to the Almighty of these thy transgressions. But I took my staff and beat her, whereupon she cursed me and Allah changed me into an ass and caused me fall into thy hands, where I have remained till this moment. However, to-day, my mother called me to mind and her heart yearned towards me; so she prayed for me and the Lord restored me to my former shape amongst the sons of Adam." Cried the silly one, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Allah upon thee, O my brother, acquit me of what I have done with thee in the way of riding and so forth." Then he let the cony-catcher go and returned home, drunken with chagrin and concern as with wine. His wife asked him, "What aileth thee and where is the donkey?"; and he answered, "Thou knowest not what was this ass; but I will tell thee." So he told her the story, and she exclaimed, "Alack and alas for the punishment we shall receive from Almighty Allah! How could we have used a man as a beast of burden, all this while?" And she gave alms by way of atonement and prayed pardon of Heaven.[119] Then the man abode awhile at home, idle and feckless, till she said to him, "How long wilt thou sit at home doing naught? Go to the market and buy us an ass and ply thy work with it." Accordingly, he went to the market and stopped by the ass-stand, where behold, he saw his own ass for sale. So he went up to it and clapping

his mouth to its ear, said to it, “Woe to thee, thou ne’er-do-well! Doubtless thou hast been getting drunk again and beating thy mother! But, by Allah, I will never buy thee more!”[120] And he left it and went away. And they tell a tale concerning

THE KAZI ABU YUSUF WITH HARUN AL-RASHID AND QUEEN ZUBAYDAH.

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid went up one noontide to his couch, to lie down; and mounting, found upon the bed-clothes semen freshly emitted; whereat he was startled and troubled with sore trouble. So he called the Lady Zubaydah and said to her, “What is that spilt on the bed?” She looked at it and replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, it is semen.” Quoth he, “Tell me truly what this meaneth or I will lay violent hands on thee forthright.” Quoth she, “By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, indeed I know not how it came there and I am guiltless of that whereof thou suspectest me.” So he sent for the Kazi Abú Yúsuf and acquainted him of the case. The Judge raised his eyes to the ceiling and, seeing a crack therein, said to the Caliph, “O Commander of the Faithful, in very sooth the bat hath seed like that of a man,[121] and this is bat’s semen.” Then he called for a spear and thrust it into the crevice, whereupon down fell the bat. In this manner the Caliph’s suspicions were dispelled——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Kazi Abu Yusuf took the spear and thrust it into the crevice, down fell the bat, and thus the Caliph’s suspicions were dispelled and the innocence of Zubaydah was made manifest; whereat she gave loud and liberal vent to her joy and promised Abu Yusuf a magnificent reward. Now there were with her certain delicious fruits, out of their season, and she knew of others in the garden; 85 so she asked Abu Yusuf, “O Imam of the Faith, which wouldest thou rather have of the two kinds of fruits, those that are here or those that are not here?” And he answered, “Our code forbiddeth us to pronounce judgment on the absent; wheneas they are present, we will give our decision.” So she let bring the two kinds of fruits before him; and he ate of both. Quoth she, “What is the difference between them?” and quoth he, “As often as I think to praise one kind, the adversary putteth in its claim.” The Caliph laughed at his answer[122] and made him a rich present; and Zubaydah also gave him what she had promised him, and he went away, rejoicing. See, then the virtues of this Imám and how at his hands were manifest the truth and the innocence of the Lady Zubaydah. And amongst other stories is that of

THE CALIPH AL-HAKIM[123] AND THE MERCHANT.

The Caliph Al-Hákim bi-Amri'llah was riding out in state procession one day, when he passed along a garden, wherein he saw a man, surrounded by negro-slaves and eunuchs. He asked him for a draught of water, and the man gave him to drink, saying, "Belike, the Commander of the Faithful will honour me by alighting in this my garden." So the Caliph dismounted and with his suite entered the garden; whereupon the said man brought out to them an hundred rugs and an hundred leather mats and an hundred cushions; and set before them an hundred dishes of fruits, an hundred bowls of sweetmeats and an hundred jars of sugared sherbets; at which the Caliph marvelled with much amaze and said to his host, "O man, verily this thy case is wondrous: didst thou know of our coming and make this preparation for us?" He replied, "No, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I knew not of thy coming and I am a merchant of the rest of thy subjects; but I have an hundred concubines; so, when the Commander of the Faithful honoured me by alighting with me, I sent 86 to each of them, bidding her send me her morning-meal in the garden. So they sent me each of her furniture and the surplus of her meat and drink: and every day each sendeth me a dish of meat and another of cooling marinades, also a platter of fruits and a bowl of sweetmeats and a jar of sherbet. This is my noonday dinner, nor have I added aught thereto for thee." Then the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Hakim bi-Amri'llah prostrated himself in thanksgiving to the Almighty (extolled and exalted be His name!) and said, "Praised be Allah, who hath been so bountiful to one of our lieges, that he entertaineth the Caliph and his host, without making ready for them; nay, he feedeth them with the surplusage of his day's provision!" Then he sent for all the dirhams in the treasury, that had been struck that year (and they were in number three thousand and seven hundred thousand); nor did he mount till the money came, when he gave it to the merchant, saying, "Use this as thy state may require; and thy generosity deserveth more than this." Then he took horse and rode away. And I have heard a story concerning

KING KISRA ANUSHIRWAN[124] AND THE VILLAGE DAMSEL.

The just King, Kisrà Anúshirwán one day rode forth to the chase and, in pursuit of a deer, became separated from his suite. Presently, he caught sight of a hamlet near hand and being sore athirst, he made for it and presenting himself at the door of a house that lay by the wayside, asked for a draught of water. So a damsel came out and looked at him; then, going back into the house, pressed the juice from a single sugar-cane into a bowl and mixed it with water; after which she strewed on the top some

scented stuff, as it were dust, and carried it to the King. Thereupon he seeing in it what resembled dust, drank it, little by little, till he came to the end; when said he to her, "O damsel, the drink is good, and how sweet it had been but for this dust in it 87 that troubleth it." Answered she, "O guest, I put in that powder for a purpose;" and he asked, "And why didst thou thus?"; so she replied, "I saw thee exceeding thirsty and feared that thou wouldst drain the whole at one draught and that this would do thee mischief; and but for this dust that troubled the drink so hadst thou done." The Just King wondered at her words, knowing that they came of her wit and good sense, and said to her, "From how many sugar canes didst thou express this draught?" "One," answered she; whereat Anushirwan marvelled and, calling for the register of the village taxes, saw that its assessment was but little and bethought him to increase it, on his return to his palace, saying in himself, "A village where they get this much juice out of one sugar-cane, why is it so lightly taxed?" He then left the village and pursued his chase; and, as he came back at the end of the day, he passed alone by the same door and called again for drink; whereupon the same damsel came out and, knowing him at a look, went in to fetch him water. It was some time before she returned and Anushirwan wondered thereat and said to her, "Why hast thou tarried?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Anushirwan hurried the damsel and asked her, "Why hast thou tarried?" she answered, "Because a single sugar-cane gave not enough for thy need; so I pressed three; but they yielded not so much as did one before." Rejoined he, "What is the cause of that?"; and she replied, "The cause of it is that when the Sultan's[125] mind is changed against a folk, their prosperity ceaseth and their good waxeth less." So Anushirwan laughed and dismissed from his mind that which he had purposed against the villagers. Moreover, he took the damsel to wife then and there, being pleased with her much wit and acuteness and the excellence of her speech. And they tell another tale of the

WATER-CARRIER[126] AND THE GOLDSMITH'S WIFE.

There was once, in the city of Bokhara, a water-carrier, who used to carry water to the house of a goldsmith and had done this thirty years. Now that goldsmith had a wife of exceeding beauty and loveliness, brilliancy and perfect grace; and she was withal renowned for piety, chastity and modesty. One day the water-carrier came, as of custom, and poured the water into the cisterns. Now the woman was standing in the midst of the court; so he went close up to her and taking her hand, stroked it and pressed it, then went away and left her. When her husband came home from the bazar,

she said to him, “I would have thee tell me what thing thou hast done in the market this day, to anger Almighty Allah.” Quoth he, “I have done nothing to offend the Lord.” “Nay,” rejoined she, “but, by Allah, thou hast indeed done something to anger Him; and, unless thou tell me the whole truth, I will not abide in thy house, and thou shalt not see me, nor will I see thee.” So he confessed, “I will tell thee the truth of what I did this day. It so chanced that, as I was sitting in my shop, as of wont, a woman came up to me and bade me make her a bracelet of gold. Then she went away and I wrought her a bracelet and laid it aside. But when she returned and I brought her out the bracelet, she put forth her hand and I clasped the bracelet on her wrist; and I wondered at the whiteness of her hand and the beauty of her wrist, which would captivate any beholder; and I recalled what the poet saith:—

Her fore-arms, dight with their bangles, show ✿ Like fire ablaze on the waves a-flow;

As by purest gold were the water girt, ✿ And belted around by a living lowe.

So I took her hand and pressed it and squeezed it.” Said the woman, “Great God! Why didst thou this ill thing? Know that the water-carrier, who hath come to our house these thirty years, nor sawst thou ever any treason in him, took my hand this day 89 and pressed and squeezed it.” Said her husband, “O woman, let us crave pardon of Allah! Verily, I repent of what I did, and do thou ask forgiveness of the Lord for me.” She cried, “Allah pardon me and thee, and receive us into his holy keeping.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the goldsmith’s wife cried out, “Allah pardon me and thee, and receive us into his holy keeping!” And on the next day, the water-carrier came in to the jeweller’s wife and, throwing himself at her feet, grovelled in the dust and besought pardon of her, saying, “O my lady, acquit me of that which Satan deluded me to do; for it was he that seduced me and led me astray.” She answered, “Go thy ways, the sin was not in thee, but in my husband, for that he did what he did in his shop, and Allah hath retaliated upon him in this world.” And it is related that the goldsmith, when his wife told him how the water-carrier had used her, said, “Tit for tat, and blow for blow!; had I done more the water-carrier had done mo’e”;—which became a current byword among the folk. Therefore it behoveth a wife to be both outward and inward with her husband; contenting herself with little from him, if he cannot give her much, and taking pattern by Ayishah the Truthful and Fatimah the virgin mother (Allah Almighty accept of them twain!), that she may be of the company of the righteous ancestry.[127] And I have heard the following tale of

KHUSRAU AND SHIRIN AND THE FISHERMAN.

King Khusrau[128] Shahinshah of Persia loved fish; and one day, as he sat in his saloon, he and Shirin his wife, there came a fisherman, with a great fish, and he laid it before the King, who was pleased and ordered the man four thousand dirhams.[129] Thereupon Shirin said to the King, "Thou hast done ill." Asked he, "And why?", and she answered, "Because if, after this, thou give one of thy courtiers a like sum, he will disdain it and say:—He hath but given me the like of what he gave the fisherman. And if thou give him less, the same will say:—He despiseth me and giveth me less than he gave the fisherman." Rejoined Khusrau, "Thou art right, but it would dishonour a king to go back on his gift; and the thing is done." Quoth Shirin, "If thou wilt, I will contrive thee a means to get it back from him." Quoth he, "How so?"; and she said, "Call back, if thou so please, the fisherman and ask him if the fish be male or female. If he say, Male, say thou, We want a female, and if he say, Female, say, We want a male." So the King sent for the fisherman, who was a man of wit and acuteness, and said to him, "Is this fish male or female?" whereupon the fisherman kissed the ground and answered, "This fish is an hermaphrodite,[130] neither male nor female." Khusrau laughed at his clever reply and ordered him other four thousand dirhams. So the fisherman went to the treasurer and, taking his eight thousand dirhams, put them in a sack he had with him. Then, throwing it over his shoulder, he was going away, when he dropped a dirham; so he laid the bag off his back and stooped down to pick it up. Now the King 91 and Shirin were looking on, and the Queen said, "O King, didst thou note the meanness of the man, in that he must needs stoop down to pick up the one dirham, and could not bring himself to leave it for any of the King's servants?" When the King heard these words, he was exceeding wroth with the fisherman and said, "Thou art right, O Shirin!" So he called the man back and said to him, "Thou low-minded carle! Thou art no man! How couldst thou put the bag with all this money off thy back and bend thee groundwards to pick up the one dirham and grudge to leave it where it fell?" Thereupon the fisherman kissed the earth before him and answered, "May Allah prolong the King's life! Indeed, I did not pick up the dirham off the ground because of its value in my eyes; but I raised it off the earth because on one of its faces is the likeness of the King and on the other his name; and I feared lest any should unwittingly set foot upon it, thus dishonouring the name and presentment of the King, and I be blamed for this offence." The King wondered at his words and approved of his wit and shrewdness, and ordered him yet other four thousand dirhams. Moreover, he bade cry abroad in his kingdom, saying, "It behoveth none to be guided by women's counsel; for whoso followeth their advice, loseth, with his one dirham, other twain."[131] And here is the tale they tell of

YAHYA BIN KHALID THE BARMECIDE AND THE POOR MAN.

Yahya bin Khálid the Barmecide was returning home, one day, from the Caliph's palace, when he saw, at the gate of his mansion, a man who rose as he drew near and saluted him, saying, "O Yahyá, I am in sore need of that which is in thy hand, and I make Allah my intermediary with thee." So Yahya caused a place to be set apart for him in his house and bade his treasurer carry him a thousand dirhams every day and ordered that his diet be of the choicest of his own meat. The man abode in this case a whole month, at the end of which time, having received in all thirty thousand dirhams, and fearing lest Yahya should take the money from him, because of the greatness of the sum, he departed by stealth——And Shahrazad 92 perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the man, taking with him the money, departed by stealth. But when they told Yahya of this, he said, "By Allah, though he had tarried with me to the end of his days, yet had I not stinted him of my largesse nor cut off from him the bounties of my hospitality!" For, indeed, the excellences of the Barmecides were past count nor can their virtues be committed to description, especially those of Yahya bin Khalid, for he was an Ocean[132] of noble qualities, even as saith the poet of him:—

I asked of Bounty, "Art thou free?" Quoth she, ✿ "No, I am slave to Yahyá Khálid-son!"
"Boughten?" asked I. "Allah forfend," quoth she, ✿ "By heirship, sire to sire's transmission!"

And the following is related of

MOHAMMED AL-AMIN AND THE SLAVE-GIRL.

Ja'afar bin Musá al-Hádi[133] once had a slave-girl, a lutist, called Al-Badr al-Kabír, than whom there was not in her time a fairer of face nor shapelier of shape nor a more elegant of manners nor a more accomplished in the art of singing and striking the strings; she was indeed perfect in beauty and extreme in every charm. Now Mohammed al-Amín,[134] son of Zubaydah, heard of her and was urgent with Ja'afar to sell her 93 to him; but he replied, "Thou knowest it beseemeth not one of my rank to sell slave-girls nor set prices on concubines; but were she not a rearling I would send her to thee, as a gift, nor grudge her to thee." And Mohammed al-Amin, some days after this went to Ja'afar's house, to make merry; and the host set before him that which it behoveth to set before true friends and bade the damsel Al-Badr al-Kabir sing to him and gladden him. So she tuned the lute and sang with a ravishing melody; whilst Mohammed al-Amin fell to drinking and jollity and bade the cupbearers ply Ja'afar with much wine, till they made him drunken, when he took the damsel and

carried her to his own house, but laid not a finger on her. And when the morrow dawned he bade invite Ja'afar; and when he came, he set wine before him and made the girl sing to him, from behind the curtain. Ja'afar knew her voice and was angered at this, but, of the nobleness of his nature and the magnanimity of his mind he showed no change. Now when the carousal was at an end, Al-Amin commanded one of his servants to fill the boat, wherein Ja'afar had come, with dirhams and dinars and all manner of jewels and jacinths and rich raiment and goods galore. So he laid therein a thousand myriads of money and a thousand fine pearls, each worth twenty thousand dirhams; nor did he give over loading the barge with all manner of things precious and rare, till the boatmen cried out for help, saying, "The boat can't hold any more;" whereupon he bade them carry all this to Ja'afar's palace. Such are the exploits of the magnanimous, Allah have mercy on them! And a tale is related of

THE SONS OF YAHYA BIN KHALID AND SA'ID BIN SALIM AL-BAHILI.

(Quoth Sa'íd bin Sálim al-Báhilí[135]), I was once in very narrow case, during the days of Harun al-Rashid, and debts accumulated upon me, burdening my back, and these I had no means of discharging. I was at my wits' end what to do, for my doors were blocked up with creditors and I was without cease importuned for payment by claimants, who dunned me in crowds till at last I was sore perplexed and troubled. So I betook myself to Abdallah bin 94 Málik al-Khuza'í[136] and besought him to extend the hand of aid with his judgment and direct me of his good counsel to the door of relief; and he said, "None can save thee from this thy strait and sorrowful state save the Barmecides." Quoth I, "Who can brook their pride and put up patiently with their arrogant pretensions?" and quoth he, "Thou wilt put up with all this for the bettering of thy case."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdallah ibn Malik al-Khuza'i said to Sa'id bin Salim, "Thou wilt put up with all this for the bettering of thy case." So I left him suddenly (continued Sa'id) and went straight to Al-Fazl and Ja'afar, sons of Yahyá bin Khálid, to whom I related my circumstances; whereto they replied, "Allah give thee His aid, and render thee by His bounties independent of His creatures and vouchsafe thee abundant weal and bestow on thee what shall suffice thee, without the need of any but Himself; for whatso He willeth that He can, and He is gracious with His servants and knoweth their wants." So I went out from the twain and returned to Abdallah, with straitened breast and mind perplexed and heavy of heart, and repeated to him what they had said. Quoth he, "Thou wouldst do well to abide

with us this day, that we may see what Allah Almighty will decree." So I sat with him awhile, when lo! up came my servant, who said to me, "O my lord, there are at our door many laden mules, and with them a man, who says he is the agent of Al-Fazl and Ja'afar bin Yahya." Quoth Abdallah, "I trust that relief is come to thee: rise up and go see what is the matter." So I left him and, hastening to my house, found at the door a man who gave me a note wherein was written the following:—"After thou hadst been with us and we heard thy case, we betook ourselves to the Caliph and informed him that ill condition had reduced thee to the humiliation of begging; whereupon he ordered us to supply thee with a thousand thousand dirhams from the Treasury. We represented to him: The debtor will spend this money in paying off creditors and wiping off debt; whence then shall he provide for his subsistence? So he ordered 95 thee other three hundred thousand, and each of us hath also sent thee, of his proper wealth, a thousand thousand dirhams: so that thou hast now three thousand thousand and three hundred thousand dirhams wherewithal to order and amend thine estate." See, then, the munificence of these magnificos: Almighty Allah have mercy on them! And a tale is told of

THE WOMAN'S TRICK AGAINST HER HUSBAND.

A man brought his wife a fish one Friday and, bidding her cook it against the end of the congregational prayers, went out to his craft and business. Meanwhile in came her friend who bade her to a wedding at his house; so she agreed and laying the fish in a jar of water, went off with him and was absent a whole week till the Friday following;[137] whilst her husband sought her from house to house and enquired after her; but none could give him any tidings of her. Now on the next Friday she came home and he fell foul of her; but she brought out to him the fish alive from the jar and assembled the folk against him and told them her tale.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the woman brought out the fish alive from the water-jar and assembled the folk against her husband, and told them her tale. He also told his; but they credited him not and said, "It cannot be that the fish should have remained alive all this while." So they proved him mad and imprisoned him and mocked at him, whereupon he shed tears in floods and recited these two couplets:—

Old hag, of high degree in filthy life, ✿ Whose face her monstrous lewdness witnesses.

When menstruous she bawds; when clean she whores; ✿ And all her time bawd or adulteress is.

And a tale is related of the



DEVOUT WOMAN AND THE TWO WICKED ELDERS.[138]

There was in times of yore and in ages long gone before, a virtuous woman among the children of Israel, who was pious and devout and used every day to go out to the place of prayer, first entering a garden, which adjoined thereto, and there making the minor ablution. Now there were in this garden two old men, its keepers, and both Shaykhs fell in love with her and sought her favours; but she refused, whereupon said they, "Unless thou yield thy body to us, we will bear witness against thee of fornication." Quoth she, "Allah will preserve me from your frowardness!" Then they opened the

garden-gate and cried out, and the folk came to them from all places, saying "What aileth you?" Quoth they, "We found this damsel in company with a youth who was doing lewdness with her; but he escaped from our hands." Now it was the wont of the people of those days to expose adulterer and adulteress to public reproach for three days, and after stone them. So they cried her name in the public streets for three days, whilst the two elders came up to her daily and, laying their hands on her head, said, "Praised be Allah who hath sent down on thee His righteous indignation!" Now on the fourth day, when they bore her away to stone her, they were followed by a lad named Daniel, who was then only twelve years old, and this was to be the first of his miracles (upon our Prophet and upon him be blessing and peace!). And he ceased not following them to the place of execution, till he came up with them and said to them, "Hasten not to stone her, till I judge between them." So they set him a chair and he sat down and summoned the old men separately. (Now he was the first ever separated witnesses.) Then said he to the first, "What sawest thou?"[139] So he repeated to him his story, and Daniel asked, "In what part of the garden did this befal?" 97 and he answered, "On the eastern side, under a pear-tree." Then he called the other old man and asked him the same question, and he replied, "On the western side of the garden, under an apple-tree." Meanwhile the damsel stood by, with her hands and eyes raised heavenwards, imploring the Lord for deliverance. Then Allah Almighty sent down His blasting leven-fire upon the elders and consumed them, and on this wise the Lord made manifest the innocence of the damsel. Such was the first of the miracles of the Prophet Daniel, on whom be blessing and peace! And they relate a tale of

JA'AFAR THE BARMECIDE AND THE OLD BADAWI.

The Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, went out one day, with Abu Ya'Kúb the cup-companion[140] and Ja'afar the Barmecide and Abu Nowas, into the desert, where they fell in with an old man, propt against his ass. The Caliph bade Ja'afar learn of him whence he came; so he asked him, "Whence comest thou?" and he answered, "From Bassorah."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ja'afar asked the man, "Whence comest thou?"; he answered "From Bassorah." Quoth Ja'afar, "And whither goest thou?" Quoth the other, "To Baghdad." Then Ja'afar enquired "And what wilt thou do there?" and the old man replied, "I go to seek medicine for my eye." Said the Caliph, "O Ja'afar, make thou sport with him," and answered Ja'afar, "I shall hear what I shall exceedingly mislike.[141]" But Al-Rashid rejoined, "I charge thee on my authority, jest with him." Thereupon Ja'afar said to the Badawi, "If I prescribe thee a

medicine that shall profit thee, what wilt thou give me in return?" Quoth the other, "Allah 98 Almighty will requite the kindness with what is better for thee than any requital of mine." Continued Ja'afar, "Now lend me an ear and I will give thee a prescription, which I have given to none but thee." "What is that?" asked the Badawi; and Ja'afar answered, "Take three ounces of wind-breaths and the like of sunbeams and the same of moonshine and as much of lamp-light; mix them well together and let them lie in the wind three months. Then place them three months in a mortar without a bottom and pound them to fine powder and after trituration set them in a cleft platter, and let it stand in the wind other three months; after which use of this medicine three drachms every night in thy sleep, and, Inshallah! thou shalt be healed and whole." Now when the Badawi heard this, he stretched himself out to full length on the donkey's back and let fly a terrible loud fart[1142] and said to Ja'afar, "Take this fart in payment of thy prescription. When I have followed it, if Allah grant me recovery, I will give thee a slave-girl, who shall serve thee in thy lifetime a service, wherewith Allah shall cut short thy term; and when thou diest and the Lord hurrieth thy soul to hell-fire, she shall blacken thy face with her skite, of her mourning for thee, and shall keen and beat her face, saying:—O frosty-beard, what a fool thou wast[1143]?" Thereupon Harun al-Rashid laughed till he fell backward, and ordered the Badawi three thousand silver pieces. And a tale is told of

THE CALIPH OMAR BIN AL-KHATTAB AND THE YOUNG BADAWI.

The Sharif Husayn bin Rayyán relateth that the Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattáb was sitting one day judging the folk and doing justice between his subjects, attended by the best and wisest of his counsellors, when there came up to him a youth comely and cleanly attired upon whom two very handsome youths had laid 99 hold and were haling by the collar till they set him in the presence. Whereupon the Commander of the Faithful, Omar, looked at him and them and bade them loose him; then, calling him near to himself, asked the twain, "What is your case with him?" They answered, "O Prince of True Believers, we are two brothers by one mother and as followers of verity known are we. We had a father, a very old man of good counsel, honoured by the tribes, sound of baseness and renowned for goodliness who reared us tenderly in childhood, and loaded us with favours in manhood;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the two youths said to the Commander of the Faithful, Omar son of Al-Khattab, "Our father was a man honoured by the tribes, sound of baseness and renowned for goodliness, who reared

us delicately in childhood, and loaded us with favours in manhood; in fine, a sea of noble and illustrious qualities, worthy of the poet's praise:—

'Is Abu's-Sakr of Shaybán[144]?' they asked; ✿ Quoth I, "Nay, by my life, of him's Shaybán:
How many a sire rose high by a noble son, ✿ As Allah's Prophet glorified Adnan!"[145]

Now he went forth this day to his garden, to refresh himself amongst its trees and pluck the ripe fruits, when this young man slew him wrongously and swerved from the road of righteousness; wherefore we demand of thee the retribution of his crime and call upon thee to pass judgment upon him, according to the commandment of Allah." Then Omar cast a terrible look at the accused youth and said to him, "Verily thou hearest the complaint these two young men prefer; what hast thou in reply to aver?" But 100 he was brave of heart and bold of speech, having doffed the robe of pusillanimity and put off the garb of cowardry; so he smiled and spake in the most eloquent and elegant words; and, after paying the usual ceremonial compliment to the Caliph, said, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I have indeed given ear to their complaint, and they have told the truth in that which they tell, so far as they have set out what befel; and the commandment of Allah is a decreed decree.[146] But I will forthright state my case between thy hands, and it is for thee to give commands. Know then, O Prince of the Faithful, that I am a very Arab of the Arabies,[147] the noblest of those that are beneath the skies. I grew up in the dwellings of the wold and fell, till evil times my tribe befel, when I came to the outskirts of this town, with my family and whatso goods I own: and as I went along one of the paths leading to its gardens, orchards and garths, with my she-camels highly esteemed and by me most precious deemed, and midst them a stallion of noble blood and shape right good, a plenteous getter of brood, by whom the females abundantly bore and who walked among them as though a kingly crown he wore, one of the she-camels broke away; and, running to the garden of these young men's father, where the trees showed above the wall, put forth her lips and began to feed as in stall. I ran to her, to drive her away, when behold, there appeared, at a breach of the wall, an old man and grey, whose eyes sparkled with angry ray, holding in his right a stone to throw and swaying to and fro, with a swing like a lion ready for a spring. He cast the stone at my stallion, and it killed him for it struck a vital part. When I saw the stallion drop dead beside me, I felt live coals of anger kindled in my heart; so I took up the very same stone and throwing it at the old man, it was the cause of his bane and ban: thus his own wrongful act returned to him anew, and the man was slain of that wherewith he slew. When the stone struck him, he cried out with a great cry and shrieked out a terrible shriek, whereupon I hastened from the spot; but these two young men hurried after 101 me and laid hands on me and before thee carried me." Quoth Omar (Almighty Allah accept of him!), "Thou hast confessed what thou committedest, and of acquittal there is no possible occasion; for urgent is the law of retaliation and they cried for mercy but it was not a time to escape."[148] The youth answered, "I hear and obey the judgment

of the Imam, and I consent to all required by the law of Al-Islam; but I have a young brother, whose old father, before his decease, appointed to him wealth in great store and gold galore, and committed his affair to me before Allah, saying:—I give this into thy hand for thy brother; keep it for him with all thy might. So I took the money and buried it; nor doth any know of it but I. Now, if thou adjudge me to be justiced forthright, the money will be lost and thou shalt be the cause of its loss; wherefore the child will sue thee for his due on the day when the Creator shall judge between His creatures. But, if thou wilt grant me three days' delay, I will appoint some guardian to administer the affairs of the boy and return to answer my debt; and I have one who will be my surety for the fulfilment of this my promise." So the Commander of the Faithful bowed his head awhile, then raised it and looking round upon those present, said, "Who will stand surety by me for his return to this place?" And the youth looked at the faces of those who were in company and pointing to Abu Zarr,[149] in preference to all present, said, "This man shall answer for me and be my bail."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the youth pointed to Abu Zarr and said, "This man shall answer for me and be my bail," Omar (Allah accept of him!) said, "O Abu Zarr, dost thou hear these words and wilt thou be surety to me for 102 the return of this youth?" He answered, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful, I will be surety for him three days." So the Caliph accepted his guarantee and let the young man go. Now when the appointed time passed and the days of grace were nearly or quite at end yet the youth came not, the Caliph took seat in his council, with the Companions surrounding him, like the constellations about the moon, Abu Zarr and the plaintiffs being also present; and the avengers said, "Where is the defendant, O Abu Zarr, and how shall he return, having once fled? But we will not stir from our places till thou bring him to us, that we may take of him our blood-revenge." Replied Abu Zarr, "By the truth of the All-Wise King, if the three days of grace expire and the young man return not, I will fulfil my warranty and surrender my person to the Imam;" and added Omar (whom Allah accept!), "By the Lord, if the young man appear not, I will assuredly execute on Abu Zarr that which is prescribed by the law of Al-Islam!"[150] Thereupon the eyes of the bystanders ran over with tears; those who looked on groaned aloud and great was the clamour. Then the chiefs of the Companions urged the plaintiffs to accept the blood-wit and deserve the thanks of the folk; but they both refused and would accept nothing save the talion. However, as the folk were swaying to and fro like waves and loudly bemoaning Abu Zarr, behold, up came the young Badawi; and, standing before the Imam, saluted him right courteously (with sweat-beaded face and shining with the crescent's grace) and said to him, "I have given the lad in charge to his mother's brothers and have made them acquainted

with all that pertaineth to his affairs and let them into the secret of his monies; after which I braved the heats of noon and have kept my word as a free-born man." Thereupon the folk marvelled, seeing his good faith and loyalty and his offering himself to death with so stout a heart; and one said to him, "How noble a youth art thou and how loyal to thy word of honour and thy devoir!" Rejoined he, "Are ye not convinced that when death presenteth itself, none can escape from it? And indeed, I 103 have kept my word, that it be not said, Good faith is gone from among mankind." Said Abu Zarr, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I became warrant for this young man, without knowing to what tribe he belonged, nor had I seen him before that day; but, when he turned away from all who were present and singled me out, saying:—This man shall answer for me and be my bail, I thought it not right to refuse him, and generosity forbade to disappoint his desire, there being no harm in compliance therewith, that it be not bruited abroad, Benevolence is gone from among mankind." Then said the two young men, "O Commander of the Faithful, we forgive this youth our father's blood, seeing that he hath changed desolation into cheerfulness; that it be not said, Humanity is gone from among mankind." So the Caliph rejoiced in the acquittance of the youth and his truth and good faith; moreover, he magnified the generosity of Abu Zarr, extolling it over all his companions, and approved the resolve of the two young men for its benevolence, giving them praise with thanks and applying to their case the saying of the poet:—

Who doth kindness to men shall be paid again; ✿ Ne'er is kindness lost betwixt God and men.

Then he offered to pay them, from the Treasury, the blood-wit for their father; but they refused, saying, "We forgave him only of our desire unto Allah,[151] the Bountiful, the Exalted; and he who is thus intentioned followeth not his benefits with reproach or with mischief."[152] And amongst the tales they relate is that of

THE CALIPH AL-MAAMUN AND THE PYRAMIDS[153] OF EGYPT.

It is told that the Caliph-al-Maamun son of Harun al-Rashid, when he entered the God-guarded city of Cairo, was minded to pull down the Pyramids, that he might take what was therein; but, when he went about to do this, he could not succeed, albeit his best was done. He expended a mint of money in the attempt,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Al-Maamun attempting to pull down the Pyramids, expended his mint of money, but succeeded only in opening up a small tunnel in one of them, wherein it is said he found treasure to the exact amount

of the monies he had spent in the works, neither more nor less; whereat he marvelled and taking what he found there, desisted from his determination. Now the Pyramids are three, and they are one of the Wonders of the World; nor is there on the face of earth aught like them for height and fashion and mysteries[154]; for they are built of huge rocks, and the builders proceeded by piercing one block of stone and setting therein upright rods of iron[155]; after which they pierced a second block of stone and lowered it upon the first. Then they poured melted lead upon the clamps and set the blocks in geometrical order, till the building was complete. Now the height of each pyramid was an hundred 105 cubits, of the normal measure of the day, and it had four faces, each three hundred cubits long from the base and thence battering upwards to a point. The ancients say that, in the western Pyramid, are thirty chambers of parti-coloured syenite, full of precious gems and treasures galore and rare images and utensils and costly weapons which are anointed with egromantic unguents, so that they may not rust till the day of Resurrection.[156] Therein, also, are vessels of glass which bend and break not, containing various kinds of compound drugs and sympathetic waters. In the second Pyramid are the records of the priests, written on tablets of syenite, to each priest his tablet, whereon are engraved the wonders of his craft and his feats; and on the walls are human figures like idols, working with their hands at all manner of mechanism and seated on stepped thrones. Moreover, to each Pyramid there is a guardian treasurer who keepeth watch over it and wardeth it, to all eternity, against the ravages of time and the shifts of events; and indeed the marvels of these Pyramids astound all who have sight and insight. Many are the poems that describe them, thou shalt thereby profit no small matter, and among the rest, quoth one of them:—

If Kings would see their high emprize preserved, ✿ ‘Twill be by tongues of monuments they laid:
Seest not the Pyramids? These two endure ✿ Despite what change Time and Chance have made.

And quoth another:—

Look on the Pyramids, and hear the twain ✿ Recount their annals of the long-gone Past:
Could they but speak, high marvels had they told ✿ Of what Time did to man from first to last.

106 And quoth a third:—

My friend I prithee tell me, ‘neath the sky ✿ Is aught with Egypt’s Pyramids can compare?
Buildings which frighten Time, albe what dwells ✿ On back of earth in fear of Time must fare:
If on their marvels rest my sight no more, ✿ Yet these I ever shall in memory bear.

And quoth a fourth:—

Where is the man who built the Pyramids? ✿ What was his tribe, what day and where his tomb?
The monuments survive the men who built ✿ Awhile, till overthrown by touch of Doom.

And men also tell a tale of

THE THIEF AND THE MERCHANT.

There was once a thief who repented to Almighty Allah with sincere penitence; so he opened himself a shop for the sale of stuffs, where he continued to trade awhile. It so chanced one day that he locked his shop and went home, and in the night there came to the bazar an artful thief disguised in the habit of the merchant, and pulling out keys from his sleeve, said to the watchman of the market, "Light me this wax-candle." The watchman took the taper and went to light it,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Three Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the watchman took the taper and went to light it, whilst the thief opened the shop and lit another candle he had by him. When the watchman came back, he found him seated in the shop, account-books in hand, and reckoning with his fingers; nor did he cease to do thus till point of day, when he said to the man, "Fetch me a camel-driver and his camel, to carry some goods for me." So the 107 man fetched him a camel, and the thief took four bales[157] of stuffs and gave them to the cameleer, who loaded them on his beast. Then he gave the watchman two dirhams and went away after the camel-driver, leaving the watchman believing him to be the owner of the shop. Now when the morning dawned and day broke the merchant came and the watchman began greeting him with blessings, because of the two dirhams; but the shop-owner wondered at his words as one not knowing what he meant. When he opened his shop, he saw the droppings of the wax and the account book lying on the floor, and looking round, found four bales of stuffs missing. So he asked the watchman what had happened and he told him what had passed in the night and what had been said to the cameleer, whereupon the merchant bade him fetch the man and asked him, "Whither didst thou carry the stuffs this morning?" Answered the driver, "To such a landing-place, and I stowed them on board such a vessel." Said the merchant, "Come with me thither;" so the camel-driver carried him to the landing-place and said to him, "This be the barque and this be her owner." Quoth the merchant to the seaman, "Whither didst thou carry the merchant and the stuff?" Answered the boat-master, "To such a place, where he fetched a camel-driver and, setting the bales on the camel, went his ways I know not whither." "Fetch me the cameleer who carried the goods," said the merchant; so he fetched him and the merchant said to him, "Whither didst thou carry the bales of stuffs from the ship?" "To such a Khan," answered he; and the merchant rejoined, "Come thither with me and show it me." So the camel-man went with him to a place far distant from the shore and showed him the Khan where he had set down the stuffs, and at the same time the false merchant's magazine, which he opened and found therein his four bales bound up as they had been packed. The thief had laid his cloak over them; so the merchant took the cloak as well as the bales and delivered them to the camel-driver, who laid them on his camel; after which he locked the magazine and went away with

the cameleer. On the way, behold, he was confronted by the thief who followed him, till he had shipped the bales, when he said to him, "O my brother (Allah have 108thee in His holy keeping!), thou hast indeed recovered thy goods and naught of them is lost; so give me back my cloak." The merchant laughed and, giving him back his cloak, let him go unhindered; whereupon both went their ways. And they tell a tale of

MASRUR THE EUNUCH AND IBN AL-KARIBI.

The Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, was exceedingly restless one night; so he said to his Wazir Ja'afar, "I am sleep-less to-night and my breast is straitened and I know not what to do." Now his castrato Masrúr was standing before him, and he laughed; whereupon the Caliph said "At whom laughest thou? is it to make mock of me or hath madness seized thee?" Answered Masrur, "Nay, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundredth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Harun al-Rashid said to Masrur the Sworder, "Dost thou laugh to make mock of me or hath madness seized thee?" Answered Masrur, "Nay, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I swear by thy kinship to the Prince of Apostles, I did it not of my free will; but I went out yesterday to walk within sight of the palace and, coming to the bank of the Tigris, saw there the folk collected; so I stopped and found a man, Ibn al-Káribí hight, who was making them laugh; but just now I recalled what he said, and laughter got the better of me; and I crave pardon of thee, O Commander of the Faithful!" Quoth the Caliph, "Bring him to me forthright;" so Masrur repaired in all haste to Ibn al-Karibi and said to him, "Answer the summons of the Commander of the Faithful," whereto he replied, "I hear and obey." "But on condition," added Masrur, "that, if he give thee aught, thou shalt have a quarter and the rest shall be mine." Replied the droll, "Nay, thou shalt have half and I half." Rejoined Masrur, "Not so, I will have three-quarters." Lastly said Ibn al-Karibi, "Thou shalt have two-thirds and I 109the other third;" to which Masrur agreed, after much higgling and haggling, and they returned to the palace together. Now when Ibn al-Karibi came into the Caliph's presence he saluted him as men greet the Caliphate, and stood before him; whereupon said Al-Rashid to him, "If thou do not make me laugh, I will give thee three blows with this bag." Quoth Ibn al-Karibi in his mind, "And a small matter were blows with that bag, seeing that beating with whips hurteth me not;" for he thought the bag was empty. Then he began to deal out his drolleries, such as would make the dismallest jemmy guffaw, and gave vent to all manner of buffooneries; but the Caliph laughed not neither smiled, whereat Ibn al-Karibi marvelled and was chagrined and affrighted. Then said the Commander of the

Faithful, "Now hast thou earned the beating," and gave him a blow with the bag, wherein were four pebbles each two rotols in weight. The blow fell on his neck and he gave a great cry, then calling to mind his compact with Masrur, said, "Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful! Hear two words from me." Quoth the Caliph, "Say on," and quoth Ibn al-Karibi, "Masrur made it a condition with me and I a covenant with him, that whatsoever largesse might come to me of the bounties of the Commander of the Faithful, one-third thereof should be mine and the rest his; nor did he agree to leave me so much as one-third, save after much higgling and haggling. Now thou hast bestowed on me nothing but beating; I have had my share and here standeth he, ready to receive his portion; so pay him the two other blows." Now when the Caliph heard this, he laughed till he fell on his back; then calling Masrur, he gave him a blow, whereat he cried out and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, the one-third sufficeth me: give him the two-thirds."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and First Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Masrur cried out, "O Commander of the Faithful! the one-third sufficeth me; give him the two-thirds." So the Caliph laughed at them and ordered them a thousand dinars each, and they went away, rejoicing at the largesse. And of the tales they tell is one of

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THE DEVOTEE PRINCE.

The Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, had a son who, from the time he attained the age of sixteen, renounced the world and walked in the way[158] of ascetics and devotees. He was wont to go out to the grave-yards and say, "Ye once ruled the world, but that saved you not from death, and now are ye come to your sepulchres! Would Heaven I knew what ye said and what is said to you!"[159] And he wept as one weepeth who is troubled with fear and apprehension, and repeated the words of the poet:—

Affright me funerals at every time; ✿ And wailing women grieve me to the soul!

Now it chanced one day, as he sat among the tombs, according to his custom, his father passed by in all his state, surrounded by his Wazirs and Lords of the realm and the Officers of his household, who seeing the Caliph's son with a gown of woollen stuff on his body and a twist of wool on his head by way of turband, said to one another, "Verily this youth dishonoureth the Commander of the Faithful among Kings: but, if he reproved him, he would leave his present way of life." The Caliph heard these words; so quoth he to his son, "O my dear child, of a truth thou disgracest me by thy present way of life." The young man looked at him and made no reply:

then he beckoned to a bird perched on the battlements of the palace, and said to it, "O thou bird, I conjure thee by Him who created thee, alight upon my hand." 111 Whereupon straightway it swooped down and perched on his finger. Then quoth he, "Return to thy place;" and it did so. Presently he said, "Alight on the hand of the Commander of the Faithful;" but it refused there to perch, and he cried to his father, "It is thou that disgracest me amongst the Holy[160] Ones, by the love of the world; and now I am resolved to part from thee, never to return to thee, save in the world to come." Then he went down to Bassorah, where he took to working with those which wrought in clay,[161] receiving, as his day's hire, but a dirham and a dánik;[162] and with the danik he fed himself and gave alms of the dirham. (Quoth Abú Amir of Bassorah) There fell down a wall in my house: so I went forth to the station of the artisans to find a man who should repair it for me, and my eyes fell on a handsome youth of a radiant countenance. So I saluted him and asked him, "O my friend, dost thou seek work?" "Yes," answered he; and I said, "Come with me and build a wall." He replied, "On certain conditions I will make with thee." Quoth I "What are they, O my friend?"; and quoth he, "My wage must be a dirham and a danik, and again when the Mu'ezzin calleth to prayer, thou shalt let me go pray with the congregation." "It is well," answered I and carried him to my place, where he fell to work, such work as I never saw the like of. Presently, I named to him the morning-meal; but he said, "No;" and I knew that he was fasting.[163] When he heard the call to prayer, he said to me, "Thou knowest the condition?" "Yes," answered I. So he loosed his girdle and, applying himself to the lesser ablution, made it after a fashion than which I never saw a fairer;[164] then he went to the mosque and 112 prayed with the congregation and returned to his work. He did the same upon the call to mid-afternoon prayer, and when I saw him fall to work again thereafterward, I said to him, "O my friend, verily the hours of labour are over; a workman's day is but till the time of afternoon-prayer." But he replied, "Praise to the Lord, my service is till the night." And he ceased not to work till nightfall, when I gave him two dirhams; whereupon he asked "What is this!"; and I answered, "By Allah, this is but part of thy wage, because of thy diligence in my service." But he threw them back to me saying, "I will have no more than was agreed upon between us twain." I urged him to take them, but could not prevail upon him; so I gave him the dirham and the danik, and he went away. And when morning dawned, I went to the station but found him not; so I enquired for him and was told, "He cometh thither only on Sabbaths." Accordingly, when Saturday came, I betook me to the market and finding him there, said to him, "Bismillah, do me the favour to come and work for me." Said he, "Upon the conditions thou wottest;" and I answered "Yes!" Then carrying him to my house I stood to watch him where he could not see me; and he took a handful of puddled clay and laid it on the wall, when, behold, the stones ranged themselves one upon other; and I said, "On this wise are Allah's holy ones." He worked out his day and did even more than before; and when

it was night, I gave him his hire, and he took it and walked away. Now when the third Saturday came round, I went to the place of standing, but found him not; so I asked after him and they told me, "He is sick and lying in the shanty of such a woman." Now this was an old wife, renowned for piety, who had a hovel of reeds in the burial-ground. So I fared thither and found him stretched on the floor which was bare, with a brick for a pillow and his face beaming like the new moon with light. I saluted him and he returned my salam; and I sat down at his head weeping over his fair young years and absence from home and submission to the will of his Lord. Then said I to him, "Hast thou any need?" "Yes," answered he; and I said, "What is it?" He replied, "Come hither to-morrow in the forenoon and thou wilt find me dead. Wash me and dig my grave and tell none thereof: but shroud me in this my gown, after thou hast unsewn it and taken out what thou shalt find in the bosom-pocket, which keep with thee. Then, when thou hast prayed over me and laid 113 me in the dust, go to Baghdad and watch for the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, till he come forth, when do thou give him what thou shalt find in the breast of my gown and bear him my salutation." Then he ejaculated the profession of the Faith and glorified his God in the most eloquent of words reciting these couplets:—

Carry the trust of him whom death awaits ✿ To Al-Rashid, and God reward thy care!

And say, "An exile who desired thy sight ✿ Long loving, from afar sends greeting fair.

Nor hate nor irk (No!) him from thee withdrew, ✿ Kissing thy right to Heaven brought him near.[165]

But what estranged his soul, O sire, from thee ✿ Is that thy worldly joys it would not share!"

Then he betook himself to prayer, asking pardon of Allah——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth then betook himself to asking pardon of Allah and to invoking prayer and praise upon the Apostle and the Lord of the Just and repeating verses of the Koran; after which he recited these couplets:—

O sire, be not deceived by worldly joys; ✿ For life must pass, and joy must learn to mourn;

When thou art told of folk in evil plight, ✿ Think thou must answer for all hearts forlorn;

And when thou bear thy dead toward the tombs, ✿ Know thou wilt likewise on that way be borne.

(Continued Abu Amir the Basri) Now when the youth had ended his charge and his verses I left him and went home. On the morrow, I returned, at the appointed hour, and found him indeed dead, the mercy of Allah be upon him! So I washed him and, unsewing his gown, found in the bosom a ruby worth thousands of gold pieces and said to myself, "By Allah, this youth was indeed 114 weaned from worldly things!" After I had buried him, I made my way to Baghdad and, going to the Caliph's palace, waited till he came forth, when I addressed him in one of the streets and gave him the ruby, which when he saw, he knew and fell down in a fainting-fit. His attendants laid

hands on me, but he revived and said to them, “Release him and bring him courteously to the palace.” They did his bidding, and when he returned, he sent for me and carrying me into his chamber said to me, “How doth the owner of this ruby?” Quoth I, “Verily he is dead;” and told him what had passed; whereupon he fell a-weeping and said, “The son hath gained; but the sire hath lost.” Then he called out, saying, “Ho, such an one!”; and behold, there came out to him a lady who, when she saw me, would have withdrawn; but he cried to her, “Come; and mind him not.” So she entered and saluted, and he threw her the ruby, which when she saw and she knew, she shrieked a great shriek and fell down in a swoon. As soon as she came to herself, she said, “O Commander of the Faithful, what hath Allah done with my son?”; and he said to me, “Do thou tell her his case;” (as he could not speak for weeping). Accordingly, I repeated the story to her, and she began to shed tears and say in a faint and failing voice, “How I have longed for thy sight, O solace of mine eyes![1661] Would I might have given thee to drink, when thou hadst none to slake thy thirst! Would I might have cheered thee, whenas thou foundest never a cheerer!” And she poured forth tears and recited these couplets:—

I weep for one whose lot a lonely death befel; ✿ Without a friend to whom he might complain and moan:

And after glory and glad union with his friends, ✿ He woke to desolation, friendless, lorn and lone:

What Fortune hides a while she soon to men shall show; ✿ Death never spared a man; no, not a single one:

O absent one, my Lord decreed thee strangerhood, ✿ Far from thy nearest friends and to long exile gone:

Though Death forbid my hope of meeting here again, ✿ On Doom-day’s morrow we shall meet again, my son![1671]

Quoth I, “O Commander of the Faithful, was he indeed thy 115 son?” Quoth he, “Yes, and indeed, before I succeeded to this office, he was wont to visit the learned and company with the devout; but, when I became Caliph, he grew estranged from me and withdrew himself apart.[168] Then said I to his mother, Verily this thy son hath cut the world and devoted his life to Almighty Allah, and it may be that hard times shall befal him and he be smitten with trial of evil chance; wherefore do thou give him this ruby, which he may find useful in hour of need. So she gave it him, conjuring him to take it, and he obeyed her bidding. Then he left to us the things of our world and removed himself from us; nor did he cease to be absent from us, till he went to the presence of Allah (to whom be Honour and Glory!), pious and pure.” Then said he, “Come, show me his grave.” So, I travelled with him to Bassorah and showed him his son’s grave; and when he saw it, he wept and lamented, till he fell down in a swoon; after which he recovered and asked pardon of the Lord, saying, “We are Allah’s and unto Him we are returning!”; and invoked blessings on the dead. Then he asked me to become his companion, but I said to him, “O Commander of the Faithful, verily, in thy son’s case is for me the most momentous of admonitions!” And I recited these couplets:—

‘Tis I am the stranger, visited by none; ✿ I am the stranger though in town my own:

‘Tis I am the stranger! lacking kith and son, ✿ And friend to whom I mote for aidance run.

I house in mosques which are my only home; ✿ My heart there wones and shall for ever wone:

Then laud ye Allah, Lord of Worlds, as long ✿ As soul and body dwell in union!

And a famous tale is told of

THE UNWISE SCHOOLMASTER WHO FELL IN LOVE BY REPORT.

(Quoth one of the learned) I passed once by a school, wherein a schoolmaster was teaching children; so I entered, finding him a good-looking man and a well-dressed; when he rose to me and made me sit with him. Then I examined him in the Koran and in syntax and prosody and lexicography; and behold, he was perfect in all required of him, so I said to him, "Allah strengthen thy purpose! Thou art indeed versed in all that is requisite." Thereafter I frequented him a while, discovering daily some new excellence in him, and quoth I to myself, "This is indeed a wonder in any dominie; for the wise are agreed upon a lack of wit in children's teachers." Then I separated myself from him and sought him and visited him only every few days, till coming to see him one day as of wont, I found the school shut and made enquiry of his neighbours, who replied, "Some one is dead in his house." So I said in my mind, "It behoveth me to pay him a visit of condolence," and going to his house, knocked at the door, when a slave-girl came out to me and asked, "What dost thou want?" and I answered, "I want thy master." She replied, "He is sitting alone, mourning;" and I rejoined, "Tell him that his friend so and so seeketh to console him." She went in and told him; and he said, "Admit him." So she brought me in to him, and I found him seated alone and his head bound with mourning fillets. So I said to him, "Allah requite thee amply! this is a path all must perforce tread, and it behoveth thee to take patience;" adding, "But who is dead unto thee?" He answered, "One who was dearest of the folk to me and best beloved." "Perhaps thy father?" "No!" "Thy brother?" "No!" "One of thy kindred?" "No!" Then asked I, "What relation was the dead to thee?"; and he answered, "My lover." Quoth I to myself "This is the first proof to swear by of his lack of wit." So I said to him, "Assuredly there be others than she and fairer;" and he made answer, "I never saw her, that I might judge whether or no there be others fairer than she." Quoth I to myself, "This is another proof positive." Then I said to him, "And how couldst thou fall in love with one thou hast never seen?" He replied [117] "Know that I was sitting one day at the window, when lo! there passed by a man, singing the following distich:—

Umm Amr',[169] thy boons Allah repay! ✿ Give back my heart be't where it may!"

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the schoolmaster continued, "When I heard the man humming these words as he passed along the street, I said to myself:—Except this Umm Amru were without equal in the world, the poets had not

celebrated her in ode and canzon. So I fell in love with her; but, two days after, the same man passed, singing the following couplet:—

Ass and Umm Amr' went their way; ✿ Nor she, nor ass returned for aye.

Thereupon I knew that she was dead and mourned for her. This was three days ago, and I have been mourning ever since." So I left him and fared forth, having assured myself of the weakness of the gerund-grinder's wit. And they tell another and a similar tale of

THE FOOLISH DOMINIE.[170]

Once upon a time, a schoolmaster was visited by a man of letters who entered a school and, sitting down by the host's side, entered into discourse with him and found him an accomplished theologian, poet, grammarian, philologist and poet; intelligent, well bred and pleasant spoken; whereat he wondered, saying in himself, 118"It cannot be that a man who teacheth children in a school, should have a perfect wit." Now when he was about to go away, the pedant said to him, "Thou art my guest to-night;" and he consented to receive hospitality and accompanied him to his house, where he made much of him and set food before him. They ate and drank and sat talking, till a third part of the night was past when the host spread his guest a bed and went up to his Harim. The stranger lay down and addressed himself to sleep, when, behold, there arose a great clamour in the women's rooms. He asked what was the matter and they said, "A terrible thing hath befallen the Shaykh and he is at the last gasp." Said he, "Take me up to him"; so they took him up to the pedagogue whom he found lying insensible, with his blood streaming down. He sprinkled water on his face and when he revived, he asked him "What hath betided thee? When thou leftest me, thou wast in all good cheer and whole of body;" and he answered, "O my brother, after I left thee, I sat meditating on the creative works of Almighty Allah, and said to myself:—In every thing the Lord hath created for man, there is an use; for He (to Whom be glory!) made the hands to seize, the feet to walk, the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the penis to increase and multiply; and so on with all the members of the body, except these two ballocks; there is no use in them. So I took a razor I had by me and cut them off; and there befel me what thou seest." So the guest left him and went away, saying, "He was in the right who said:—Verily no schoolmaster who teacheth children can have a perfect wit, though he know all the sciences." And they tell a pleasant tale of the

ILLITERATE WHO SET UP FOR A SCHOOLMASTER.

There was once, among the menials[171] of a certain mosque, a man who knew not how to write or even to read and who gained his bread by gulling folk. One day, it occurred to him to open a school and teach children; so he got together writing-tablets

and written papers and hung them up in a high place. Then he 119 greatened his turband[172] and sat down at the door of the school; and when the people, who passed by, saw his huge head-gear and tablets and scrolls, they thought he must be a very learned pedagogue; so they brought him their children; and he would say to this, "Write," and to that "Read"; and thus the little ones taught one another. Now one day, as he sat as of wont, at the door of the school, behold, up came a woman letter in hand, and he said in his mind, "This woman doubtless seeketh me, that I may read her the missive she hath in her hand: how shall I do with her, seeing I cannot read writing?" And he would fain have gone down and fled from her; but, before he could do this, she overtook him and said to him, "Whither away?" Quoth he, "I purpose to pray the noon-prayer and return." Quoth she, "Noon is yet distant, so read me this letter." He took the letter and turning it upside down, fell to looking at it, now shaking his head till his turband quivered, then dancing his eyebrows and anon showing anger and concern. Now the letter came from the woman's husband, who was absent; and when she saw the dominie do on this wise, she said to herself, "Doubtless my husband is dead, and this learned doctor of law and religion is ashamed to tell me so." So she said to him, "O my lord, if he be dead, tell me;" but he shook his head and held his peace. Then said she, "Shall I rend my raiment?" "Rend!" replied he. "Shall I beat my face?" asked she; and he answered, "Beat!" So she took the letter from his hand and returning home fell a-weeping, she and her children. Presently, one of her neighbours heard her sobbing and asking what ailed her, was answered, "Of a truth she hath gotten a letter, telling her that her husband is dead." Quoth the man, "This is a falsehood; for I had a letter from him but yesterday, advising me that he is whole and in good health and will be with her after ten days." So he rose forthright and going in to her, said, "Where is the letter which came to thee?" She brought it to him, and he took it and read it; and lo! it ran as follows, "After the usual salutations, I am well and in good health and whole and will be with you all after ten days. Meanwhile, I send you a quilt and an extinguisher."[173] So she took the letter and, returning with it 120 to the schoolmaster, said to him, "What induced thee to deal thus with me?" And she repeated to him what her neighbour had told her of her husband's well-being and of his having sent her a quilt and an extinguisher. Answered he, "Thou art in the right, O good woman; for I was, at the time"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the pedagogue replied, "Verily I was at that time fashed and absent-minded and, seeing the extinguisher wrapped up in the quilt, I thought that he was dead and they had shrouded him." The woman, not smoking the cheat, said, "Thou art excused," and taking the letter, went her ways.[174] And they relate a story of

THE KING AND THE VIRTUOUS WIFE.

A certain King once went forth in disguise, to look into the affairs of his lieges. Presently, he came to a great village which he entered unattended and being athirst, stopped at the door of a house and asked for water. There came out to him a fair woman with a gugglet, which she gave him, and he drank. When he looked at her, he was ravished with her and besought her favours. Now she knew him; so she led him into the house and, making him sit down, brought out a book and said to him, "Look therein whilst I order my affair and return to thee." So he looked into the book, and behold, it treated of the Divine prohibition against advoutry and of the punishments which Allah hath prepared for those who commit adulterous sin. When he read this, his flesh quaked and his hair bristled and he repented to Almighty Allah: then he called the woman and, giving her the book, went away. Now her husband was absent and when he returned, she told him what had passed, whereat he was confounded and said in himself, "I fear lest the King's desire have fallen upon her." And he dared not have 121 to do with her and know her carnally after this. When some time had past, the wife told her kinsfolk of her husband's conduct, and they complained of him to the King, saying, "Allah advance the King! This man hired of us a piece of land for tillage, and tilled it awhile; then left it fallow and neither tilled it nor forsook it, that we might let it to one who would till it. Indeed, harm is come to the field, and we fear its corruption, for such land as that, if it be not sown, spoileth." Quoth the King to the man, "What hindereth thee from sowing thy land?" Answered he, "Allah advance the King! It reached me that the lion entered the field, wherefor I stood in awe of him and dared not draw near it, since knowing that I cannot cope with the lion, I stand in fear of him." The King understood the parable and rejoined, saying, "O man, the lion trod and trampled not thy land, and it is good for seed; so do thou till it and Allah prosper thee in it, for the lion hath done it no hurt." Then he bade give the man and his wife a handsome present and sent them away.[175] And amongst the stories is that of

ABD AL-RAHMAN THE MAGHRIBI'S STORY OF THE RUKH.[176]

There was once a man of the people of West Africa who had journeyed far and wide and traversed many a desert and a tide. He was once cast upon an island, where he abode a long while and, returning thence to his native country, brought with him the quill of a wing-feather of a young Rukh, whilst yet in egg and unhatched; and this quill was big enough to hold a goat-skin's of water, for it is said that the length of the Rukh-chick's wing, when he cometh forth of the egg, is a thousand fathoms. The folk marvelled at this quill, when they saw it, and the man who was called 122 Abd al-Rahman the Moor (and he was known, to boot, as the Chinaman, for his long sojourn in Cathay), related to them the following adventure, one of many of his traveller's

tales of marvel. He was on a voyage in the China seas,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abd al-Rahman, the Moorman, the Chinaman, was wont to tell wondrous tales amongst which was the following. He was on a voyage in the China seas with a company of merchants, when they sighted an island from afar; so they steered for it and, making fast thereto, saw that it was large and spacious. The ship's crew went ashore to get wood and water, taking with them hatchets and ropes and waterskins (the travellers accompanying them), and presently espied a great dome, white and gleaming, an hundred cubits long. So they made towards it and drawing near, found that it was an egg of the Rukh and fell on it with axes and stones and sticks till they uncovered the young bird and found the chick as it were a firm-set hill. So they plucked out one of the wing-feathers, but could not do so, save by helping one another, for all the quills were not full grown; after which they took what they could carry of the young bird's flesh and cutting the quill away from the vane, returned to the ship. Then they set sail and putting out to sea, voyaged with a fair wind all that night, till the sun rose; and while everything went well, they saw the Rukh come flying after them, as he were a vast cloud, with a rock in his talons, like a great heap bigger than the ship. As soon as he poised himself in air over the vessel, he let fall the rock upon it; but the craft, having great way on her, outwent the rock, which fell into the sea with a loud crash and a horrible. So Allah decreed their deliverance and saved them from doom; and they cooked the young bird's flesh and ate it. Now there were amongst them old white-bearded men; and when they awoke on the morrow, they found that their beards had turned black, nor did any who had eaten of the young Rukh grow gray ever after. Some said the cause of the return of youth to them and the ceasing of hoariness from them was that they had heated the pot with 123arrow-wood, whilst others would have it that it came of eating the Rukh-chick's flesh; and this is indeed a wonder of wonders.[177] And a story is related of

ADI BIN ZAYD AND THE PRINCESS HIND.

Al-Nu'uman bin al-Munzir, King of the Arabs of Irak, had a daughter named Hind, who went out one Pasch, which is a feast day of the Nazarenes, to the White Church, to take the sacrament; she was eleven years old and was the loveliest woman of her age and time; and it so chanced that on the same day came to Hírah[178] a young man called 'Adí bin Zayd[179] with presents from the Chosroë to Al-Nu'uman, and he also went to the White Church, to communicate. He was tall of stature and fair of favour, with handsome eyes and smooth cheeks, and had with him a company of his people. Now there was with Hind bint al-Nu'uman a slave-girl named Máriyah, who was

enamoured of Adi, but had not been able to foregather with him. So, when she saw him in the church, she said to Hind, "Look at yonder youth. By Allah, he is handsomer than all thou seest!" Hind asked, "And who is he?" and Mariyah answered, "Adi bin Zayd." Quoth Al-Nu'uman's daughter, "I fear lest he know me, if I draw nearer to look on him." Quoth Mariyah, "How should he know thee when he hath never seen thee?" So she drew near him and found him jesting with the youths his companions; and indeed he surpassed them all, not only in his personal charms but in the excellence of his speech, the eloquence of his tongue and the richness of his raiment. When the Princess saw him, she was ravished with him, her reason was confounded and her colour changed; and Mariyah, seeing her inclination to him, said to her, "Speak to him." So she spoke to him and went away. Now when he looked upon her and heard her speech, he was captivated by her and his wit was dazed; his heart fluttered, and his colour 124 changed, so that his companions suspected him, and he whispered one of them to follow her and find out who she was. The young man went after her and returning informed him that she was Princess Hind, daughter of Al-Nu'uman. So Adi left the church, knowing not whither he went, for excess of love, and reciting these two couplets:—

O friends of me, one favour more I pray: ✿ Unto the convents[180] find once more your way:

Turn me that so I face the land of Hind; ✿ Then go, and fairest greetings for me say.

Then he went to his lodging and lay that night, restless and without appetite for the food of sleep.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Adi ended his verses he went to his lodging and lay that night restless and without appetite for the food of sleep. Now on the morrow Mariyah accosted him and he received her kindly, though before he would not incline to her, and said to her, "What is thy will?" Quoth she, "I have a want of thee;" and quoth he, "Name it, for by Allah, thou shalt not ask me aught, but I will give it thee!" So she told him that she loved him, and her want of him was that he would grant her a lover's privacy; and he agreed to do her will, on condition that she would serve him with Hind and devise some device to bring them together. Then he took her into a vintner's tavern in one of the by-streets of Hirah, and lay with her; after which she returned to Hind and asked her, "Dost thou not long to see Adi?" She answered, "How can this be? indeed my longing for him makes me restless, and no repose is left me since yesterday." Quoth Mariyah, "I will appoint him to be in such a place, where thou canst look on him from the palace." Quoth Hind, "Do what thou wilt," and agreed with her upon the place. So Adi came, and the Princess looked out upon him; and, when she saw him, she was like to topple down from the palace-top and said, 125 "O Mariyah, except thou bring him in to me this

night, I shall die." So saying, she fell to the ground in a fainting-fit, and her serving-women lifted her up and bore her into the palace; whilst Mariyah hastened to Al-Nu'uman and discovered the whole matter to him with perfect truth, telling him that indeed she was mad for the love of Adi; and except he marry her to him, she must be put to shame and die of love for him, which would disgrace her father among the Arabs, adding at the end, "There is no cure for this but wedlock." The King bowed his head awhile in thought and exclaimed again and again, "Verily, we are Allah's and unto Him we are returning!" Then said he, "Woe to thee! How shall the marriage be brought about, seeing I mislike to open the matter?" And she said, "He is yet more ardently in love and yet more desireful of her than she is of him; and I will so order the affair that he shall be unaware of his case being known to thee; but do not betray thyself, O King." Then she went to Adi and, after acquainting him with everything said, "Make a feast and bid the King thereto; and, when the wine hath gotten the better of him, ask of him his daughter, for he will not refuse thee." Quoth Adi, "I fear lest this enrage him against me and be the cause of enmity between us." But quoth she, "I came not to thee, till I had settled the whole affair with him." Then she returned to Al-Nu'uman and said to him, "Seek of Adi that he entertain thee in his house." Replied the King, "There is no harm in that;" and after three days, besought Adi to give him and his lords the morning-meal in his house. He consented and the King went to him; and when the wine had taken effect on Al-Nu'uman, Adi rose and sought of him his daughter in wedlock. He consented and married them and brought her to him after three days; and they abode at Al-Nu'uman's court, in all solace of life and its delight——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Adi abode with Hind bint Al-Nu'uman bin Munzir three years in all solace of life and its delight, after which time the King was wroth with Adi and slew him. Hind mourned for him with grievous mourning 126 and built her an hermitage outside the city, whither she retired and became a religious, weeping and bewailing her husband till she died. And her hermitage is seen to this day in the suburbs of Hirah. They also tell a tale of

DI'IBIL AL-KHUZA'I WITH THE LADY AND MUSLIM BIN AL-WALID.

(Quoth Di'ibil al-Khuzá'i[181]), I was sitting one day at the gate of Al-Karkh,[182] when a damsel came past, never saw I a fairer faced or better formed than she, walking with a voluptuous swaying gait and ravishing all beholders with her lithe and undulating pace. Now as my eyes fell on her, I was captivated by her and my vitals trembled and

meseemed my heart flew forth of my breast; so I stood before her and I accosted her with this verse:—

The tears of these eyes find easy release; ✿ But sleep flies these eyelids without surcease.

Whereon she turned her face and looking at me, straightway made answer with this distich:—

A trifle this an his eyes be sore, ✿ When her eyes say "yes" to his love-caprice!

I was astounded at the readiness of her reply and the fluency of her speech and rejoined with this verse:—

Say, doth heart of my fair incline to him ✿ Whose tears like a swelling stream increase?

And she answered me without hesitation, thus:—

If thou crave our love, know that love's a loan; ✿ And a debt to be paid by us twain a-piece.

Never entered my ears aught sweeter than her speech nor ever saw 127 I brighter than her face: so I changed rhyme and rhythm to try her, in my wonder at her words, and repeated this couplet:—

Will Fate with joy of union ever bless our sight, ✿ And one desireful one with other one unite.

She smiled at this (never saw I fairer than her mouth nor sweeter than her lips), and answered me, without stay or delay, in the following distich:—

Pray, tell me what hath Fate to do betwixt us twain? ✿ Thou'rt Fate: so bless our eyne with union and delight.

At this, I sprang up and fell to kissing her hands and cried, "I had not thought that Fortune would vouchsafe me such occasion. Do thou follow me, not of bidding or against thy will, but of the grace of thee and thy favour to me." Then I went on and she after me. Now at that time I had no lodging I deemed fit for the like of her; but Muslim bin al-Walíd[183] was my fast friend, and he had a handsome house. So I made for his abode and knocked at the door, whereupon he came out, and I saluted him, saying, "'Tis for time like this that friends are treasured up"; and he replied, "With love and gladness! Come in you twain." So we entered but found money scarce with him: however, he gave me a kerchief, saying, "Carry it to the bazar and sell it and buy food and what else thou needest." I took the handkerchief, and hastening to the market, sold it and bought what we required of victuals and other matters; but when I returned, I found that Muslim had retired with her to an underground chamber.[184] When he heard my step he hurried out and said to me, "Allah requite thee the kindness thou hast done me, O Abu Ali and reward thee in time to come and reckon it of thy good deeds on the Day of Doom!" So saying, he took from me the food and wine and shut the door in my face. His words enraged me and I knew not what to do; but he stood behind the door, shaking for mirth; and, when he saw me thus, he said to me, "I conjure thee on my life, O Abu Ali, tell who it was composed this couplet?"—

I lay in her arms all night, leaving him ✿ To sleep foul-hearted but clean of staff.

128 At this my rage redoubled, and I replied, "He who wrote this other couplet":—

One, I wish him in belt a thousand horns, ✿ Exceeding in mighty height Manáf.[185]

Then I began to abuse him and reproach him with the foulness of his action and his lack of honour; and he was silent never uttering a word. But, when I had finished, he smiled and said, "Out on thee, O fool! Thou hast entered my house and sold my kerchief and spent my silver: so, with whom art thou wroth, O pimp?"[186] Then he left me and went away to her, whilst I said, "By Allah, thou art right to twit me as nincompoop and pander!" Then I left his door and went away in sore concern, and I feel its trace in my heart to this very day; for I never had my will of her nor, indeed, ever heard of her more. And amongst other tales is that about

ISAAC OF MOSUL AND THE MERCHANT.

(Quoth Ishak bin Ibrahim al-Mausili), It so chanced that, one day feeling weary of being on duty at the Palace and in attendance upon the Caliph, I mounted horse and went forth, at break of dawn, having a mind to ride out in the open country and take my pleasure. So I said to my servants, "If there come a messenger from the Caliph or another, say that I set out at daybreak, upon a pressing business, and that ye know not whither I am gone." Then I fared forth alone and went round about the city, till the sun waxed hot, when I halted in a great thoroughfare known as Al-Haram,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ishak bin Ibrahim the Mausili continued:—When the sun waxed hot I 129 halted in a great thoroughfare known as Al-Haram, to take shelter in the shade and found it in a spacious wing of a house which projected over the street. And I stood there but a little while before there came up a black slave, leading an ass bestridden by a damsel; and under her were housings set with gems and pearls and upon her were the richest of clothes, richness can go no farther; and I saw that she was elegant of make with languorous look and graceful mien. I asked one of the passers-by who she was, and he said, "She is a singer," so I fell in love with her at first sight: hardly could I keep my seat on horseback. She entered the house at whose gate I stood; and, as I was planning a device to gain access to her, there came up two men young and comely who asked admission and the housemaster gave them leave to enter. So they alighted and I also and they entered and I with them, they supposing that the master of the house had invited me; and we sat awhile, till food was brought and we ate. Then they set wine before us, and the damsel came out, with a lute in her hand. She sang and we drank, till I rose to obey a call of nature. Thereupon the host questioned the two others of me, and they replied that they knew me not; whereupon quoth he, "This is a parasite[187]; but he is a pleasant

fellow, so treat him courteously." Then I came back and sat down in my place, whilst the damsel sang to a pleasing air these two couplets:—

Say to the she-gazelle, who's no gazelle, ✿ And Kohl'd ariel who's no ariel.[1188]

Who lies with male, and yet no female is, ✿ Whose gait is female most unlike the male.

She sang it right well, and the company drank and her song pleased them. Then she carolled various pieces to rare measures, and amongst the rest one of mine, which consisted of this distich:—

Bare hills and camp-ground desolate ✿ And friends who all have ganged their gait.

How severance after union leaves ✿ Me and their homes in saddest state!

130 Her singing this time was even better than the first; then she chanted other rare pieces, old and new, and amongst them, another of mine with the following two couplets:—

Say to angry lover who turns away, ✿ And shows thee his side whatso thou say,

"Thou wroughtest all that by thee was wrought, ✿ Albe 'twas haply thy sport and play."

I prayed her to repeat the song, that I might correct it for her; whereupon one of the two men accosted me and said, "Never saw we a more impudent lick-platter than thou. Art thou not content with spunging, but thou must eke meddle and muddle? Of very sooth, in thee is the saying made true, Parasite and pushing wight." So I hung down my head for shame and made him no answer, whilst his companion would have withheld him from me; but he would not be restrained. Presently, they rose to pray, but I lagged behind a little and, taking the lute, screwed up the sides and brought it into perfect tune. Then I stood up in my place to pray with the rest; and when we had ended praying, the same man fell again to blaming me and reviling me and persisted in his rudeness, whilst I held my peace. Thereupon the damsel took the lute and touching it, knew that it had been altered, and said, "Who hath touched my lute?" Quoth they, "None of us hath touched it." Quoth she, "Nay, by Allah, some one hath touched it, and he is an artist, a past master in the craft; for he hath arranged the strings and tuned them like one who is a perfect performer." Said I, "It was I tuned it;" and said she, "Then, Allah upon thee, take it and play on it!" So I took it; and, playing a piece so difficult and so rare, that it went nigh to deaden the quick and quicken the dead, I sang thereto these couplets:—

I had a heart, and with it lived my life: ✿ 'Twas seared with fire and burnt with loving-lowe:

I never won the blessing of her love; ✿ God would not on His slave such boon bestow:

If what I've tasted be the food of Love, ✿ Must taste it all men who Love-food would know.

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

131

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ishak of Mosul thus continued:—Now when I had finished my verse, there was not one of the company but sprang from his place and sat down like schoolboys before me, saying, "Allah upon thee, O our lord, sing us another song." "With pleasure" said I, and playing another measure in masterly fashion, sang thereto these couplets:—

Ho thou whose heart is melted down by force of Amor's fire, ✿ And griefs from every side against thy happiness conspire:

Unlawful is that he who pierced my vitals with his shaft, ✿ My blood between my midriff and my breast-bone[189] he desire,

'Twas plain, upon our severance-day, that he had set his mind ✿ On an eternal parting, moved by tongue of envious liar:

He sheds my blood he ne'er had shed except by wound of love; ✿ Will none demand my blood of him, my wreak of him require?

When I had made an end of this song, there was not one of them but rose to his feet and threw himself upon the ground for excess of delight. Then I cast the lute from my hand, but they said, "Allah upon thee, do not on this wise, but let us hear another song, so Allah Almighty increase thee of His bounty!" Replied I, "O folk, I will sing you another song and another and another and will tell you who I am. I am Ishak bin Ibrahim al-Mausili, and by Allah, I bear myself proudly to the Caliph when he seeketh me. Ye have to-day made me hear abuse from an unmannerly carle such as I loathe; and by Allah, I will not speak a word nor sit with you, till ye put yonder quarrelsome churl out from among you!" Quoth the fellow's companion to him, "This is what I warned thee against, fearing for thy good name." So they hent him by the hand and thrust him out; and I took the lute and sang over again the songs of my own composing which the damsel had sung. Then I whispered the host that she had taken my heart and that I had no patience to abstain from her. Quoth he, "She is thine on one condition." I asked, "What is that?" and he answered, "It is that thou abide with me a month, when 132 the damsel and all belonging to her of raiment and jewellery shall be thine." I rejoined, "It is well, I will do this." So I tarried with him a whole month, whilst none knew where I was and the Caliph sought me everywhere, but could come by no news of me; and at the end of this time, the merchant delivered to me the damsel, together with all that pertained to her of things of price and an eunuch to attend upon her. So I brought all that to my lodging, feeling as I were lord of the whole world, for exceeding delight in her; then I rode forthright to Al-Maamun. And when I stood in the presence, he said, "Woe to thee, O Ishak, where hast thou been?" So I acquainted him with the story and he said, "Bring me that man at once." Thereupon I told him where he lived and he sent and fetched him and questioned him of the case; when he repeated the story and the Caliph said to him, "Thou art a man of right generous mind, and it is only fitting that thou be aided in thy generosity." Then he ordered him an hundred thousand dirhams and said to me, "O Ishak, bring the damsel before me." So I brought her to him, and she sang and delighted him; and

being greatly gladdened by her he said to me, “I appoint her turn of service every Thursday, when she must come and sing to me from behind the curtain.” And he ordered her fifty thousand dirhams, so by Allah, I profited both myself and others by my ride. And amongst the tales they tell is one of

THE THREE UNFORTUNATE LOVERS.

(Quoth Al-‘Utbí,[190]) I was sitting one day with a company of educated men, telling stories of the folk, when the talk turned upon legends of lovers and each of us said his say thereanent. Now there was in our company an old man, who remained silent, till all had spoken and had no more to say, when quoth he, “Shall I tell you a thing, the like of which you never heard; no, never?” “Yes,” quoth we; and he said, “Know, then, that I had a daughter, who loved a youth, but we knew it not; while the youth loved a singing-girl, who in her turn loved my daughter. One day, I was present at an assembly, wherein were also the youth”——And 133 Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Tenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Shaykh continued:—One day, I was present at an assembly wherein were also the youth and the singing-girl and she chanted to us these couplets:—

Prove how Love bringeth low ✿ Lover those tears that run;

Lowering him still the more ✿ When pity finds he none.

Cried the youth, “By Allah, thou hast said well, O my mistress! Dost thou incite me to die?” Answered the girl from behind the curtain, “Yes, if thou be a true lover.” So he laid his head on a cushion and closed his eyes; and when the cup came round to him, we shook him and behold, he was dead.[191] Therewith we all flocked to him, and our pleasure was troubled and we grieved and broke up at once. When I came home, my people took in bad part my returning before the appointed time, and I told them what had befallen the youth, thinking that thereby I should greatly surprise them. My daughter heard my words and rising, went from the sitting-chamber into another, whither I followed her and found her lying with her head on a cushion, even as I had told of the young man. So I shook her and lo! she was dead. Then we laid her out and set forth next morning to bury her, whilst the friends of the young man set forth in like guise to bury him. As we were on the way to the burial-place, we met a third funeral and asking whose it was, were told that it was that of the singing-girl who, hearing of my daughter’s death, had done even as she did and was dead. So we buried them all three on one day, and this is the rarest tale that ever was heard of lovers. And they also tell a tale of

HOW ABU HASAN BRAKE WIND.

They recount that in the City Kaukabán of Al-Yaman there was a man of the Fazlí tribe who had left Badawi life, and become a townsman for many years and was a merchant of the most opulent merchants. His wife had deceased when both were young; and his friends were instant with him to marry again, ever quoting to him the words of the poet:—

Go, gossip! re-wed thee, for Prime draweth near:
A wife is an almanac—good for the year.

So being weary of contention, Abu Hasan entered into negotiations with the old women who procure matches, and married a maid like Canopus when he hangeth over the seas of Al-Hind. He made high festival therefor, bidding to the wedding-banquet kith and kin, Olema and Fakirs; friends and foes and all his acquaintances of that country-side. The whole house was thrown open to feasting: there were rices of five several colours, and sherbets of as many more; and kids stuffed with walnuts and almonds and pistachios and a camel-colt[192] roasted whole. So they ate and drank and made mirth and merriment; and the bride was displayed in her seven dresses and one more, to the women, who could not take their eyes off her. At last, the bridegroom was summoned to the chamber where she sat enthroned; and he rose slowly and with dignity from his divan; but in so doing, for that he was over full of meat and drink, lo and behold! he let fly a fart, great and terrible. Thereupon each guest turned to his neighbour and talked aloud and made as though he had heard nothing, fearing for his life. But a consuming fire was lit in Abu Hasan's heart; so he pretended a call of nature; and, in lieu of seeking the bride-chamber, he went down to the house-court and saddled his mare and rode off, weeping bitterly, through the 135 shadow of the night. In time he reached Láhej where he found a ship ready to sail for India; so he shipped on board and made Calicut of Malabar. Here he met with many Arabs, especially Hazramís,[193] who recommended him to the King; and this King (who was a Kafir) trusted him and advanced him to the captain-ship of his body-guard. He remained ten years in all solace and delight of life; at the end of which time he was seized with home-sickness; and the longing to behold his native land was that of a lover pining for his beloved; and he came near to die of yearning desire. But his appointed day had not dawned; so, after taking the first bath of health, he left the King without leave, and in due course landed at Makallá of Hazramaut. Here he donned the rags of a religious; and, keeping his name and case secret, fared for Kaukaban afoot; enduring a thousand hardships of hunger, thirst and fatigue; and braving a thousand dangers from the lion, the snake and the Ghul. But when he drew near his old home, he looked down upon it from the hills with brimming eyes, and said in himself, "Haply they might know thee; so I will wander about the outskirts, and hearken to the folk. Allah grant that my case be not remembered by them!" He listened carefully for seven nights and seven days, till it so chanced that, as he was sitting at the door of a hut, he heard the voice of a young girl saying, "O my mother, tell me the day when I

was born; for such an one of my companions is about to take an omen[194] for me." And the mother answered, "Thou was born, O my daughter, on the very night when Abu Hasan farted." Now the listener no sooner heard these words than he rose up from the bench, and fled away saying to himself, "Verily thy fart hath become a date, which shall last for ever and ever; even as the poet said:"—

As long as palms shall shift the flower; ✿ As long as palms shall sift the flour.[195]

136 And he ceased not travelling and voyaging and returned to India; and there abode in self-exile till he died; and the mercy of Allah be upon him![196] And they tell another story of

THE LOVERS OF THE BANU TAYY.

Kásim, son of Adi, was wont to relate that a man of the Banú Tamím spake as follows. I went out one day in search of an estray and, coming to the waters of the Banu Tayy, saw two companies of people near one another, and behold, those of one company were disputing among themselves even as the other. So I watched them and observed, in one of the companies, a youth wasted with sickness, as he were a worn-out dried-up water-skin. And as I looked on him, lo! he repeated these couplets:—

What ails the Beauty she returneth not? ✿ Is't Beauty's irk or grudging to my lot?

I sickened and my friends all came to call; ✿ What stayed thee calling with the friendly knot?

Hadst thou been sick, I had come running fast ✿ To thee, nor threats had kept me from the spot:

Mid them I miss thee, and I lie alone; ✿ Sweetheart, to lose thy love sad loss I wot!

His words were heard by a damsel in the other company who hastened towards him, and when her people followed her, she fought them off. Then the youth caught sight of her and sprang up and ran towards her, whilst the people of his party ran after him and laid hold of him. However he haled and freed himself from them, and she in like manner loosed herself; and, when they were free, each ran to other and meeting between the two parties, embraced and fell dead upon the ground.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

137

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man and the maid met between the two parties and embraced and both fell dead upon the ground; whereat came there out an old man from one of the tents and stood over them exclaiming, "Verily, we are Allah's and unto Him we are returning!" Then weeping sore he said, "Allah have ruth on you both! by the Almighty, though you were not united in your lives, I will at least unite you after your deaths." And he bade lay them out: so they washed them and shrouded them in one shroud and dug for them one grave and prayed one prayer over them both and buried them in one tomb; nor was there man or woman in the two parties but I saw weeping over them and buffeting their faces. Then

I questioned the Shaykh of them, and he said, "She was my daughter and he my brother's son; and love brought them to the pass thou seest." I exclaimed, "Allah amend thee! but why didst thou not marry them to each other?" Quoth he, "I feared shame[197] and dishonour; and now I am fallen into both." And they tell a tale of

THE MAD LOVER.

Quoth Abu 'l-Abbás al-Mubarrad,[198] I set out one day with a company to Al-Bárid on an occasion and, coming to the monastery of Hirakl,[199] we alighted in its shade. Presently a man 138 came out to us and said, "There are madmen in the monastery,[200] and amongst them one who speaketh wisdom; if ye saw him, ye would marvel at his speech." So we arose all and went into the monastery, where we saw a man seated on a skin-mat in one of the cells, with bare head and eyes intently fixed upon the wall. We saluted him, and he returned our salam, without looking at us; and one said to us, "Repeat some verses to him; for, when he heareth verse, he speaketh." So I repeated these two couplets:—

O best of race to whom gave Hawwá[201] boon of birth, ✿ Except for thee the world were neither sweet nor fair!

Thou'rt he, whose face, by Allah shown to man, ✿ Doth ward off death, decay and hoary hair.

When he heard from me this praise of the Apostle he turned towards us and repeated these lines:—

Well Allah wotteth I am sorely plagued: ✿ Nor can I show my pain to human sight.

Two souls have I; one soul is here contained, ✿ While other woneth in another site

Meseems the absent soul's like present soul, ✿ And that she suffers what to me is dight.

Then he asked us, "Have I said well or said ill?" And we answered, "Thou hast said the clean contrary of ill, well and right well." Then he put out his hand to a stone, that was by him and took it up; whereupon thinking he would throw it at us we fled from him; but he fell to beating upon his breast therewith violent blows and said to us, "Fear not, but draw near and hear somewhat from me and receive it from me." So we came back, and he repeated these couplets:—

139 When they made their camels yellow-white kneel down at dawning grey, ✿ They mounted her on crupper and the camel went his way,

Mine eye-balls through the prison-wall beheld them, and I cried ✿ With streaming eyelids and a heart that burnt in dire dismay,

"O camel-driver turn thy beast that I farewell my love! ✿ In parting and farewelling her I see my doomèd day:

I'm faithful to my vows of love which I have never broke; ✿ Would Heaven I kenned what they have done with vows that vowèd they!"

Then he looked at me and said, "Say me, dost thou know what they did?"[202] Answered I, "Yes, they are dead; Almighty Allah have mercy on them!" At this his face changed and he sprang to his feet and cried out, "How knowest thou they be dead?;" and I replied, "Were they alive they had not left thee thus." Quoth he, "By Allah, thou art right, and I care not to live after them." Then his side-muscles quivered and he fell on

his face; and we ran up to him and shook him and found him dead, the mercy of the Almighty be on him! At this we marvelled and mourned for him and, sore mourning, laid him out and buried him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Al-Mubarrad thus continued:—When the man fell we mourned over him with sore mourning and laid him out and buried him. And when I returned to Baghdad and went in to the Caliph Al Mutawakkil, he saw the trace of tears on my face and said to me, "What is this?" So I told him what had passed and it was grievous to him and he cried, "What moved thee to deal thus with him?[203] By Allah, if I thought thou didst not repent it and regret him I would punish thee therefor!" And he mourned for him the rest of the day. And amongst the tales they tell is one of

THE PRIOR WHO BECAME A MOSLEM.

Quoth Abu Bakr Mohammed ibn Al-Anbári[204]:—I once left Anbár on a journey to 'Amúríyah,[205] where there came out to me the prior of the monastery and superior of the monkery, Abd al-Masíh hight, and brought me into the building. There I found forty religious, who entertained me that night with fair guest-rite, and I left them after seeing among them such diligence in adoration and devotion as I never beheld the like of in any others. Next day I farewelled them and fared forth and, after doing my business at 'Amuriyah, I returned to my home at Anbar. And next year I made pilgrimage to Meccah and as I was circumambulating the Holy House I saw Abd al-Masih the monk also compassing the Ka'abah, and with him five of his fellows, the shavelings. Now when I was sure that it was indeed he, I accosted him, saying, "Art thou not Abd al-Masih, the Religious?" and he replied, "Nay, I am Abdallah, the Desirous."[206] Therewith I fell to kissing his grey hairs and shedding tears; then, taking him by the hand, I led him aside into a corner of the Temple and said to him, "Tell me the cause of thy conversion to Al-Islam;" and he made reply, "Verily, 'twas a wonder of wonders, and befel thus. A company of Moslem devotees came to the village wherein is our convent, and sent a youth to buy them food. He saw, in the market, a Christian damsel selling bread, who was of the fairest of women; and he was struck at first sight with such love of her, that his senses failed him and he fell on his face in a fainting-fit." When he revived, he returned to his companions and told them what had befallen him, saying, "Go ye about your business; I may not go with you." They chided him and exhorted him, but he paid no heed to them; so they left him whilst he entered the village and 141 seated himself at the door of the woman's booth.[207] She asked him what he wanted, and he told her that he was in love with her, whereupon she turned from him; but he abode in his place three days without tasting food, keeping his eyes fixed on her face. Now whenas she saw that he departed not from

her, she went to her people and acquainted them with his case, and they set on him the village boys, who stoned him and bruised his ribs and broke his head; but, for all this, he would not budge. Then the villagers took counsel together to slay him; but a man of them came to me and told me of his case, and I went out to him and found him lying prostrate on the ground. So I wiped the blood from his face and carried him to the convent, and dressed his wounds; and there he abode with me fourteen days. But as soon as he could walk, he left the monastery——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdallah the Religious continued:—So I carried him to the convent and dressed his wounds, and he abode with me fourteen days. But as soon as he could walk, he left the monastery and returned to the door of the woman's booth, where he sat gazing on her as before. When she saw him, she came out to him and said, "By Allah, thou movest me to pity! wilt thou enter my faith that I may marry thee?" He cried, "Allah forbid that I should put off the faith of Unity and enter that of Plurality!"[208] Quoth she, "Come in with me to my house and take thy will of me and wend thy ways in peace." Quoth he, "Not so, I will not waste the worship of twelve years for the lust of an eye-twinkle." Said she, "Then depart from me forthwith;" and he said, "My heart will not suffer me to do that;" whereupon she turned her countenance from him. Presently the boys found him out and began to pelt him with stones; and he fell on his face, saying, "Verily, Allah is my protector, who sent down the Book of the Koran; and He protecteth 142 the Righteous!"[209] At this I sallied forth and driving away the boys, lifted his head from the ground and heard him say, "Allah mine, unite me with her in Paradise!" Then I carried him to the monastery; but he died, before I could reach it, and I bore him without the village and I dug for him a grave and buried him. And next night when half of it was spent, the damsel cried with a great cry (and she in her bed); so the villagers flocked to her and questioned her of her case. Quoth she, "As I slept, behold the Moslem man came in to me and taking me by the hand, carried me to the gate of Paradise; but the Guardian denied me entrance, saying:—'Tis forbidden to unbelievers. So I embraced Al-Islam at his hands and, entering with him, beheld therein pavilions and trees, such as I cannot describe to you. Moreover, he brought me to a pavilion of jewels and said to me, Of a truth this is my pavilion and thine, nor will I enter it save with thee; but, after five nights thou shalt be with me therein, if it be the will of Allah Almighty. Then he put forth his hand to a tree which grew at the door of the pavilion and plucked therefrom two apples and gave them to me, saying:—Eat this and keep the other, that the monks may see it. So I ate one of them and never tasted I aught sweeter.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the woman continued:—So he plucked two apples and gave them to me, saying, "Eat this and keep the other that the monks may see it." So I ate one of them and never tasted I aught sweeter. Then he took my hand and fared forth and carried me back to my house; and, when I awoke, I found the taste of the apple in my mouth and the other in my hand." So saying she brought out the apple, and in the darkness of the night it shone as it were a sparkling star. So they carried her (and the apple with her) to the monastery, where she repeated her vision and showed it to us; never saw we its like among all the fruits of the world. Then I took a knife and cut the apple into pieces according as we were folk in company; 143 and never knew we aught more delicious than its savour nor more delightsome than its scent; but we said, "Haply this was a devil that appeared unto her to seduce her from her faith." Thereupon her people took her and went away; but she abstained from eating and drinking and on the fifth night she rose from her bed, and going forth the village to the grave of her Moslem lover threw herself upon it and died, her family not knowing what was come of her. But, on the morrow, there came to the village two Moslem elders, clad in hair-cloth, and with them two women in like garb, and said, "O people of the village, with you is a woman Saint, a Wáliyah of the friends of Allah, who died a Moslemah; and we will take charge of her in lieu of you." So the villagers sought her and found her dead on the Moslem's grave; and they said, "This was one of us and she died in our faith; so we will take charge of her." Rejoined the two old men, "Nay, she died a Moslemah and we claim her." And the dispute waxed to a quarrel between them, till one of the Shaykhs said, "Be this the test of her faith: the forty monks of the monastery shall come and try to lift her from the grave. If they succeed, then she died a Nazarene; if not, one of us shall come and lift her up and if she be lifted by him, she died a Moslemah." The villagers agreed to this and fetched the forty monks, who heartened one another, and came to her to lift her, but could not. Then we tied a great rope round her middle and haled at it; but the rope broke in sunder, and she stirred not; and the villagers came and did the like, but could not move her from her place.[210] At last, when all means failed, we said to one of the two Shaykhs, "Come thou and lift her." So he went up to the grave and, covering her with his mantle, said, "In the name of Allah the Compassionating, the Compassionate, and of the Faith of the Apostle of Allah, on whom be prayers and peace!" Then he lifted her and, taking her in his bosom, betook himself with her to a cave hard by, where they laid her, and the two women came and washed her and shrouded her. Then the two elders bore her to her Moslem lover's grave and prayed over her and buried her by his side and went their ways. Now we were eye-witnesses of all this; and, when we were alone 144 with one another, we said, "'In sooth, the truth is most worthy to be followed;'[211] and indeed the verity hath been made manifest to us, nor is there a proof more patent of the truth of Al-Islam than that we have seen

this day with our eyes." So I and all the monks became Moslems and on like wise did the villagers; and we sent to the people of Mesopotamia for a doctor of the law, to instruct us in the ordinances of Al-Islam and the canons of the Faith. They sent us a learned man and a pious, who taught us the rites of prayer and the tenets of the faith; and we are now in ease abounding; so to Allah be the praise and the thanks! And they also tell a tale of

THE LOVES OF ABU ISA AND KURRAT AL-AYN.

Quoth Amrú bin Masa'dah:[212]—Abú Isá, son of Al-Rashíd and brother to Al-Maamun, was enamoured of one Kurrat al-Ayn, a slave-girl belonging to Ali bin Hishám,[213] and she also loved him; but he concealed his passion, complaining of it to none neither discovering his secret to anyone, of his pride and magnanimity; for he had used his utmost endeavour to purchase her of her master, but he had failed. At last when his patience was at an end and his passion was sore on him and he was helpless in the matter, he went in to Al-Maamun, one day of state after the folk had retired, and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, if thou wilt this day make trial of thine Alcaydes by taking them unawares, thou wilt know the generous from the mean and note each one's place, after the quality of his mind." But, in saying this he purposed only to sit with Kurrat al-Ayn in her lord's house. Quoth Al-Maamun, "Right is thy recking," and bade make ready a barge, called 'the Flyer,' wherein he embarked with Abu Isa and a party of his chief officers. The first mansion he visited unexpectedly was that of Hamíd al-Tawíl of Tús, whom he found seated——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Al-Maamun embarked with his chief officers and fared on till they reached the mansion of Hamíd al-Tawíl of Tús; and, unexpectedly entering, they found him seated on a mat and before him singers and players, with lutes and flageolets and other instruments of music in their hands. So Al-Maamun sat with him awhile and presently he set before him dishes of nothing but fleshmeat, with no birds among them. The Caliph would not taste thereof and Abu Isa said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, we have taken the owner of this place unawares, and he knew not of thy coming; but now let us go to another place which is prepared for thee and fitted for thee." Thereupon the Caliph arose and betook himself with his brother Abu Isa and his suite, to the abode of Ali son of Hishám who, on hearing of their approach, came out and received them with the goodliest of reception, and kissed the earth before the King. Then he brought them into his mansion and opened to them a saloon than which seer never saw a goodlier. Its floors, pillars and

walls were of many-coloured marbles, adorned with Greek paintings: and it was spread with matting of Sind[214] whereon were carpets and tapestry of Bassorah make, fitted to the length and breadth of the room. So the Caliph sat awhile, examining the house and its ceilings and walls, then said, "Give us somewhat to eat." So they brought him forthwith nearly an hundred dishes of poultry besides other birds and brewises, fritters and cooling marinades. When he had eaten, he said, "Give us something to drink, O Ali;" and the host set before him, in vessels of gold and silver and crystal, raisin-wine boiled down to one third with fruits and spices; and the cupbearers were pages like moons, clad in garments of Alexandrian stuff interwoven with gold and bearing on their breasts beakers of crystal, full of rose-water mingled with musk. So Al-Maamun marvelled with exceeding marvel at all he saw and said, "Ho thou, Abu al-Hasan!" Whereupon Ali sprang to the Caliph's carpet and kissing it, said, "At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful!" 146 and stood before him. Quoth Al-Maamun, "Let us hear some pleasant and merry song." Replied Ali, "I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful," and said to one of his eunuchs, "Fetch the singing-women." So the slave went out and presently returned, followed by ten castratos, bearing ten stools of gold, which they set down in due order; and after these came ten damsels, concubines of the master, as they were shining full moons or gardens full of bloom, clad in black brocade, with crowns of gold on their heads; and they passed along the room till they sat down on the stools, when sang they sundry songs. Al-Maamun looked at one of them; and, being captivated by her elegance and fair favour, asked her, "What is thy name, O damsel?"; and she answered, "My name is Sajáhí,[215] O Commander of the Faithful," and he said, "Sing to us, O Sajahi!" So she played a lively measure and sang these couplets:—

I walk, for fear of interview, the weakling's walk ✿ Who sees two lion-whelps the fount draw nigh:

My cloak acts sword, my heart's perplext with fright, ✿ Lest jealous hostile eyes th' approach descry:

Till sudden hapt I on a delicate maid ✿ Like desert-doe that fails her fawns to espy.

Quoth the Caliph, "Thou hast done well, O damsel! whose are these lines?" She answered, "Written by Amru bin Ma'di Karib al-Zubaydi,[216] and the air is Ma'abid's."[217] Then the Caliph and Abu Isa and Ali drank and the damsels went away and were succeeded by other ten, all clad in flowered silk of Al-Yaman, brocaded with gold, who sat down on the chairs and sang various songs. The Caliph looked at one of the concubines, who was like a wild heifer of the waste, and said to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?" She replied, "My name is Zabiyah,[218] O Commander of the Faithful;" and he, "Sing to us, Zabiyah;" so she warbled like a bird with many a trill and sang these two couplets:—

147 Houris, and high-born Dames who feel no fear of men; ✿ Like Meccan game forbidden man to slam:[219]

Their soft sweet voices make you deem them whores, ✿ But bars them from all whoring Al-Islam.

When she had finished, Al-Maamun cried, "Favoured of Allah art thou!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the slave-girl finished her song, Al-Maamun cried, "Favoured of Allah art thou! Whose is this verse?" and she answered, "Jarír's[220] and the air is by Ibn Surayj." Then the Caliph and his company drank, whilst the girls went away and there came forth yet other ten, as they were rubies, robed in red brocade inwoven with gold and purfled with pearls and jewels whilst all their heads were bare. They sat down on the stools and sang various airs; so the Caliph looked at one of them, who was like the sun of the day, and asked her, "What is thy name, O damsel?"; and she answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, my name is Fátin." "Sing to us, O Fatin," quoth he; whereat she played a lively measure and sang these couplets:—

Deign grant thy favours; since 'tis time I were engraced; ✿ Enough of severance hath it been my lot to taste.
Thou'rt he whose face doth every gift and charm unite; ✿ Yet is my patience spent for that 'twas sore misplaced:
I've wasted life in loving thee; and would high Heaven ✿ Grant me one meeting hour for all this wilful waste.

"Well sung, O Fatin!" exclaimed the Caliph; "whose verse is this?" And she answered, "Adi bin Zayd's, and the air is antique." Then all three drank, whilst the damsels retired and 148 were succeeded by other ten maidens, as they were sparkling stars, clad in flowered silk embroidered with red gold and girt with jewelled zones. They sat down and sang various motives; and the Caliph asked one of them, who was like a wand of willow, "What is thy name, O damsel?"; and she answered, "My name is Rashaa[221], O Commander of the Faithful." "Sing to us, O Rashaa," quoth he; so she played a lively measure and sang these couplets:—

And wand-like Houri, who can passion heal ✿ Like young gazelle that paceth o'er the plain:
I drain this wine-cup on the toast, her cheek; ✿ Each cup disputing till she bends in twain,
Then sleeps the night with me, the while I cry ✿ "This is the only gain my Soul would gain!"

Said the Caliph, "Well done, O damsel! Sing us something more." So she rose and kissing the ground before him, sang the following distich:—

She came out to gaze on the bridal at ease ✿ In a shift that reekèd of ambergris.

The Caliph was highly pleased with this couplet and, when the slave-girl saw how much it delighted him, she repeated it several times. Then said Al-Maamun, "Bring up 'the Flyer,'" being minded to embark and depart: but Ali bin Hisham said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I have a slave-girl, whom I bought for ten thousand dinars; she hath taken my heart in whole and part, and I would fain display her to the Commander of the Faithful. If she please him and he will accept of her, she is his: and if not, let him hear something from her." Said the Caliph, "Bring her to me;" and forth came a damsel, as she were a branchlet of willow, with seducing eyes and eyebrows set like twin bows; and on her head she wore a crown of red gold crusted with pearls and jewelled, under which was a fillet bearing this couplet wrought in letters of chrysolite:—

A Jinniyah this, with her Jinn, to show ✿ How to pierce man's heart with a stringless bow!

149 The handmaiden walked, with the gait of a gazelle in flight and fit to damn a devotee, till she came to a chair, whereon she seated herself.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventeenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the handmaiden walked with the gait of a gazelle in flight, fit to damn a devotee, till she came to a chair whereon she seated herself. And Al-Maamun marvelled at her beauty and loveliness; but, when Abu Isa saw her, his heart throbbed with pain, his colour changed to pale and wan and he was in evil case. Asked the Caliph, "O Abu Isa, what aileth thee to change thus?;" and he answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, it is because of a twitch that seizeth me bytimes." Quoth the Caliph, "Hast thou known yonder damsel before to-day?" Quoth he, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful, can the moon be concealed?" Then said Al-Maamun to her, "What is thy name, O damsel?"; and she replied, "My name is Kurrat al-Ayn, O Commander of the Faithful," and he rejoined, "Sing to us, O Kurrat al-Ayn." So she sang these two couplets:—

The loved ones left thee in middle night, ✿ And fared with the pilgrims when dawn shone bright:

The tents of pride round the domes they pitched, ✿ And with broidered curtains were veiled fro' sight.

Quoth the Caliph, "Favoured of Heaven art thou, O Kurrat al-Ayn! Whose song is that?"; whereto she answered "The words are by Di'ibil al-Khuza'i, and the air by Zurzúr al-Saghír." Abu Isa looked at her and his tears choked him; so that the company marvelled at him. Then she turned to Al-Maamun and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, wilt thou give me leave to change the words?" Said he, "Sing what thou wilt;" so she played a merry measure and carolled these couplets:—

If thou should please a friend who pleaseth thee ✿ Frankly, in public practise secrecy.

And spurn the slanderer's tale, who seldom[222] seeks ✿ Except the severance of true love to see.

150 They say, when lover's near, he tires of love, ✿ And absence is for love best remedy:

Both cures we tried and yet we are not cured, ✿ Withal we judge that nearness easier be:

Yet nearness is of no avail when he ✿ Thou lovest lends thee love unwillingly.

But when she had finished, Abu Isa said, "O Commander of the Faithful,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kurrat al-Ayn had finished her verse, Abu Isa said, "O Commander of the Faithful, though we endure disgrace, we shall be at ease.[223] Dost thou give me leave to reply to her?" Quoth the Caliph, "Yes, say what thou wilt to her." So he swallowed his tears and sang these two distichs:—

Silent I woned and never owned my love; ✿ But from my heart I hid love's blissful boon;

Yet, if my eyes should manifest my love, ✿ ‘Tis for my nearness to the shining moon.

Then Kurrat al-Ayn took the lute and played a lively tune and rejoined with these couplets:—

An what thou claimest were the real truth, ✿ With only Hope content thou hadst not been;

Nor couldest patient live without the girl ✿ So rare of inner grace and outward mien.

But there is nothing in the claim of thee ✿ At all, save tongue and talk that little mean.

When Abu Isa heard this he fell to weeping and wailing and evidencing his trouble and anguish. Then he raised his eyes to her and sighing, repeated these couplets:—

Under my raiment a waste body lies, ✿ And in my spirit all-comprising prize.

I have a heart, whose pain shall aye endure, ✿ And tears like torrents pour these woeful eyes.

151 Whene’er a wise man spies me, straight he chides ✿ Love, that misleads me thus in ways unwise:

O Lord, I lack the power this dole to bear: ✿ Come sudden Death or joy in bestest guise!

When he had ended, Ali bin Hisham sprang up and kissing his feet, said, “O my lord, Allah hearing thy secret hath answered thy prayer and consenteth to thy taking her with all she hath of things rare and fair, so the Commander of the Faithful have no mind to her.” Quoth Al-Maamun, “Had we a mind to her, we would prefer Abu Isa before ourselves and help him to his desire.” So saying, he rose and embarking, went away, whilst Abu Isa tarried for Kurrat al-Ayn, whom he took and carried to his own house, his breast swelling with joy. See then the generosity of Ali son of Hisham! And they tell a tale of

AL AMIN SON OF AL-RASHID AND HIS UNCLE IBRAHIM BIN AL-MAHDI.

Al-Amin[224], brother of Al-Maamun, once entered the house of his uncle Ibrahim bin Al-Mahdi, where he saw a slave-girl playing upon the lute; and, she being one of the fairest of women, his heart inclined to her. Ibrahim, seeing how it was with him, sent the girl to him, with rich raiment and precious ornaments. When he saw her, he thought that his uncle had lain with her; so he was loath to have to do with her, because of that, and accepting what came with her sent her back to Ibrahim. His uncle learnt the cause of this from one of Al-Amin’s eunuchs; so he took a shift of watered silk and worked upon its skirt, in letters of gold, these two couplets:—

No! I declare by Him to whom all bow, ✿ Of nothing ‘neath her petticoat I trow:

Nor meddle with her mouth; nor aught did I ✿ But see and hear her, and it was enow!

Then he clad her in the shift and, giving her a lute, sent her back again to his nephew. When she came into Al-Amin’s presence, 152 she kissed ground before him and tuning the lute, sang thereto these two couplets:—

Thy breast thou baredst sending back the gift; ✿ Showing unlove for me withouten shift:

An thou bear spite of Past, the Past forgive, ✿ And for the Caliphate cast the Past adrift.

When she had made an end of her verse, Al-Amin looked at her and, seeing what was upon her skirt, could no longer control himself,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Al-Amin looked at the damsel and saw what was upon her skirt, he could no longer control himself, but drew near unto her and kissed her and appointed her a separate lodging in his palace. Moreover, he thanked his uncle for this and bestowed on him the government of Rayy. And a tale is told of

AL FATH BIN KHAKAN AND THE CALIPH AL-MUTAWAKKIL.

Al-Mutawakkil[225] was once taking medicine, and folk sent him by way of solace all sorts of presents and rarities and things costly and precious. Amongst others, Al-Fath bin Khákán[226] sent him a virgin slave, high-breasted, of the fairest among women of her time, and with her a vase of crystal, containing ruddy wine, and a goblet of red gold, whereon were graven in black these couplets:—

153 Since our Imam came forth from medicine, ✿ Which made him health and heartiness rewin,

There is no healing draught more sovereign ✿ Than well-boiled wine this golden goblet in:

Then let him break the seal for him secured; ✿ ‘Tis best prescription after medicine.[227]

Now when the damsel entered, the physician Yohanná[228] was with the Caliph, and as he read the couplets, he smiled and said, “By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, Fath is better versed than I in the art of healing: so let not the Prince of True Believers gainsay his prescription.” Accordingly, the Caliph followed the recipe contained in the poetry and was made whole by the blessing of Allah and won his every wish. And among tales they tell is one of

THE MAN’S DISPUTE WITH THE LEARNED WOMAN CONCERNING THE RELATIVE EXCELLENCE OF MALE AND FEMALE.

Quoth a certain man of learning, I never saw amongst woman-kind one wittier, and wiser, better read and by nature more generously bred; and in manners and morals more perfected than a preacher of the people of Baghdad, by name Sitt al-Mashá’ikh.[229] It chanced that she came to Hamah-city in the year of the Flight five hundred and sixty and one[230]; and there delivered salutary exhortations to the folk

from the professorial chair. Now there used to visit her house a number of students of divinity and persons of learning and polite letters, who would discuss with her questions of theology and dispute with her on controversial points. I went to her one day, with a friend of mine, a man of years and education; and when we had taken our seats, 154 she set before us a dish of fruit and seated herself behind a curtain. Now she had a brother, a handsome youth, who stood behind us, to serve us. And when we had eaten we fell to disputing upon points of divinity, and I propounded to her a theological question bearing upon a difference between the Imams, the Founders of the Four Schools. She proceeded to speak in answer, whilst I listened; but all the while my friend fell to looking upon her brother's face and admiring his beauties without paying any heed to what she discoursed. Now as she was watching him from behind the curtain; when she had made an end of her speech, she turned to him and said, "Methinks thou be of those who give men the preference over women!" He replied, "Assuredly," and she asked, "And why so?"; whereto he answered, "For that Allah hath made the masculine worthier than the feminine;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Shaykh replied, "For that Allah hath made the masculine worthier than the feminine; and I like the excelling and mislike the excelled." She laughed and presently said, "Wilt thou deal fairly with me in debate, if I battle the matter with thee?" and he rejoined, "Yes." Then quoth she, "What is the evidence of the superiority of the male to the female?" Quoth he, "It is of two kinds, traditional and reasonable. The authoritative part deriveth from the Koran and the Traditions of the Apostle. As for the first we have the very words of Almighty Allah, 'Men shall have the pre-eminence above women because of those advantages wherein Allah hath caused the one of them to excel the other;'[231] and again, 'If there be not two men, let there be one man and two women;'[232] and again, when treating of inheritance, 'If there be brothers and sisters let a male have as much as the portion of two females.'[233] Thus Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath in these places preferred the male over the female and teacheth that a woman is 155 as the half of a man, for that he is worthier than she As for the Sunnah-traditions, is it not reported of the Prophet (whom Allah save and assain!) that he appointed the blood-money for a woman to be half that of a man? And as for the evidence of reason, the male is the agent and active and the female the patient and passive."[234] Rejoined she, "Thou hast said well, O my lord, but, by Allah, thou hast proved my contention with thine own lips and hast advanced evidence which telleth against thee, and not for thee. And thus it is: Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) preferred the male above the female solely because of the inherent condition and essential quality of masculinity; and in this there is no dispute between us. Now this quality of male-hood is common to the child, the boy, the youth, the adult and the old man; nor is there any distinction

between them in this. If, then, the superior excellence of male masculant belong to him solely by virtue of manhood, it behoveth that thy heart incline and thy soul delight in the greybeard, equally with the boy; seeing that there is no distinction between them, in point of male-hood. But the difference between thee and me turneth upon the accident of qualities that are sought as constituting the pleasure of intercourse and its enjoyment; and thou hast adduced no proof of the superiority of the youth over the young girl in this matter of non-essentials." He made answer, "O reverend lady, knowest thou not that which is peculiar to the youth of limber shape and rosy cheeks and pleasant smile and sweetness of speech? Youths are, in these respects superior to women; and the proof of this is what they traditionally report of the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!) that he said, 'Stay not thy gaze upon the beardless, for in them is a momentary eye-glance at the black-eyed girls of Paradise.' Nor indeed is the superiority of the lad over the lass hidden to any of mankind, and how well saith Abu Nowas:[235]—

The least of him is the being free ✿ From monthly courses and pregnancy.

156 And the saying of another poet:—

Quoth our Imam, Abu Nowas, who was ✿ For mad debauch and waggishness renowned:—

'O tribe that loves the cheeks of boys, take fill ✿ Of joys in Paradise shall ne'er be found!'

So if any one enlarge in praise of a slave-girl and wish to enhance her value by the mention of her beauties, he likeneth her to a youth,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Shaykh continued, "So if any one enlarge in praise of a slave-girl and wish to enhance her value by the mention of her beauties, he likeneth her to a youth, because of the illustrious qualities that belong to the male, even as saith the poet:—

Boy-like of backside, in the deed of kind, ✿ She sways, as sways the wand-like boughs a-wind.

An youths, then, were not better and fairer than girls, why should these be likened to them? And know also (Almighty Allah preserve thee!) that a youth is easy to be led, adapting himself to every rede, pleasant of converse and manners, inclining to assent rather than dissent, especially when his side-face is newly down'd and his upper lip is first embrowned, and the purple lights of youth on his cheeks abound, so that he is like the full moon sound; and how goodly is the saying of Abu Tammám[236]:—

The slanderers said There's hair upon his cheeks; ✿ Quoth I, Exceed not; that's no blemish there.

When he could bear that haling of his hips ✿ And pearl-beads shaded by mustachio-hair;[237]

And Rose swore solemn, holiest oath that is, ✿ From that fair cheek she nevermore would fare,

I spoke with eyelids without need of speech, ✿ And they who answered me his eyebrows were.

He's even fairer than thou knewest him, ✿ And cheek-down guards from all would overdare.

157 Brighter and sweeter now are grown his charms, ✿ Since down robes lip and cheek before were bare.
And those who blame me for my love of him, ✿ When him they mention say of him, 'Thy Fair'!

And quoth Al-Hariri[238] and quoth excellently well:—

My censors say, What means this pine for him? ✿ Seest not the flowing hair on cheeks a-flowing?
I say, By Allah, an ye deem I dote, ✿ Look at the truth in those fine eyes a-showing!
But for the down that veils his cheek and chin, ✿ His brow had dazed all eyes no sight allowing:
And whoso sojourns in a growthless land, ✿ How shall he move from land fair growths a-growing?

And quoth another:—

My blamers say of me, 'He is consoled,' And lie! ✿ No consolation comes to those who pine and sigh.
I had no solace when Rose bloomed alone on cheek, ✿ Now Basil blooms thereon and now consoled am I.

And again:—

Slim-waisted one, whose looks with down of cheek ✿ In slaughtering mankind each other hurtle:
With the Narcissus-blade he sheddeth blood, ✿ The baldrick of whose sheath is freshest myrtle.[239]

And again:—

Not with his must I'm drunk, but verily ✿ Those curls turn manly heads like newest wine[240]:
Each of his beauties envies each, and all ✿ Would be the silky down on side-face li'en.

158 Such are the excellencies of the youth which women do not own, and they more than suffice to give those the preference over these." She replied, "Allah give thee health! verily, thou hast imposed the debate upon thyself; and thou hast spoken and hast not stinted and hast brought proofs to support every assertion. But, 'Now is the truth become manifest;'[241] so swerve thou not from the path thereof; and, if thou be not content with a summary of evidence, I will set it before thee in fullest detail. Allah upon thee, where is the youth beside the girl and who shall compare kid and wild cow? The girl is soft of speech, fair of form, like a branchlet of basil, with teeth like chamomile-petals and hair like halters wherefrom to hang hearts. Her cheeks are like blood-red anemones and her face like a pippin: she hath lips like wine and breasts like pomegranates twain and a shape supple as a rattan-cane. Her body is well-formed and with sloping shoulders dight; she hath a nose like the edge of a sword shining bright and a forehead brilliant white and eyebrows which unite and eyes stained by Nature's hand black as night. If she speak, fresh young pearls are scattered from her mouth forthright and all hearts are ravished by the daintiness of her sprite; when she smileth thou wouldst ween the moon shone out her lips between and when she eyes thee, sword-blades flash from the babes of her eyes. In her all beauties to conclusion come, and she is the centre of attraction to traveller and stay-at-home. She hath two lips of cramoisy, than cream smoother and of taste than honey sweeter,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the preacher-woman thus pursued her theme in the praise of fair maids, “She hath two lips of cramoisy, than cream smoother and than honey sweeter;” adding, “And she hath a bosom, as it were a way two hills between which are a pair of breasts like globes of ivory sheen; likewise, a stomach right smooth, flanks soft as the palm-spathe and creased with folds and dimples which overlap one 159 another, and liberal thighs, which like columns of pearl arise, and back parts which billow and beat together like seas of glass or mountains of glance, and two feet and hands of gracious mould like unto ingots of virgin gold. So, O miserable! where are mortal men beside the Jinn? Knowest thou not that puissant princes and potent Kings before women ever humbly bend and on them for delight depend? Verily, they may say;—We rule over necks and rob hearts. These women! how many a rich man have they not paupered, how many a powerful man have they not prostrated and how many a superior man have they not enslaved! Indeed, they seduce the sage and send the saint to shame and bring the wealthy to want and plunge the fortune-favoured into penury. Yet for all this, the wise but redouble in affection of them and honour; nor do they count this oppression or dishonour. How many a man for them hath offended his Maker and called down on himself the wrath of his father and mother! And all this because of the conquest of their love over hearts. Knowest thou not, O wretched one, that for them are built pavilions, and slave-girls are for sale;[242] that for them tear-floods rail and for them are collected jewels of price and ambergris and musk odoriferous; and armies are arrayed and pleasaunces made and wealth heaped up and smitten off is many a head?” And indeed he spoke sooth in the words, ‘Whoso saith the world meaneth woman.’ Now as for thy citation from the Holy Traditions, it is an argument against thee and not for thee; in that the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!) compareth the beardless with the black-eyed girls of Paradise. Now, doubtless, the subject of comparison is worthier than the object therewith compared; so, unless women be the worthier and the goodlier, wherefore should other than they be likened to them? As for thy saying that girls are likened to boys, the case is not so, but the contrary: boys are likened to girls; for folk say, Yonder boy is like a girl. As for what proof thou quotest from the poets, the verses were the product of a complexion unnatural in this respect; and as for the habitual sodomites and catamites, offenders against religion, Almighty Allah hath condemned them in His Holy Book,[243] 160 wherein He denounceth their filthy practices, saying, Do ye approach unto the males among mankind[244] and leave your wives which your Lord hath created for you? Surely ye are a people who transgress! These it is that liken girls to boys, of their exceeding profligacy and ungraciousness and inclination to follow the fiend and own lusts, so that they say, She is apt for two tricks;[245] and these are all wanderers from the way of right and the righteous. Quoth their chief Abu Nowas:—

Slim-waist and boyish wits delight ✿ Wencher, as well as Sodomite,[246]

As for what thou sayest of a youth's first hair on cheek and lips and how they add to his beauty and loveliness, by Allah, thou strayest from the straight path of sooth and sayest that which is other than the truth; for whiskers change the charms of the comely into ugliness; (quoting these couplets):—

That sprouting hair upon his face took wreak ✿ For lovers' vengeance, all did vainly seek.

I see not on his face a sign fuli- ✿ genous, except his curls are hue of reek.

If so his paper[247] mostly be begrimed ✿ Where deemest thou the reed shall draw a streak?

If any raise him other fairs above, ✿ This only proves the judge of wits is weak.

And when she ended her verse she resumed, "Laud be to Allah Almighty,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the preacher-woman ended her verse she resumed, addressing the man, "Laud to Allah Almighty! how can it be hid from thee that the perfect pleasure is in women and that abiding blessings are not to be found but with them, seeing that Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath promised His prophets and saints black-eyed damsels in Paradise and hath appointed these for a recompense of their godly works. And had the Almighty known that the joy supreme was in the possession of other than women, He had rewarded them therewith and promised it to them. And quoth he (whom Allah bless and preserve!), The things I hold dearest of the things of your world are three: women and perfume and the solace of my eyes in prayer. Verily Allah hath appointed boys to serve his prophets and saints in Paradise, because Paradise is the abode of joy and delight, which could not be complete without the service of youths; but, as to the use of them for aught but service, it is Hell's putridity[248] and corruption and turpitude. How well saith the poet:"—

Men's turning unto bums of boys is bumptious; ✿ Whoso love noble women show their own noblesse.

How many goodly wights have slept the night, enjoying ✿ Buttocks of boys, and woke at morn in foulest mess;

Their garments stained by safflower, which is yellow merde ✿ Their shame proclaiming, showing colour of distress.

Who can deny the charge, when so bewrayed are they ✿ That e'en by daylight shows the dung upon their dress?

What contrast wi' the man, who slept a gladsome night ✿ By Houri-maid for glance a mere enchantress,

He rises off her borrowing wholesome bonny scent; ✿ That fills the house with whiffs of perfumed goodliness.

No boy deserved place by side of her to hold; ✿ Canst even aloes-wood with what fills pool of cess![249]

Then said she, "O folk ye have made me to break the bounds of 162modesty and the circle of free-born women and indulge in idle talk of chambering and wantonness, which beseemeth not people of learning. But the breasts of free-borns are the

sepulchres of secrets, and such conversations are in confidence. Moreover, actions are according to intentions,[250] and I crave pardon of Allah for myself and you and all Moslems, seeing that He is the Pardoner and the Compassionate." Then she held her peace and thereafter would answer us of naught; so we went our way, rejoicing in that we had profited by her contention and yet sorrowing to part from her. And among the tales they tell is one of

ABU SUWAYD AND THE PRETTY OLD WOMAN.

(Quoth Abu Suwayd) I and a company of my friends, entered a garden one day to buy somewhat of fruit; and we saw in a corner an old woman, who was bright of face, but her head-hair was white, and she was combing it with an ivory comb. We stopped before her, yet she paid no heed to us neither veiled her face: so I said, to her, "O old woman,[251] wert thou to dye thy hair black, thou wouldst be handsomer than a girl: what hindereth thee from this?" She raised her head towards me——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu Suwayd continued:—When I spake these words to the ancient 163 dame she raised her head towards me and, opening wide her eyes, recited these two couplets:—

I dyed what years have dyed, but this my staining ✿ Lasts not, while that of days is aye remaining:

Days when beclad in gear of youth I fared, ✿ Raked fore and aft by men with joy unfeigning.

I cried:—By Allah, favoured art thou for an old woman! How sincere art thou in thine after-pine for forbidden pleasures and how false is thy pretence of repentance from frowardness! And another tale is that of

THE EMIR ALI BIN TAHIR AND THE GIRL MUUNIS.

Once on a time was displayed for sale to Ali bin Mohammed bin Abdallah bin Táhir[252] a slave-girl called Muunis who was superior to her fellows in beauty and breeding, and to boot an accomplished poetess; and he asked her of her name. Replied she, "Allah advance the Emir, my name is Muunis."[253] Now he knew this before; so he bowed his head awhile, then raising his eyes to her, recited this verse:—

What sayest of one by a sickness caught ✿ For the love of thy love till he waxed distraught?

Answered she, "Allah exalt the Emir!" and recited this verse in reply:—

If we saw a lover who pains as he ought, ✿ Wi' love we would grant him all favours he sought.

She pleased him: so he bought her for seventy thousand dirhams and begat on her Obayd' Allah bin Mohammed, afterwards minister of Police.[254] And we are told by Abu al-Aynâ[255] a tale of

THE WOMAN WHO HAD A BOY AND THE OTHER WHO HAD A MAN TO LOVER.

(Quoth Abu al-Aynâ.) There were in our street two women, one of whom had for lover a man and the other a beardless youth, and they foregathered one night on the terrace-roof of a house adjoining mine, knowing not that I was near. Quoth the boy's lover to the other, "O my sister, how canst thou bear with patience the harshness of thy lover's beard as it falleth on thy breast, when he busseth thee and his mustachios rub thy cheek and lips?" Replied the other, "Silly that thou art, what decketh the tree save its leaves and the cucumber but its warts?[256] Didst ever see in the world aught uglier than a scald-head bald of his beard? Knowest thou not that the beard is to men as the sidelocks to women; and what is the difference between chin and cheek?[257] Knowest thou not that Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath created an angel in Heaven, who saith:—Glory be to Him who ornamenteth men with beards and women with long hair? So, were not the beard even as the tresses in comeliness, it had not been coupled with them, O silly! How shall I spread-eagle myself under a boy, who will emit long before I can go off and forestall me in limpness of penis and clitoris; and leave a man who, when he taketh breath clippeth close and when he entereth goeth leisurely, and when he hath done, repeateth, and when he pusheth poketh hard, and as often as he withdraweth, returneth?" The boy's leman was edified by her speech and said, "I forswear my lover by the lord of the Ka'abah!" And amongst tales is one of

17- ALI THE CAIRENE AND THE HAUNTED HOUSE IN BAGHDAD.

There lived once, in the city of Cairo, a merchant who had great store of monies and bullion, gems and jewels, and lands and houses beyond count, and his name was Hasan the Jeweller, the Baghdad man. Furthermore Allah had blessed him with a son of perfect beauty and brilliancy; rosy-cheeked, fair of face and well-figured, whom he named Ali of Cairo and had taught the Koran and science and elocution and the other branches of polite education, till he became proficient in all manner of knowledge. He was under his father's hand in trade but, after a while, Hasan fell sick and his sickness grew upon him, till he made sure of death; so he called his son to him,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Jeweller, the Baghdadi, fell sick and made sure of death, he called to him his son, named Ali of Cairo, and said, "O my son, verily this world passeth away; but the next world endureth for aye. Every soul shall taste of death;[258] and now, O my son, my decease is at hand and I desire to charge thee with a charge, which if thou observe, thou shalt abide in safety and prosperity, till thou meet Almighty Allah; but if thou follow it not, there shall befal thee much weariness and thou wilt repent of having transgressed mine injunctions." Replied Ali, "O my father, how shall I do other than hearken to thy words and act according to thy charge, seeing that I am bounden by the law of the Faith to obey thee and give ear to thy command?" Rejoined his father, "O my son, I leave thee lands and houses and goods and wealth past count; so that wert thou each day to spend thereof five hundred dinars, thou wouldst miss naught of it. But, O my son, look that thou 166 live in the fear of Allah and follow His Chosen One, Mustafa, (whom may He bless and preserve!) in whatso he is reported to have bidden and forbidden in his traditional law.[259] Be thou constant in alms-deeds and the practice of beneficence and in consorting with men of worth and piety and learning; and look that thou have a care for the poor and needy and shun avarice and meanness and the conversation of the wicked or those of suspicious character. Look thou kindly upon thy servants and family, and also upon thy wife, for she is of the daughters of the great and is big with child by thee; haply Allah will vouchsafe thee virtuous issue by

her." And he ceased not to exhort him thus, weeping and saying, "O my son, I beseech Allah the Bountiful, the Lord of the glorious Empyrean[260] to deliver thee from all straits that may encompass thee and grant thee His ready relief!" Thereupon his son wept with sore weeping and said, "O my father, I am melted by thy words, for these are as the words of one that saith farewell." Replied the merchant, "Yes, O my son, I am aware of my condition: forget thou not my charge." Then he fell to repeating the two professions of the Faith and to reciting verses of the Koran, until the appointed hour arrived, when he said, "Draw near unto me, O my son." So Ali drew near and he kissed him; then he sighed and his soul departed his body and he went to the mercy of Almighty Allah.[261] Therewith great grief fell upon Ali; the clamour of keening arose in his house and his father's friends flocked to him. Then he betook himself to preparing the body for burial and made him a splendid funeral. They bore his bier to the place of prayer and prayed over him, then to the 167 cemetery, where they buried him and recited over him what suited of the sublime Koran; after which they returned to the house and condoled with the dead man's son and wended each his own way. Moreover, Ali prayed the Friday prayer for his father and had perlections of the Koran every day for the normal forty, during which time he abode in the house and went not forth, save to the place of prayer; and every Friday he visited his father's tomb. So he ceased not from his praying and reciting for some time, until his fellows of the sons of the merchants came in to him one day and saluting him, said, "How long this thy mourning and neglecting thy business and the company of thy friends? Verily, this is a fashion which will bring thee weariness, and thy body will suffer for it exceedingly." Now when they came in to him, Iblis the Accursed was with them, prompting them; and they went on to recommend him to accompany them to the bazar, whilst Iblis tempted him to consent to them, till he yielded,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the sons of the merchants went in to Ali the Cairene, son of Hasan the Jeweller, they recommended him to accompany them to the bazar, till he yielded, that the will of Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) might be fulfilled; and he left the house of mourning with them. Presently they said, "Mount thy she-mule and ride with us to such a garden, that we may solace us there and that thy grief and despondency may depart from thee." So he mounted and taking his slave, went with them to the garden in question; and when they entered one of them went and making ready the morning-meal, brought it to them there. So they ate and were merry and sat in talk, till the end of the day, when they mounted and returned each to his own lodging, where they passed the night. As soon as the morrow dawned, they again visited Ali and said, "Come with us." Asked he, "Whither?"; and they answered, "To such a garden; for it is finer than the first and more pleasurable." So he went with them to the garden, and one of them, going away,

made ready the morning-meal and brought it to them, together with strong heady wine; and after 168 eating they brought out the wine, when quoth Ali, “What is this?” and quoth they, “This is what dispelleth sadness and brighteneth gladness.” And they ceased not to commend it to him, till they prevailed upon him and he drank with them. Then they sat, drinking and talking, till the end of the day, when each returned home. But as for Ali, the Cairene, he was giddy with wine and in this plight went in to his wife, who said to him, “What aileth thee that thou art so changed?” He said, “We were making merry to-day, when one of my companions brought us liquor; so my friends drank and I with them, and this giddiness came upon me.” And she replied, “O my lord, say me, hast thou forgotten thy father’s injunction and done that from which he forbade thee, in consorting with doubtful folk?” Answered he, “These be of the sons of the merchants; they are no suspicious folk, only lovers of mirth and good cheer.” And he continued to lead this life with his friends, day after day, going from place to place and feasting with them and drinking, till they said to him, “Our turns are ended, and now it is thy turn.” “Well come, and welcome and fair cheer!” cried he; so on the morrow, he made ready all that the case called for of meat and drink, two-fold what they had provided, and taking cooks and tent-pitchers and coffee-makers,[262] repaired with the others to Al-Rauzah[263] and the Nilometer, where they abode a whole month, eating and drinking and hearing music and making merry. At the end of the month, Ali found that he had spent a great sum of money; but Iblis the Accursed deluded him and said to him, “Though thou shouldst spend every day a like sum yet wouldst thou not miss aught of it.” So he took no account of money expenses and continued this way of life for three years, whilst his wife remonstrated with him and reminded him of his father’s charge; but he hearkened not to her words, till he had spent all the ready monies he had, when he fell to selling his jewels and spending their price, until they also were all gone. Then he sold his houses, fields, farms and gardens, one after other, till they likewise were all gone and he had 169 nothing left but the tenement wherein he lived. So he tore out the marble and wood-work and sold it and spent of its price, till he had made an end of all this also, when he took thought with himself and, finding that he had nothing left to expend, sold the house itself and spent the purchase-money. After that, the man who had bought the house came to him and said “Seek out for thyself a lodging, as I have need of my house.” So he bethought himself and, finding that he had no want of a house, except for his wife, who had borne him a son and daughter (he had not a servant left), he hired a large room in one of the mean courts[264] and there took up his abode, after having lived in honour and luxury, with many eunuchs and much wealth; and he soon came to want one day’s bread. Quoth his wife, “Of this I warned thee and exhorted thee to obey thy father’s charge, and thou wouldst not hearken to me; but there is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Whence shall the little ones eat? Arise then, go round to thy friends, the sons of the merchants: belike they will give

thee somewhat on which we may live this day." So he arose and went to his friends one by one; but they all hid their faces from him and gave him injurious words revolting to hear, but naught else; and he returned to his wife and said to her, "They have given me nothing." Thereupon she went forth to beg of her neighbours the wherewithal to keep themselves alive——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the wife of Ali the Cairene, seeing her husband return empty-handed, went forth to beg of her neighbours the wherewithal to keep themselves alive and repaired to a woman, whom she had known in former days. When she came in to her and she saw her case, she rose and receiving her kindly, wept and said, "What hath befallen you?" So she told her all that her husband had done, and the other replied, "Well come and welcome and fair cheer!; whatever thou needest, seek it of me, without price." Quoth she, "Allah 170requite thee abundantly!"[265] Then her friend gave her as much provision as would suffice herself and her family a whole month, and she took it and returned to her lodging. When her husband saw her, he wept and asked, "Whence hadst thou that?"; and she answered, "I got it of such a woman; for, when I told her what had befallen us, she failed me not in aught, but said, Seek of me all thou needest." Whereupon her husband rejoined, "Since thou hast this much I will betake myself to a place I have in my mind; peradventure Allah Almighty will bring us relief."[266] With these words he took leave of her and kissed his children and went out, not knowing whither he should go, and he continued walking on till he came to Bulák, where he saw a ship about to sail for Damietta.[267] Here he met a man, between whom and his father there had been friendship, and he saluted him and said to him, "Whither now?" Replied Ali, "To Damietta: I have friends there, whom I would enquire after and visit them and then return." The man took him home and treated him honourably; then, furnishing him with vivers for the voyage and giving him some gold pieces, embarked him on board the vessel bound for Damietta. When they reached it, Ali landed, not knowing whither to go; but as he was walking along, a merchant saw him and had pity on him, and carried him to his house. Here he abode awhile, after which he said in himself, "How long this sojourning in other folk's homes?" Then he left the merchant's place and walked to the wharf where, after enquiry, he found a ship ready to sail for Syria. His hospitable host provided him with provision and embarked him in the ship; and it set sail and Ali reached in due season the Syrian shores where he disembarked and journeyed till he entered Damascus. As he walked about the great thoroughfare behold, a kindly man saw him and took him to his house, where he tarried for a time till, one day, going abroad, he saw a caravan about to start for Baghdad and bethought

himself [171] to journey thither with it. Thereupon he returned to his host and taking leave of him, set out with the Cafilah. Now Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) inclined to him the heart of one of the merchants, so that he took him with him, and Ali ate and drank with him, till they came within one day's journey of Baghdad. Here, however, a company of highwaymen fell upon the caravan and took all they had and but few of the merchants escaped. These made each for a separate place of refuge; but as for Ali the Cairene he fared for Baghdad, where he arrived at sundown, as the gatekeepers were about to shut the gates, and said to them, "Let me in with you." They admitted him and asked him, "Whence come, and whither wending?" and he answered, "I am a man from Cairo-city and have with me mules laden with merchandise and slaves and servants. I forewent them, to look me out a place wherein to deposit my goods: but, as I rode along on my she-mule, there fell upon me a company of banditti, who took my mule and gear; nor did I escape from them but at my last gasp." The gate-guard entreated him honourably and bade him be of good cheer, saying, "Abide with us this night, and in the morning we will look thee out a place befitting thee." Then he sought in his breast-pocket and, finding a dinar of those given to him by the merchant at Bulak, handed it to one of the gatekeepers, saying, "Take this and change it and bring us something to eat." The man took it and went to the market, where he changed it, and brought Ali bread and cooked meat: so he ate, he and the gate-guards, and he lay the night with them. Now on the morrow, one of the warders carried him to a certain of the merchants of Baghdad, to whom he told the same story, and he believed him, deeming that he was a merchant and had with him loads of merchandise. Then he took him up into his shop and entreated him with honour; moreover, he sent to his house for a splendid suit of his own apparel for him and carried him to the Hammam. So, quoth Ali of Cairo:—I went with him to the bath, and when we came out, he took me and brought me to his house, where he set the morning-meal before us, and we ate and made merry. Then said he to one of his black slaves, "Ho Mas'úd, take this thy lord: show him the two houses standing in such a place, and whichever pleaseth him, give him the key of it and come back." So I went with the slave, till we came to a street-road where stood three houses side by side, newly built and yet shut up. He opened the first and I looked at it; and we did the same to the second; after which he said to me [172] "Of which shall I give thee the key?" "To whom doth the big house belong?" "To us!" "Open it, that I may view it." "Thou hast no business there." "Wherefore?" "Because it is haunted, and none nighteth there but in the morning he is a dead man; nor do we use to open the door, when removing the corpse, but mount the terrace-roof of one of the other two houses and take it up thence. For this reason my master hath abandoned the house and saith:—I will never again give it to any one." "Open it," I cried, "that I may view it;" and I said in my mind, "This is what I seek; I will pass the night there and in the morning be a dead man and be at peace from this my case." So he opened it and I

entered and found it a splendid house, without its like; and I said to the slave, “I will have none other than this house; give me its key.” But he rejoined, “I will not give thee this key till I consult my master,”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the negro (continued Ali of Cairo) rejoined, “I will not give thee its key till I consult my master,” and going to him, reported, “The Egyptian trader saith:—I will lodge in none but the big house.” Now when the merchant heard this, he rose and coming to Ali, spake thus to him, “O my lord, thou hast no need of this house.” But he answered, “I will lodge in none other than this; for I care naught for this silly saying.” Quoth the other, “Write me an acknowledgment that, if aught happen to thee, I am not responsible.” Quoth Ali, “So be it;” whereupon the merchant fetched an assessor from the Kazi’s court and, taking the prescribed acknowledgment, delivered to him the key wherewith he entered the house. The merchant sent him bedding by a blackamoor who spread it for him on the built bench behind the door[2681] and walked away. Presently Ali went about and, seeing in the inner court a well with a bucket, let this down and drew water, wherewith he made the lesser ablution and prayed the obligatory prayers. Then he sat awhile, till the slave brought him the evening meal from his master’s house, together with a lamp, a candle 173 and candlestick, a basin and ewer and a gugglet[269]; after which he left him and returned home. Ali lighted the candle, supped at his ease and prayed the night-prayer; and presently he said to himself, “Come, take the bedding and go upstairs and sleep there; ‘twill be better than here.” So he took the bed and carried it upstairs, where he found a splendid saloon, with gilded ceiling and floor and walls cased with coloured marbles. He spread his bed there and sitting down, began to recite somewhat of the Sublime Koran, when (ere he was ware) he heard one calling to him and asking, “O Ali, O son of Hasan, say me, shall I send thee down the gold?” And he answered, “Where be the gold thou hast to send?” But hardly had he spoken, when gold pieces began to rain down on him, like stones from a catapult, nor ceased till the saloon was full. Then, after the golden shower, said the Voice, “Set me free, that I may go my way; for I have made an end of my service and have delivered unto thee that which was entrusted to me for thee.” Quoth Ali, “I adjure thee, by Allah the Almighty, to tell me the cause of this gold-rain.” Replied the Voice, “This is a treasure that was talisman’d to thee of old time, and to every one who entered the house, we used to come and say:—O Ali, O son of Hasan, shall we send thee down the gold? Whereat he would be affrighted and cry out, and we would come down to him and break his neck and go away. But, when thou camest and we accosted thee by thy name and that of thy father, saying, Shall we send thee down the gold? and thou madest answer to us, And where be the gold? we knew thee for the owner of it and sent it down.

Moreover, there is yet another hoard for thee in the land of Al-Yaman and thou wouldst do well to journey thither and fetch it. And now I would fain have thee set me free, that I may go my way." Said Ali, "By Allah, I will not set thee free, till thou bring me hither the treasure from the land of Al-Yaman!" Said the Voice, "An I bring it to thee, wilt thou release me and eke the servant of the other hoard?" "Yes," replied Ali, and the Voice cried, "Swear to me." So he swore to him, and he was about to go away, when Ali said to him, "I have one other need to ask of thee;" and he, "What is that?" Quoth Ali, "I have a wife and children at Cairo in such a place; thou needs must fetch them to me, at their ease and without their unease." 174 Quoth he, "I will bring them to thee in a mule-litter[270] and much state, with a train of eunuchs and servants, together with the treasure from Al-Yaman, Inshallah!"[271] Then he took of him leave of absence for three days, when all this should be with him, and vanished. As soon as it was morning Ali went round about the saloon, seeking a place wherein to store the gold, and saw on the edge of the dais a marble slab with a turning-pin; so he turned the pin and the slab sank and showed a door which he opened and entering, found a great closet, full of bags of coarse stuff carefully sewn. So he began taking out the bags and fell to filling them with gold and storing them in the closet, till he had transported thither all the hoarded gold, whereupon he shut the door and turning the pin, the slab returned to its place. Then he went down and seated himself on the bench behind the door; and presently there came a knock; so he opened and found the merchant's slave who, seeing him comfortably sitting, returned in haste to his master——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the house-owner's black slave returned and knocked at the door, Ali the Cairene, son of the merchant Hasan, opened it to him and the negro, seeing him comfortably sitting, returned in haste to his master with the good tidings, saying, "O my Lord, the merchant, who is lodged in the house inhabited by the Jinn,[272] is alive and well and sitteth on the bench behind the door." Then the merchant rose joyfully and went to the house, taking breakfast with him; and, when he saw Ali, he embraced him and kissed him between the eyes, asking, "How hath Allah dealt with thee?"; and Ali answered, "Right well, I slept upstairs in the marble saloon." Quoth the merchant, "Did aught come to thee or didst thou see any thing?" and quoth Ali, "No, I recited some little of the Sublime Koran and slept till morning, when I arose and, after 175 making the minor ablution and praying, seated myself on the bench behind the door." "Praised be Allah for safety!" exclaimed the merchant, then left him and presently sent him black slaves and white Mamelukes and handmaidens with household gear. They swept the house from top to

bottom and furnished it with magnificent furniture; after which three white slaves and three blacks and four slave-girls remained with him, to serve him, while the rest returned to their master's house. Now when the merchants heard of him, they sent him presents of all manner things of price, even to food and drink and clothes, and took him with them to the market, asking, "When will thy baggage arrive?" And he answered, "After three days it will surely come." When the term had elapsed, the servant of the first hoard, the golden rain, came to him and said, "Go forth and meet the treasure I have brought thee from Al-Yaman together with thy Harim; for I bring part of the wealth in the semblance of costly merchandise; but the eunuchs and Mamelukes and the mules and horses and camels are all of the Jánn." Now the Jinni, when he betook himself to Cairo, found Ali's wife and children in sore misery, naked and hungry; so he carried them out of the city in a travelling-litter and clad them in sumptuous raiment of the stuffs which were in the treasure of Al-Yaman. So when Ali heard this, he arose and repairing to the merchants, said to them, "Rise and go forth with us from the city, to meet the caravan bringing my merchandise, and honour us with the presence of your Harims, to meet my Harim." "Hearkening and obedience," answered they and, sending for their Harims, went forth all together and took seat in one of the city-gardens; and as they sat talking, behold, a dust-cloud arose out of the heart of the desert, and they flocked forth to see what it was. Presently it lifted and discovered mules and muleteers, tent-pitchers and linkmen, who came on, singing and dancing, till they reached the garden, when the chief of the muleteers walked up to Ali and kissing his hand, said to him, "O my master, we have been long on the way, for we purposed entering yesterday; but we were in fear of the bandits, so abode in our station four days, till Almighty Allah rid us of them." Thereupon the merchants mounted their mules and rode forward with the caravan, the Harims waiting behind, till Ali's wife and children mounted with them; and they all entered in splendid train. The merchants marvelled at the number of mules laden with chests, whilst the women of the merchants wondered at the 176richness of the apparel of his wife and the fine raiment of her children; and kept saying each to other, "Verily, the King of Baghdad hath no such gear; no, nor any other of the kings or lords or merchants!" So they ceased not to fare forwards in high great state, the men with Ali of Cairo and the Harims with his Harim, till they came to the mansion,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that they ceased not to fare forwards in high state, the men with Ali's men and the women with his wife, till they came to the mansion, where they alighted and brought the mules and their burdens into the midst of the courtyard. Then they unloaded them and warehoused the goods whilst the merchants' wives went up with Ali's family to the saloon, which they found as it were a luxuriant garden, spread with magnificent furniture. They sat in mirth and good

cheer till noon, when they brought them up the midday meal, all manner meats and sweetmeats of the very best; and they ate and drank costly sherbets and perfumed themselves thereafter with rose-water and scented woods. Then they took leave and went home, men and women; and, when the merchants returned to their places, they sent presents to the husband according to their conditions; and their wives likewise sent presents to the wife, so that there came to them great store of handmaids and negroes and Mamelukes; and all kinds of goods, such as grain, sugar and so forth, in abundance beyond account. As for the Baghdad merchant, the landlord of the house, he abode with Ali and quitted him not, but said to him, "Let the black slaves and servants take the mules and the common cattle into one of my other houses, to rest." Quoth Ali, "They set out again to-night for such a place." Then he gave them leave to go forth and camp outside the city, that they might start on their journey at night-come; whereupon, hardly believing that they were dismissed, they took leave of him and departing to the outliers of the city, flew off through the air to their several abodes. So Ali and his house-owner sat together till a third of the night was past, when their colloquy ended and the merchant returned to his own house and Ali went up to his wife and children and after saluting them, said, 177"What hath befallen you in my absence all this time?" So she told him what they had suffered of hunger and nakedness and travail, and he said, "Praised be Allah for safety! How did ye come?" Answered she, "O my lord, I was asleep with my children yesternight, when suddenly and unexpectedly one raised us from the ground and flew with us through the firmament without doing us any hurt, nor did he leave flying with us, till he set us down in a place as it were an Arab camping-ground, where we saw laden mules and a travelling litter borne upon two great mules, and around it servants, all boys and men. So I asked them:—Who are ye and what are these loads and where are we?; and they answered:—We are the servants of the merchant Ali of Cairo, son of the merchant-jeweller, who hath sent us to fetch you to him at Baghdad. Quoth I, Tell me, is it far or near, hence to Baghdad? They replied, Near: there lieth between us and the city but the darkness of the night. Then they mounted us in the litter and, when the morrow dawned, we found ourselves with thee, without having suffered any hurt whatever." Quoth he, "Who gave you these dresses;" and quoth she, "The chief of the caravan opened one of the boxes on the mules and taking out thereof these clothes, clad me and thy children each in a suit; after which he locked the case and gave me the key, saying, Take care of it, till thou give it to thy husband. And here it is safe by me." So saying, she gave him the key, and he said, "Dost thou know the chest?" Said she, "Yes, I know it." So he took her down to the magazine and showed her the boxes, when she cried, "This is the one whence the dresses were taken;" upon which he put the key in the lock and opened the chest, wherein he found much raiment and the keys of all the other cases. So he took them and fell to opening them, one after another, and feasting his eyes upon the gems and precious ores they contained, whose like was not found with any of the kings; after which he locked them again, took the keys, and

returned to the saloon, saying to his wife, “This is of the bounty of Almighty Allah!” Then bringing her to the secret slab he turned the pin and opened the door of the closet, into which he entered with her and showed her the gold he had laid up therein. Quoth she, “Whence came all this to thee?” “It came to me by the grace of my Lord,” answered he:——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ali’s wife had looked upon the gold she said to him, “Whence came all this to thee?” “It came to me by the grace of my Lord,” answered he: “When I left thee in my trouble, I shipped at Bulak for Damietta and met a friend there who forwarded me to Damascus”: in brief he told her all that had befallen him, from first to last. Said she, “O my lord, all this cometh by boon of thy father’s blessing and orisons when he prayed for thee, before his death, saying:—I beseech Allah to cast thee into no straits except He grant thee ready relief! So praised be Allah Almighty for that He hath brought thee deliverance and hath requited thee with more than went from thee! But Allah upon thee, O my lord, return not to thy practice of associating with doubtful folk; but look thou fear Allah (whose name be exalted!) both in private and in public.” And as she went on to admonish him, he said, “I accept thine admonition and beg the Almighty to remove the froward from amongst us and stablish us in His obedience and in the observance of the law and practice of His Prophet, on whom be blessings and peace!” After that Ali and his wife and children were in all solace of life and gladness; and he opened him a shop in the merchants’ bazar and, stocking it with a somewhat of jewels and bullion, sat therein with his children and white servants. Presently he became the most considerable of the merchants of Baghdad, and his report reached the King of that city,[273] who sent a messenger to command his attendance, saying, “Answer the summons of the King who requireth thee.” He replied, “I hear and obey,” and straightway prepared his present and he took four trays of red gold and, filling them with jewels and precious metals, such as no King possessed, went up to the palace and presenting himself before the presence, kissed the ground between his hands and wished him endurance of goods and glory in the finest language he could command. Said the King, “O merchant, thou cheerest our city with thy presence!” and Ali rejoined, “O King of the age, thy slave hath brought thee a 179gift and hopeth for acceptance thereof from thy favour.” Then he laid the four trays before the King, who uncovered them and seeing that they contained gems, whose fellows he possessed not and whose worth equalled treasuries of money, said, “Thy present is accepted, O merchant, and Inshallah! we will requite thee with its like.” And Ali kissed his hands and went away; whereupon the King called his grandees and said to them, “How many of the Kings have sought my daughter in marriage?” “Many,” answered they;

and he asked, “Hath any of them given me the like of this gift?”; whereto they replied, “Not one, for that none of them hath its like;” and he said, “I have consulted Allah Almighty by lot as to marrying my daughter to this merchant. What say ye?” “Be it as thou reckest,” answered they. Then he bade the eunuch carry the four trays into his serraglio and going in to his wife, laid them before her. She uncovered them and seeing therein that whose like she possessed not; no, nor a fraction thereof, said to him, “From which of the Kings hadst thou these?: perchance of one of the royalties that seek thy daughter in marriage?” Said he, “Not so, I had them of an Egyptian merchant, who is lately come to this our city. Now when I heard of his coming I sent to command him to us, thinking to make his acquaintance, so haply we might find with him somewhat of jewels and buy them of him for our daughter’s trousseau. He obeyed our summons and brought us these four trays, as a present, and I saw him to be a handsome youth of dignified aspect and intelligent as elegant, almost such as should be the sons of Kings. Wherefore my heart inclined to him at sight, and my heart rejoiced in him and I thought good to marry my daughter to him. So I showed the gift to my grandees, who agreed with me that none of the Kings hath the like of these and I told them my project. But what sayst thou?”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King of Baghdad, after showing the presents to his wife and highly praising Ali, the merchant-jeweller, and informing her of the proposed marriage, asked, “But what sayst thou?” She replied, “O King of the age, the ordering this affair is in Allah’s 180 hand, and thine, and whatso Allah willeth shall come to pass.” Rejoined the King, “If it be His will, I will marry her to none other than this young man.” He slept on this resolve and on the morrow, he went out to his Divan and summoned Ali and the rest of the merchants of Baghdad, and when all came bade them be seated. Then said he, “Bring me the Kazi of the Divan” and they brought him; whereupon the King said to him, “O Kazi, write the contract of marriage between my daughter and the merchant Ali the Cairene.” But Ali said, “Thy pardon, O our lord the Sultan! It befitteth not that a trader such as I, be the King’s son-in-law.” Quoth the King, “It is my will to bestow this favour upon thee, as well as the Wazirate;” and he invested him forthwith in the Wazir’s office and ministerial robes. Then Ali sat down in the chair of the Wazirate and said, “O King of the age, thou hast bestowed on me this; and indeed I am honoured by thy bounties; but hear one word I have to say to thee!” He replied, “Say on, and fear not.” Quoth Ali, “Since it is thine august resolution to marry thy daughter, thou wouldst do better to marry her to my son.” Quoth the King, “Hast thou then a son?”; and Ali replied, “Yes.” “Send for him forthwith,” said the King. Thereupon answered Ali, “Hearkening and obedience!”, and despatched a servant to fetch his son, who came

and kissing the ground before the King, stood in an attitude of respect. The King looked at him and seeing him to be yet comelier than his daughter and goodlier than she in stature and proportion and brightness and perfection, said to him, "What is thy name, O my son?" "My name is Hasan, O our lord the Sultan," replied the young man, who was then fourteen years old. Then the Sultan said to the Kazi, "Write the contract of marriage between my daughter Husn al-Wujúd and Hasan, son of the merchant Ali the Cairene." So he wrote the marriage-contract between them, and the affair was ended in the goodliest fashion; after which all in the Divan went their ways and the merchants followed the Wazir Ali, escorting him to his house, where they gave him joy of his advancement and departed. Then he went in to his wife, who seeing him clad in the Wazir's habit, exclaimed, "What is this?"; when he told her all that had passed from first to last and she joyed therein with exceeding joy. So sped the night and on the morrow, he went up to the Divan, where the King received him with especial favour and seating him close by his side, said, "O Wazir, we purpose to begin the wedding festivities and bring thy son 181 in to our daughter." Replied Ali, "O our lord the Sultan, whatso thou deemest good is good." So the Sultan gave orders to celebrate the festivities, and they decorated the city and held high festival for thirty days, in all joy and gladness; at the end of which time, Hasan, son of the Wazir Ali, went in to the Princess and enjoyed her beauty and loveliness. When the Queen saw her daughter's husband, she conceived a warm affection for him, and in like manner she rejoiced greatly in his mother. Then the King bade build for his son-in-law Hasan Ali-son a palace beside his own; so they built him with all speed a splendid palace in which he took up his abode; and his mother used to tarry with him some days and then go down to her own house. After awhile the Queen said to her husband, "O King of the age, Hasan's lady-mother cannot take up her abode with her son and leave the Wazir; neither can she tarry with the Wazir and leave her son." "Thou sayest sooth," replied the King, and bade edify a third palace beside that of Hasan, which being done in a few days he caused remove thither the goods of the Wazir, and the Minister and his wife took up their abode there. Now the three palaces communicated with one another, so that when the King had a mind to speak with the Wazir by night, he would go to him or send to fetch him; and so with Hasan and his father and mother. On this wise they dwelt in all solace and in the greatest happiness——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King and the Wazir and his son ceased not to dwell in all solace and in the greatest happiness awhile, till the King fell ill and his sickness grew on him. So he summoned the lords of his realm and said to them, "There is come upon me a sore malady, peradventure a mortal; and I have therefore summoned you to consult you respecting a certain matter, on which I would have you counsel me as you deem well." They asked, "What is the matter of which

thou wouldst take counsel with us, O King?"; and he answered, "I am old and sickly and I fear for the realm after me from its enemies; so I would have you all agree upon some one, that I may proclaim him King in my lifetime and so ye may be at ease." 182 Whereupon quoth they with one voice, "We all approve of thy daughter's husband Hasan, son of the Wazir Ali; for we have seen his wit and perfect understanding, and he knoweth the place of all, great and small." Asked the King, "Are ye indeed agreed upon this?" and they answered, "Yes." Rejoined he "Peradventure ye all say this to my face, of respect for me; but behind my back ye will say otherwise." However, they all replied, "By Allah, our word is one and the same in public and in private, and we accept him frankly and with heartiness of heart and breadth of breast." Quoth he, "Since the case is thus, bring the Kazi of the Holy Law and all the Chamberlains and Viceroys and Officers of state before me to-morrow, and we will order the affair after the goodliest fashion." "We hear and we obey," answered they and withdrawing, notified all the Olema,[274] the doctors of the law and the chief personages among the Emirs. So when the morrow dawned, they came up to the Divan and having craved and obtained permission to enter, they saluted the King, saying, "Here are we all in thy presence." Whereto he made reply, "O Emirs of Baghdad, whom will ye have to be King over you after me, that I may inaugurate him during my lifetime, before the presence of you all?" Quoth they with one voice, "We are agreed upon thy daughter's husband Hasan, son of the Wazir Ali." Quoth he, "If it be so, go all of you and bring him before me." So they all arose and, repairing to Hasan's palace, said to him, "Rise, come with us to the King." "Wherefore?" asked he, and they answered, "For a thing that will benefit both us and thee." So he went in with them to the King and kissed the ground before his father-in-law who said to him, "Be seated, O my son!" He sat down and the King continued, "O Hasan, all the Emirs have 183 approved of thee and agreed to make thee King over them after me; and it is my purpose to proclaim thee, whilst I yet live, and so make an end of the business." But Hasan stood up and, kissing the ground once more before the King, said to him, "O our lord the King, among the Emirs there be many who are older than I and greater of worth; acquit me therefore of this thing." But all the Emirs cried out saying, "We consent not but that thou be King over us." Then said Hasan, "My father is older than I, and I and he are one thing; and it befits not to advance me over him." But Ali said, "I will consent to nothing save whatso contenteth my brethren; and they have all chosen and agreed upon thee; wherefore gainsay thou not the King's commandment and that of thy brethren." And Hasan hung his head abashed before the King and his father. Then said the King to the Emirs, "Do ye all accept of him?" "We do," answered they and recited thereupon seven Fátihahs.[275] So the King said, "O Kazi, draw up a legal instrument testifying of these Emirs that they are agreed to make King over them my daughter's husband Hasan." The Kazi wrote the act and made it binding on all men,[276] after they had sworn in a body the oath of

fealty to Hasan. Then the King did likewise and bade him take his seat on the throne of kingship; whereupon they all arose and kissed King Hasan's hands and did homage to him, and swore lealty to him. And the new King dispensed justice among the people that day in fashion right royal, and invested the grandees of the realm in splendid robes of honour. When the Divan broke up, he went in to and kissed the hands of his father-in-law who spake thus to him, "O my son, look thou rule the lieges in the fear of Allah;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Hasan was quit of the Divan, he went in to and kissed the hands of his wife's father, who spake thus to him, "O my son, look thou rule the lieges in the fear of Allah;" whereto he replied, "O my father, through thy prayers for me, the grace and guidance of Allah will come to me." Then he entered his own palace and was met by his wife and her mother and their attendants, who kissed his hands and gave him joy of his advancement, saying, "Be this day blessed!" Next he went in to his father and mother, who joyed with exceeding joy in that which Allah had vouchsafed him of his advancement to the kingship, and his father charged him to fear Allah and to deal mercifully with his subjects. He passed the night in glee and gladness, and on the morrow, having prayed the obligatory prayers ending with the usual short chapters[277] of the Koran, he went up to the Divan, whither came all his officers and dignitaries. He passed the day in dispensing justice among the folk, bidding to graciousness and forbidding ungraciousness and appointing to place and displacing, till day-end, when the Divan broke up, after the goodliest fashion, and all the troops withdrew and each went his own way. Then he arose and repaired to the palace, where he found his father-in-law's sickness grown heavy upon him and said to him, "May no ill befal thee!" At this the old King opened his eyes and said, "O Hasan!" and he replied, "At thy service, O my lord." Quoth the old King, "Mine appointed hour is at hand: be thou careful of thy wife and her mother, and look thou fear Allah and honour thy parents; and bide in awe of the majesty of the Requiting King and bear in mind that He commandeth justice and good works." And King Hasan replied, "I hear and obey." Now after this the old King lingered three days and then departed into the mercy of Almighty Allah. So they laid him out and shrouded and buried him and held over him readings and perlections of the Koran, to the end of the customary forty 185 days. And King Hasan, son of the Wazir, reigned in his stead, and his subjects joyed in him and all his days were gladness; moreover, his father ceased not to be his chief Wazir on his right hand, and he took to himself another Wazir, to be at his left hand. His reign was a

prosperous and well ordered, and he lived a long life as King of Baghdad; and Allah blessed him, by the old King's daughter, with three sons who inherited the kingdom after him; and they abode in the solace of life and its pleasures till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies. And glory be to Him who is eternal and in whose hand are annulling and confirming. And of the tales they tell is one of

18- THE PILGRIM MAN AND THE OLD WOMAN.

A man of the pilgrims once slept a long sleep and awaking, found no trace of the caravan. So he rose up and walked on, but lost his way and presently came to a tent, where he saw an old woman standing at the entrance and by her side a dog asleep. He went up to the tent and, saluting the old woman, sought of her food, when she replied, "Go to yonder Wady and catch thy sufficiency of serpents, that I may broil of them for thee and give thee to eat." Rejoined the pilgrim, "I dare not catch serpents nor did I ever eat them." Quoth the old woman, "I will go with thee and catch some; fear not." So she went with him, followed by the dog, to the valley and, catching a sufficient number of serpents, proceeded to broil them. He saw nothing for it (saith the story teller) but to eat, in fear of hunger and exhaustion; so he ate of the serpents.[278] Then he was athirst and asked for water to drink; and she answered, "Go to the spring and drink." Accordingly, he went to the spring and found the water thereof bitter; yet needs must he drink of it despite its bitterness, because of the violence of his thirst. Presently he returned to the old woman and said to her, "I marvel, O ancient dame, at thy choosing to 186 sojourn in this place"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the palmer-man drank the bitter draught for stress of thirst, he returned and said "I marvel, O ancient dame, at thy choosing to sojourn in this place and thy putting up with such meat and drink!" She asked, "And how is it then in thy country?"; whereto he answered, "In my country are houses wide and spacious and fruits ripe and delicious and waters sweet and viands savorous and of goodly use and meats fat and full of juice and flocks innumerous and all things pleasant and all the goods of life, the like whereof are not, save in the Paradise which Allah the Omnipotent hath promised to His servants pious." Replied she, "All this have I heard: but tell me, have ye a Sultan who ruleth over you and is tyrannical in his rule and under whose hand you are; one who, if any of you commit an offence, taketh his goods and ruineth him and who, whenas he will, turneth you out of house and home and uprooteth you, stock and branch?" Replied the man, "Indeed that may be;" and she rejoined, "If so, by Allah, these your delicious food and life of dainty-hood and gifts however good, with tyranny and oppression, are but a searching poison, while our coarse meat which in freedom and safety we eat is a healthful medicine. Hast thou not heard that the best of boons, after Al-Islam, the true

Faith, are sanity and security?"[279] Now such boons (quoth he who telleth the tale) may be by the just rule of the Sultan, Vice-regent of Allah on His earth, and the goodness of his polity. The Sultan of time past needed but little awfulness, for when the lieges saw him, they feared him; but the Sultan of these days hath need of the most accomplished polity and the utmost majesty, because men are not as men of by-gone time and this our age is one of folk opprobrious, and is greatly calamitous, noted for folly and hardness of heart and inclined to hate and 187 enmity. If, therefore, the Sultan (which Almighty Allah forfend!) be weak or wanting in polity and majesty, this will be the assured cause of his country's ruin. Quoth the proverb, "An hundred years of the Sultan's tyranny, but not one year of the people's tyranny one over other." When the lieges oppress one another, Allah setteth over them a tyrannical Sultan and a terrible King. Thus it is told in history that one day there was sent to Al-Hajjáj bin Yúsuf a slip of paper, whereon was written, "Fear Allah and oppress not His servants with all manner of oppression." When he read this, he mounted the pulpit (for he was eloquent and ever ready of speech), and said, "O folk, Allah Almighty hath made me ruler over you, by reason of your frowardness;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hajjaj Yusuf-son read the paper he mounted the pulpit and said, "O folk, Allah Almighty hath made me ruler over you by reason of your frowardness; and indeed, though I die yet will ye not be delivered from oppression, with these your ill deeds; for the Almighty hath created like unto me many an one. If it be not I, 'twill be one more mischievous than I and a mightier in oppression and a more merciless in his majesty; even as saith the poet:[280]—

For not a deed the hand can try
Save 'neath the hand of God on high,
Nor tyrant harsh work tyranny
Uncrushed by tyrant harsh as he.

Tyranny is feared: but justice is the best of all things. We beg Allah to better our case!" And among tales is that of

19- ABU AL-HUSN AND HIS SLAVE-GIRL TAWADDUD.[281]

There was once in Baghdad a man of consequence and rich in monies and immoveables, who was one of the chiefs of the merchants; and Allah had largely endowed him with worldly goods, but had not vouchsafed him what he longed for of offspring; and there passed over him a long space of time, without his being blessed with issue, male or female. His years waxed great; his bones became wasted and his back bent; weakness and weariness grew upon him, and he feared the loss of his wealth and possessions, seeing he had no child whom he might make his heir and by whom his name should be remembered. So he betook himself with supplication to Almighty Allah, fasting by day and praying through the night. Moreover, he vowed many vows to the Living, the Eternal; and visited the pious and was constant in supplication to the Most Highest, till He gave ear to him and accepted his prayer and took pity on his straining and complaining; so that, before many days were past, he knew carnally one of his women and she conceived by him the same night. In due time she finished her months and, casting her burden, bore a male child as he were a slice of the moon; whereupon the merchant fulfilled his vows in his gratitude to Allah, (to whom be honour and glory!) and gave alms and clothed the widow and the orphan. On the seventh night after the boy's birth, he named him Abu al-Husn,[282] and the wet-nurses suckled him and the dry-nurses dandled him and the servants and the slaves carried him and handled him, till he shot up and grew tall and throve greatly and learnt the Sublime Koran and the ordinances of Al-Islam and the canons of the True Faith; and calligraphy and poetry and mathematics and archery. On this wise he became the union-pearl of his age and the goodliest of the folk of his time and his day; fair of face and of tongue fluent, carrying himself with 189 a light and graceful gait and glorying in his stature proportionate and amorous graces which were to many a bait: and his cheeks were red and flower-white was his forehead and his side face waxed brown with tender down, even as saith one, describing him:—

The spring of the down on cheeks right clearly shows: ✿ And how when the Spring is gone shall last the rose?
Dost thou not see that the growth upon his cheek ✿ Is violet-bloom that from its leaves outgrows.

He abode awhile in ease and happiness with his father, who rejoiced and delighted in him, till he came to man's estate, when the merchant one day made him sit down before him and said, "O my son, the appointed term draweth near; my hour of death is at hand and it remaineth but to meet Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!). I leave thee what shall suffice thee, even to thy son's son, of monies and mansions,

farms and gardens; wherefore, fear thou Almighty Allah, O my son, in dealing with that which I bequeath to thee and follow none but those who will help thee to the Divine favour." Not long after, he sickened and died; so his son ordered his funeral,[283] after the goodliest wise, and burying him, returned to his house and sat mourning for him many days and nights. But behold, certain of his friends came in to him and said to him, "Whoso leaveth a son like thee is not dead; indeed, what is past is past and fled and mourning beseemeth none but the young maid and the wife cloistered." And they ceased not from him till they wrought on him to enter the Hammam and break off his mourning.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abu al-Husn was visited by his friends and taken to the Hammam 190 and persuaded to break off his mourning, he presently forgot his father's charge, and his head was turned by his riches; he thought fortune would always wone with him as it was, and that wealth would ever wax and never wane. So he ate and drank and made merry and took his pleasure and gave gifts of gear and coin and was profuse with gold and addrest himself up to eating fowls and breaking the seals of wine-flasks and listening to the giggle of the daughter of the vine, as she gurgled from the flagon and enjoying the jingle of the singing-girls; nor did he give over this way of life, till his wealth was wasted and the case worsened and all his goods went from him and he bit his hands[284] in bitter penitence. For of a truth he had nothing left, after that which he had squandered, but a concubine, a slave-girl whom his father had bequeathed to him with the rest of his estate: and she had no equal in beauty and loveliness and brightness and liveliness and symmetric stature and perfect grace. She was past mistress in every manner of arts and accomplishments and endowed with many excellences, surpassing all the folk of her age and time. She was grown more notorious than a way-mark,[285] for her seductive genius, and outdid the fair both in theory and practice, and she was noted for her swimming gait, flexile and delicate, albeit she was full five feet in height and by all the boons of fortune deckt and dight, with strait arched brows twain, as they were the crescent moon of Sha'abán,[286] and eyes like gazelles' eyne; and nose like the edge of scymitar fine and cheeks like anemones of blood-red shine; and mouth like Solomon's seal and sign and teeth like necklaces of pearls in line; and navel holding an ounce of oil of benzoin and waist more slender than his body whom love hath wasted and whom concealment hath made sick with pine and hind parts heavier than two hills of sand; briefly she was a volume of charms after his saying who saith:—

191 Her fair shape ravisheth, if face to face she did appear, ✿ And if she turn, for severance from her she slayeth sheer.

Sun-like, full-moon-like, sapling-like, unto her character ✿ Estrangement no wise appertains nor cruelty austere.

Under the bosom of her shift the garths of Eden are ✿ And the full-moon revolveth still upon her neck-rings' sphere.[287]

She seemed a full moon rising and a gazelle browsing, a girl of nine plus five[288] shaming the moon and sun, even as saith of her the sayer eloquent and ingenious:—

Semblance of full-moon Heaven bore, ✿ When five and five are conjoined by four;

'Tis not my sin if she made of me ✿ Its like when it riseth horizon o'er.[289]

Clean of skin, odoriferous of breath, it seemed as if she were of fire fashioned and of crystal moulded; rose-red was the cheek of her and perfect the shape and form of her; even as one saith of her, describing her:—

Scented with sandal[290] and musk, right proudly doth she go, ✿ With gold and rose and saffron-colour aglow.

A flower in a garden she is, a pearl in an ouch of gold ✿ Or an image in chapel[291] set for worship of high and low.

Slender and shapely she is; vivacity bids her arise, ✿ But the weight of her hips says, "Sit, or softly and slowly go."

Whenas her favours I seek and sue for my heart's desire, ✿ "Be gracious," her beauty says; but her coquetry answers, "No."

Glory to Him who made beauty her portion, and that ✿ Of her lover to be the prate of the censurers, heigho![292]

She captivated all who saw her, with the excellence of her beauty 192 and the sweetness of her smile,[293] and shot them down with the shafts she launched from her eyes; and withal she was eloquent of speech and excellently skilled in verse. Now when Abu al-Husn had squandered all his gold, and his ill-plight all could behold, and there remained to him naught save this slave-girl, he abode three days without tasting meat or taking rest in sleep, and the handmaid said to him, "O my lord, carry me to the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the slave-girl to her master, "O my lord, carry me to Harun al-Rashid, fifth of the sons of Abbas, and seek of him to my price ten thousand dinars. If he deem me dear, say to him:—O Prince of True Believers, my handmaid is worth more than this: do but prove her, and her value will be magnified in thine eyes; for this slave-girl hath not her equal, and she were unfit to any but thou." And she added, "Beware, O my lord, of selling me at less than the sum I have named; indeed 'tis but little for the like of me." Now her owner knew not her worth nor that she had no equal in her day; but he carried her to the Caliph and set her in the presence and repeated what she had bidden him say. The Caliph asked her, "What is thy name?"; to which she answered, "My name is Tawaddud."[294] He then enquired, "O Tawaddud, in what branches of knowledge dost thou excel?"; and

she replied, “O my lord, I am versed in syntax and poetry and jurisprudence and exegesis and philosophy; and I am skilled in music and the knowledge of the Divine ordinances and in arithmetic and geodesy and geometry and the fables of the ancients. I know the Sublime Koran by heart and have read it according to the seven, the ten and the fourteen modes. I know the number of 193its chapters and versets and sections and words; and its halves and fourths and eighths and tenths; the number of prostrations which occur in it and the sum total of its letters; and I know what there is in it of abrogating and abrogated[295]; also what parts of it were revealed at Al-Medinah and what at Meccah and the cause of the different revelations. I know the Holy Traditions of the Apostle’s sayings, historical and legendary, the established and those whose ascription is doubtful; and I have studied the exact sciences, geometry and philosophy and medicine and logic and rhetoric and composition; and I have learnt many things by rote and am passionately fond of poetry. I can play the lute and know its gamut and notes and notation and the crescendo and diminuendo. If I sing and dance, I seduce, and if I dress and scent myself, I slay. In fine, I have reached a pitch of perfection such as can be estimated only by those of them who are firmly rooted in knowledge.”[296] Now when the Caliph heard these words spoken by one so young, he wondered at her eloquence, and turning to Abu al-Husn, said, “I will summon those who shall discuss with her all she claimeth to know; if she answer correctly, I will give thee the price thou askest for her and more; and if not, thou art fitter to have her than I.” “With gladness and goodly gree, O Commander of the Faithful,” replied Abu al-Husn. So the Caliph wrote to the Viceroy of Bassorah, to send him Ibrahim bin Siyyár the prosodist, who was the first man of his day in argument and eloquence and poetry and logic, and bade him bring with him readers of the Koran and learned doctors of the law and physicians and astrologers and scientists and mathematicians and philosophers; and Ibrahim was more learned than all. In a little while they arrived at the palace of the Caliphate, knowing not what was to do, and the Caliph sent for them to his sitting-chamber and ordered them to be seated. So they sat down and he bade bring the damsel Tawaddud, who came and unveiling, showed herself, as she were a sparkling star.[297] The Caliph set her a stool of gold; and she 194saluted, and speaking with an eloquent tongue, said, “O Commander of the Faithful, bid the Olema and the doctors of law and leaches and astrologers and scientists and mathematicians and all here present contend with me in argument.” So he said to them, “I desire of you that ye dispute with this damsel on the things of her faith, and stultify her argument in all she advanceth;” and they answered, saying, “We hear and we obey Allah and thee, O Commander of the Faithful.” Upon this Tawaddud bowed her head and said, “Which of you is the doctor of the law, the scholar, versed in the readings of the Koran and in the Traditions?” Quoth one of them, “I am the man thou seekest.” Quoth she, “Then ask me of what thou wilt.” Said the doctor, “Hast thou read the precious book of Allah and dost thou know its cancelling and cancelled parts and hast

thou meditated its versets and its letters?" "Yes," answered she. "Then," said he, "I will proceed to question thee of the obligations and the immutable ordinances: so tell me of these, O damsel, and who is thy Lord, who thy prophet, who thy Guide, what is thy point of fronting in prayer, and who be thy brethren? Also what thy spiritual path and what thy highway?" Whereto she replied, "Allah is my Lord, and Mohammed (whom Allah save and assain!) my prophet, and the Koran is my guide and the Ka'abah my fronting; and the True-believers are my brethren. The practice of good is my path and the Sunnah my highway." The Caliph again marvelled at her words so eloquently spoken by one so young; and the doctor pursued, "O damsel, with what do we know Almighty Allah?" Said she, "With the understanding." Said he, "And what is the understanding?" Quoth she, "It is of two kinds, natural and acquired."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel continued, "The understanding is of two kinds, natural and acquired. The natural is that which Allah (to whom be honour and glory!) created for the right direction of His servants after His will; and the acquired is that which men accomplish by dint of study and fair knowledge." He rejoined, "Thou hast answered well. (¿) Where is the seat of the understanding?"—Allah 195 casteth it in the heart whence its lustrous beams ascend to the brain and there become fixed. (¿) "How knowest thou the Prophet of Allah?"—By the reading of Allah's Holy Book and by signs and proofs and portents and miracles! (¿) "What are the obligations and the immutable ordinances?"—The obligations are five, (1) Testification that there is no iláh[298] but Allah, no god but *the* God alone and One, which for partner hath none, and that Mohammed is His servant and His apostle. (2) The standing in prayers.[299] (3) The payment of the poor-rate. (4) Fasting Ramazan. (5) The Pilgrimage to Allah's Holy House for all to whom the journey is possible. The immutable ordinances are four; to wit, night and day and sun and moon, the which build up life and hope; nor any son of Adam wotteth if they will be destroyed on the Day of Judgment. (¿) "What are the obligatory observances of the Faith?"—They are five, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage, fighting for the Faith and abstinence from the forbidden. (¿) "Why dost thou stand up to pray?"—To express the devout intent of the slave acknowledging the Deity. (¿) "What are the obligatory conditions which precede standing in prayer?"—Purification, covering the shame, avoidance of soiled clothes, standing on a clean place, fronting the Ka'abah, an upright posture, the intent[300] and the pronouncing "Allaho Akbar" of prohibition.[301] (¿) "With what shouldest thou go forth from thy house to pray?"—With the intent of worship mentally pronounced. (¿) "With what intent shouldest thou enter the mosque?"—With an intent of service. (¿) "Why do we front the Kiblah[302]?"—In obedience to three Divine orders and one 196 Traditional ordinance. (¿) "What are the beginning, the consecration and the end of prayer?"—Purification beginneth prayer,

saying the Allaho Akbar of prohibition consecrateth, and the salutation endeth prayer. (¿) "What deserveth he who neglecteth prayer?"—It is reported, among the authentic Traditions of the Prophet, that he said, "Whoso neglecteth prayer wilfully and purposely hath no part in Al-Islam."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after the damsel had repeated the words of that Holy Tradition the doctor cried, "Thou hast replied aright: now say me, what is prayer?"—Prayer is communion between the slave and his lord, and in it are ten virtues; (1) it illumineth the heart; (2) it maketh the face shine; (3) it pleaseth the Compassionate One; (4) it angereth Satan; (5) it conjureth calamity; (6) it wardeth off the mischief of enemies; (7) it multiplieth mercy; (8) it forfendeth vengeance and punishment; (9) it bringeth the slave nigh unto his lord; and (10) it restraineth from lewdness and frowardness. Hence it is one of the absolute requisites and obligatory ordinances and the pillar of the Faith. (¿) "What is the key of prayer?"—Wuzú or the lesser ablution. (¿) "What is the key to the lesser ablution?"—Intention and naming the Almighty. (¿) "What is the key of naming the Almighty?"—Assured faith. (¿) "What is the key of faith?"—Trust in the Lord. (¿) "What is the key of trust in the Lord?"—Hope. (¿) "What is the key of hope?"—Obedience. (¿) "What is the key of obedience?"—The confession of the Unity and the acknowledgment of the divinity of Allah. (¿) "What are the Divine ordinances of Wuzu, the minor ablution?"[303]—They are six, according to the canon of the Imam al-Sháfi'í Mohammed bin Idris (of whom Allah accept!); (1) intent while washing the face; (2) washing the face; (3) washing the hands and fore-arms; (4) wiping part of the head; (5) washing the feet and heels; and 197(6) observing due order.[304] And the traditional statutes are ten, (1) nomination; (2) and washing the hands before putting them into the water-pot; (3) and mouth-rinsing; (4) and snuffing;[305] (5) and wiping the whole head; (6) and wetting the ears within and without with fresh water; (7) and separating a thick beard; (8) and separating the fingers and toes;[306] (9) and washing the right foot before the left and (10) doing each of these thrice and all in unbroken order. When the minor ablution is ended, the worshipper should say, I testify that there is no god but *the* God, the One, which for partner hath none, and I testify that Mohammed is His servant and His apostle. O my Allah, make me of those who repent and in purity are permanent! Glory to Thee, O my God, and in Thy praise I bear witness, that there is no god save Thou! I crave pardon of Thee and I repent to Thee! For it is reported, in the Holy Traditions, that the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!) said of this prayer:—Whoso endeth every ablution with this prayer, the eight gates of Paradise are open to him; he shall enter at which he pleaseth. (¿) "When a man purposeth ablution, what betideth him from the angels and the devils?"—When a man prepareth for ablution, the angels come and stand on his right and the devils on his left hand.[307] If he name Almighty

Allah at the beginning of the ablution, the devils flee from him and the angels hover over him with a pavilion of light, having four ropes, to each 198 an angel glorifying Allah and craving pardon for him, so long as he remaineth silent or calleth upon the name of Allah. But if he omit to begin washing with naming Allah (to whom belong might and majesty!), neither remain silent, the devils take command of him; and the angels depart from him and Satan whispereth evil thoughts unto him, till he fall into doubt and come short in his ablution. For (quoth he on whom be blessing and peace!):—A perfect ablution driveth away Satan and assureth against the tyranny of the Sultan; and again quoth he:—If calamity befal one who is not pure by ablution; verily and assuredly let him blame none but himself. (¿) "What should a man do when he awaketh from sleep?"—He should wash his hands thrice, before putting them into the water vessel. (¿) "What are the Koranic and traditional orders anent Ghusl, the complete ablution[308]?"—The divine ordinances are intent and 'crowning'[309] the whole body with water, that is, the liquid shall come at every part of the hair and skin. Now the traditional ordinances are the minor ablution as preliminary; rubbing the body; separating the hair and deferring in words[310] the washing of the feet till the end of the ablution.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel had recounted to the doctor what were the divine and traditional orders anent Ghusl or total ablution, quoth he, "Thou hast replied aright: now tell me what are the occasions for Tayammum, or making the ablution with sand and dust; and what are the ordinances thereof, divine and human?"—The reasons are seven, viz., want of water; fear lest water lack; need thereto; going astray on a march; sickness; having broken bones in splints and having 199 open wounds.[311] As for its ordinances, the divine number four, viz., intent, dust, clapping it to the face and clapping it upon the hands; and the human number two, nomination and preferring the right before the left hand. (¿) "What are the conditions, the pillars or essentials, and the traditional statutes of prayer?"—The conditions are five, (1) purification of the members; (2) covering of the privy parts; (3) observing the proper hours, either of certainty or to the best of one's belief; (4) fronting the Kiblah; and (5) standing on a clean place. The pillars or essentials number twelve, (1) intent; (2) the Takbír or magnification of prohibition; (3) standing when able to stand[312]; (4) repeating the Fatihah or opening chapter of the Koran and saying, In the name of Allah, the Compassionating the Compassionate! with a verse thereof according to the canon of the Imam Al-Shafi'i; (5) bowing the body and keeping it bowed; (6) returning to the upright posture and so remaining for the time requisite; (7) prostration and permanence therein; (8) sitting between two prostrations and permanence therein; (9) repeating the latter profession of the Faith and sitting up therefor; (10) invoking benediction on the Prophet (whom Allah bless and preserve!);

(11) the first Salutation,[313] and (12) the intent of making an end of prayer expressed in words. But the traditional statutes are the call to prayer; the standing posture; raising the hands (to either side of the face) whilst pronouncing the prohibition; uttering the magnification before reciting the Fatihah; seeking refuge with Allah[314]; saying, 'Amen'; repeating the chapter of the Koran after the Fatihah, repeating the magnifications during change of posture; saying, May Allah hear him who praiseth Him! and O our Lord, to Thee be the praise!; praying aloud in the proper place[315] and praying under the breath prayers so prescribed; the first profession of unity and sitting up thereto; blessing the Prophet therein; blessing his family in 200 the latter profession and the second Salutation. (¿) "On what is the Zakát or obligatory poor-rate taxable?"—On gold and silver and camels and oxen and sheep and wheat and barley and holcus and millet and beans and vetches and rice and raisins and dates. (¿) "What is the Zakát or poor-rate on gold?"—Below twenty miskals or dinars, nothing; but on that amount half a dinar for every score and so on proportionally.[316] (¿) "On silver?"—Under two hundred dirhams nothing, then five dirhams on every two hundred and so forth. (¿) "On camels?"—For every five, an ewe, or for every twenty-five a pregnant camel. (¿) "On sheep?"—An ewe for every forty head. (¿) "What are the ordinances of the Ramazan Fast?"—The Koranic are intent; abstinence from eating, drinking and carnal copulation, and the stoppage of vomiting. It is incumbent on all who submit to the Law, save women in their courses and forty days after childbirth; and it becomes obligatory on sight of the new moon or on news of its appearance, brought by a trustworthy person and commending itself as truth to the hearer's heart; and among its requisites is that the intent be pronounced at nightfall. The traditional ordinances of fasting are, hastening to break the fast at sundown; deferring the fore dawn meal,[317] and abstaining from speech, save for good works and for calling on the name of Allah and reciting the Koran. (¿) "What things vitiate not the fast?"—The use of unguents and eye-powders and the dust of the road and the undesigned swallowing of saliva and the emission of seed in nocturnal pollution or at the sight of a strange woman and blooding and cupping; none of these things vitiates the fast. (¿) "What are the prayers of the two great annual Festivals?"—Two one-bow prayers, which be a traditional ordinance, without call to prayer or standing up to pronounce the call;[318] but let the Moslem say, Prayer is a collector of all folk![319] and pronounce 'Allaho Akbar' seven times 201 in the first prayer, besides the Takbir of prohibition; and, in the second, five times, besides the magnification of rising up (according to the doctrine of the Imam Al-Shafi'i, on whom Allah have mercy!) and make the profession of the Faith.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel had answered the doctor anent the Festival-prayers, quoth he, "Thou hast replied aright: now tell me

what are the prayers prescribed on the occasion of an eclipse of the sun or moon?"—Two one-bow prayers without call to prayer or standing thereto by the worshipper, who shall make in each two-bow prayer double standing up and double inclinations and two-fold prostrations, then sit and testify and salute. (¿) "What is the ritual of prayer for rain?"—Two one-bow prayers without call to prayer or standing thereto; then shall the Moslem make the profession and salute. Moreover the Imam shall deliver an exhortation and ask pardon of Allah, in place of the magnification, as in the two sermons of the Festivals and turn his mantle upper edge downwards and pray and supplicate. (¿) "What are the Witr, the additional or occasional prayers?"—The least is a one-bow prayer and the most eleven. (¿) "What is the forenoon prayer?"—At least, two one-bow prayers and at most, twelve. (¿) "What hast thou to say of the I'itikáf or retreat[320]?"—It is a matter of traditional ordinance. (¿) "What are its conditions?"—(1) intent; (2) not leaving the mosque save of necessity; (3) not having to do with a woman; (4) fasting; and (5) abstaining from speech. (¿) "Under what conditions is the Hajj or Pilgrimage[321] obligatory?"—Manhood, and understanding and being a Moslem and practicability; in which case it is obligatory on 202 all, once before death. (¿) "What are the Koranic statutes of the Pilgrimage?"—(1) The Ihrám or pilgrim's habit; (2) the standing at Arafat; (3) circumambulating the Ka'abah; (4) running between Safá and Marwah[322]; and (5) shaving or clipping the hair. (¿) "What are the Koranic statutes of the 'Umrah[323] or lesser pilgrimage?"—Assuming the pilgrim's habit and compassing and running. (¿) "What are the Koranic ordinances of the assumption of the pilgrim's habit?"[324]—Doffing sewn garments, forswearing perfume and ceasing to shave the head or pare the nails, and avoiding the killing of game, and eschewing carnal copulation. (¿) "What are the traditional statutes of the pilgrimage?"—(1) The crying out "Labbay'ka, Adsum, Here am I, O our Lord, here am I!";[325] (2) the Ka'abah-circuitings[326] of arrival and departure; (3) the passing the night at the Mosque of Muzdalifah and in the valley of Mina, and (4) the lapidation.[327] (¿) "What is the Jihád or Holy War and its essentials?"—Its essentials are (1) the descent of the Infidels upon us; (2) the presence of the Imam; (3) a state of preparation and (4) firmness in meeting the foe. Its traditional ordinance is incital to battle, in that the Most High hath said, "O thou my Prophet, incite the faithful to fight!"[328] (¿) "What are the ordinances of buying and selling?"—The Koranic are (1) offer and acceptance and (2) if the thing sold be a white slave, by whom one profiteth, all possible endeavour to convert him to Al-Islam; and (3) to abstain from usury: the traditional 203 are making void[329] and option before not after separating, according to his saying (whom Allah bless and preserve!), "The parties to a sale shall have the option of cancelling or altering terms whilst they are yet unseparated." (¿) "What is it forbidden to sell for what?"—On this point I mind me of an authentic tradition, reported by Náf'i[330] of the Apostle of Allah, that he forbade the barter of dried dates for fresh and fresh figs for dry and jerked for fresh meat and cream for clarified

butter; in fine, all eatables of one and the same kind, it is unlawful to buy or barter some for other some.[331] Now when the doctor of law heard her words and knew that she was wit-keen, penetrative, ingenious and learned in jurisprudence and the Traditions and the interpretation of the Koran and what not else, he said in his mind, "Needs must I manœuvre with her, that I may overcome her in the assembly of the Commander of the Faithful." So he said to her, "O damsel, what is the lexicographical meaning of Wuzú?" And she answered, "Philologically it signifieth cleanliness and freedom from impurities." (¿) "And of Salát or prayer?"—An invocation of good. (¿) "And of Ghusl?"—Purification. (¿) "And of Saum or fasting?"—Abstention. (¿) "And of Zakát?"—Increase. (¿) "And of Hajj or pilgrimage?"—Visitation. (¿) "And of Jihád?"—Repelling. With this the doctor's arguments were cut off,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the doctor's arguments were cut off, he rose to his feet and said, "Bear witness against me, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned in the Law than I am." Quoth she, "I will ask thee somewhat, which do thou answer me speedily, an thou be indeed a learned man." Quoth he, "Say on;" and she said, "What are the arrows of the Faith?" Answered he, "They number ten, (1) Testification, that is, religion; (2) Prayer, 204 that is, the covenant; (3) Alms, that is, purification; (4) Fasting, that is, defensive armour; (5) Pilgrimage, that is, the Law; (6) Fighting for the Faith, that is, a general duty; (7) Bidding to beneficence and (8) Forbidding from frowardness, both of which are a man's honour; (9) Commune,[332] that is, sociableness of the Faithful; and (10) Seeking knowledge, that is, the praiseworthy path." She rejoined, "Thou hast replied aright and now remaineth but one question, What be the roots or fundamentals of Al-Islam?" He said, "They are four, sincerity of belief, truth of intent, observance of the lawful limit and keeping the covenant." Then said she, "I have one more question to ask thee, which if thou answer, it is well; else, I will take thy clothes." Quoth he, "Speak, O damsel;" and she said, "What are the branches or superstructure of Al-Islam?" But he was silent awhile and made no reply: so she cried, "Doff thy clothes and I will expound them to thee." Quoth the Caliph "Expound them, and I will make him put off his clothes for thee." She said, "There are two-and-twenty branches; (1) holding fast to the Book of Allah the Most Highest; (2) taking example by His Apostle (whom Allah bless and preserve!); (3) abstaining from evil doing; (4) eating what is lawful and (5) avoiding what is unlawful; (6) restitution of things wrongfully taken; (7) repentance; (8) knowledge of the Law; (9) love of the Friend,[333] (10) and of the followers of the true Revelation; (11) belief in the apostles of Al-Islam; (12) fear of apostacy; (13) preparation for departing this life; (14) force of conviction; (15) mercy on all possible occasions; (16) strength in time of weakness; (17) patience under trials; (18) knowledge of Allah Almighty and (19) of what His Prophet hath

made known to us; (20) thwarting Iblis the accursed; (21) striving earnestly against the lusts of the soul and warring them down, and (22) devotion to 205 the one God." Now when the Commander of the Faithful heard her words, he bade the professor put off his clothes and hooded turband; and so did that doctor and went forth, beaten and confounded, from the Caliph's presence. Thereupon another man stood up and said to her, "O damsel, hear a few questions from me." Quoth she, "Say on;" and he asked, "What are the conditions of purchase by advance?" whereto she answered, "That the price be fixed, the kind be fixed and the period of delivery be fixed and known." (¿) "What are the Koranic and the traditional canons of eating?"—The confession that Allah Almighty provideth the eater and giveth him meat and drink, with thanksgiving to Him therefor. (¿) "What is thanksgiving?"—The use by the creature of that which the Creator vouchsafeth to him, according as it was created for the creature. (¿) "What are the traditional canons of eating?"—The Bismillah[334] and washing both hands; sitting on the left of the hind part; eating with three fingers, and eating of that which hath been duly masticated.[335] (¿) "What are good manners in eating?"—Taking small mouthfuls and looking little at one's table-companion.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel had answered concerning good manners in eating, the doctor who was trying her, rejoined, "Thou hast replied aright. Now tell me what are the stays of the heart and their supports?"[336]—The stays and supports both number three; (1) holding fast to the Faith, the support whereof is the shunning of infidelity; (2) holding fast to the Traditional Law, and its support the shunning of innovation; and (3) holding fast to obedience, and its support the shunning of disobedience. (¿) "What are the conditions of Wuzu?"—(1) being a Moslem; (2) discernment of good and evil; 206 (3) purity of the water, and (4) absence of material or religious impediments. (¿) "What is belief?"—It is divided into nine parts, (1) belief in the One worshipped; (2) belief in the condition of slavery of the worshipper; (3) belief in the personality of the Deity; (4) belief in the Two Handfuls;[337] (5) belief in Providence which allotteth to man his lot; (6) belief in the Abrogating and (7) in the Abrogated; (8) belief in Allah, His angels and apostles; and (9) in fore-ordained Fate, general and individual, its good and ill, its sweet and bitter. (¿) "What three things do away other three?"—It is told of Sufyán al-Saurí[338] that he said, "Three things do away with other three. Making light of the pious doth away the future life, making light of Kings doth away this life, and, making light of expenditure doth away wealth." (¿) "What are the keys of the heavens, and how many gates have they?"—Quoth Almighty Allah, "And the heaven shall be opened and be full of portals;"[339] and quoth he whom Allah bless and preserve!, "None knoweth the number of the gates of heavens, save He who created the heavens, and there is no son of Adam but hath two gates allotted to him in the heavens, one

whereby his daily bread descendeth and another wherethrough his works ascend. The first gate is not closed, save when his term of life cometh to an end, nor the gate of works, good and evil, till his soul ascend for judgment." (¿) "Tell me of a thing and a half thing and a no-thing."—The thing is the Moslem; the half thing the hypocrite,[3401] and the no-thing the miscreant. (¿) "Tell me of various kinds of hearts."—There is the whole heart, the sick heart, the contrite heart, the vowed heart and the enlightened heart. Now the whole heart is that of Abraham, the Friend of Allah; the sick heart is that of the Unbeliever in Al-Islam; the contrite heart is that of the pious who fear the Lord; the vowed heart is that of our Lord Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!) and the illuminated heart is that of his followers. Furthermore, the hearts of learned Olema are of three kinds, the heart which is 207in love with this world; the heart which loveth the next world, and the heart which loveth its Lord; and it is said that hearts are three, the suspended, that of the infidel; the non-existent, that of the hypocrite; and the constant, that of the True-believer. Moreover, it is said that the firm heart is of three kinds, viz., the heart dilated with light and faith, the heart wounded with fear of estrangement and the heart which feareth to be forsaken of its Supreme Friend.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the second doctor declared, "Thou hast said well," quoth she to the Caliph, "O Commander of the Faithful, he hath questioned me, till he is weary, and now I will ask of him two questions. If he answer them both, it is well; and if not, I will take his clothes and he shall wend in peace." Quoth the doctor, "Ask me what thou wilt," and she said, "What sayest thou religion is?" Answered he, "Religion is confession of Faith with the tongue and conviction with the heart and correspondent action with the members. He (upon whom be blessings and peace!) hath said:—The believer is not perfect in belief, except he perfect himself in five qualities, namely, trust in Allah,[3411] committal of his affair to Allah, submission to the commands of Allah, acquiescence in the decrees of Allah; and that all he doth be done for sake of Allah; so is he of those who are acceptable to the Deity, and who give to Him and withhold for Him; and such man is perfect in belief." Then said she, "What is the Divine ordinance of ordinances and the ordinance which is the initiator of all ordinances and that of which all others stand in need and that which comprehendeth all others; and what is the traditional ordinance that entereth into the Koranic, and the prophetic practice whereby the Divine is completed?" But he was silent and made no reply; whereupon the Caliph bade her expound and ordered him to doff his clothes and give them to her. Said she, "O doctor, the Koranic ordinance 208of ordinances is the knowledge of Almighty Allah; that, which is the initiative of all others, is the testifying there is no god but *the* God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God; that, of which all others have need, is the

Wuzu-ablution; that, which compriseth all others, is the Ghusl-ablution from defilement[342]: the Traditional ordinance that entereth into the Koranic, is the separation of the fingers and the thick beard;[343] and that, wherewith all Koranic ordinances are completed, is circumcision."[344] Therewith was made manifest the defeat of the doctor, who rose to his feet and said, "I call Allah to witness, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I in theology and what pertaineth to the Law." So saying, he put off his clothes and went away ignominiously worsted. Then she turned to the rest of the learned men present and said, "O masters, which of you is the Koranist, the reader and reciter of the Koran, versed in the seven readings and in syntax and in lexicography?" Thereupon a professor arose and, seating himself before her, said, "Hast thou read the Book of Almighty Allah and made thyself thoroughly acquainted with its signs, that is its 209verses, and its abrogating parts and abrogated portions, its unequivocal commands and its ambiguous; and the difference of its revelations, Meccan and Medinan? Dost thou understand its interpretation and hast thou studied it, according to the various traditions and origins?" "Yes," answered she; and he said, "What then is the number of its chapters, how many are the decades and versets, how many words and how many letters and how many acts of prostration and how many prophets and how many chapters are Medinan and how many are Meccan and how many birds are mentioned in it?" Replied she, "O my lord, its chapters are an hundred and fourteen, whereof seventy were revealed at Meccah and forty-four at Al-Medinah; and it containeth six hundred and twenty-one decades; six thousand three hundred and thirty-six versets;[345] seventy-nine thousand four hundred and thirty-nine words and three hundred and twenty-three thousand and six hundred and seventy letters; and to the reader thereof, for every letter, are given ten benefits. The acts of prostration it compriseth are fourteen."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now When it Was the Four Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the professor of Koranic exegesis questioned the damsel, she continued, "As regards the Prophets named in the Book there be five-and-twenty, to wit, Adam, Noah,[346] Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Lot, Elisha, Jonah, Salih,[347] or Heber, Húd,[348] Shua'yb or Jethro,[349] David, Solomon, Zú'l-kafl or Joshua, Idrís, Elias, Yahyá or John the Baptist, Zacharias, Job, Moses, Aaron, Jesus and Mohammed,[350] the peace of Allah and His blessing be on them all! Moreover, nine flying things are mentioned in the Koran, namely, the gnat, the bee, the fly, the ant, the hoopoe, the crow, 210the locust, the swallow and the bird of Jesus[351] (on whom be peace!), to wit, the bat." (¿) "Which is the most excellent chapter of the Koran?"—That of The Cow.[352] (¿) "Which is the most magnificent verse?"—That of The Throne; it hath fifty words, bearing in each fifty blessings. (¿) "What sign or verse hath in it nine signs or wonders?"—That in

which quoth Allah Almighty, “Verily, in the creation of the Heaven and the Earth; and in the vicissitude of night, and day; and in the ship which saileth through the sea laden with what is profitable for mankind; and in the rain-water which God sendeth down from Heaven, quickening thereby the dead ground and replenishing the same with all sorts of cattle; and in the change of winds and in the clouds that are compelled to do service between the Heaven and the Earth;[353]—are signs to people of understanding.” (¿) “Which verse is the most just?”—That in which Allah saith, “Verily, Allah enjoineth justice and the doing of good, and the giving unto kindred what shall be necessary; and He forbiddeth wickedness and iniquity and oppression.”[354] (¿) “Which is the most greedy?”—That in which quoth Allah, “Is it that every man of them greedeth to enter the Garden of Delight?”[355] (¿) “Which is the most hopeful?”—That in which quoth Almighty Allah, “Say: ‘O my servants who have transgressed against your own souls, despair not of the mercy of Allah; seeing, that Allah forgiveth all sins; aye Gracious, Merciful is He.’”[356] (¿) “By what school of intonation dost thou read?”—By that of the people of Paradise, to wit, the version of Náf’i. (¿) “In which verse doth Allah make prophets lie?”[357]—In that wherein He saith, “They 211(the brothers of Joseph) brought his inner garment stained with false blood.”[358] (¿) “In which doth He make unbelievers speak the truth?”—In that wherein He saith, “The Jews say, ‘The Christians are grounded on nothing,’ and the Christians say, ‘The Jews are grounded on nothing’; and yet they both read the Scriptures;”[359] and, so saying, all say sooth. (¿) “In which doth God speak in his own person?”—In that in which he saith, “I have not created Genii and men for any other end than that they should serve me.”[360] (¿) “In which verse do the angels speak?”—In that which saith, “But we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness.”[361] (¿) “What sayest thou of the formula:—I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned?”—It is obligatory by commandment of Allah on all before reading the Koran, as appeareth by His saying, “When thou readest the Koran, seek refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned.”[362] (¿) “What signify the words ‘seeking refuge’[363] and what are the variants of the formula?”—Some say, “I take refuge with Allah the All-hearing and All-knowing,” and others, “With Allah the Strong;” but the best is that whereof the Sublime Koran speaketh and the Traditions perpetuate. And he (whom Allah bless and keep!) was used to ejaculate, “I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned.” And quoth a Tradition, reported by Naf’i on the authority of his adopted father, “The apostle of Allah, was wont when he rose in the night to pray, to say aloud, Allaho Akbar; God is Most Great, with all Majesty! Praise be to Allah abundantly! Glory to Allah morn and even be!” Then would he say, “I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned and from the delusions of the Devils and their evil suggestions.” And it is told of Ibn Abbas[364] (of whom Allah accept!) that he said, “The first time Gabriel came down to the Prophet with revelation he taught him the ‘seeking refuge,’ saying:—O Mohammed, say, I seek refuge with Allah the 212All-hearing and All-

knowing; then say:—In the name of Allah the Compassionating, the Compassionate! Read, in the name of thy Lord who created;—created man of blood-clots."[365] Now when the Koranist heard her words he marvelled at her expressions, her eloquence, her learning, her excellence, and said, "O damsel, what sayst thou of the verse "In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate? Is it one of the verses of the Koran?""—Yes; it is a verset of "The Ant"[366] occurring also at the head of the first and between every two following chapters; and there is much difference of opinion, respecting this, among the learned.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now When it Was the Four Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel had told the professor concerning the difference of opinion among the learned touching the 'Basmalah,' he said, "Thou hast replied aright: now tell me why is not the formula written at the head of the chapter of Immunity[367]?"; and she answered, "When this chapter was revealed from on high for the dissolution of the alliance between the Prophet and the idolaters, He (whom Allah bless and preserve!) sent Ali[368] ibn Abí Tálib (whose face Allah honour!) therewith, and he read the chapter to them, but did not read the Basmalah."[369] (¿) "What of the excellence of the formula and its blessing?"—It is told of the Prophet that he said, "Never is the Basmalah pronounced over aught, but there is a blessing in it;" 213 and it is reported, on authority of Him (whom Allah bless and preserve!) that the Lord of Glory swore by His glory that never should the Basmalah be pronounced over a sick person, but he should be healed of his sickness. Moreover, it is said that, when Allah created the empyrean, it was agitated with an exceeding agitation; but He wrote on it, 'Bismillah' and its agitation subsided. When the formula first descended from heaven to the Prophet, he said, "I am safe from three things, earthquake and metamorphosis and drowning;" and indeed its boons are great and its blessings too many to enumerate. It is told of Allah's Apostle that he said, "There will be brought on the Judgment-day a man with whom He shall reckon and finding no good deed to his account, shall order him to the Fire; but the man will cry:—O my God, Thou hast not dealt justly by me! Then shall Allah (to whom be honour and glory!) say, How so? and the man shall answer, O Lord, for that Thou callest Thyself the Compassionating, the Compassionate, yet wilt Thou punish me with the Fire! And Allah (magnified be His Majesty!) shall reply, I did indeed name myself the Compassionating, the Compassionate. Carry My servant to Paradise, of My mercy, for I am the most Merciful of the mercifuls!" (¿) "What was the origin of the use of the Basmalah?"—When Allah sent down from Heaven the Koran, they wrote, "In Thy name, O my God!"; when Allah revealed the words, "Say: Call upon Allah, or call upon the Compassionating, what days ye pray, for hath He the most excellent names,"[370] they wrote, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionating,

the Compassionate;" and, when He revealed the words, "Your God is one God, there is no God but He, the Compassionating, the Compassionate,"[371] they wrote, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate!" Now when the Koranist heard her reply, he hung down his head and said to himself, "This be a marvel of marvels! How hath this slave-girl expounded the origin of the Basmalah? But, by Allah, needs must I go about with her and haply defeat her." So he asked, "Did Allah reveal the Koran all at once or at times 214 manifold?" She answered, "Gabriel the Faithful (on whom be peace!) descended with it from the Lord of the Worlds upon His Prophet Mohammed, Prince of the Apostles and Seal of the Prophets, by detached versets; bidding and forbidding, covenanting and comminating, and containing advices and instances in the course of twenty years as occasion called for it." (¿) "Which chapter was first revealed?"—According to Ibn Abbas, that entituled Congealed Blood:[372] and, according to Jábir bin Abdillah,[373] that called 'The Covered' which preceded all others.[374] (¿) "Which verset was the last revealed?"—That of Usury,[375] and it is also said, the verse, "When there cometh Allah's succour and victory."[376]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel told the Koranist which was the last verse he said, "Thou hast replied aright; now tell me the names of the Companions who collected the Koran, in the lifetime of the Apostle of Allah." And she answered, "They were four, Ubay ibn Ka'ab, Zayd ibn Sábit, Abú Obaydah 'Aamir bin Jarráh, and Othmán bin Affán,[377] (Allah accept of them one and all!)" (¿) "Who are the readers, from whom the accepted reading of the Koran is taken?"—They number four, Abdallah bin Mas'úd, Ubay bin Ka'ab, Ma'az bin Jabal and Sálim bin Abdillah. (¿) "What sayest thou of the words of the Most High, 'That which is sacrificed to stones'"?[378]—The stones are idols, which are set up and worshipped, 215 instead of Allah the Most High, and from this we seek refuge with Allah. (¿) "What sayest thou of the words of the Most High, Thou knowest what is in my soul, and I know not what is in Thy soul"?[379]—They mean, "Thou knowest the truth of me and what is in me, and I know not what is in Thee; and the proof of this are His words,[380] 'Thou art He who wottest the hidden things'"; and it is said, also, "Thou knowest my essence, but I know not Thine essence." (¿) "What sayst thou of the words of the Most High, 'O true believers, forbid not yourselves the good things which Allah hath allowed you?'"[381]—My Shaykh (on whom Allah have mercy!) told me that the Companion Al-Zahhák related:—There was a people of the True-believers who said, "We will dock our members masculine and don sackcloth;" whereupon this verse was revealed. But Al-Kutádah declareth that it was revealed on account of sundry Companions of the Apostle of Allah, namely, Ali ibn Abí Tálib and Othmán bin Musa'ab and others, who said, "We will geld ourselves and don hair cloth and

make us monks." (¿) "What sayest thou of the words of the Most Highest, 'And Allah took Abraham for His friend'"?[382]—The friend of Allah is the needy, the poor, and (according to another saying) he is the lover, he who is detached from the world in the love of Allah Almighty and in whose attachment there is no falling away. Now when the Koranist[383] saw her pass on in speech with the passage of the clouds and that she stayed not in reply, he rose to his feet and said, "I take Allah to witness, O Commander of the Faithful, that this damsel is more learned than I in Koranic exegesis and what pertaineth thereto." Then said she, "I will ask thee one question, which if thou answer it is well; but if thou answer not, I will strip off thy clothes." Quoth the Commander of the Faithful, "Ask on," and she enquired, "Which verset of the Koran hath in it three-and-twenty Káfs, which sixteen Míms, which an hundred and forty 216 'Ayns[384] and which section[385] lacketh the formula, 'To Whom belong glory and glorification and majesty[386]?'" The Koranist could not reply, and she said to him, "Put off thy clothes." So he doffed them, and she continued, "O Commander of the Faithful, the verset of the sixteen Mims is in the chapter Húd and is the saying of the Most High, 'It was said, O Noah, go down in peace from us, and blessing upon thee!';[387] that of the three-and-twenty Kafs is the verse called of the Faith, in the chapter of The Cow; that of the hundred and forty Ayns is in the chapter of Al-A'aráf,[388] where the Lord saith, 'And Moses chose seventy men of his tribe to attend our appointed time;[389] to each man a pair of eyes.'[390] And the lesson, which lacketh the formula, 'To Whom be glory and glorification,' is that which comprises the chapters, The Hour draweth nigh and the Moon shall be cloven in twain[391]; The Compassionate and The Event."[392] Thereupon the professor departed in confusion.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel defeated the Koranist and took off his clothes and sent him away confused, then came forward the skilled physician and said to her, "We are free of theology and come now to physiology. Tell me, therefore, how is man made; how many veins, bones and vertebræ are there in his body; which is the first and chief vein and why Adam was named Adam?" She replied, "Adam was called Adam, because of his *udmah*, that is, the wheaten colour of his complexion and also (it is said) because he was created of the *adim* of the earth, that is to say, of the surface-soil. His breast was made of the earth of the Ka'abah, his head of earth from the East and his legs of earth from the West. There were created for him seven doors in his head, viz., the eyes, the ears, the nostrils and the mouth, and two passages, before and behind. The eyes were made the seat of the sight-sense, the ears the seat of the hearing-sense, the nostrils the seat of the smell-sense, the mouth the seat of the taste-sense and the tongue to utter what is in the heart of man.[393] Now Adam was made of a compound of the four elements, which

be water, earth, fire and air. The yellow bile is the humour of fire, being hot-dry; the black bile that of earth, being cold-dry; the phlegm that of water, being cold-moist, and the blood that of air, being hot-moist.[394] There were made in man three hundred and sixty veins, two hundred and forty-nine bones, and three souls[395] or spirits, the animal, the rational and the natural, to each of which is allotted its proper function. Moreover, Allah made him a heart and spleen and lungs and six intestines and a liver and two kidneys and buttocks and brain and bones and skin and five senses; hearing, seeing, smell, taste, touch. The heart He set on the left side of the breast and made the stomach the guide and governor thereof. He appointed the lungs for a fan to the heart and stablished the liver on the right side, opposite thereto. Moreover, He made, besides this, the diaphragm and the viscera and set up the bones of the breast and latticed them 218 with the ribs." (¿) "How many ventricles are there in a man's head?"—Three, which contain five faculties, styled the intrinsic senses, to wit, common sense, imagination, the thinking faculty, perception and memory. (¿) "Describe to me the configuration of the bones."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the physicist said to her, "Describe to me the configuration of the bones," she replied, "Man's frame consists of two hundred and forty bones, which are divided into three parts, the head, the trunk and the extremities. The head is divided into calvarium and face. The skull is constructed of eight bones, and to it are attached the four osselets of the ear. The face is furnished with an upper jaw of eleven bones and a lower jaw of one; and to these are added the teeth two-and-thirty in number, and the os hyoides.[396] The trunk is divided into spinal column, breast and basin. The spinal column is made up of four-and-twenty bones, called Fikár or vertebræ; the breast, of the breast-bone and the ribs, which are four-and-twenty in number, twelve on each side; and the basin of the hips, the sacrum[397] and the os coccygis. The extremities are divided into upper and lower, arms and legs. The arms are again divided firstly into shoulder, comprising shoulder blades and collar bone; secondly into the upper arm which is one bone; thirdly into fore-arm, composed of two bones, the radius and the ulna, and fourthly into the hand, consisting of the wrist, the metacarpus of five and the fingers, which number five, of three bones each, called the phalanges, except the thumb, which hath but two. The lower extremities are divided, firstly into thigh, which is one bone secondly into leg, composed of three bones, the tibia, the fibula and the patella, 219 and thirdly into the foot, divided, like the hand, into tarsus, metatarsus and toes; and is composed of seven bones, ranged in two rows, two in one and five in the other; and the metatarsus is composed of five bones and the toes number five, each of three phalanges except the big toe which hath only two." (¿) "Which is the root of the veins?"—The aorta, from which they ramify, and they are many, none knoweth the tale of them save He who

created them; but I repeat, it is said that they number three hundred and sixty.[398] Moreover, Allah hath appointed the tongue as interpreter for the thought, the eyes to serve as lanterns, the nostrils to smell with, and the hands for prehensors. The liver is the seat of pity, the spleen of laughter[399] and the kidneys of craft; the lungs are ventilators, the stomach the store-house and the heart the prop and pillar of the body. When the heart is sound, the whole body is sound, and when the heart is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. (¿) "What are the outward signs and symptoms evidencing disease in the members of the body, both external and internal?"—A physician, who is a man of understanding, looketh into the state of the body and is guided by the feel of the hands,[400] according as they are firm or flabby, hot or cool, moist or dry. Internal disorders are also indicated by external symptoms, such as yellowness of the white of the eyes, which denoteth jaundice, and bending of the back, which denoteth disease of the lungs.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel had described to the doctor the outer signs and symptoms quoth he, "Thou hast replied aright! now what are the internal 220 symptoms of disease?"—The science of the diagnosis of disease by internal symptoms is founded upon six canons, (1) the patient's actions; (2) what is evacuated from his body; (3) the nature of the pain and (4) the site thereof; (5) swelling and (6) the effluvia given off his person. (¿) "How cometh hurt to the head?"—By the ingestion of food upon food, before the first be digested, and by fullness upon fullness; this it is that wasteth peoples. He who would live long, let him be early with the morning-meal and not late with the evening-meal; let him be sparing of commerce with women and chary of such depletory measures as cupping and blood-letting; and let him make of his belly three parts, one for food, one for drink and the third for air; for that a man's intestines are eighteen spans in length and it befitteth that he appoint six for meat, six for drink, and six for breath. If he walk, let him go gently; it will be wholesomer for him and better for his body and more in accordance with the saying of the Almighty, "Walk not proudly on the earth."[401] (¿) "What are the symptoms of yellow bile and what is to be feared therefrom?"—The symptoms are sallow complexion and bitter taste in the mouth with dryness; failure of the appetite, venereal and other, and rapid pulse; and the patient hath to fear high fever and delirium and eruptions and jaundice and tumour and ulcers of the bowels and excessive thirst. (¿) "What are the symptoms of black bile and what hath the patient to fear from it, an it get the mastery of the body?"—The symptoms are false appetite and great mental disquiet and cark and care; and it behoveth that it be evacuated, else it will generate melancholia[402] and leprosy and cancer and disease of the spleen and ulceration of the bowels. (¿) "Into how many branches is the art of medicine divided?"—Into two: the art of diagnosing diseases and that of restoring the

diseased body to health. (¿) "When is the drinking of medicine more efficacious than other-when?"—When the sap runs in the wood and the grape thickens in the 221 cluster and the two auspicious planets, Jupiter and Venus, are in the ascendant; then setteth in the proper season for drinking of drugs and doing away of disease. (¿) "What time is it, when, if a man drink water from a new vessel, the drink is sweeter and lighter or more digestible to him than at another time, and there ascendeth to him a pleasant fragrance and a penetrating?"——When he waiteth awhile after eating, as quoth the poet:—

Drink not upon thy food in haste but wait awhile; ✿ Else thou with halter shalt thy frame to sickness lead:
And patient bear a little thirst from food, then drink; ✿ And thus, O brother, haply thou shalt win thy need.[403]

(¿) "What food is it that giveth not rise to ailments?"—That which is not eaten but after hunger, and when it is eaten, the ribs are not filled with it, even as saith Jálínús or Galen the physician, "Whoso will take in food, let him go slowly and he shall not go wrongly." And to conclude with His saying (on whom be blessing and peace!), "The stomach is the house of disease, and diet is the head of healing; for the origin of all sickness is indigestion, that is to say, corruption of the meat"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel said to the doctor, "The stomach is the house of disease and diet is the head of healing; for the origin of all sickness is indigestion, that is to say, corruption of the meat in the stomach;" he rejoined, "Thou hast replied aright! what sayest thou of the Hammam?"—Let not the full man enter it. Quoth the Prophet, "The bath is the blessing of the house, for that it cleanseth the body and calleth to mind the Fire." (¿) "What Hammams are best for bathing in?"—Those whose waters are sweet and whose space is ample and which are kept well aired; 222 their atmosphere representing the four seasons—autumn and summer and winter and spring. (¿) "What kind of food is the most profitable?"—That which women make and which hath not cost overmuch trouble and which is readily digested. The most excellent of food is brewis[404] or bread sopped in broth; according to the saying of the Prophet, "Brewis excelleth other food, even as Ayishah excelleth other women." (¿) "What kind of kitchen, or seasoning, is most profitable?"—"Flesh meat" (quoth the Prophet) "is the most excellent of kitchen; for that it is the delight of this world and the next world." (¿) "What kind of meat is the most profitable?"—Mutton; but jerked meat is to be avoided, for there is no profit in it. (¿) "What of fruits?"—Eat them in their prime and quit them when their season is past. (¿) "What sayest thou of drinking water?"—Drink it not in large quantities nor swallow it by gulps, or it will give thee head-ache and cause divers kinds of harm; neither drink it immediately after leaving the Hammam nor after carnal copulation or eating (except it be after the lapse of fifteen minutes for a young man

and forty for an old man), nor after waking from sleep. (¿) "What of drinking fermented liquors?"—Doth not the prohibition suffice thee in the Book of Almighty Allah, where He saith, "Verily, wine and lots and images, and the divining arrows are an abomination, of Satan's work; therefore avoid them, that ye may prosper"?[405] And again, "They will ask thee concerning wine and lots: Answer, 'In both there is great sin and also some things of use unto men: but their sinfulness is greater than their use.'"[406] Hence quoth the poet:—

223 O bibber of liquor, art not ashamed ✿ To drink what Allah forbade thee drain?

Put it far from thee and approach it not; ✿ It holds what Allah forbade as bane.

And quoth another to the same purport:—

I drank the sin till my reason fled: ✿ I'll drink that reason to loss misled!

As for the advantages that be therein, it disperseth stone and gravel from the kidneys and strengtheneth the viscera and banisheth care, and moveth to generosity and preserveth health and digestion; it conserveth the body, expelleth disease from the joints, purifieth the frame of corrupt humours, engendereth cheerfulness, gladdeneth the heart of man and keepeth up the natural heat: it contracteth the bladder, enforceth the liver and removeth obstructions, reddeneth the cheeks, cleareth away maggots from the brain and deferreth grey hairs. In short, had not Allah (to whom be honour and glory!) forbidden it,[407] there were not on the face of the earth aught fit to stand in its stead. As for gambling by lots, it is a game of hazard such as dicing not of skill. (¿) "What wine is best?"—That which is pressed from white grapes and kept eighty days or more after fermentation: it resembleth not water and indeed there is nothing on the surface of the earth like unto it. (¿) "What sayest thou of cupping?"—It is for him who is over full of blood and who hath no defect therein; and whoso would be cupped, let it be during the wane of the moon, on a day without cloud, wind or rain and on the seventeenth of the month. If it fall on a Tuesday, it will be the more efficacious, and nothing is more salutary for the brain and eyes and for clearing the intellect than cupping.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel enumerated the benefits of cupping, quoth the doctor, 224"What is the best time for cupping?"—One should be cupped 'on the spittle,' that is, in the morning before eating, for this fortifieth the wit and the memory. It is reported of the Prophet that, when anyone complained to him of a pain in the head or legs, he would bid him be cupped and after cupping not eat salt food fasting, for it engendereth scurvy; neither eat sour things as curded milk[408] immediately after cupping. (¿) "When is cupping to be avoided?"—On Sabbaths or Saturdays and Wednesdays, and let him who is cupped on these days blame none but himself. Moreover, one should not be cupped in very hot weather nor

in very cold weather; and the best season for cupping is springtide. Quoth the doctor, "Now tell me of carnal copulation." Hereupon Tawaddud hung her head, for shame and confusion before the Caliph's majesty; then said, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, it is not that I am at fault, but that I am ashamed; though, indeed, the answer is on the edge of my tongue." Said the Caliph; "Speak, O damsel," whereupon said she, "Copulation hath in it many and exceeding virtues and praiseworthy qualities, amongst which are, that it lighteneth a body full of black bile and calmeth the heat of love and induceth affection and dilateth the heart and dispelleth the sadness of solitude; and the excess of it is more harmful in summer and autumn than in spring and winter." (¿) "What are its good effects?"—It banisheth trouble and disquiet, calmeth love and wrath and is good for ulcers, especially in a cold and dry humour; on the other hand excess of it weakeneth the sight and engendereth pains in the legs and head and back: and beware, beware of carnal connection with old women, for they are deadly. Quoth the Imam Ali[409] (whose face Allah honour!), "Four things kill and ruin the body: entering the Hammam on a full stomach; eating salt food; copulation on a plethora of blood and lying with an ailing woman; for she will weaken thy strength and infect thy frame with sickness; and an old woman is deadly poison." And quoth one of them, "Beware of taking an old woman to wife, though she be richer in hoards than Kárún."[410] (¿) "What is the best copulation?"—If the woman 225 be tender of years, comely of shape, fair of face, swelling of breast and of noble race, she will add to thee strength and health of body; and let her be even as saith a certain poet describing her:—

Seeing thy looks wots she what thou desir'st, ✿ By inspiration; wants nor word nor sign;
And, when thou dost behold her rarest grace, ✿ The charms of every garden canst decline.

(¿) "At what time is copulation good?"—If by night, after food digested and if by day, after the morning meal. (¿) "What are the most excellent fruits?"—Pomegranate and citron. (¿) "Which is the most excellent of vegetables?"—Endive.[411] (¿) "Which of sweet-scented flowers?"—Rose and Violet. (¿) "How is the seed of man secreted?"—There is in man a vein which feedeth all the other veins. Now water is collected from the three hundred and sixty veins and, in the form of red blood, entereth the left testicle, where it is decocted, by the heat of temperament inherent in the son of Adam, into a thick, white liquid, whose odour is as that of the palm-spathe. (¿) "What flying thing is it that emitteth seed and menstruateth?"—The flitter-mouse,[412] that is the bat. (¿) "What is that which, when confined and shut out from the air liveth, and when let out to smell the air dieth?"—The fish. (¿) "What serpent layeth eggs?"—The Su'ban or dragon.[413] With this the physician waxed weary with much questioning, and held his peace, when Tawaddud said to the Caliph, "O Commander of the Faithful, he hath questioned me till he is tired out and now I will ask him one question, which if he answer not, I will take his clothes as lawful prize."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel said to the Commander of the Faithful, "Verily he hath questioned me till he is tired out, and now I will ask him one question, which if he answer not I will take his clothes as lawful prize," the Caliph cried, "Ask on." So quoth she to the physician, "What is that thing which resembleth the earth in roundness, whose resting-place and whose spine are hidden from men's eyes; little of price and estimation; narrow of chest and shackled as to throat though it be nor runaway slave nor pestilent thief; thrust through and through, though not in fray, and wounded, though not in fight; time eateth its vigour and water wasteth it away; now it is beaten without blemish, and then made to serve without stint; united after separation; submissive, but not to him who caresseth it; pregnant without child in belly; drooping, yet not leaning on its side; becoming dirty yet purifying itself; cleaving to its fere, yet changing; copulating without a yard, wrestling without arms: resting and taking its ease; bitten, yet not crying out: now more complaisant than a cup-companion and then more troublesome than summer-heat; leaving its mate by night and embracing her by day and having its abode in the corners of the mansions of the noble?" The physician was silent awhile in perplexity and his colour changed and he bowed his head and made no reply; whereupon she said to him, "Ho, sir doctor, speak or doff thy dress." At this, he rose and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, bear witness against me that this damsel is more learned than I in medicine and what else, and that I cannot cope with her." And he put off his clothes and fled forth. Quoth the Caliph to Tawaddud, "Ree us thy riddle," and she replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, it is the button and the button-loop.[414]"—Then she undertook the astronomers and said, "Let him of you who is an astronomer rise and come forward." So the astronomer advanced and sat down before her; and, when she saw him, she laughed and said, "Art thou the astronomer, the mathematician, the scribe?" 227"Yes," answered he. Quoth she, "Ask of what thou wilt; success resteth with Allah." So he said, "Tell me of the sun and its rising and setting?" And she replied:—Know that the sun riseth from the shadows in the Eastern hemisphere and setteth in the shadows of the Western, and each hemisphere compriseth one hundred and eighty degrees. Quoth Allah Almighty, 'I swear by the Lord of the East and of the West.'[415] And again, 'He it is who hath ordained the sun to shine by day, and the moon for a light by night; and hath appointed her station that ye might know the number of years and the computation of time.'[416] The moon is Sultan of the night and the sun Sultan of the day, and they vie with each other in their courses and follow without overtaking each other. Quoth Almighty Allah, 'It is not expedient that the sun overtake the moon in her course; neither doth the night outstrip the day, but each of these luminaries moveth in a peculiar orbit.'[417] (¿) "When the day cometh, what becometh of the night; and what of the day, when the night cometh?"—He causeth the

night to enter in upon the day, and He causeth the day to enter in upon the night.'[418] (¿) "Enumerate to me the mansions of the moon?"[419]—They number eight-and-twenty, to wit, Sharatán, Butayn, Surayá, Dabarán, Hak'ah, Han'ah, Zirá'a, Nasrah, Tarf, Jabhah, Zubrah, Sarfah, 'Awwá, Simák, Ghafar, Zubání, Iklíl, Kalb, Shaulah, Na'am, Baldah, Sa'ad al-Zábih, Sa'ad al-Bul'a, Sa'ad al-Su'úd, Sa'ad al-Akhbiyah, Fargh the Former and Fargh the Latter; and Risháa. They are disposed in the order of the letters of the Abjad-hawwaz or older alphabet,[4201] 228 according to their numerical power, and in them are secret virtues which none knoweth save Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) and the stablished in science. They are divided among the twelve Signs of the Zodiac, two mansions and a third of a mansion to each Sign. Thus Sharatan, Butayn and one-third of Suráyá, belong to Aries, the other two-thirds of Suráyá, Dabaran and two-thirds of Hak'ah to Taurus, the other third of Hak'ah, Han'ah and Zira'a to Gemini; Nasrah, Tarf and a third of Jabhah to Cancer, the other two-thirds of Jabhah, Zubrah and two-thirds of Sarfah to Leo; the other third of Sarfah, 'Awwá and Simák to Virgo; Ghafar, Zubáni and one-third of Iklíl to Libra; the other two-thirds of Iklil, Kalb and two-thirds of Shaulah to Scorpio; the other third of Shaulah, Na'áim and Baldah to Sagittarius; Sa'ad al-Zábih, Sa'ad al-Bul'a and one-third of Sa'ad al-Su'ud to Capricorn, the other two-thirds of Sa'ad al-Su'úd, Sa'ad al-Akhbiyah and two-thirds of Fargh the Former to Aquarius, the other third of Fargh the Former, Fargh the Latter and Risháa to Pisces.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel enumerated the Mansions and distributed them into their Signs, the astronomer said, "Thou hast replied aright; now tell me of the planets and their natures, also of their sojourn in the Zodiacal Signs, their aspects, auspicious and sinister, their houses, ascendants and descendants." She answered, "The sitting is narrow for so large a matter, but I will say as much as I can. Now the planets number seven; which are, the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. The Sun, hot-dry, sinister in conjunction, favourable in opposition, abideth thirty days in each Sign. The Moon, cold-moist and favourable of aspect, tarrieth in each Sign two days and a third of another day. Mercury is of a mixed nature, favourable in conjunction with the favourable, and sinister in conjunction with the sinister 229 aspects, and abideth in each sign seventeen days and a half day. Venus, temperate and favourable, abideth in each sign five-and-twenty days. Mars is sinister and woneth in each sign ten months. Jupiter is auspicious and abideth in each sign a year. Saturn, cold-dry and sinister, tarrieth in each sign thirty months. The house of the Sun is Leo, her ascendant is Aries, and her descendant Aquarius. The Moon's house is Cancer, his ascendant Taurus, his descendant Scorpio and his sinister aspect Capricorn. Saturn's house is Capricorn-Aquarius, his ascendant Libra, his descendant Aries and his sinister aspects Cancer

and Leo. Jupiter's house is Pisces-Sagittarius, his ascendant Cancer, his descendant Capricorn and his sinister aspects Gemini and Leo. Venus's house is Taurus, her ascendant Pisces, her descendant Libra, and her sinister aspects Aries and Scorpio. Mercury's house is Gemini-Virgo, his ascendant Virgo, his descendant Pisces, and his sinister aspect Taurus. Mars's house is Aries-Scorpio, his ascendant Capricorn, his descendant Cancer and his sinister aspect Libra." Now when the astronomer saw her acuteness and comprehensive learning and heard her fair answers, he bethought him for a sleight to confound her before the Commander of the Faithful, and said to her, "O damsel, tell me, will rain fall this month?" At this she bowed her head and pondered so long, that the Caliph thought her at a loss for an answer and the astronomer said to her, "Why dost thou not speak?" Quoth she, "I will not speak except the Commander of the Faithful give me leave." So the Caliph laughed and said, "How so?" Cried she, "I would have thee give me a sword, that I may strike off his head, for he is an Infidel, an Agnostic, an Atheist.[421]" At this, loud laughed the Caliph and those about him laughed, and she continued, "O astronomer, there are five things that none knoweth save Allah Almighty;" and she repeated the verset; 'Aye! Allah!—with Him is the knowledge of the hour and He causeth the rain to descend at His own appointed time—and He knoweth what is in the wombs of females—but no soul knoweth what it shall have gotten on the morrow; neither 230 wotteth any soul in what land it shall die: Verily Allah is knowing, informed of all.'[422] Quoth the astronomer, "Thou hast said well, and I, by Allah, thought only to try thee." Rejoined she, "Know that the almanack-makers have certain signs and tokens, referring to the planets and constellations relative to the coming in of the year; and folk have learned something by experience." (¿) "What be that?"—Each day hath a planet that ruleth it: so if the first day in the year fall on First Day (Sunday) that day is the Sun's and this portendeth (though Allah alone is All-knowing!) oppression of kings and sultans and governors and much miasma and lack of rain; and that people will be in great tumult and the grain-crop will be good, except lentils, which will perish, and the vines will rot and flax will be dear and wheat cheap from the beginning of Túbah to the end of Barmahát.[423] And, in this year there will be much fighting among kings, and there shall be great plenty of good in this year, but Allah is All-knowing! (¿) "What if the first day fall on Second Day (Monday)?"—That day belongeth to the Moon and portendeth righteousness in administrators and officials; and that it will be a year of much rain and grain-crops will be good, but linseed will decay and wheat will be cheap in the month Kiyáhk;[424] also the plague will rage and the sheep and goats will die, grapes will be plentiful and honey scarce and cotton cheap; and Allah is omniscient!——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel ended her notice of Second Day the astronomer said to 231 her "Now tell me what will occur if New Year's day fall on Third Day (Tuesday)." She replied, That is Mars' day and portendeth death of great men and much destruction and deluge of blood and dearness of grain; lack of rain and scarcity of fish, which will anon be in excess and anon fail. Lentils and honey in this year will be cheap and linseed dear and only barley will thrive, to the exception of all other cereals: great will be the fighting among kings and death will be in the blood and there will be much mortality among asses. (¿) "What if it fall on Fourth Day?"—That is Mercury's day and portendeth great tumult among the folk and much enmity and, though rains be moderate, rotting of some of the green crops; also that there will be sore mortality among cattle and young children and much fighting by sea; that wheat will be dear from Barmúdah to Misra[425] and other grains cheap; thunder and lightning will abound and honey will be dear, palm-trees will thrive and bear abundantly and flax and cotton will be plentiful, while radishes and onions will be dear; but Allah is All-knowing! (¿) "What if it fall on Fifth Day?"—That is Jupiter's day and portendeth equity in Wazirs and righteousness in Kazis and Fakirs and the Ministers of religion; and that good will be plentiful: rains and fruit and trees and grain will abound, and flax, cotton, honey, grapes and fish be cheap; and Allah is Omniscient! (¿) "What if it fall on Meeting Day or Friday?"—That day appertaineth to Venus and portendeth oppression in the chiefs of the Jinn and talk of forgery and back-biting; there will be much dew; the autumn crops will be good in the land and there will be cheapness in one town and not in another: ungraciousness will be rife by land and sea; linseed will be dear, also wheat, in Hátúr, but cheap in Amshír; honey will be dear and grapes and water-melons will rot; and Allah is Omniscient! (¿) "What if it fall on the Sabbath (Saturday)?"—"That is Saturn's day and portendeth the preferment of slaves and Greeks and those in whom there is no good, neither in their neighbourhood; there will be great drought and dearth; clouds will abound and death will be rife among the sons of Adam and woe to the people of Egypt and Syria from the oppression of the Sultan and failure of blessing upon the green crops and rotting of grain; and Allah is All-knowing!"[426] 232 Now with this, the astronomer hung his head very low, and she said to him, "O astronomer, I will ask thee one question, which if thou answer not, I will take thy clothes." "Ask," replied he. Quoth she, "Where is Saturn's dwelling-place?"; and he answered, "In the seventh heaven." (¿) "And that of Jupiter?"—In the sixth heaven. (¿) "And that of Mars?"—In the fifth heaven. (¿) "And that of the Sun?"—In the fourth heaven. (¿) "And that of Venus?"—In the third heaven. (¿) "And that of Mercury?"—In the second heaven. (¿) "And that of the Moon?"—In the first heaven. Quoth she, "Well answered; but I have one more question to ask thee;" and quoth he, "Ask!" Accordingly she said, "Now tell me concerning the stars, into how many parts are they divided." But he was silent and answered nothing; and she cried to him, "Put

off thy clothes." So he doffed them and she took them; after which the Caliph said to her, "Tell us the answer to thy question." She replied:—O Commander of the Faithful, the stars are divided into three parts, whereof one-third is hung in the sky of the earth,[427] as it were lamps, to give light to the earth, and a part is used to shoot the demons withal, when they draw near by stealth to listen to the talk in heaven. Quoth Allah Almighty, 'Verily, we have dight the sky of the earth with the adornment of the stars; and have appointed them for projectiles against every rebellious Satan.'[428] And the third part is hung in air to illuminate the seas and give light to what is therein. Quoth the astronomer, "I have one more question to ask, which if 233she answer, I will avow myself beaten." "Say on," answered she.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the astronomer said, "Now tell me what four contraries are based upon other four contraries?" Replied she, "The four qualities of Caloric and Frigoric, Humidity and Siccity; for of heat Allah created fire, whose nature is hot-dry; of dryness, earth, which is cold-dry; of cold, water, which is cold-wet; of moisture, air, which is hot-wet. Moreover, He created twelve Signs of the Zodiac, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces; and appointed them of the four humours; three fiery, Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius; three earthy, Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn; three airy, Gemini, Libra and Aquarius; and three watery, Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces." Hereupon the astronomer rose, and saying, "Bear witness against me that she is more learned than I," away he went beaten. Then quoth the Caliph, "Where is the philosopher[429]?"; at which one rose hastily and came forward and said to Tawaddud, "What is Time and what be its limits, and its days, and what things bringeth it?" Replied she, "Time is a term applied to the hours of the night and day, which are but the measures of the courses of the sun and moon in their several heavens, even as Allah Almighty telleth us when he saith, 'A sign to them also is the Night, from which we strip off the day, and lo! they are plunged in darkness, and the Sun runneth to her place of rest; this is the ordinance of the Sublime, the All-knowing.'"[430] (¿) "How cometh unbelief to the son of Adam?"—It is reported of the Apostle (whom Allah bless and preserve!) that he said, 'Unbelief in a man runneth as the blood runneth in his veins, when he revileth the world and Time and night and the Hour.' And again, 'Let none of you 234revile Time, for Time is God;' neither revile the world, for she saith, May Allah not aid him who revileth me! neither revile the hour, for, 'The Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt thereof';[431] neither revile the earth, for it is a portent, according to the saying of the Most High, 'Out of the ground have we created you, and into the same will we cause you to return, and we will bring you forth yet thence another time.'[432] (¿) "What are the five that ate and drank, yet came not out of loins nor womb?"—Adam and Simeon[433] and Salih's she-camel[434] and

Ishmael's ram and the bird that Abu Bakr the Truth-teller saw in the cave.[435] (¿) "Tell me of five that are in Paradise and are neither humans, Jinns nor angels?"—Jacob's wolf and the Seven Sleepers' dog and Esdras's ass and Salih's camel and Duldul the mule of the Prophet (upon whom be blessings and peace!). (¿) "What man prayed a prayer neither on earth nor in heaven?"—Solomon, when he prayed on his carpet, borne by the wind. (¿) "Ree me this riddle:—A man once looked at a handmaid during dawn-prayer, and she was unlawful to him; but, at noonday she became lawful to him: by mid-afternoon, she was again unlawful, but at sundown, she was lawful to him: at supper time she was a third time unlawful, but by daybreak, she became once more lawful to him."—This was a man who looked at another's slave-girl in the morning, and she 235 was then unlawful to him; but at midday he bought her, and she became lawful to him: at mid-afternoon he freed her, and she became unlawful to him; but at sundown he married her and she was again lawful to him. At nightfall he divorced her and she was then a third time unlawful to him; but, next morning at daybreak, he took her back, and she became once more lawful to him. (¿) "Tell me what tomb went about with him that lay buried therein?"—Jonah's whale, when it had swallowed him. (¿) "What spot of lowland is it, upon which the sun shone once, but will never again shine till Judgment-Day?"—The bottom of the Red Sea, when Moses smote it with his staff, and the sea clave asunder in twelve places, according to the number of the tribes;[436] then the sun shone on the bottom and will do so nevermore until Judgment-Day.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the philosopher then addressed the damsel saying, "What was the first skirt that trailed over the face of the earth?" She replied, "That of Hagar, out of shame before Sarah; and it became a custom among the Arabs." (¿) "What is that which breatheth without life?"—Quoth Almighty Allah, 'By the morning when it breatheth!'[437] (¿) "Ree me this riddle:—A number of pigeons came to a high tree and lighted, some on the tree and others under it. Said those on the tree to those on the ground:—If one of you come up to us, ye will be a third part of us all in number; and if one of us descend to you, we shall be like unto you in number. How many pigeons were there in all?"—Twelve: seven alighted on the tree and five beneath; and, if one go up, those above would be eight to four; and, if one go down, both would be six and Allah is all-knowing.[438] With this the philosopher put 236 off his clothes and fled: whereupon the next contest took place, for she turned to the Olema present and said, "Which of you is the rhetorician that can discourse of all arts and sciences?" There came forward a sage hight Ibrahim bin Siyyár and said to her, "Think me not like the rest." Quoth she, "It is the more assured to me that thou wilt be beaten, for that thou art a boaster; and Allah will help me to victory over thee, that I may strip thee of thy clothes. So, if thou sentest one to fetch thee wherewithal to

cover thyself, 'twould be well for thee." Cried he, "By Allah, I will assuredly conquer thee and make thee a byword among the peoples, generation after generation!" Rejoined she, "Do penance in advance for thy broken oath." Then he asked, "What five things did Allah create before he made man?"; and she answered, "Water and earth and light and darkness and the fruits of the earth." (¿) "What did Allah create with the hand of omnipotence?"—The 'Arsh, throne of God or the empyreal heaven and the tree Túbá[439] and Adam and the garden of Eden; these Allah created with the hand of His omnipotence; but to all other created things He said, "Be,"—and they were. (¿) "Who is thy father in Al-Islam?"—Mohammed, whom Allah bless and preserve! (¿) "Who was the father in Al-Islam of Mohammed?"—Abraham, the Friend of God. (¿) "What is the Faith of Al-Islam?"—The professing that there is no God but *the* God and that Mohammed is the apostle of God. (¿) "What is thy first and thy last?"—My first is man's seed in the shape of foul water and my last filthy carrion: the first of me is dust and the last of me is dust. Quoth the poet:—

Of dust was I created, and man did I become, ✿ In question ever ready and aye fluent in reply,

Then, I unto the dust return'd, became of it again, ✿ For that, in very deed, of dust at first create was I.

He continued, "What thing was it, whose first state was wood and 237 its last life?"—Moses' staff,[440] when he cast it on the valley-ground and it became, by permission of Allah, a writhing serpent. (¿) "What is the meaning of the word of the Lord, 'And I have other occasion for it?'"[441]—He, Moses, was wont to plant his staff in the ground, and it would flower and fruit and shade him from the heat and from the cold. Moreover, it would carry him when he was weary, and whilst he slept guard his sheep from lions and wild beasts. (¿) "What woman was born of a man alone and what man of a woman alone?"—Eve of Adam and Jesus of Mary.[442] (¿) "Tell me of the four fires, what fire eateth and drinketh; what fire eateth but drinketh not; what fire drinketh but eateth not and what other neither eateth nor drinketh?"—The fire of the world eateth but drinketh not; the fire which eateth and drinketh is Hell-fire; the fire of the sun drinketh but eateth not, and the fire of the moon neither eateth nor drinketh. (¿) "Which is the open door and which the shut?"—The Traditional Ordinances are the open door, the Koranic the shut door. (¿) "Of what doth the poet speak, when he saith:—

And dweller in the tomb whose food is at his head, ✿ When he eateth of that meat, of words he waxeth fain:

238 He riseth and he walketh and he talketh without tongue; ✿ And returneth to the tomb where his kith and kin are lain.

No living wight is he, yet in honour he abides; ✿ Nor dead yet he deserveth that Allah him assain."

She replied, "The reed-pen."[443] Quoth he, "What doth the poet refer to in these verses:—

Two vests in one; blood flowing easiest wise; ✿ Rosy red ears and mouth wide open lies;

It hath a cock-like form, its belly pecks ✿ And, if you price it, half a dirham buys."

She replied, "The ink-case." Quoth he, "And in these:—

Ho say to men of wisdom, wit and lore ✿ To sapient, reverend, clever counsellor:
Tell me what was't you saw that bird bring forth ✿ When wandering Arab-land and Ajam o'er?
No flesh it beareth and it hath no blood, ✿ Nor down nor any feathers e'er it wore.
'Tis eaten cooked and eke 'tis eaten cold; ✿ 'Tis eaten buried 'neath the flames that roar:
It showeth two-fold colours, silver white ✿ And yellow brighter than pure golden ore:
'Tis not seen living or we count it dead: ✿ So ree my riddle rich in marvel-store!"

She replied, "Thou makest longsome the questioning anent an egg worth a mite." "And this?:"—

I waved to and fro and he waved to and fro, ✿ With a motion so pleasant, now fast and now slow;
And at last he sunk down on my bosom of snow; ✿ "Your lover friend?"

—"*No friend, my fan*;"[444] said she. (¿) "How many words did Allah speak to Moses?"—It is related of the Apostle that he said, "God spoke to Moses fifteen hundred and fifteen words." (¿) "Tell me of fourteen things that speak to the Lord of the Worlds?"—The seven heavens and the seven earths, when they say, 'We come obedient to Thy command.'[445]———And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel made the answer, the philosopher continued, "Tell me of Adam and how he was first created?" and she said, "Allah created Adam of clay: the clay He made of foam and the foam of the sea, the sea of darkness, darkness of light, light of a fish, the fish of a rock, the rock of a ruby, the ruby of water, and the water He created by His Omnipotence according to His saying (exalted be His name!), 'His commandment when He willeth aught, is but to say, BE,—and IT IS.'"[446] (¿) "What is meant by the poet in these verses:—

And eater lacking mouth and even maw; ✿ Yet trees and beasts to it are daily bread:
Well fed it thrives and shows a lively life, ✿ But give it water and you do it dead?"

"This," quoth she, "is Fire." "And in these;" he asked:—

"Two lovers barred from every joy and bliss, ✿ Who through the livelong night embracing lie:
They guard the folk from all calamities, ✿ But with the rising sun apart they fly?"

She answered, "The leaves of a door." Quoth he, "Tell me of the gates of Gehenna?" Quoth she, "They are seven in number and their names are comprised in these two couplets:—

Jahannam, next Lazá, and third Hatím; ✿ Then count Sa'ír and Sakar eke, five-fold,
Sixth comes Jahím and Háwiyah the seventh; ✿ Here are seven Hells in four lines briefly told."

Quoth he "To what doth the poet refer when he saith:—

She wears a pair of ringlets long let down ✿ Behind her, as she comes and goes at speed,

And eye that never tastes of sleep nor sheds ✿ A tear, for ne'er a drop it hath at need;

That never all its life wore stitch of clothes; ✿ Yet robes mankind in every mode of weed?"

240 Quoth she, "A needle." (¿) "What is the length and what the breadth of the bridge Al-Sirát?"—Its length is three thousand years' journey, a thousand in descent and a thousand in ascent and a thousand level: it is sharper than a sword and finer than a hair.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel had described to him Al-Sirat, the philosopher said, "Inform me how many intercessions with Allah hath the Prophet for each soul?"[447]—Three. (¿) "Was Abu Bakr the first who embraced Al-Islam?"—Yes. (¿) "Yet Ali became a Moslem before him?"—Ali came to the Prophet, when he was a boy of seven years old, for Allah vouchsafed him knowledge of the way of salvation in his tender youth, so that he never prostrated himself to idols. Quoth he, "Tell me which is the more excellent, Ali or Abbás?" Now she knew that, in propounding this question, Ibrahim was laying a trap for her; for if she said, "Ali is more excellent than Abbas," she would lack excuse with the Caliph for undervaluing his ancestor; so she bowed her head awhile, now reddening, then paling, and lastly said, "Thou askest me of two excellent men, each having his own excellence. Let us return to what we were about." When the Caliph Harun al-Rashid heard her, he stood up and said, "Thou hast spoken well, by the Lord of the Ka'abah, O Tawaddud!" Then quoth Ibrahim the rhetorician, "What meaneth the poet when he saith:—

Slim-wasted one, whose taste is sweetest-sweet, ✿ Likest a lance whereon no head we scan:

And all the lieges find it work them weal, ✿ Eaten of afternoon in Ramazan."

She answered, "The sugar-cane;" and he said, "Tell me of many 241 things." Asked she, "What are they?" and he said, "What is sweeter than honey; what is sharper than the sword; what is swifter than poison; what is the delight of a moment and what the contentment of three days; what is the pleasantest of days; what is the joy of a week; what is that debt the worst debtor denieth not; what is the prison of the tomb; what is the joy of the heart; what is the snare of the soul; what is death-in-life; what is the disease that may not be healed; what is the shame that may not be wiped off; what is the beast that woneth not in cultivated fields, but lodgeth in waste places and hateth the sons of Adam and hath in him somewhat of the make of seven strong and violent beasts?" Quoth she, "Hear what I shall say in reply; then put off thy clothes, that I may explain to thee;" and the Caliph said, "Expound, and he shall doff his clothes." So she said, "Now that, which is sweeter than honey, is the love of pious children to their two parents; that, which is sharper than the sword, is the tongue; that, which is swifter than poison, is the Envier's eye; the delight of a moment is carnal copulation

and the contentment of three days is the depilatory for women; the pleasantest of days is that of profit on merchandise; the joy of a week is the bride; the debt, which the worst debtor denieth not, is death; the prison of the tomb is a bad son; the joy of the heart is a woman obedient to her husband (and it is said also that, when fleshmeat descendeth upon the heart, it rejoiceth therein); the snare of the soul is a disobedient slave; death-in-life is poverty; the disease that may not be healed is an ill-nature, and the shame that may not be wiped away is an ill daughter; lastly, the beast that woneth not in cultivated fields, but lodgeth in waste places and hateth the sons of Adam and hath in him somewhat of the make of seven strong and violent beasts, is the locust, whose head is as the head of a horse, its neck as the neck of the bull, its wings as the wings of the vulture, its feet as the feet of the camel, its tail as the tail of the serpent, its belly as the belly of the scorpion and its horns as the horns of the gazelle." The Caliph was astounded at her quickness and understanding, and said to the rhetorician, "Doff thy clothes." So he rose up and cried, "I call all who are present in this assembly to witness that she is more learned than I and every other learned man." And he put off his clothes and gave them to her, saying, "Take them and may Allah not bless them to thee!" So the Caliph ordered him fresh clothes and said, "O Tawaddud, there is one thing left of that for which thou didst 242 engage, namely, chess." And he sent for experts of chess and cards[448] and trictrac. The chess-player sat down before her, and they set the pieces, and he moved and she moved; but, every move he made she speedily countered,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel was playing chess with the expert in presence of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, whatever move he made was speedily countered by her, till she beat him and he found himself checkmated. Quoth he, "I did but lead thee on, that thou mightest think thyself skilful: but set up again, and thou shalt see." So they placed the pieces a second time, when he said in himself, "Open thine eyes or she will beat thee." And he fell to moving no piece, save after calculation, and ceased not to play, till she said, "Thy King is dead!—Checkmate." When he saw this he was confounded at her quickness and understanding; but she laughed and said, "O professor, I will make a wager with thee on this third game. I will give thee the queen and the right-hand castle and the left-hand knight; if thou beat me, take my clothes, and if I beat thee, I will take thy clothes." Replied he, "I agree to this;" and they replaced the pieces, she removing queen, castle and knight.[449] Then said she, "Move, O master." So he moved, saying to himself, "I cannot but beat her, with such odds," and planned a combination; but, behold, she moved on, little by little, till she made one of her pawns[450] a queen and pushing up to him 243 pawns and other pieces, to take off his attention, set one in his way and tempted him to take it. Accordingly, he took it and she said to him, "The

measure is meted and the loads equally balanced.[451] Eat till thou art over-full; naught shall be thy ruin, O son of Adam, save thy greed. Knowest thou not that I did but tempt thee, that I might finesse thee? See: this is check-mate!" adding, "So doff off thy clothes." Quoth he, "Leave me my bag-trousers, so Allah repay thee;" and he swore by Allah that he would contend with none, so long as Tawaddud abode in the realm of Baghdad. Then he stripped off his clothes and gave them to her and went away. Thereupon came the backgammon-player, and she said to him, "If I beat thee, this day, what wilt thou give me?" Quoth he, "I will give thee ten suits of brocade of Constantinople, figured with gold, and ten suits of velvet and a thousand gold pieces; and if I beat thee, I ask nothing but that thou write me an acknowledgment of my victory." Quoth she, "To it, then, and do thy best." So they played, and he lost and went away, chattering in Frankish jargon and saying, "By the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful, there is not her like in all the regions of the world!" Then the Caliph summoned players on instruments of music and asked her, "Dost thou know aught of music?"; when she answered, "Even so!" He bade bring a worn lute, polished by use, whose owner forlorn and lone was by parting trodden down; and of which quoth one, describing it:—

Allah watered a land, and upsprang a tree ✿ Struck root deep down, and raised head a-sky:

The birds o'ersang it when green its wood; ✿ And the Fair o'ersing now the wood is dry.

So they brought the lute in a bag of red satin, with tassels of saffron-coloured silk: and she opened the bag, and took it out and behold on it was graven:—

Oft hath a tender bough made lute for maid, ✿ Whose swift sweet lays at feast men's hearts invade:

She sings; it follows on her song, as though ✿ The Bulbuls[452] taught her all the modes she played.

244 She laid her lute in her lap and with bosom inclining over it, bent to it with the bending of a mother who suckleth her child; then she preluded in twelve different modes, till the whole assembly was agitated with delight, like a waving sea, and she sang the following:—

Cut short this strangeness, leave unruth of you; ✿ My heart shall love you aye, by youth of you!

Have ruth on one who sighs and weeps and moans, ✿ Pining and yearning for the troth of you.

The Caliph was ravished and exclaimed, "Allah bless thee and be merciful to him who taught thee!": whereupon she rose and kissed the ground before him. Then he sent for money and paid her master Abu al-Husn an hundred thousand gold pieces to her price; after which he said to her, "O Tawaddud, ask a boon of me!" Replied she, "I ask of thee that thou restore me to my lord who sold me." "'Tis well," answered the Caliph and restored her to her master and gave her five thousand dinars for herself. Moreover, he appointed Abu al-Husn one of his cup-companions for a permanence,—

—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph gave the damsel five thousand dinars for herself and restored her to her master whom he appointed one of his cup-companions for a permanence and assigned him a monthly stipend of a thousand dinars so long as he should live; and he abode with the damsel Tawaddud in all solace and delight of life. Marvel then, O King, at the eloquence of this damsel and the hugeness of her learning and understanding and her perfect excellence in all branches of art and science; and consider the generosity of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, in that he gave her master this money and said to her, "Ask a boon of me;" and she besought him to restore her to her lord. So he restored her to him and gave her five thousand dinars for herself and made him one of his boon-companions. Where is such generosity to be found after the Abbaside Caliphs?—May Allah Almighty have mercy upon them, one and all! And they tell a tale of

[20- Other tales]

[Stories of the Angel of Death]

THE ANGEL OF DEATH WITH THE PROUD KING AND THE DEVOUT MAN.

It is related, O auspicious King, that one of the olden monarchs was once minded to ride out in state with the officers of his realm and the Grandees of his retinue and display to the folk the marvels of his magnificence. So he ordered his Lords and Emirs equip them therefor and commanded his keeper of the wardrobe to bring him of the richest of raiment, such as befitted the King in his state; and he bade them bring his steeds[453] of the finest breeds 246 and pedigrees every man heeds; which being done, he chose out of the raiment what rejoiced him most and of the horses that which he deemed best; and, donning the clothes, together with a collar set with margarites and rubies and all manner jewels, mounted and set forth in state, making his destrier prance and curvet among his troops and glorying in his pride and despotic power. And Iblis came to him and, laying his hand upon his nose, blew into his nostrils the breath of hauteur and conceit, so that he magnified and glorified himself and said in his heart, "Who among men is like unto me?" And he became so puffed up with arrogance and self-sufficiency, and so taken up with the thought of his own splendour and magnificence, that he would not vouchsafe a glance to any man. Presently, there stood before him one clad in tattered clothes and saluted him, but he returned not his salam; whereupon the stranger laid hold of his horse's bridle. "Lift thy hand," cried the King, "thou knowest not whose bridle-rein it is whereof thou takest hold." Quoth the other, "I have a need of thee." Quoth the King, "Wait till I alight and then name thy need." Rejoined the stranger, "It is a secret and I will not tell it but in thine ear." So the King bowed his head to him and he said, "I am the Angel of Death and I purpose to take thy soul." Replied the King, "Have patience with me a little, whilst I return to my house and take leave of my people and children and neighbours and wife." "By no means so," answered the Angel; "thou shalt never return nor look on them again, for the fated term of thy life is past." So saying, he took the soul of the King (who fell off his horse's back dead) and departed thence. Presently the Death

Angel met a devout man, of whom Almighty Allah had accepted, and saluted him. He returned the salute, and the Angel said to him, "O pious man, I have a need of thee which must be kept secret." "Tell it in my ear," quoth the devotee; and quoth the other, "I am the Angel of Death." Replied the man, "Welcome to thee! and praised be Allah for thy coming! I am aweary of awaiting thine arrival; for indeed long hath been thine absence from the lover which longeth for thee." Said the Angel, "If thou have any business, make an end of it;" but the other answered, 247 saying, "There is nothing so urgent to me as the meeting with my Lord, to whom be honour and glory!" And the Angel said "How wouldst thou fain have me take thy soul? I am bidden to take it as thou willest and choosest." He replied, "Tarry till I make the Wuzu-ablution and pray; and, when I prostrate myself, then take my soul while my body is on the ground."[454] Quoth the Angel, "Verily, my Lord (be He extolled and exalted!) commanded me not to take thy soul but with thy consent and as thou shouldst wish; so I will do thy will." Then the devout man made the minor ablution[455] and prayed: and the Angel of Death took his soul in the act of prostration and Almighty Allah transported it to the place of mercy and acceptance and forgiveness. And they tell another tale of

THE ANGEL OF DEATH AND THE RICH KING.

A certain King had heaped up coin beyond count and gathered store of all precious things, which Allah the Most Highest hath created. So, in order that he might take his pleasure whenas he should find leisure to enjoy all this abounding wealth he had collected, he built him a palace wide and lofty such as besitteth and beseemeth Kings; and set thereto strong doors and appointed, for its service and its guard, servants and soldiers and doorkeepers to watch and ward. One day, he bade the cooks dress him somewhat of the goodliest of food and assembled his household and retainers and boon-companions and servants to eat with him, and partake of his bounty. Then he sat down upon the sofa of his kingship and dominion; and, propping his elbow upon the cushion, addressed 248 himself, saying, "O soul, thou hast gathered together all the wealth of the world; so now take thy leisure therein and eat of this good at thine ease, in long life and prosperity ever rife!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that hardly had the King made an end of saying to himself, "Eat of this weal at thine ease, in long life and prosperity ever rife!" when a man clad in tattered raiment, with an asker's wallet hanging at his neck, as he were one who came to beg food, knocked with the door-ring a knock so loud and terrible that the whole palace shook as with quake of earth and the King's throne trembled. The servants were affrighted and rushed to the door, and when they

saw the man who had knocked they cried out at him, saying, “Woe to thee! what manner of unmannerly fashion be this? Wait till the King eateth and we will then give thee of what is left.” Quoth he, “Tell your lord to come out and speak with me, for I have of him a pressing need and a matter to heed.” They cried, “Away, fool! who art thou that we should bid our lord come forth to thee?” But he said, “Tell him of this.” So they went in and told the King, who said, “Did ye not rebuke him and draw upon him and threaten him!” Now as he spoke, behold, there came another knock at the gate, louder than the first knock, whereupon the servants sprang at the stranger with staves and weapons, to fall upon him and slay him; but he shouted at them, saying, “Bide in your steads, for I am the Angel of Death.” Hereat their hearts quaked and their wits forsook them; their understandings were in confusion, their side-muscles quivered in perturbation and their limbs lost the power of motion. Then said the King to them, “Tell him to take a substitute[456] in my place and one to relieve me in this case.” But the Angel answered, saying, “I will take no substitute, and I come not but on thine account, to cause separation between thee and the goods thou hast gathered together and the riches thou hast heaped up and entreasured.” 249 When the King heard this, he wept and groaned, saying, “Allah curse the treasure which hath deluded and undone me and diverted me from the service of my Lord! I deemed it would profit me, but to-day it is a regret for me and a calamity to me, and behold, I go forth, empty-handed of it, and leave it to my foes.” Thereupon Allah caused the Treasure to speak out and it said, “Wherefore cursest thou me?[457] Curse thyself, for Allah created both me and eke thyself of the dust and appointed me to be in thine hand, that thou mightest provide thee with me a viaticum for the next world and give alms with me to the poor and the needy and the sick; and build mosques and hospices and bridges and aqueducts, so might I be an aidance unto thee in the world to come. But thou didst garner me and hoard me up and on thine own vanities bestowest me, neither gavest thou thanks for me, as was due, but wast ungrateful to me; and now thou must leave me to thy foes and thou hast naught save thy regretting and thy repenting. But what is my sin, that thou shouldest revile me?” Then the Angel of Death took the King’s soul as he sat on his throne before he ate of the food, and he fell down dead. Quoth Allah Almighty, “While they were rejoicing for that which had been given them, we suddenly laid hold on them; and, behold, they were seized with despair.”[458] And they tell another tale of

THE ANGEL OF DEATH AND THE KING OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

There was a puissant despot among the Kings of the Banú Isráíl, who sat one day upon the throne of his kingship, when he saw come in to him, by the gate of the hall, a man of forbidding aspect and horrible presence. The King was affrighted at his

sudden 250intrusion and his look terrified him; so he sprang up before him and said, “Who art thou, O man? Who gave thee leave to come in to me and who invited thee to enter my house?” Quoth the stranger, “Verily the Lord of the House sent me to thee, nor can any doorkeeper exclude me, nor need I leave to come in to Kings; for I reck not of a Sultan’s majesty neither of the multitude of his guards. I am he from whom no tyrant is at rest, nor can any man escape from my grasp: I am the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies.” Now when the King heard this a palsy crept over him[459] and he fell on his face in a swoon; but presently coming to himself, he asked, “Art thou then the Angel of Death?”; and the stranger answered, “Yes.” “I conjure thee, by Allah,” quoth the King, “grant me one single day’s respite, that I may pray pardon of my sins and ask absolution of my Lord and restore to their rightful owners the monies which are in my treasures, so I may not be burdened with the woe of a reckoning nor with the misery of punishment therefor.” Replied the Angel, “Well-away! well-away! this may be in no way.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the Death-messenger to the King, “Well-away, well-away! this may be in no way. How can I grant thee a reprieve when the days of thy life are counted and thy breaths numbered and thy moments fixed and written?” “Grant me an hour,” asked the King; but the Angel answered saying, “The hour was in the account and hath sped, and thou unheeding aught; and hath fled, and thou taking no thought: and now thy breathings are accomplished, and there remaineth to thee but one breath.” Quoth the King, “Who will be with me when I am transported to my tomb?” Quoth the Angel, “Naught will be with thee but thy works good or evil.” “I have no works,” said the King; and the Angel, “Doubtless thy long home will be in hell-fire and thy doom the wrath of the Almighty.” Then he seized the soul of the King, and he fell off his throne and dropped on the earth dead. And there arose a mighty weeping and wailing and clamour of keening 251for him among the people of his court, and had they known that to which he went of the wrath of his Lord, their weeping for him had been sorer and their wailing louder and more abounding. And a story is told of

ISKANDAR ZU AL-KARNAYN[460] AND A CERTAIN TRIBE OF POOR FOLK.

It is related that Iskandar Zu al-Karnayn[461] once came, in his journeyings, upon a tribe of small folk, who owned naught of the weals of the world and who dug their graves over against the doors of their houses and were wont at all times to visit them and sweep the earth from them and keep them clean and pray at them 252and worship Almighty Allah at them; and they had no meat save grasses and the growth of the

ground. So Iskandar sent a man to summon their King, but he refused to come, saying, “I have no need of him.” Thereupon Iskandar went to him and said, “How is it with you and what manner of men are ye?; for I see with you forsooth naught of gold or silver, nor find I with you aught of the weals of the world.” Answered the King, “None hath his fill of the weals of the world.” Iskandar then asked “Why do you dig your graves before your house-doors?”; and the King answered, “That they may be the prospective of our eye-glances; so we may look on them and ever renew talk and thought of death, neither forget the world to come; and on this wise the love of the world be banished from our hearts and we be not thereby distracted from the service of our Lord, the Almighty.” Quoth Iskandar, “Why do ye eat grasses?”; and the other replied, “Because we abhor to make our bellies the tombs of animals and because the pleasure of eating outstrippeth not the gullet.” Then putting forth his hand he brought out a skull of a son of Adam and, laying it before Iskandar, said, “O Zu al-Karnayn, Lord of the Two Horns, knowest thou who owned this skull?” Quoth he, “Nay;” and quoth the other, “He who owned this skull was a King of the Kings of the world, who dealt tyrannously with his subjects, specially wronging the weak and wasting his time in heaping up the rubbish of this world, till Allah took his sprite and made the fire his abiding-site; and this is his head.” He then put forth his hand and produced another skull and, laying it before Iskandar, said to him, “Knowest thou this?” “No,” answered the conqueror; and the other rejoined, “This is the skull of another King, who dealt justly by his lieges and was kindly solicitous for the folk of his realm and his dominions, till Allah took his soul and lodged him in His Garden and made high his degree in Heaven.” Then laying his hands on Iskandar’s head he said, “Would I knew which of these two art thou.” Whereupon Iskandar wept with sore weeping and straining the King to his bosom cried, “If thou be minded to company with me, I will commit to thee as Wazir the government of my affairs and share with thee my kingdom.” Cried the other, “Well-away, well-away! I have no mind to this.” “And why so?” asked Iskandar, and the King answered, “Because all men are thy foes by reason of the wealth and the worlds thou hast won: 253 while all men are my true friends, because of my contentment and pauperdom, for that I possess nothing, neither covet aught of the goods of life; I have no desire to them nor wish for them, neither reck I aught save contentment.” So Iskandar pressed him to his breast and kissed him between the eyes and went his way.[462] And among the tales they tell is one concerning

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF KING ANUSHIRWAN.[463]

It is told of Anushirwan, the just King, that once upon a time he feigned himself sick, and bade his stewards and intendants go round about the provinces of his empire and the quarters of his dominion and seek him out a mud-brick thrown away from some ruined village, that he might use it as medicine, informing his intimates that the

leaches had prescribed this to him. So they went the round of the provinces of his reign and of all the lands under his sway and said to him on return, “In all the realm we have found nor ruined site nor castaway mud-brick.” At this Anushirwan rejoiced and rendered thanks to the Lord, saying, “I was but minded to try my kingdom and prove mine empire, that I might know if any place therein remained ruined and deserted, so I might rebuild and repeople it; but, since there be no place in it but is inhabited, the affairs of the reign are best-conditioned and 254its ordinance is excellent; and its populousness[464] hath reached the pitch of perfection.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the high officials returned and reported, “We have found in the empire nor ruined site nor rotten brick,” the Just King thanked his God and said, “Verily the affairs of the realm are best-conditioned and its ordinance is excellent and its populousness hath reached the pink of perfection.” And ken thou, O King, continued Shahrazad, that these olden Kings strave not and toiled not for the peopling of their possessions, but because they knew that the more populous a country is, the more abundant is that which is desired therein; and because they wist the saying of the wise and the learned to be true without other view, namely, “Religion dependeth on the King, the King on the troops, the troops on the treasury, the treasury on the populousness of the country and its prosperity on the justice done to the lieges.” Wherefore they upheld no one in tyranny or oppression; neither suffered their dependants and suite to work injustice, knowing that kingdoms are not established upon tyranny, but that cities and places fall into ruin when oppressors are set as rulers over them, and their inhabitants disperse and flee to other governments; whereby ruin falleth upon the realm, the imports fail, the treasuries become empty and the pleasant lives of the subjects are perturbed; for that they love not a tyrant and cease not to offer up successive prayers against him; so that the King hath no ease of his kingdom, and the vicissitudes of fortune speedily bring him to destruction. And they tell a tale concerning

THE JEWISH KAZI AND HIS PIOUS WIFE.

Among the Children of Israel one of the Kazis had a wife of surpassing beauty, constant in fasting and abounding in patience and long-suffering; and he, being minded to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, appointed his own brother Kazi in his stead, during his absence, and commended his wife to his charge. Now this brother had heard of her beauty and loveliness and had taken a fancy to her. So no sooner was his brother gone than he went to her and sought her love-favours; but she denied him and held fast to her chastity. The more she repelled him, the more he pressed his suit

upon her; till, despairing of her and fearing lest she should acquaint his brother with his misconduct whenas he should return, he suborned false witnesses to testify against her of adultery; and cited her and carried her before the King of the time who adjudged her to be stoned. So they dug a pit, and seating her therein stoned her, till she was covered with stones, and the man said, "Be this hole her grave!" But when it was dark a passer-by, making for a neighbouring hamlet, heard her groaning in sore pain; and, pulling her out of the pit, carried her home to his wife, whom he bade dress her wounds. The peasant woman tended her till she recovered and presently gave her her child to be nursed; and she used to lodge with the child in another house by night. Now a certain thief saw her and lusted after her. So he sent to her seeking her love-favours, but she denied herself to him; wherefore he resolved to slay her and, making his way into her lodging by night (and she sleeping), thought to strike at her with a knife; but it smote the little one and killed it. Now when he knew his misdeed, fear overtook him and he went forth the house and Allah preserved from him her chastity. But as she awoke in the morning, she found the child by her side with throat cut; and presently the mother came and seeing her boy dead, said to the nurse, "'Twas thou didst murther him." Therewith she beat her a grievous beating and purposed to put her to death; but her husband interposed and delivered the woman, saying, "By Allah, thou shalt not do on this wise." So the woman, who had somewhat of money with her, fled forth for her life, knowing not whither she should wend. Presently, she came to a village, where she saw a 256crowd of people about a man crucified to a tree-stump, but still in the chains of life. "What hath he done?" she asked, and they answered, "He hath committed a crime, which nothing can expiate but death or the payment of such a fine by way of alms." So she said to them, "Take the money and let him go;" and, when they did so, he repented at her hands and vowed to serve her, for the love of Almighty Allah till death should release him. Then he built her a cell and lodged her therein; after which he betook himself to woodcutting and brought her daily her bread. As for her, she was constant in worship, so that there came no sick man or demoniac to her, but she prayed for him and he was straightway healed.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the woman's cell was visited by folk (and she constant in worship), it befel by decree of the Almighty that He sent down upon her husband's brother (the same who had caused her to be stoned), a cancer in the face, and smote the villager's wife (the same who had beaten her) with leprosy, and afflicted the thief (the same who had murthered the child) with palsy. Now when the Kazi returned from his pilgrimage, he asked his brother of his wife, and he told him that she was dead, whereat he mourned sore and accounted her with her Maker. After awhile, very many folk heard of the pious recluse and flocked to her cell from all parts of the length and breadth of the earth; whereupon said the

Kazi to his brother, "O my brother, wilt thou not seek out yonder pious woman? Haply Allah shall decree thee healing at her hands!" and he replied, "O my brother, carry me to her." Moreover, the husband of the leprous woman heard of the pious devotee and carried his wife to her, as did also the people of the paralytic thief; and they all met at the door of the hermitage. Now she had a place wherefrom she could look out upon those who came to her, without their seeing her; and they waited till her servant came, when they begged admittance and obtained permission. Presently she saw them all and recognized them; so she veiled and cloaked face and body and went out and stood in the door, looking at her husband and his brother and the thief and the peasant-woman; but they could not recognise her. 257 Then said she to them, "Ho folk, ye shall not be relieved of what is with you till ye confess your sins; for, when the creature confesseth his sins the Creator relenteth towards him and granteth him that wherefore he resorteth to Him." Quoth the Kazi to his brother, "O my brother, repent to Allah and persist not in thy frowardness, for it will be more helpful to thy relief." And the tongue of the case spake this speech:—

This day oppressor and oppressèd meet, ✿ And Allah sheweth secrets we secrete:

This is a place where sinners low are brought; ✿ And Allah raiseth saint to highest seat.

Our Lord and Master shows the truth right clear, ✿ Though sinner froward be or own defeat:

Alas[465] for those who rouse the Lord to wrath, ✿ As though of Allah's wrath they nothing weet!

O whoso seekest honours, know they are ✿ From Allah, and His fear with love entreat.

(Saith the relator), Then quoth the brother, "Now I will tell the truth: I did thus and thus with thy wife;" and he confessed the whole matter, adding, "And this is my offence." Quoth the leprous woman, "As for me, I had a woman with me and imputed to her that of which I knew her to be guiltless, and beat her grievously; and this is my offence." And quoth the paralytic, "And I went in to a woman to kill her, after I had tempted her to commit adultery and she had refused; and I slew a child that lay by her side; and this is my offence." Then said the pious woman, "O my God, even as Thou hast made them feel the misery of revolt, so show them now the excellence of submission, for Thou over all things art Omnipotent!" And Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!) made them whole. Then the Kazi fell to looking on her and considering her straitly, till she asked him why he looked so hard and he said, "I had a wife and were she not dead, I had said thou art she." Hereupon, she made herself known to him and both began praising Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!) for that which He had vouchsafed them of the reunion of their loves; but the brother and the thief and the villager's wife joined in imploring her forgiveness. So she forgave 258 them one and all, and they worshipped Allah in that place and rendered her due service, till Death parted them. And one of the Sayyids[466] hath related this tale of

THE SHIPWRECKED WOMAN AND HER CHILD.

I was circuiting the Ka'abah one dark night, when I heard a plaintive voice, speaking from a contrite heart and saying, "O Bountiful One, Thy past boon! Indeed, by my heart shall Thy covenant never be undone." Hearing this voice, my heart fluttered so that I was like to die; but I followed the sound and behold, it came from a woman, to whom I said, "Peace be with thee, O handmaid of Allah;" whereto she replied, "And with thee be peace, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings!" Quoth I, "I conjure thee, by Allah the Most Great, tell me what is the covenant to which thy heart is constant." Quoth she, "But that thou adjurest me by the Omnipotent, I would not tell thee my secrets. See what is before me." So I looked and lo! there was a child lying asleep before her and breathing heavily in his slumber. Said she, "Know, that I set forth, being big with this boy, to make the pilgrimage to this House and took passage in a ship; but the waves rose against us and the winds blew contrary and the vessel broke up. I saved myself on a plank; and, on that bit of wood, I gave birth to this child; and while he lay on my bosom and the waves beating upon me,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the woman continued, "Now while the boy lay on my bosom and the waves 259 beat upon me, there swam up to me one of the sailors, who climbed on the plank and said:—By Allah, I desired thee whilst thou wast yet in the ship, and now I have come at thee: so yield thy body to me, or I will throw thee into the sea. Said I:—Out on thee! hast thou no memory of that which thou hast seen and is it no warning to thee? Quoth he:—I have seen the like of this many a time and come off safe and care not. Quoth I:—O fellow, we are now in a calamity, whence we hope to be delivered by obedience to Allah and not by disobedience. But he persisted with me, and I feared him and thought to put him off; so I said to him:—Wait till this babe shall sleep; but he took the child off my lap and threw him into the sea. Now when I saw this desperate deed, my heart sank and sorrow was sore upon me; so I raised my eyes heavenwards and said:—O Thou that interposest between a man and his heart, intervene between me and this leonine brute; for Thou over all things art Omnipotent! And by Allah, hardly had I spoken when a beast rose out of the sea and snatched him off the plank. When I saw myself alone my sorrows redoubled and my grief and longing for my child, and I recited:—

My coolth of eyes, the darling child of me ✿ Is lost, and racked my heart with agony;

My body wrecked, and red-hot coals of love ✿ Burning my liver with sore pangs, I see.

In this my sorrow shows no gleam of joy; ✿ Save Thy high grace and my expectancy:

Hast seen, O Lord, what unto me befel; ✿ My son aye lost and parting pangs I dree:
Take ruth on us and make us meet again; ✿ For now my stay and only hope's in Thee!

I abode in this condition a day and a night; and, when morning dawned, I caught sight of the sails of a vessel shining afar off, nor did the waves cease to drive me and the winds to waft me on, till I reached the ship, whose sails I had sighted. The sailors took me up and I looked and behold, my babe was amongst them: so I threw myself upon him and said:—O folk, this is my child: how and whence came ye by him? Quoth they:—Whilst we were sailing along the seas the ship suddenly stood still and lo! that which stayed us was a beast, as it were a great city, and this babe on its back, sucking his thumbs. So we took him up. Now when I heard this, I told them my tale and all that had betided me and returned thanks to my Lord for His goodness, and vowed 260 to Him that never, whilst I lived, would I stir from His House nor swerve from His service; and since then I have never asked of Him aught but He hath given it me." Now when she had made an end of her story (quoth the Sayyid), I put my hand to my alms-pouch and would have given to her, but she exclaimed, "Away from me, thou idle man! Have I not told thee of His mercies and the graciousness of His dealings and shall I take an alms from other than His hand?" And I could not prevail with her to accept aught of me: so I left her and went away, reciting these couplets:—

How many boons conceals the Deity, ✿ Eluding human sight in mystery:
How many graces come on heels of stresses, ✿ And fill the burning heart with jubilee:
How many a sorrow in the morn appears, ✿ And turns at night-tide into gladdest gree:
If things go hard with thee some day, yet trust ✿ Th' Eterne, th' Almighty God of Unity:
And pray the Prophet that he intercede; ✿ Through intercession every wish shalt see.

And she left not the service of her Lord, cleaving unto His House, till death came to her. And a tale is also told, by Málik bin Dínár[467] (Allah have mercy on him!) of

THE PIOUS BLACK SLAVE.

We were once afflicted with drought at Bassorah and went forth sundry times to pray for rain, but saw no sign of our prayers being accepted. So I went, I and 'Itaa al-Salamí and Sábit al-Banáni and Naja al-Bakáa and Mohammed bin Wási'a and Ayyúb al-Sukhtiyáni and Habíb al-Farsi and Hassán bin Abi Sinán and 'Otbah al-Ghulám and Sálih al-Muzani,[468] till we reached the oratory,[469] when the boys came out of the schools and we prayed for rain, but saw no sign of acceptance. So about midday the people went away and I and Sabit al-Banani tarried in the place of 261 prayer till nightfall, when we saw a black of comely face, slender of shank[470] and big of belly, approach us, clad in a pair of woollen drawers; if all he wore had been priced, it would not have fetched a couple of dirhams. He brought water and made the minor ablution, then, going up to the prayer-niche, prayed two inclinations deftly, his standing and bowing and prostration being exactly similar in both. Then he raised his glance heavenwards, and said, "O my God and my Lord and Master, how

long wilt Thou reject Thy servants in that which offereth no hurt to Thy sovereignty? Is that which is with Thee wasted or are the treasuries of Thy Kingdom annihilated? I conjure Thee, by Thy love to me forthwith to pour out upon us Thy rain-clouds of grace!" He spake and hardly had he made an end of speaking, when the heavens clouded over and there came a rain, as if the mouths of waterskins had been opened; and when we left the oratory, we were knee-deep in water,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that hardly had he spoken when the heavens clouded over and there came a rain, as if the mouths of waterskins had been opened. And when we left the oratory we were knee-deep in water, and we were lost in wonder at the black. So I accosted him and said to him, "Woe to thee, O black, art thou not ashamed of what thou saidst?" He turned to me and asked, "What said I?"; and I, "Thy saying to Allah:—By Thy love of me; and what giveth thee to know that He loveth thee?" Replied he, "Away from me, O thou distracted by the world from the care of thine own soul. Where was I, when He gave me strength to profess the unity of the Godhead and vouchsafed unto me the knowledge of Him? How deemest thou that He aided me thus except of His love to me?" adding, "Verily, His love to me is after the measure of my love to Him." Quoth I, "Tarry awhile [262] with me, so may Allah have mercy on thee!" But he said, "I am a chattel and the Book enjoineth me to obey my lesser master." So we followed him afar off, till we saw him enter the house of a slave-broker. Now the first half of the night was past and the last half was longsome upon us, so we went away; but next morning, we repaired to the slave-dealer and said to him, "Hast thou a lad to sell us for service?" He answered, "Yes, I have an hundred lads or so and they are all for sale." Then he showed us slave after slave, till he had shown us some seventy; but my friend was not amongst them, and the dealer said, "These are all I have." But, as we were going out from him we saw a ruinous hut behind his house and going in behold, we found the black standing there. I cried, "'Tis he, by the Lord of the Ka'abah!" and turning to the dealer, said to him, "Sell me yonder slave." Replied he, "O Abu Yahya, this is a pestilent unprofitable fellow, who hath no concern by night but weeping and by day but repentance." I rejoined, "It is for that I want him." So the dealer called him, and he came out, showing drowsiness. Quoth his master, "Take him at thine own price, so thou hold me free of all his faults." I bought him for twenty dinars and asked "What is his name?" and the dealer answered, "Maymún, the monkey;" and I took him by the hand and went out with him, intending to go home; but he turned to me and said, "O my lesser lord, why and wherefore didst thou buy me? By Allah, I am not fit for the service of God's creatures!" Replied I, "I bought thee that I might serve thee myself; and on my head be it." Asked he, "Why so?" and I answered, "Wast thou not in company with us yesterday in the place of prayer?" Quoth he, "And didst thou hear me?"; and quoth I,

"It was I accosted thee yesterday and spoke with thee." Thereupon he advanced till we came to a mosque, where he entered and prayed a two-bow prayer; after which he said, "O my God and my Lord and Master, the secret that was between me and Thee Thou hast discovered unto Thy creatures and hast brought me to shame before the worldling. How then shall life be sweet to me, now that other than Thou hath happened upon that which is between Thee and me? I conjure Thee to take my soul to Thee forthright."[471] So saying, he prostrated himself, and I awaited 263 awhile without seeing him raise his head; so I shook him and behold, he was indeed dead, the mercy of Almighty Allah be upon him! I laid him out stretching his arms and legs and looked at him, and lo! he was smiling. Moreover, whiteness had got the better of blackness on his brow, and his face was radiant with light like a young moon. As we wondered at his case, the door opened and a young man came in to us and said, "Peace be with you! May Allah make great our reward and yours for our brother Maymun! Here is his shroud: wrap him in it." So saying, he gave us two robes, never had we seen the like of them, and we shrouded him therein. And now his tomb is a place whither men resort to pray for rain and ask their requirements of Allah (be He extolled and exalted!); and how excellently well saith the poet on this theme:

The heart of Gnostic[472] homed in heavenly Garth ✿ Heaven decks, and Allah's porters aid afford.
Lo! here they drink old wine commingled with ✿ Tasním,[473] the wine of union with the Lord.
Safe is the secret 'twixt the Friend and them; ✿ Safe from all hearts but from that Heart adored.

And they recount another anecdote of

THE DEVOUT TRAY-MAKER AND HIS WIFE.

There was once, among the Children of Israel, a man of the worthiest, who was strenuous in the service of his Lord and abstained from things worldly and drave them away from his heart. He had a wife who was a helpmate meet for him and who was at all times obedient to him. They earned their living by making trays[474] and fans, whereat they wrought all through the 264 light hours; and, at nightfall, the man went out into the streets and highways seeking a buyer for what they had made. They were wont to fast continually by day[475] and one morning they arose, fasting, and worked at their craft till the light failed them, when the man went forth, according to custom, to find purchasers for his wares, and fared on till he came to the door of the house of a certain man of wealth, one of the sons of this world, high in rank and dignity. Now the tray-maker was fair of face and comely of form, and the wife of the master of the house saw him and fell in love with him and her heart inclined to him with exceeding inclination; so, her husband being absent, she called her handmaid and said to her, "Contrive to bring yonder man to us." Accordingly the maid went out to him and

called him and stopped him as though she would buy what he held in hand.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the maid-servant went out to the man and asked him, "Come in; my lady hath a mind to buy some of thy wares, after she hath tried them and looked at them." The man thought she spoke truly and, seeing no harm in this, entered and sat down as she bade him; and she shut the door upon him. Whereupon her mistress came out of her room and, taking him by the gaberdine,[476] drew him within and said, "How long shall I seek union of thee? Verily my patience is at an end on thine account. See now, the place is perfumed and provision prepared and the householder is absent this night, and I give to thee my person without reserve, I whose favours kings and captains and men of fortune have sought this long while, but I have regarded none of them." And she went 265 on talking thus to him, whilst he raised not his eyes from the ground, for shame before Allah Almighty and fear of the pains and penalties of His punishment; even as saith the poet:—

'Twixt me and riding many a noble dame, ✿ Was naught but shame which kept me chaste and pure:

My shame was cure to her; but haply were ✿ Shame to depart, she ne'er had known a cure.

The man strove to free himself from her, but could not; so he said to her, "I want one thing of thee." She asked, "What is that?": and he answered, "I wish for pure water and that I may carry it to the highest place of thy house and do somewhat therewith and cleanse myself of an impurity, which I may not disclose to thee." Quoth she, "The house is large and hath closets and corners and privies at command." But he replied, "I want nothing but to be at a height." So she said to her slave-girl, "Carry him up to the belvedere on the house-terrace." Accordingly the maid took him up to the very top and, giving him a vessel of water, went down and left him. Then he made the ablution and prayed a two-bow prayer; after which he looked at the ground, thinking to throw himself down, but seeing it afar off, feared to be dashed to pieces by the fall.[477] Then he bethought him of his disobedience to Allah, and the consequences of his sin; so it became a light matter to him to offer up his life and shed his blood; and he said, "O my God and my Lord, Thou seest that which is fallen on me; neither is my case hidden from Thee. Thou indeed over all things art Omnipotent and the tongue of my case reciteth and saith:"—

I show my heart and thoughts to Thee, and Thou ✿ Alone my secret's secrecy canst know.

If I address Thee fain I cry aloud; ✿ Or, if I'm mute, my signs for speech I show.

O Thou to whom no second be conjoined! ✿ A wretched lover seeks Thee in his woe.

I have a hope my thoughts as true confirm; ✿ And heart that fainteth as right well canst trow.

To lavish life is hardest thing that be, ✿ Yet easy an Thou bid me life forego;

But, an it be Thy will to save from stowre, ✿ Thou, O my Hope, to work this work hast power!

266 Then the man cast himself down from the belvedere; but Allah sent an angel who bore him up on his wings and brought him down to the ground, whole and without hurt or harm. Now when he found himself safe on the ground, he thanked and praised Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!) for His merciful protection of his person and his chastity; and he went straight to his wife who had long expected him, and he empty-handed. Then seeing him, she asked him why he had tarried and what was come of that he had taken with him and why he returned empty-handed; whereupon he told her of the temptation which had befallen him, and she said, "Alhamdolillah—praised be God—for delivering thee from seduction and intervening between thee and such calamity!" Then she added, "O man, the neighbours use to see us light our oven every night; and, if they see us fireless this night, they will know that we are destitute. Now it behoveth in gratitude to Allah, that we hide our destitution and conjoin the fast of this night to that of the past and continue it for the sake of Allah Almighty." So she rose and, filling the oven with wood, lighted it, to baffle the curiosity of her women-neighbours, reciting these couplets:—

Now I indeed will hide desire and all repine; ✿ And light up this my fire that neighbours see no sign:
Accept I what befalls by order of my Lord; ✿ Haply He too accept this humble act of mine.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after the goodwife had lit the fire to baffle the curiosity of her women-neighbours, she and her husband made the Wuzu-ablution and stood up to pray, when behold, one of the neighbours' wives came and asked leave to take a fire-brand from the oven. "Do what thou wilt with the oven," answered they; but, when she came to the fire, she cried out, saying, "Ho, such an one (to the tray-maker's wife) take up thy bread ere it burn!" Quoth the wife to her husband, "Hearest thou what she saith?" Quoth he, "Go 267 and look." So she went up to the oven, and behold, it was full of fine bread and white. She took up the scones and carried them to her husband, thanking Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!) for His abounding good and great bounty; and they ate of the bread and drank water and praised the Almighty. Then said the woman to her husband, "Come let us pray to Allah the Most Highest, so haply He may vouchsafe us what shall enable us to dispense with the weariness of working for daily bread and devote ourselves wholly to worshipping and obeying Him." The man rose in assent and prayed, whilst his wife said, "Amen," to his prayer, when the roof clove in sunder and down fell a ruby, which lit the house with its light. Hereat, they redoubled in praise and thanksgiving to Allah praying what the Almighty willed,[478] and rejoiced at the ruby with great joy. And the night being far spent, they lay down to sleep and the woman dreamt that she entered Paradise and saw therein many chairs ranged and stools set in rows. She asked what the seats were and it was answered her, "These are the chairs of the prophets and

those are the stools of the righteous and the pious." Quoth she, "Which is the stool of my husband such an one?"; and it was said to her, "It is this." So she looked and seeing a hole in its side asked, "What may be this hole?"; and the reply came, "It is the place of the ruby that dropped upon you from your house-roof." Thereupon she awoke, weeping and bemoaning the defect in her husband's stool among the seats of the Righteous; so she told him the dream and said to him, "Pray Allah, O man, that this ruby return to its place; for endurance of hunger and poverty during our few days here were easier than a hole in thy chair among the just in Paradise."[479] Accordingly, he prayed to his Lord, 268 and lo! the ruby flew up to the roof and away whilst they looked at it. And they ceased not from their poverty and their piety, till they went to the presence of Allah, to whom be Honour and Glory! And they also tell a tale of

AL-HAJJAJ AND THE PIOUS MAN.

Al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Sakafi had been long in pursuit of a certain man of the notables, and when at last he was brought before him, he said, "O enemy of Allah, He hath delivered thee over to me;" and cried, "Hale him to prison and lay him by the heels in heavy fetters and build a closet over him, that he may not come forth of it nor any go into him." So they bore him to jail and summoned the blacksmith with the irons; and every time the smith gave a stroke with his hammer, the prisoner raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Is not the whole Creation and the Empire thereof His?"[480] Then the gaolers built the cage[481] over him and left him therein, lorn and lone, whereupon longing and consternation entered into him and the tongue of his case recited in extempore verse:—

O Wish of wistful men, for Thee I yearn; ✿ My heart seeks grace of one no heart shall spurn.

Unhidden from thy sight is this my case; ✿ And for one glance of thee I pine and burn.

They jailed and tortured me with sorest pains:✿ Alas for lone one can no aid discern'!

269 But, albe lone, I find Thy name befriends ✿ And cheers, though sleep to eyes shall ne'er return:

An thou accept of me, I care for naught; ✿ And only Thou what's in my heart canst learn!

Now when night fell dark, the gaoler left his watchmen to guard him and went to his house; and on the morrow, when he came to the prison, he found the fetters lying on the ground and the prisoner gone; whereat he was affrighted and made sure of death. So he returned to his place and bade his family farewell, after which he took in his sleeve his shroud and the sweet herbs for his corpse, and went in to Al-Hajjáj. And as he stood before the presence, the Governor smelt the perfumes and asked, "What is that?" when the gaoler answered, "O my lord, it is I who have brought it." "And what moved thee to that?" enquired the Governor; whereupon he told him his case,—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the gaoler told his case to Al-Hajjaj, the Governor cried, "Woe to thee! Didst thou hear him say aught?" Answered the gaoler, "Yes! whilst the blacksmith was hammering his irons, he ceased not to look up heavenwards and say:—Is not the whole Creation and the Empire thereof His?" Rejoined Al-Hajjaj, "Dost thou not know that He, on whom he called in thy presence, delivered him in thine absence?" And the tongue of the case recited on this theme:—

O Lord, how many a grief from me hast driven ✿ Nor can I sit or stand without Thy hold:
How many many things I cannot count, ✿ Thou sav'st from many many and manifold!

And they also tell a tale of

THE BLACKSMITH WHO COULD HANDLE FIRE WITHOUT HURT.

It reached the ears of a certain pious man that there abode in such a town a blacksmith, who could put his hand into the fire and pull out the iron red-hot, without the flames doing him aught of hurt.[482] So he set out for the town in question and asked for the blacksmith; and, when the man was shown to him, he watched him at work and saw him do as had been reported to him. He waited till he had made an end of his day's work; then, going up to him, saluted him with the salam and said, "I would be thy guest this night." Replied the smith, "With gladness and goodly gree!" and carried him to his place, where they supped together and lay down to sleep. The guest watched, but saw no sign in his host of praying through the night or of special devoutness and said in his mind, "Haply he hideth himself from me." So he lodged with him a second and a third night, but found that he did not exceed the devotions prescribed by the law and custom of the Prophet and rose but little in the dark hours to pray. At last he said to him, "O my brother, I have heard of the gift with which Allah hath favoured thee and have seen the truth of it with mine eyes. Moreover, I have taken note of thine assiduity in religious exercises, but find in thee no such piety as distinguisheth those who work saintly miracles: whence, then, cometh this to thee?" "I will tell thee," answered the smith:—Know that I was once passionately enamoured of a slave-girl and ofttimes sued her for love-liesse, but could not prevail upon her, because she still held fast by her chastity. Presently there came a year of drought and hunger and hardship; food failed and there befel a sore famine. As I was sitting one day at home, somebody knocked at the door; so I went out and behold, she was standing there; and she said to me, "O my brother, I am sorely anhungered and I lift mine eyes to thee, beseeching thee to feed me for Allah's sake!" Quoth I, "Wottest thou not how I love thee and what I have suffered for thy sake? Now I will not give thee one bittock of bread except 271 thou yield thy person to me." Quoth she, "Death, but not disobedience to the Lord!" Then she went away and returned after two days

with the same prayer for food as before. I made her a like answer, and she entered and sat down in my house being nigh upon death. I set food before her, whereupon her eyes brimmed with tears and she cried, "Give me meat for the love of Allah, to whom belong Honour and Glory!" But I answered, "Not so, by Allah, except thou yield thyself to me." Quoth she, "Better is death to me than the wrath and wreak of Allah the Most Highest;" and she rose and left the food untouched——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the man set food before her, the woman said, "Give me meat for the love of Allah, to whom be Honour and Glory!" But I answered, "Not so, by Allah, except thou yield to me thy person." Quoth she, "Better is death than the wrath and wreak of Allah;" and she rose and left the food untouched and went away repeating these couplets:—

O Thou, the One, whose grace doth all the world embrace; ✿ Thine ears have heard, Thine eyes have seen my case!

Privation and distress have dealt me heavy blows; ✿ The woes that weary me no utterance can trace.

I am like one athirst who eyes the landscape's eye, ✿ Yet may not drink a draught of streams that rail and race.

My flesh would tempt me by the sight of savoury food ✿ Whose joys shall pass away and pangs maintain their place.

She then disappeared for two days, when she again came and knocked at the door; so I went out to her, and lo! hunger had taken away her voice; but, after a rest she said, "O my brother, I am worn out with want and know not what to do, for I cannot show my face to any man but to thee. Say, wilt thou feed me for the love of Allah Almighty?" But I answered, "Not so, except thou yield to me thy person." And she entered my house and sat down. Now I had no food ready; but, when the meat was dressed and I laid it in a saucer, behold, the grace of Almighty Allah entered into me and I said to myself, "Out on thee! This woman, weak of wit and faith, hath refrained from food till she can no 272 longer, for stress of hunger; and, while she refuseth time after time, thou canst not forbear from disobedience to the Lord!" And I said, "O my God, I repent to Thee of that which my flesh purposed!" Then I took the food and carrying it to her, said, "Eat, for no harm shall betide thee: this is for the love of Allah, to whom belong Honour and Glory!" Then she raised her eyes to heaven and said, "O my God, if this man say sooth, I pray Thee forbid fire to harm him in this world and the next, for Thou over all things art Omnipotent and Prevalent in answering the prayer of the penitent!" Then I left her and went to put out the fire in the brasier.[4831] Now the season was winter and the weather cold, and a live coal fell on my body: but by the decree of Allah (to whom be Honour and Glory!) I felt no pain and it became my conviction that her prayer had been answered. So I took the coal in

my hand, and it burnt me not; and going in to her, I said, "Be of good cheer, for Allah hath granted thy prayer!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the blacksmith continued:—So I went in to her and said, "Be of good cheer, for Allah hath granted thy prayer!" Then she dropped the morsel from her hand and said, "O my God, now that Thou hast shown me my desire of him and hast granted me my prayer for him, take Thou my soul, for Thou over all things art Almighty!" And straightway He took her soul to Him, the mercy of Allah be upon her! And the tongue of the case extemporised and spake on this theme:—

She prayed: the Lord of grace her prayer obeyed; ✿ And spared the sinner, who for sin had prayed:
He showed her all she prayed Him to grant; ✿ And Death (as prayed she) her portion made:
273 Unto his door she came and prayed for food, ✿ And sued his ruth for what her misery made:
He leant to error following his lusts, ✿ And hoped to enjoy her as her wants persuade;
But he knew little of what Allah willed; ✿ Nor was Repentance, though unsought, denayed.
Fate comes to him who flies from Fate, O Lord, ✿ And lot and daily bread by Thee are weighed.

And they also tell of

THE DEVOTEE TO WHOM ALLAH GAVE A CLOUD FOR SERVICE AND THE DEVOUT KING.

There was once, among the children of Israel, a man of the devout, for piety acclaimed and for continence and asceticism en-famed, whose prayers were ever granted and who by supplication obtained whatso he wanted; and he was a wanderer in the mountains and was used to pass the night in worship. Now Almighty Allah had subjected to him a cloud which travelled with him wherever he went, and poured on him its water-treasures in abundance that he might make his ablutions and drink. After a long time when things were thus, his fervour somewhat abated, whereupon Allah took the cloud away from him and ceased to answer his prayers. On this account, great was his grief and long was his woe, and he ceased not to regret the time of grace and the miracle vouchsafed to him and to lament and bewail and bemoan himself, till he saw in a dream one who said to him, "An thou wouldest have Allah restore to thee thy cloud, seek out a certain King, in such a town, and beg him to pray for thee: so will Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) give thee back thy cloud and

bespread it over thee by virtue of his pious prayers." And he began repeating these couplets:—

Wend to that pious prayerful Emir, ✿ Who can with gladness thy condition cheer;

An he pray Allah, thou shalt win thy wish; ✿ And heavy rain shall drop from welkin clear.

He stands all Kings above in potent worth; ✿ Nor to compare with him doth aught appear:

274 Near him thou soon shalt hap upon thy want, ✿ And see all joy and gladness draw thee near:

Then cut the wolds and wilds unfounted till ✿ The goal thou goest for anigh shalt speer!

So the hermit set out for the town named to him in the dream; and, coming thither after long travel, enquired for the King's palace which was duly shown to him. And behold, at the gate he found a slave-officer sitting on a great chair and clad in gorgeous gear; so he stood to him and saluted him; and he returned his salam and asked him, "What is thy business?" Answered the devotee, "I am a wronged man, and come to submit my case to the King." Quoth the officer, "Thou hast no access to him this day; for he hath appointed unto petitioners and enquirers one day in every seven" (naming the day), "on which they may go in to him; so wend thy ways in welfare till then." The hermit was vexed with the King for thus veiling himself from the folk and said in thought, "How shall this man be a saint of the saints of Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!) and he on this wise?" Then he went away and awaited the appointed day. Now (quoth he) when it came, I repaired to the palace, where I found a great number of folk at the gate, expecting admission; and I stood with them, till there came out a Wazir robed in gorgeous raiment and attended by guards and slaves, who said, "Let those, who have petitions to present, enter." So I entered with the rest and found the King seated facing his officers and grandees who were ranged according to their several ranks and degrees. The Wazir took up his post and brought forward the petitioners, one by one, till it came to my turn, when the King looked on me and said, "Welcome to the 'Lord of the Cloud'! Sit thee down till I make leisure for thee." I was confounded at his words and confessed his dignity and superiority; and, when the King had answered the petitioners and had made an end with them, he rose and dismissed his Wazirs and Grandees; then, taking my hand he led me to the door of the private palace, where we found a black slave, splendidly arrayed, with helm on head, and on his right hand and his left, bows and coats of mail. He rose to the King; and, hastening to obey his orders and forestall his wishes, opened the door. We went in, hand in hand, till we came to a low wicket, which the King himself opened and led me into a ruinous place of frightful desolation and thence passed into a chamber, wherein was naught but a prayer-carpet, an ewer for ablution and some mats of 275 palm-leaves. Here the King doffed his royal robes and donned a coarse gown of white wool and a conical bonnet of felt. Then he sat down and making me sit, called out to his wife, "Ho, such an one!" and she answered from within saying, "Here am I." Quoth he, "Knowest thou who is our guest to-day?" Replied she, "Yes, it is the 'Lord of the Cloud.'" The King said, "Come forth: it mattereth not for him." And

behold, there entered a woman, as she were a vision, with a face that beamed like the new moon; and she wore a gown and veil of wool.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King called to his wife, she came forth from the inner room; and her face beamed like the new moon; and she wore a gown and a veil of wool. Then said the King, "O my brother, dost thou desire to hear our story or that we should pray for thee and dismiss thee?" Answered the hermit; "Nay, I wish to hear the tale of you twain, for that to me were preferable." Said the King, "My forefathers handed down the throne, one to the other, and it descended from great one to great one, in unbroken succession, till the last died and it came to me. Now Allah had made this hateful to me, for I would fain have gone awandering over earth and left the folk to their own affairs; but I feared lest they should fall into confusion and anarchy and misgovernment so as to swerve from divine law, and the union of the Faith be broken up. Wherefore, abandoning my own plans, I took the kingship and appointed to every head of them a regular stipend; and donned the royal robes; and posted slave-officers at the doors, as a terror to the dishonest and for the defence of honest folk and the maintenance of law and limitations. Now when free of this, I entered this place and, doffing my royal habit, donned these clothes thou seest; and this my cousin, the daughter of my father's brother, hath agreed with me to renounce the world and helpeth me to serve the Lord. So we are wont to weave these palm-leaves and earn, during the day, a wherewithal to break our fast at nightfall; and we have lived on this wise nigh upon forty years. Abide thou with us (so Allah have mercy on thee!) till we sell our mats; and thou shalt sup and sleep with us this night and on the morrow wend thy ways with that thou wishest, [276] Inshallah!" So he tarried with them till the end of the day, when there came a boy five years old who took the mats they had made and carrying them to the market, sold them for a carat;[4841] and with this bought bread and beans and returned with them to the King. The hermit broke his fast and lay down to sleep with them; but in the middle of the night, they both arose and fell to praying and weeping. When daybreak was near, the King said, "O my God, this Thy servant beseecheth Thee to return him his cloud; and to do this Thou art able; so, O my God, let him see his prayer granted and restore him his cloud." The Queen amen'd to his orisons and behold, the cloud grew up in the sky; whereupon the King gave the hermit joy and the man took leave of them and went away, the cloud companying him as of old. And whatsoever he required of Allah after this, in the names of the pious King and Queen, He granted it without fail and the man made thereon these couplets:—

My Lord hath servants fain of piety; ✿ Hearts in the Wisdom-garden ranging free:

Their bodies' lusts at peace, and motionless ✿ For breasts that bide in purest secresy.
Thou seest all silent, awesome of their Lord, ✿ For hidden things unseen and seen they see.

And they tell a tale of

THE MOSLEM CHAMPION AND THE CHRISTIAN DAMSEL.

The Commander of the Faithful, Omar bin al-Khattáb (whom Allah accept!), once levied for holy war an army of Moslems, to encounter the foe before Damascus, and they laid close siege to one of the Christians' strongholds. Now there were amongst the Moslems two men, brothers, whom Allah had gifted with fire and bold daring against the enemy; so that the commander of the 277 besieged fortress said to his chiefs and braves, "Were but yonder two Moslems ta'en or slain, I would warrant you against the rest of their strain." Wherefore they left not to set for them all manner of toils and snares and ceased not to manœuvre and lie in wait and ambush for them, till they took one of them prisoner and slew the other who died a martyr. They carried the captive to the Captain of the fort, who looked at him and said, "Verily, to kill this man were indeed a pity; but his return to the Moslem would be a calamity."—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the enemy carried their Moslem captive before the Captain of the fort, the Christian looked at him and said, "Verily to kill this man were a pity indeed; but his return to the Moslem would be a calamity. Oh that he might be brought to embrace the Nazarene Faith and be to us an aid and an arm!" Quoth one of his Patrician Knights, "O Emir, I will tempt him to abjure his faith and on this wise: we know that the Arabs are much addicted to women, and I have a daughter, a perfect beauty, whom when he sees, he will be seduced by her." Quoth the Captain, "I give him into thy charge." So he carried him to his place and clad his daughter in raiment, such as added to her beauty and loveliness. Then he brought the Moslem into the room and set before him food and made the fair girl stand in his presence, as she were a handmaid obedient to her lord and awaiting his orders that she might do his bidding. When the Moslem saw the evil sent down upon him, he commended himself to Allah Almighty and closing his eyes, applied himself to worship and to reciting the Koran. Now he had a pleasant voice and a piercing wit; and the Nazarene damsel presently loved him with passionate love and pined for him with extreme repine. This lasted seven days, at the end of which she said to herself, "Would to Heaven he would admit me into the Faith of Al-Islam!" And the tongue of her case recited these couplets:—

Wilt turn thy face from heart that's all thine own, ✿ This heart thy ransom and this soul thy wone?
278 I'm ready home and kin to quit for aye, ✿ And every Faith for that of sword[485] disown:

I testify that Allah hath no mate: ✿ This proof is stablished and this truth is known.

Haply shall deign He union grant with one ✿ Averse, and hearten heart love-overthrown;

For ofttimes door erst shut, is opened wide, ✿ And after evil case all good is shown.

At last her patience failed her and her breast was straitened and she threw herself on the ground before him, saying, "I conjure thee by thy Faith, that thou give ear to my words!" Asked he, "What are they?" and she answered, "Expound unto me Al-Islam." So he expounded to her the tenets of the Faith, and she became a Moslemah, after which she was circumcised[4861] and he taught her to 279 pray. Then said she to him, "O my brother, I did but embrace Al-Islam for thy sake and to win thy favours." Quoth he, "The law of Al-Islam forbiddeth sexual commerce save after a marriage before two legal witnesses, and a dowry and a guardian are also requisite. Now I know not where to find witnesses or friend or parapherne; but, an thou can contrive to bring us out of this place, I may hope to make the land of Al-Islam, and pledge myself to thee that none other than thou in all Al-Islam shall be wife to me." Answered she, "I will manage that"; and, calling her father and mother, said to them, "Indeed this Moslem's heart is softened and he longeth to enter the faith, so I will grant him that which he desireth of my person; but he saith:—It befitteth me not to do this in a town where my brother was slain. Could I but get outside it my heart would be solaced and I would do that which is wanted of me. Now there is no harm in letting me go forth with him to another town, and I will be a surety to you both and to the Emir for that which ye wish of him." Therefore her father went to their Captain and told him this, whereat he joyed with exceeding joy and bade him carry them forth to a village that she named. So they went out and made the village where they abode the rest of their day, and when night fell, they got ready for the march and went their way, even as saith the poet:—

"The time of parting," cry they, "draweth nigh": ✿ "How oft this parting-threat?" I but reply:

I've naught to do but cross the wild and wold ✿ And, mile by mile, o'er fount-less wastes to fly,

If the belovèd seek another land ✿ Sons of the road, whereso they wend, wend I.

I make desire direct me to their side, ✿ The guide to show me where the way doth lie.

And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the prisoner and the lady abode in the village the rest of their day and, when night fell, made ready for the march and went upon their way; and travelled all night without stay or delay. The 280 young Moslem, mounting a swift blood-horse and taking up the maiden behind him, ceased not devouring the ground till it was bright morning, when he turned aside with her from the highway and, alighting, they made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed the dawn-prayer. Now as they were thus engaged behold, they heard the clank of swords and

clink of bridles and men's voices and tramp of horse; whereupon he said to her, "Ho, such an one, the Nazarenes are after us! What shall we do?: the horse is so jaded and broken down that he cannot stir another step." Exclaimed she, "Woe to thee! art thou then afraid and affrighted?" "Yes," answered he; and she said, "What didst thou tell me of the power of thy Lord and His readiness to succour those who succour seek? Come, let us humble ourselves before Him and beseech Him: haply He shall grant us His succour and endue us with His grace, extolled and exalted be He!" Quoth he, "By Allah, thou sayst well!" So they began humbling themselves and supplicating Almighty Allah and he recited these couplets:—

Indeed I hourly need thy choicest aid, ✿ And should, though crown were placed upon my head:
Thou art my chiefest want, and if my hand ✿ Won what it wisheth, all my wants were sped.
Thou hast not anything withholdest Thou; ✿ Like pouring rain Thy grace is showerèd:
I'm shut therefrom by sins of me, yet Thou, ✿ O Clement, deignest pardon-light to shed.
O Care-Dispeller, deign dispel my grief! ✿ None can, save Thou, dispel a grief so dread.

Whilst he was praying and she was saying, "Amen," and the thunder of horse-tramp nearing them, lo! the brave heard the voice of his dead brother, the martyr, speaking and saying, "O my brother, fear not, nor grieve! for the host whose approach thou hearest is the host of Allah and his Angels, whom He hath sent to serve as witnesses to your marriage. Of a truth Allah hath made His Angels glorify you and He bestoweth on you the meed of the meritorious and the martyrs; and He hath rolled up the earth for you as it were a rug so that, by morning, you will be in the mountains of Al-Medinah. And thou, when thou foregatherest with Omar bin al-Khattab (of whom Allah accept!) give him my salutation and say to him:—Allah abundantly requite thee for Al-Islam, because thou hast counselled faithfully and hast striven diligently." Thereupon the Angels lifted up their voices in salutation 281 to him and his bride, saying, "Verily, Almighty Allah appointed her in marriage to thee two thousand years before the creation of your father Adam (with whom be peace evermore!)." Then joy and gladness and peace and happiness came upon the twain; confidence was confirmed and established was the guidance of the pious pair. So when dawn appeared, they prayed the accustomed prayer and fared forward. Now it was the wont of Omar son of Al-Khattab (Allah accept him!) to rise for morning-prayer in the darkness before dawn and at times he would stand in the prayer-niche with two men behind him, and begin reciting the Chapter entitled "Cattle"[487] or that entitled Women;[488] whereupon the sleeper awoke and he who was making his Wuzu-ablution accomplished it and he who was afar came to prayer; nor had he made an end of the first bow, ere the mosque was full of folk; then he would pray his second bow quickly, repeating a short chapter. But, on that morning he hurried over both first and second inclinations, repeating in each a short chapter; then, after the concluding salutation, turning to his companions, he said to them, "Come, let us fare forth to meet the bride and bridegroom"; at which they wondered, not understanding his words. But

he went out and they followed him, till they came to the gate of the city, where they met the young Moslem who, when the day broke and the standards of Al-Medinah appeared to him, had pushed forward for the gate closely followed by his bride. There he was met by Omar who bade make a marriage-feast; and the Moslems came and ate. Then the young Moslem went in unto his bride and Almighty Allah vouchsafed him children,——And Shahrazad, perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Omar (on whom be peace!) bade make a marriage-feast; and the Moslems came and ate. Then the young Moslem went in unto his bride and Almighty Allah vouchsafed him children, who fought in the Lord's way and preserved genealogies, for they gloried therein. And how excellent is what is said on such theme:—

282 I saw thee weep before the gates and 'plain, ✿ Whilst only curious wight reply would deign:
Hath eye bewitcht thee, or hath evil lot ✿ 'Twixt thee and door of friend set bar of bane?
Wake up this day, O wretch, persist in prayer, ✿ Repent as wont repent departed men.
Haply shall wash thy sins Forgiveness-showers; ✿ And on thine erring head some ruth shall rain:
And prisoner shall escape despite his bonds; ✿ And slave from thraldom freedom shall attain.

And they ceased not to be in all solace and delight of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies. And a tale is told by Sídi Ibrahim bin Al-Khawwás[489] (on whom be the mercy of Allah!) concerning himself and

THE CHRISTIAN KING'S DAUGHTER AND THE MOSLEM.

My spirit urged me, once upon a time, to go forth into the country of the Infidels; and I strove with it and struggled to put away from me this inclination; but it would not be rejected. So I fared forth and journeyed about the land of the Unbelievers and traversed it in all its parts; for divine grace enveloped me and heavenly protection encompassed me, so that I met not a single Nazarene but he turned away his eyes and drew off from me, till I came to a certain great city at whose gate I found a gathering of black slaves, clad in armour and bearing iron maces in their hands. When they saw me, they rose to their feet and asked me, "Art thou a leach?"; and I answered, "Yes." Quoth they, "Come speak to our King," and carried me before their ruler, who was a handsome personage of majestic presence. When I stood before him, he looked at me and said, "Art a physician, thou?" "Yes," quoth I; and quoth he to his officers, "Carry him to her, and acquaint him with the condition 283 before he enter." So they took me out and said to me, "Know that the King hath a daughter, and she is stricken with a

sore disease, which no doctor hath been able to cure: and no leach goeth in to her and treateth, without healing her, but the King putteth him to death. So bethink thee what thou seest fitting to do." I replied, "The King drove me to her; so carry me to her." Thereupon they brought me to her door and knocked; and behold, I heard her cry out from within, saying, "Admit to me the physician, lord of the wondrous secret!" And she began reciting:

Open the door! the leach now draweth near; ✿ And in my soul a wondrous secret speer:
How many of the near far distant are![490] ✿ How many distant far are nearest near!
I was in strangerhood amidst you all: ✿ But willed the Truth[491] my solace should appear.
Joined us the potent bonds of Faith and Creed; ✿ We met as dearest fere greets dearest fere:
He sued for interview whenas pursued ✿ The spy, and blamed us envy's jibe and jeer:
Then leave your chiding and from blame desist, ✿ For fie upon you! not a word I'll hear.
I care for naught that disappears and fleets; ✿ My care's for Things nor fleet nor disappear.

And lo! a Shaykh, a very old man, opened the door in haste and said to me, "Enter." So I entered and found myself in a chamber strewn with sweet-scented herbs and with a curtain drawn across one corner, from behind which came a sound of groaning and grame, weak as from an emaciated frame. I sat down before the curtain and was about to offer my salam when I bethought me of his words (whom Allah save and assain!), "Accost not a Jew nor a Christian with the salam salutation;[492] and, when ye meet them in 284 the way, constrain them to the straitest part thereof." So I withheld my salutation, but she cried out from behind the curtain, saying, "Where is the salutation of Unity and Indivisibility, O Khawwás?" I was astonished at her speech and asked, "How knowest thou me?"; whereto she answered, "When the heart and thoughts are whole, the tongue speaketh eloquently from the secret recesses of the soul. I begged Him yesterday to send me one of His saints, at whose hands I might have deliverance, and behold, it was cried to me from the dark places of my house:—Grieve not; for we soon will send thee Ibrahim the Basket-maker." Then I asked her, "What of thee?" and she answered, "It is now four years since there appeared to me the Manifest Truth, and He is the Relator and the Ally, and the Uniter and the Sitter-by; whereupon my folk looked askance upon me with an evil eye and taxed me with insanity and suspected me of depravity, and there came not in to me doctor but terrified me, nor visitor but confounded me." Quoth I, "And who led thee to the knowledge of what thou wottest?" Quoth she, "The manifest signs and visible portents of Allah; and, when the path is patent to thee, thou espiest with thine own eyes both proof and prover." Now whilst we were talking, behold, in came the old man appointed to guard her and said, "What doth thy doctor?"; and she replied, "He knoweth the hurt and hath hit upon the healing."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Shaykh, her guardian, went in to her he said, "What doth thy doctor?"; and she replied, "He knoweth the hurt and hath hit upon the healing." Hereupon he manifested joy and gladness and accosted me with a cheerful countenance, then went and told the King, who enjoined to treat me with all honour and regard. So I visited her daily for seven days, at the end of which time she said to me, "O Abú Ishák, when shall be our flight to the land of Al-Islam?" "How canst thou go forth," replied I, "and who would dare to aid thee?" Rejoined she, "He who sent thee to me, driving thee as it were;" and I observed, "Thou sayest sooth." So when the morrow dawned, we fared forth by the city-gate and all eyes were veiled from us, by commandment of Him who when 285 He desireth aught, saith to it, "Be," and it becometh;[4931] so that I journeyed with her in safety to Meccah, where she made a home hard by the Holy House of Allah and lived seven years; till the appointed day of her death. The earth of Meccah was her tomb, and never saw I any more steadfast in prayer and fasting than she, Allah send down upon her His mercies and have compassion on him who saith:—

When they to me had brought the leach (and surely showed ✿ The signs of flowing tears and pining malady),
The face-veil he withdrew from me, and 'neath it naught ✿ Save breath of one unsouled, unbodied, could he see.
Quoth he, "This be a sickness Love alone shall cure; ✿ Love hath a secret from all guess of man wide free."
Quoth they, "An folk ignore what here there be with him ✿ Nature of ill and eke its symptomology,"
How then shall medicine work a cure? At this quoth I ✿ "Leave me alone; I have no guessing specialty."

And they tell a tale of

THE PROPHET AND THE JUSTICE OF PROVIDENCE.

A certain Prophet[4941] made his home for worship on a lofty mountain, at whose foot was a spring of running water, and he was wont to sit by day on the summit, that no man might see him, calling upon the name of Allah the Most Highest and watching those who frequented the spring. One day, as he sat looking upon the fountain, behold, he espied a horseman who came up and dismounted thereby and taking a bag from his neck, set it down beside him, after which he drank of the water and rested awhile, then he rode away, leaving behind him the bag which contained gold pieces. Presently up came another man to drink of the spring, who saw 286 the bag and finding it full of money took it up; then, after satisfying his thirst, he made off with it in safety. A little after came a wood-cutter wight with a heavy load of fuel on his back, and sat down by the spring to drink, when lo! back came the first horseman in great trouble and asked him, "Where is the bag which was here?" and when he

answered, “I know nothing of it,” the rider drew his sword and smote him and slew him. Then he searched his clothes, but found naught; so he left him and wended his ways. Now when the Prophet saw this, he said, “O Lord, one man hath taken a thousand dinars and another man hath been slain unjustly.” But Allah answered him, saying, “Busy thyself with thy devotions, for the ordinance of the universe is none of thine affair. The father of this horseman had violently despoiled of a thousand dinars the father of the second horseman; so I gave the son possession of his sire’s money. As for the wood-cutter, he had slain the horseman’s father, wherefore I enabled the son to obtain retribution for himself.” Then cried the Prophet, “There is none other god than Thou! Glory be to Thee only! Verily, Thou art the Knower of Secrets.”[4951]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that when the Prophet was bidden by inspiration of Allah to busy himself with his devotions and learned the truth of the case, he cried, “There is none other god but Thou! Glory be to Thee only! Verily, Thou and Thou alone wottest hidden things.” Furthermore, one of the poets hath made these verses on the matter:—

The Prophet saw whatever eyes could see, ✿ And fain of other things enquirèd he;
And, when his eyes saw things misunderstood, ✿ Quoth he, “O Lord, this slain from sin was free.
This one hath won him wealth withouten work; ✿ Albe appeared he garbed in penury.
And that in joy of life was slain, although ✿ O man’s Creator free of sin he be.”
God answered “‘Twas his father’s good thou saw’st ✿ Him take; by heirship not by roguery;
287 Yon woodman too that horseman’s sire had slain; ✿ Whose son avenged him with just victory:
Put off, O slave of Me, this thought for I ✿ In men have set mysterious secrecy!
Bow to Our Law and humble thee, and learn ✿ For good and evil issues Our decree.”[4961]

And a certain pious man hath told us the tale of

THE FERRYMAN OF THE NILE AND THE HERMIT.

I was once a ferryman on the Nile and used to ply between the eastern and the western banks. Now one day, as I sat in my boat, there came up to me an old man of a bright and beaming countenance, who saluted me and I returned his greeting; and he said to me, “Wilt thou ferry me over for the love of Allah Almighty?” I answered, “Yes,” and he continued, “Wilt thou moreover give me food for Allah’s sake?”; to which again I answered, “With all my heart.” So he entered the boat and I rowed him over to the eastern side, remarking that he was clad in a patched gown and carried a gourd-bottle and a staff. When he was about to land, he said to me, “I desire to lay on thee a heavy

trust." Quoth I, "What is it?" Quoth he, "It hath been revealed to me that my end is nearhand and that to-morrow about noon thou wilt come and find me dead under yonder tree. Wash me and wrap me in the shroud thou wilt see under my head and after thou hast prayed over me, bury me in this sandy ground and take my gown and gourd and staff, which do thou deliver to one who shall come and demand them of thee." I marvelled at his words, and I slept there. On the morrow I awaited till noon the event he had announced, and then I forgot what he had said till near the hour of afternoon-prayer, when I remembered it and hastening to the appointed place, found him under the tree, dead, with a new shroud under his head, exhaling a fragrance of musk. So I washed him and shrouded him and prayed over him, then dug a hole in the sand and buried him, after I had taken his ragged gown and bottle and staff, with which I crossed the Nile 288 to the western side and there nighted. As soon as morning dawned and the city gate opened, I sighted a young man known to me as a loose fellow, clad in fine clothes and his hands stained with Henna, who said to me, "Art thou not such an one?" "Yes," answered I; and he said, "Give me the trust." Quoth I, "What is that?" Quoth he, "The gown, the gourd and the staff." I asked him, "Who told thee of them?" and he answered, "I know nothing save that I spent yesternight at the wedding of one of my friends singing and carousing till daylight, when I lay me down to sleep and take my rest; and behold, there stood by me a personage who said, "Verily Allah Almighty hath taken such a saint to Himself and hath appointed thee to fill his place; so go thou to a certain person (naming the ferryman), and take of him the dead man's gown and bottle and staff, for he left them with him for thee."" So I brought them out and gave them to him; whereupon he doffed his clothes and, donning the gown, went his way and left me.[497] And when the glooms closed around me, I fell a-weeping; but, that night, while sleeping I saw the Lord of Holiness (glorified and exalted be He!) in a dream saying, "O my servant, is it grievous to thee that I have granted to one of My servants to return to Me? Indeed, this is of My bounty, that I vouchsafe to whom I will, for I over all things am Almighty." So I repeated these couplets:—

Lover with lovèd[498] loseth will and aim; ✿ All choice (an couldst thou know) were sinful shame.

Or grant He favour and with union grace, ✿ Or from thee turn away, He hath no blame.

An from such turning thou no joy enjoy ✿ Depart! the place for thee no place became.

Or canst His near discern not from His far? ✿ Then Love's in vain and thou'rt a-rear and lame.

If pine for Thee afflict my sprite, or men ✿ Hale me to death, the rein Thy hand shall claim!

289 So turn Thee to or fro, to me 'tis one; ✿ What Thou ordainest none shall dare defame:

My love hath naught of aim but Thine approof ✿ And if Thou say we part I say the same.

And of the tales they tell is one concerning

THE ISLAND KING AND THE PIOUS ISRAELITE.

There was once a notable of the Children of Israel, a man of wealth who had a pious and blessed son. When his last hour drew nigh, his son sat down at his head and said to him, "O my lord, give me an injunction." Quoth the father, "O dear son, I charge thee, swear not by Allah or truly or falsely." Then he died and certain lewd fellows of the Children of Israel heard of the charge he had laid on his son and began coming to the latter and saying, "Thy father had such and such monies of mine, and thou knowest it; so give me what was entrusted to him or else make oath that there was no trust." The good son would not disobey his sire's injunction, so gave them all they claimed; and they ceased not to deal thus with him, till his wealth was spent and he fell into straitest predicament. Now the young man had a pious and blessed wife, who had borne him two little sons; so he said to her, "The folk have multiplied their demands on me and, while I had the wherewithal to free myself of debt, I rendered it freely; but naught is now left us, and if others make demands upon me, we shall be in absolute distress, I and thou; our best way were to save ourselves by fleeing to some place, where none knoweth us, and earn our bread among the lower of the folk." Accordingly, he took ship with her and his two children, knowing not whither he should wend; but, "When Allah judgeth, there is none to reverse His judgment;"[499] and quoth the tongue of the case:—

O flier from thy home when foes affright! ✿ Whom led to weal and happiness such flight,
Grudge not this exile when he flees abroad ✿ Where he on wealth and welfare may alight.
An pearls for ever did abide in shell, ✿ The kingly crown they ne'er had deckt and dight.

290 The ship was wrecked, yet the man saved himself on a plank and his wife and children also saved themselves, but on other planks. The waves separated them and the wife was cast up in one country and one of the boys in another. The second son was picked up by a ship, and the surges threw the father on a desert island, where he landed and made the Wuzu-ablution. Then he called the prayer-call——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the man landed upon the island, he made the Wuzu-ablution to free himself from the impurities of the sea and called the call to prayer and stood up to his devotions, when, behold, there came forth of the sea creatures of various kinds and prayed with him. When he had finished, he went up to a tree and stayed his hunger with its fruits; after which he found a spring of water and drank thereof and praised Allah, to whom be honour and glory! He abode thus three days and whenever he stood up to pray, the sea-creatures came out and prayed in the same manner as he prayed. Now after the third day, he heard a voice

crying aloud and saying, “O thou just man, and pious, who didst so honour thy father and revere the decrees of thy Lord, grieve not, for Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) shall restore to thee all which left thy hand. In this isle are hoards and monies and things of price which the Almighty willeth thou shalt inherit, and they are in such a part of this place. So bring thou them to light; and verily, we will send ships unto thee; and do thou bestow charity on the folk and bid them to thee.” So he sought out that place, and the Lord discovered to him the treasures in question. Then ships began resorting to him, and he gave abundant largesse to the crews, saying to them, “Be sure ye direct the folk unto me and I will give them such and such a thing and appoint to them this and that.” Accordingly, there came folk from all parts and places, nor had ten years passed over him ere the island was peopled and the man became its King.[500] No one came to him but he entreated him with munificence, and 291 his name was noised abroad, throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Now his elder son had fallen into the hands of a man who reared him and taught him polite accomplishments; and, in like manner, the younger was adopted by one who gave him a good education and brought him up in the ways of merchants. The wife also happened upon a trader who entrusted to her his property and made a covenant with her that he would not deal dishonestly by her, but would aid her to obey Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!); and he used to make her the companion of his voyages and his travels. Now the elder son heard the report of the King and resolved to visit him, without knowing what he was; so he went to him and was well received by the King, who made him his secretary. Presently the other son heard of the King’s piety and justice and was also taken into his service as a steward. Then the brothers abode awhile, neither knowing the other, till it chanced that the merchant, in whose home was their mother, also hearing of the King’s righteous and generous dealing with the lieges, freighted a ship with rich stuffs and other excellent produce of the land, and taking the woman with him, set sail for the island. He made it in due course and landing, presented himself with his gift before the King; who rejoiced therein with exceeding joy and ordered him a splendid return-present. Now, there were, among the gifts, certain aromatic roots of which he would have the merchant acquaint him with the names and uses; so he said to him, “Abide with us this night.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King said, “Abide with us this night,” the merchant replied, “We have in the ship one to whom I have promised to entrust the care of her to none save myself; and the same is a holy woman whose prayers have brought me weal and I have felt the blessing of her counsels.” Rejoined the King, “I will send her some trusty men, who shall pass the night in the ship and guard her and all that is with her.” The merchant agreed to this and abode with the King, who called his secretary and steward and said to them, “Go and pass

the night in this man's ship and keep it safe, Inshallah!" So they went up into the ship and seating themselves, this on the [292]poop and that on the bow, passed a part of the night in repeating the names of Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!). Then quoth one to the other, "Ho, such an one! The King bade us keep watch and I fear lest sleep overtake us; so, come, let us discourse of stories of fortune and of the good we have seen and the trials of life." Quoth the other, "O my brother, as for my trials Fate parted me from my mother and a brother of mine, whose name was even as thine; and the cause of our parting was this. My father took ship with us from such a place, and the winds rose against us and were contrary, so that the ship was wrecked and Allah broke our fair companionship." Hearing this the first asked, "What was the name of thy mother, O my brother?"; and the second answered, "So and so." Said the elder, "And of thy father?"; said the younger, "So and so." Thereat brother threw himself upon brother saying, "By Allah, thou art my very brother!" And each fell to telling the other what had befallen him in his youth, whilst the mother heard all they said, but held her peace and in patience possessed her soul. Now when it was morning, one said to the other, "Come, brother, let us go to my lodging and talk there;" and the other said, "'Tis well." So they went away and presently, the merchant came back and finding the woman in great trouble, said to her, "What hath befallen thee and why this concern?" Quoth she, "Thou sentest to me yesternight men who tempted me to evil, and I have been in sore annoy with them." At this, he was wroth and, repairing to the King, reported the conduct of his two trusty wights. The King summoned the twain forthwith, as he loved them for their fidelity and piety; and, sending for the woman, that he might hear from her own lips what she had to say against them, thus bespake her, "O woman, what hath betided thee from these two men in whom I trust?" She replied, "O King, I conjure thee by the Almighty, the Bountiful One, the Lord of the Empyrean, bid them repeat the words they spoke yesternight." So he said to them, "Say what ye said and conceal naught thereof." Accordingly, they repeated their talk, and lo! the King rising from his throne, gave a great cry and threw himself upon them, embracing them and saying, "By Allah, ye are my very sons!" Therewith the woman unveiled her face and said, "And by Allah, I am their very mother." So they were united and abode in all solace of life and its delight till death parted them; and so glory be to Him who delivereth His servant when he resorteth to Him, and disappointeth not his hope in Him and his trust! And how well saith the poet on the subject:—

[293] Each thing of things hath his appointed tide ✿ When 'tis, O brother, granted or denied.

Repine not an affliction hit thee hard; ✿ For woe and welfare aye conjoint abide:

How oft shall woman see all griefs surround ✿ Yet feel a joyance thrill what lies inside!

How many a wretch, on whom the eyes of folk ✿ Look down, shall grace exalt to pomp and pride!

This man is one long suffering grief and woe; ✿ Whom change and chance of Time hath sorely tried:

The World divided from what held he dearest, ✿ After long union scattered far and wide;

But deigned his Lord unite them all again, ✿ And in the Lord is every good descried.
Glory to Him whose Providence rules all ✿ Living, as surest proofs for us decide.
Near is the Near One; but no wisdom clearer ✿ Shows him, nor distant way-fare brings Him nearer.

And this tale is told of

ABU AL-HASAN AND ABU JA'AFAR THE LEPER.[501]

I had been many times to Meccah (Allah increase its honour!) and the folk used to follow me for my knowledge of the road and remembrance of the water-stations. It happened one year that I was minded to make the pilgrimage to the Holy House and visitation of the tomb of His Prophet (on whom be blessing and peace!), and I said in myself, "I well know the way and will fare alone." So I set out and journeyed till I came to Al-Kadisíyah[502] and, 294 entering the mosque there, saw a man suffering from black leprosy seated in the prayer-niche. Quoth he on seeing me, "O Abu al-Hasan, I crave thy company to Meccah." Quoth I to myself, "I fled from all my companions, and how shall I company with lepers?" So I said to him, "I will bear no man company"; and he was silent at my words. Next day I walked on alone, till I came to Al-Akabah,[503] where I entered the mosque and found the leper seated in the prayer-niche. So I said to myself, "Glory be to Allah! how hath this fellow preceded me hither?" But he raised his head to me and said with a smile, "O Abu al-Hasan, He doth for the weak that which surpriseth the strong!" I passed that night confounded at what I had seen; and, as soon as morning dawned, set out again by myself; but when I came to Arafat[504] and entered the mosque, behold, there was the leper seated in the niche! So I threw myself upon him and kissing his feet said, "O my lord, I crave thy company." But he answered, "This may in no way be." Then I began weeping and wailing at the loss of his converse, when he said, "Spare thy tears which will avail thee naught!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu al-Hasan continued:—Now when I saw the leper-man seated in the prayer-niche, I threw myself upon him and said, "O my lord, I crave thy company;" and fell to kissing his feet. But he answered, "This may in no way be!" Then I began weeping and wailing at the loss of his company when he said, "Spare thy tears which will avail thee naught!"; and he recited these couplets:—

Why dost thou weep when I depart and thou didst parting claim; ✿ And cravest union when we ne'er shall reunite the same?

Thou lookedest on nothing save my weakness and disease; ✿ And saidst "Nor goes nor comes, or night or day, this sickly frame."

295 Seest not how Allah (glorified His glory ever be!) ✿ Deigneth to grant His slave's petition wherewithal he came.

If I, to eyes of men be that and only that they see, ✿ And this my body show itself so full of grief and grame,

And have I naught of food that shall supply me to the place ✿ Where crowds unto my Lord resort impelled by single aim,

I have a high Creating Lord whose mercies aye are hid; ✿ A Lord who hath none equal and no fear is known to Him.

So fare thee safe and leave me lone in strangerhood to wone ✿ For He, the only One, consoles my loneliness so lone.

Accordingly, I left him; but every station I came to, I found he had foregone me, till I reached Al-Medinah, where I lost sight of him and could hear no tidings of him. Here I met Abu Yazíd al-Bustámi and Abu Bakr al-Shibli and a number of other Shaykhs and learned men, to whom with many complaints, I told my case and they said, "Heaven forbid that thou shouldst gain his company after this! He was Abu Ja'afar the leper, in whose name folk at all times pray for rain and by whose blessing-prayers their end attain." When I heard their words, my desire for his company redoubled and I implored the Almighty to reunite me with him. Whilst I was standing on Arafat,[505] one pulled me from behind, so I turned and behold, it was my man. At this sight I cried out with a loud cry and fell down in a fainting fit; but, when I came to myself he had disappeared from my sight. This increased my yearning for him and the ceremonies were tedious to me and I prayed Almighty Allah to give me sight of him; nor was it but a few days after, when lo! one pulled me from behind, and I turned and it was he again. Thereupon he said, "Come, I conjure thee and ask thy want of me." So I begged him to pray for me three prayers; first, that Allah would make me love poverty; secondly, that I might never lie down at night upon provision assured to me; and thirdly, that He would vouchsafe me to look upon His bountiful Face. So he prayed for me as I wished, and departed from me. And indeed Allah hath granted me what the devotee asked in prayer: to begin with He hath made me so love poverty that, by the Almighty! there is naught in the world dearer to me than it, and secondly since such a year, I have never lain down to sleep upon assured provision; withal hath He never let me lack aught. As for the third prayer, I trust that He will vouchsafe me that also, 296 even as He hath granted the two precedent for right Bountiful and Beneficent is His Godhead, and Allah have mercy on him who said:[506]—

Garb of Fakir, renouncement, lowliness;

His robe of tatters and of rags his dress;

And pallor ornamenting brow as though

'Twere wanness such as waning crescents show.

Wasted him prayer a-through the long-lived night,

And flooding tears ne'er cease to dim his sight.

Memory of Him shall cheer his lonely room:
Th' Almighty nearest is in nightly gloom.
The Refuge helpeth such Fakir in need;
Help e'en the cattle and the wingèd breed:
Allah for sake of him of wrath is fain,
And for the grace of him shall fall the rain;
And if he pray one day for plague to stay,
'Twill stay, and 'bate man's wrong and tyrants slay.
While folk are sad, afflicted one and each,
He in his mercy's rich, the generous leach:
Bright shines his brow; an thou regard his face
Thy heart illumined shines by light of grace.
O thou who shunnest souls of worth innate,
Departs thee (woe to thee!) of sins the weight.
Thou thinkest to overtake them, while thou bearest
Follies, which slay thee whatso way thou farest.
Didst wot their worth thou hadst all honour showed,
And tears in streamlets from thine eyes had flowed.
To catarrh-troubled men flowers lack their smell;
And brokers ken for how much clothes can sell;
So haste and with thy Lord reunion sue,
And haply Fate shall lend thee aidance due,
Rest from rejection and estrangement-stress,
And Joy thy wish and will shall choicely bless.
His court wide open for the suer is dight:—
One, very God, the Lord, th' Almighty might.

21- THE QUEEN OF THE SERPENTS.[507]

There was once, in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, a Grecian sage called Daniel, who had disciples and scholars; and the wise men of Greece were obedient to his bidding and relied upon his learning. Withal had Allah denied him a man-child. One night, as he lay musing and weeping over the lack of a son who might inherit his lore, he bethought him that Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) heareth the prayer of those who resort to Him and that there is no doorkeeper at the door of His bounties and that He favoureth whom He will without compt and sendeth no supplicant empty away; nay He filleth their hands with favours and benefits. So he besought the Almighty, the Bountiful, to vouchsafe him a son to succeed him, and to endow him abundantly with His beneficence. Then he returned home and carnally knew his wife who conceived by him the same night.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Grecian sage returned home and knew his wife who conceived by him the same night. A few days after this he took ship for a certain place, but the ship was wrecked and he saved himself on one of her planks, while only five leaves remained to him of all the books he had. When he returned home, he laid the five leaves in a box and locking it, gave the key to his wife (who then showed big with child), and said to her, "Know that my decease is at hand and that the time draweth nigh for my translation from this abode temporal to the home which is eternal. Now thou art with child and after my death wilt haply bear a son: if this be so, name him Hásib Karím al-Dín[508] and rear him with the best of rearing. When the boy shall grow up and shall say to thee:—What inheritance 298 did my father leave me? give him these five leaves, which when he shall have read and understood, he will be the most learned man of his time." Then he farewelled her and heaving one sigh, departed the world and all that is therein—the mercy of Allah the Most Highest be upon Him! His family and friends wept over him and washed him and bore him forth in great state and buried him; after which they wended their ways home. But few days passed ere his widow bare a handsome boy and named him Hasib Karim al-Din, as her husband charged her; and immediately after his birth she summoned the astrologers, who calculated his ascendants and drawing his horoscope, said to her, "Know, O woman! that this birth will live many a year; but that will be after a great peril in the early part of his life, wherefrom an he escape, he will be given

the knowledge of all the exact sciences." So saying they went their ways. She suckled him two years,[509] then weaned him, and when he was five years old, she placed him in a school to learn his book, but he would read nothing. So she took him from school and set him to learn a trade; but he would not master any craft and there came no work from his hands. The mother wept over this and the folk said to her, "Marry him: haply he will take heart for his wife and learn him a trade." So she sought out a girl and married him to her; but, despite marriage and the lapse of time, he remained idle as before, and would do nothing. One day, some neighbours of hers, who were woodcutters, came to her and said, "Buy thy son an ass and cords and an axe and let him go with us to the mountain and we will all of us cut wood for fuel. The price of the wood shall be his and ours, and he shall provide thee and his wife with his share." When she heard this, she joyed with exceeding joy and bought her son an ass and cords and hatchet; then, carrying him to the woodcutters, delivered him into their hands and solemnly committed him to their care. Said they, "Have no concern for the boy, our Lord 299 will provide him: he is the son of our Shaykh." So they carried him to the mountain, where they cut firewood and loaded their asses therewith; then returned to the city and, selling what they had cut, spent the monies on their families. This they did on the next day and the third and ceased not for some time, till it chanced one day, a violent storm of rain broke over them, and they took refuge in a great cave till the downfall should pass away. Now Hasib Karim al-Din went apart from the rest into a corner of the cavern and sitting down, fell to smiting the floor with his axe. Presently he noted that the ground sounded hollow under the hatchet; so he dug there awhile and came to a round flagstone with a ring in it. When he saw this, he was glad and called his comrades the woodcutters,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasib Karim al-Din saw the flagstone with the ring, he was glad and called his comrades the woodcutters, who came to him and, finding it was fact, soon pulled up the stone and discovered under it a trap-door, which, being opened, showed a cistern full of bees' honey.[510] Then said they to one another, "This is a large store and we have nothing for it but to return to the city and fetch vessels wherein to carry away the honey, and sell it and divide the price, whilst one of us stands by the cistern, to guard it from outsiders." Quoth Hasib, "I will stay and keep watch over it till you bring your pots and pans." So they left him on guard there and, repairing to the city, fetched vessels, which they filled with honey and loading their asses therewith, carried them to the streets and sold the contents. They returned on the morrow and thus they did several days in succession, sleeping in the town by night and drawing off the stuff by day, whilst Hasib abode on guard by it till but little remained, when they said one to other, "It was Hasib Karim al-Din found

the honey, and to-morrow he will come down to the city and complain against us and claim the price of it, saying, 'Twas I found it; nor is there escape for us but that we 300 let him down into the cistern, to bale out the rest of the honey, and leave him there; so will he die of hunger, and none shall know of him." They all fell in with this plot as they were making for the place; and, when they reached it, one said to him, "O Hasib, go down into the pit and bale out for us the rest of the honey." So he went down and passed up to them what remained of the honey, after which he said to them, "Draw me up, for there is nothing left." They made him no answer; but, loading their asses, went off to the city and left him alone in the cistern. Thereupon he fell to weeping and crying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Such was his case; but as regards his comrades, when they reached the city and sold the honey, they repaired to Hasib's mother, weeping, and said to her, "May thy head outlive thy son Hasib!" She asked, "What brought about his death?" and they answered, "We were cutting wood on the mountain-top, when there fell on us a heavy downfall of rain and we took shelter from it in a cavern; and suddenly thy son's ass broke loose and fled into the valley, and he ran after it, to turn it back, when there came out upon them a great wolf, who tore thy son in pieces and ravined the ass." When the mother heard this, she beat her face and strewed dust on her head and fell to mourning for her son; and she kept life and soul together only by the meat and drink which they brought her every day. As for the woodcutters they opened them shops and became merchants and spent their lives in eating and drinking and laughing and frolicking. Meanwhile Hasib Karim al-Din, who ceased not to weep and call for help, sat down upon the cistern-edge when behold, a great scorpion fell down on him; so he rose and killed it. Then he took thought and said, "The cistern was full of honey; how came this scorpion here?" Accordingly he got up and examined the well right and left, till he found a crevice from which the scorpion had fallen and saw the light of day shining through it. So he took out his woodman's knife and enlarged the hole, till it was big as a window, when he crept through it and, after walking for some time, came to a vast gallery, which led him to a huge door of black iron bearing a padlock of silver wherein was a key of gold. He stole up to the door and, looking through the chink, saw a great light shining within; so he took the key and, opening the door, went on for some time, till he came to a large artificial lake, wherein he caught sight of something that shimmered like silver. He walked up to it and at last he saw, 301 hard by a hillock of green jasper and on the hill-top, a golden throne studded with all manner gems,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasib reached the hillock he found it of green jasper surmounted by a golden throne studded with all manner gems, round which were set many stools, some of gold, some of silver and others of

leek-green emerald. He clomb the hillock and, counting the stools, found them twelve thousand in number; then he mounted the throne which was set on the centre and, seating himself thereon, fell to wondering at the lake and the stools, and he marvelled till drowsiness overcame him and he dropt asleep. Presently, he was aroused by a loud snorting and hissing and rustling, so he opened his eyes; and, sitting up, saw each stool occupied by a huge serpent, an hundred cubits in length. At this sight, great fear gat hold of him; his spittle dried up for the excess of his dread and he despaired of life, as all their eyes were blazing like live coals. Then he turned towards the lake and saw that what he had taken for shimmering water was a multitude of small snakes, none knoweth their compt save Allah the Most High. After awhile, there came up to him a serpent as big as a mule, bearing on its back a tray of gold, wherein lay another serpent which shone like crystal and whose face was as that of a woman[511] and who spake with human speech. And as soon as she was brought up to Hasib, she saluted him and he returned the salutation. Thereupon, one of the serpents seated on the stools came up and, lifting her off the tray, set her on one of the seats and she cried out to the other serpents in their language, whereupon they all fell down from their stools and did her homage. But she signed to them to sit and they did so. Then she addressed 302 Hasib, saying, "Have no fear of us, O youth; for I am the Queen of the Serpents and their Sultánah." When he heard her speak on this wise, he took heart and she bade the serpents bring him somewhat of food.[512] So they brought apples and grapes and pomegranates and pistachio-nuts and filberts and walnuts and almonds and bananas and set them before him, and the Queen-serpent said, "Welcome, O youth! What is thy name?" Answered he, "Hasib Karim al-Din;" and she rejoined, "O Hasib, eat of these fruits, for we have no other meat and fear thou nothing from us at all." Hearing this, he ate his fill and praised Allah Almighty; and presently they took away the trays from before him, and the Queen said, "Tell me, O Hasib, whence thou art and how camest thou hither and what hath befallen thee." So he told her his story from first to last, the death of his father; his birth; his being sent to school where he learnt nothing; his becoming a wood-cutter; his finding the honey-cistern; his being abandoned therein; his killing the scorpion; his widening the crevice; his finding the iron door and his coming upon the Queen, and he ended his long tale with saying, "These be my adventures from beginning to end and only Allah wotteth what will betide me after all this!" Quoth the Queen, after listening to his words, "Nothing save good shall betide thee:"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Serpent-queen had heard his story she said, "Nothing save good shall betide thee: but I would have thee, O Hasib, abide with me some time, that I may tell thee my history and acquaint thee with the wondrous adventures which have happened to me." "I hear and obey thy hest," answered he; and she began to tell in these words,

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THE ADVENTURES OF BULUKIYA.

Know thou, O Hasib, there was once in the city of Cairo a King of the Banu Isra'íl, a wise and a pious, who was bent double by poring over books of learning, and he had a son named Bulúkiyá. When he grew old and weak and was nigh upon death, his Grandees and Officers of state came up to salute him, and he said to them, "O folk, know that at hand is the hour of my march from this world to the next, and I have no charge to lay on you, save to commend to your care my son Bulukiya." Then said he, "I testify that there is no god save *the* God;" and, heaving one sigh, departed the world—the mercy of Allah be upon him! They laid him out and washed him and buried him with a procession of great state. Then they made his son Bulukiya Sultan in his stead; and he ruled the kingdom justly and the people had peace in his time. Now it befel one day that he entered his father's treasuries, to look about him, and coming upon an inner compartment and finding the semblance of a door opened it and passed in. And lo! he found himself in a little closet, wherein stood a column of white marble, on the top of which was a casket of ebony; he opened this also and saw therein another casket of gold, containing a book. He read the book and found in it an account of our lord Mohammed (whom Allah bless and preserve!) and how he should be sent in the latter days[513] and be the lord of the first Prophets and the last. On seeing the personal description Bulukiya's heart was taken with love of him, so he at once assembled all the notables of the Children of Israel, the Cohens or diviners, the scribes and the priests, and acquainted them with the book, reading portions of it to them and, adding, "O folk, needs must I bring my father out of his grave and burn him." 304 The lieges asked, "Why wilt thou burn him?"; and he answered, "Because he hid this book from me and imparted it not to me." Now the old King had excerpted it from the Torah or Pentateuch and the Books of Abraham; and had set it in one of his treasuries and concealed it from all living. Rejoined they, "O King, thy father is dead; his body is in the dust and his affair is in the hands of his Lord; thou shalt not take him forth of his tomb." So he knew that they would not suffer him to do this thing by his sire and leaving them he repaired to his mother, to whom said he, "O my mother, I have found, in one of my father's treasuries, a book containing a description of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!), a prophet who shall be sent in the latter days; and my heart is captivated with love of him. Wherefore am I resolved to wander over the earth, till I foregather with him; else I shall die of longing for his love." Then he doffed his clothes and donned an Abá-gown of goat's hair and coarse sandals, saying, "O my mother, forget me not in thy prayers." She wept over him and said, "What will become of us after thee?"; but Bulukiya answered, "I can endure no longer, and I commit my affair and thine to Allah who is Almighty." Then he set out on foot Syria-wards without the knowledge of any of his folk, and coming to the sea-board found a vessel whereon he shipped as one of the crew. They sailed till he made an island, where Bulukiya landed with the crew, but straying away from the rest he sat down under a tree and sleep got the better of him. When he awoke, he sought the ship but found that she had set sail without him, and in that island he saw serpents as big as

camels and palm-trees, which repeated the names of Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) and blessed Mohammed (whom the Lord assain and save!), proclaiming the Unity and glorifying the Glorious; whereat he wondered——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Bulukiya saw the serpents glorifying God and proclaiming the Unity, he wondered with extreme wonder. When they saw him, they flocked to him and one of them said to him, "Who and whence art thou, and whither goest thou, and what is thy name?" 305 Quoth he, "My name is Bulukiya; I am of the Children of Israel and, being distracted for love of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!), I come in quest of him. But who are ye, O noble creatures?" Answered they, "We are of the dwellers in the Jahannam-hell; and Almighty Allah created us for the punishment of Kafirs." "And how came ye hither?" asked he, and the Serpents answered, "Know, O Bulukiya, that Hell[514] of the greatness of her boiling, breatheth twice a year, expiring in the summer and inspiring in the winter, and hence the summer-heat and winter-cold. When she exhaleth, she casteth us forth of her maw, and we are drawn in again with her inhaled breath." Quoth Bulukiya, "Say me, are there greater serpents than you in Hell?"; and they said, "Of a truth we are cast out with the expired breath but by reason of our smallness; for in Hell every serpent is so great, that were the biggest of us to pass over its nose it would not feel us.[515]" Asked Bulukiya, "Ye sing the praises of Allah and invoke blessings on Mohammed, whom the Almighty assain and save! Whence wot ye of Mohammed?"; and they answered, "O Bulukiya, verily his name is written on the gates of Paradise; and, but for him, Allah had not created the worlds[516] nor Paradise, nor heaven nor hell nor earth, for He made all things that be, solely on his account, and hath conjoined his name with His own in every place; wherefore we love Mohammed, whom Allah bless and 306 preserve!" Now hearing the serpents' converse did but inflame Bulukiya's love for Mohammed and yearning for his sight; so he took leave of them; and, making his way to the sea-shore, found there a ship made fast to the beach; he embarked therein as a seaman and sailed nor ceased sailing till he came to another island. Here he landed and walking about awhile found serpents great and small, none knoweth their number save Almighty Allah, and amongst them a white Serpent, clearer than crystal, seated in a golden tray borne on the back of another serpent as big as an elephant. Now this, O Hasib, was the Serpent-queen, none other than myself. Quoth Hasib, "And what answer didst thou make him?" Quoth she, "Know, O Hasib, that when I saw Bulukiya, I saluted him with the salam, and he returned my salutation," and I said to him, "Who and what art thou and what is thine errand and whence comest thou and whither goest thou?" Answered he, "I am of the Children of Israel;

my name is Bulukiya, and I am a wanderer for the love of Mohammed, whose description I have read in the revealed scriptures, and of whom I go in search. But what art thou and what are these serpents about thee?" Quoth I, "O Bulukiya, I am the Queen of the Serpents; and when thou shalt foregather with Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!) bear him my salutation." Then Bulukiya took leave of me and journeyed till he came to the Holy City which is Jerusalem. Now there was in that stead a man who was deeply versed in all sciences, more especially in geometry and astronomy and mathematics, as well as in white magic[517] and Spiritualism; and he had studied the Pentateuch and the Evangel and the Psalms and the Books of Abraham. His name was Affán; and he had found in certain of his books, that whoso should wear the seal-ring of our lord Solomon, men and Jinn and birds and beasts and all created things would be bound to obey him. Moreover, he had discovered that our lord Solomon had been buried in a coffin which was miraculously transported beyond the Seven Seas to the place of burial;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Affan had found in certain books that none, mortal or spirit, could pluck the seal-ring from the lord Solomon's finger; and that no navigator could sail his ship upon the Seven Seas over which the coffin had been carried. Moreover, he had found out by reading that there was a herb of herbs and that if one express its juice and anoint therewith his feet, he should walk upon the surface of any sea that Allah Almighty had created without wetting his soles; but none could obtain this herb, without he had with him the Serpent-queen. When Bulukiya arrived at the Holy City, he at once sat down to do his devotions and worship the Lord; and, whilst he was so doing, Affan came up and saluted him as a True Believer. Then seeing him reading the Pentateuch and adoring the Almighty, he accosted him saying, "What is thy name, O man; and whence comest thou and whither goest thou?" He answered, "My name is Bulukiya; I am from the city of Cairo and am come forth wandering in quest of Mohammed, whom Allah bless and preserve!" Quoth Affan, "Come with me to my lodging that I may entertain thee." "To hear is to obey," replied Bulukiya. So the devotee took him by the hand and carried him to his house where he entreated him with the utmost honour and presently said to him, "Tell me thy history, O my brother, and how thou camest by the knowledge of Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!) that thy heart hath been taken with love of him and compelled thee to fare forth and seek him; and lastly tell me who it was directed thee in this road." So he related to him his tale in its entirety; whereupon Affan, who well-nigh lost his wits for wonder, said to him, "Make tryst for me with the Queen of the Serpents and I will bring thee in company with

Mohammed, albeit the date of his mission is yet far distant. We have only to prevail upon the Queen and carry her in a cage to a certain mountain where the herbs grow; and, as long as she is with us, the plants as we pass them will parley with human speech and discover their virtues by the ordinance of Allah the Most High. For I have found in my books that there is a certain herb and all who express its juice and anoint therewith their feet shall walk upon whatsoever sea Almighty Allah hath made, without wetting sole. When we 308 have found the magical herb, we will let her go her way; and then will we anoint our feet with the juice and cross the Seven Seas, till we come to the burial-place of our lord Solomon. Then we will take the ring off his finger and rule even as he ruled and win all our wishes; we will enter the Main of Murks[518] and drink of the Water of Life, and so the Almighty will let us tarry till the End of Time and we shall foregather with Mohammed, whom Allah bless and preserve!" Hearing these words Bulukiya replied, "O Affan, I will make tryst for thee with the Serpent-queen and at once show thee her abiding place." So Affan made him a cage of iron; and, providing himself with two bowls, one full of wine and the other of milk, took ship with Bulukiya and sailed till they came to the island, where they landed and walked upon it. Then Affan set up the cage, in which he laid a noose and withdrew after placing in it the two bowls; when he and Bulukiya concealed themselves afar off. Presently, up came the Queen of the Serpents (that is, myself) and examined the cage. When she (that is I) smelt the savour of the milk, she came down from the back of the snake which bore her tray and, entering the cage, drank up the milk. Then she went to the bowl of wine and drank of it, whereupon her head became giddy and she slept. When Affan saw this, he ran up and locking the cage upon her, set it on his head and made for the ship, he and Bulukiya. After awhile she awoke and finding herself in a cage of iron on a man's head and seeing Bulukiya walking beside the bearer, said to him, "This is the reward of those who do no hurt to the sons of Adam." Answered he, "O Queen, have no fear of us, for we will do thee no hurt at all. We wish thee only to show us the herb which, when pounded and squeezed yieldeth a juice, and this rubbed upon the feet conferreth the power of walking dryshod upon what sea soever Almighty Allah hath created; and when we have found that we will return thee to thy place and let thee wend thy way." Then Affan and Bulukiya fared on for the hills where grew the herbs; and, as they went about with the Queen, each plant they passed began to speak and avouch its virtues by permission of Allah the Most High. As they were thus doing and the herbs speaking right and left behold, a plant spoke out and said, "I am the herb ye seek, and all who gather and crush me and anoint 309 their feet with my juice, shall fare over what sea soever Allah Almighty hath created and yet ne'er wet sole." When Affan heard this, he set down the cage from his head and, gathering what might suffice them of the herb, crushed it and filling two vials with the juice kept them for future use; and with what was left they anointed their feet. Then they took up the Serpent-queen's cage and journeyed days

and nights, till they reached the island, where they opened the cage and let out her, that is me. When I found myself at liberty, I asked them what use they would make of the juice; and they answered, “We design to anoint our feet and to cross the Seven Seas to the burial-place of our lord Solomon[519] and take the seal-ring from his finger.” Quoth I, “Far, far is it from your power to possess yourselves of the ring!” They enquired, “Wherefore?” and I replied, “Because Almighty Allah vouchsafed unto our lord Solomon the gift of this ring and distinguished him thereby, for that he said to Him:—O Lord, give me a kingdom which may not be obtained after me; for Thou verily art the Giver of kingdoms.[520] So that ring is not for you.” And I added, “Had ye twain taken the herb, whereof all who eat shall not die until the First Blast,[521] it had better availed you than this ye have gotten; for ye shall nowise come at your desire thereby.” Now when they heard this, they repented them with exceeding penitence and went their ways.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Bulukiya and Affan heard these words, they repented them with 310 exceeding penitence and went their ways. Such was their case; but as regards myself (continued the Serpent-queen) I went in quest of my host and found it fallen in piteous case, the stronger of them having grown weak in my absence and the weaker having died. When they saw me, they rejoiced and flocking about me, asked, “What hath befallen thee, and where hast thou been?” So I told them what had passed, after which I gathered my forces together and repaired with them to the mountain Kaf, where I wont to winter, summer-freshing in the place where thou now seest me, O Hasib Karim al-Din. This, then, is my story and what befel me. Thereupon Hasib marvelled at her words and said to her, “I beseech thee, of thy favour, bid one of thy guards bear me forth to the surface of the earth, that I may go to my people.” She replied, “O Hasib, thou shalt not have leave to depart from us till winter come, and needs must thou go with us to the Mountain Kaf and solace thyself with the sight of the hills and sands and trees and birds magnifying the One God, the Victorious; and look upon Marids and Ifrits and Jinn, whose number none knoweth save Almighty Allah.” When Hasib heard this, he was sore chafed and chagrined: then he said to her, “Tell me of Affan and Bulukiya; when they departed from thee and went their way, did they cross the Seven Seas and reach the burial-place of our lord Solomon or not; and if they did had they power to take the ring or not?” Answered she, “Know, that when they left me, they anointed their feet with the juice; and, walking over the water, fared on from sea to sea, diverting themselves with the wonders of the deep, nor ceased they faring till they had traversed the Seven Seas and came in sight of a mountain, soaring high in air, whose stones were emeralds and whose dust was musk; and in it was a stream of running water. When they made it they rejoiced, saying each to other:—Verily we have won our wish; and they entered

the passes of the mountain and walked on, till they saw from afar a cavern surmounted by a great dome, shining with light. So they made for the cavern, and entering it beheld therein a throne of gold studded with all manner jewels, and about it stools whose number none knoweth save Allah Almighty. And they saw lying at full length upon the throne our lord Solomon, clad in robes of green silk inwoven with gold and broidered with jewels and precious minerals: his right hand was passed over his breast and on the middle finger was the seal-ring whose lustre outshone that of all other gems in the place. Then Affan taught Bulukiya adjurations [311] and conjurations galore and said to him:—Repeat these conjurations and cease not repeating until I take the ring. Then he went up to the throne; but, as he drew near unto it lo! a mighty serpent came forth from beneath it and cried out at him with so terrible a cry that the whole place trembled and sparks flew from its mouth, saying, Begone, or thou art a dead man! But Affan busied himself with his incantations and suffered himself not to be startled thereby. Then the serpent blew such a fiery blast at him, that the place was like to be set on fire, and said to him, Woe to thee! Except thou turn back, I will consume thee! Hearing these words Bulukiya left the cave, but Affan, who suffered himself not to be troubled, went up to the Prophet: then he put out his hand to the ring and touched it and strove to draw it off the lord Solomon's finger; and behold, the serpent blew on him once more and he became a heap of ashes. Such was his case; but as regards Bulukiya he fell down in a swoon."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen continued:—When Bulukiya saw Affan burnt up by the fire and become a heap of ashes, he fell down in a swoon. Thereupon the Lord (magnified be His Majesty!) bade Gabriel descend earthwards and save him ere the serpent should blow on him. So Gabriel descended without delay and, finding Affan reduced to ashes and Bulukiya in a fit, aroused him from his trance and saluting him, asked, "How camest thou hither?" Bulukiya related to him his history from first to last, adding, "Know that I came not hither but for the love of Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!), of whom Affan informed me that his mission would take place at the End of Time; moreover that none should foregather with him but those who endured to the latter days by drinking of the Water of Life through means of Solomon's seal. So I companied him hither and there befel him what befel; but I escaped the fire and now it is my desire that thou inform me where Mohammed is to be found." Quoth Gabriel, "O Bulukiya, go thy ways, for the time of Mohammed's coming is yet far distant." Then he ascended up to heaven forthright, and Bulukiya wept [312] with sore weeping and repented of that which he had done, calling to mind my words, whenas I said to them, "Far is it from man's power to possess himself of the ring." Then he descended from the mountain and returned in exceeding confusion to the sea-shore and passed the night there,

marvelling at the mountains and seas and islands around him. When morning dawned, he anointed his feet with the herb-juice and descending to the water, set out and fared on over the surface of the seas days and nights, astonied at the terrors of the main and the marvels and wonders of the deep, till he came to an island as it were the Garden of Eden. So he landed and, finding himself in a great and pleasant island, paced about it and saw with admiration that its dust was saffron and its gravel carnelian and precious minerals; its hedges were of jessamine, its vegetation was of the goodliest of trees and of the brightest of odoriferous shrubs; its brushwood was of Comorin and Sumatran aloes-wood and its reeds were sugar-canes. Round about it were roses and narcissus and amaranths and gilly-flowers and chamomiles and white lilies and violets, and other flowers of all kinds and colours. Of a truth the island was the goodliest place, abounding in space, rich in grace, a compendium of beauty material and spiritual. The birds warbled on the boughs with tones far sweeter than chaunt of Koran and their notes would console a lover whom longings unman. And therein the gazelle frisked free and fain and wild cattle roamed about the plain. Its trees were of tallest height; its streams flowed bright; its springs welled with waters sweet and light; and all therein was a delight to sight and sprite. Bulukiya marvelled at the charms of the island but knew that he had strayed from the way he had first taken in company with Affan. He wandered about the place and solaced him with various spectacles until nightfall, when he climbed into a tree to sleep; but as he sat there, musing over the beauty of the site, behold, the sea became troubled and there rose up to the surface a great beast, which cried out with a cry so terrible that every living thing upon the isle trembled. As Bulukiya gazed upon him from the tree and marvelled at the bigness of his bulk, he was presently followed unexpectedly by a multitude of other sea-beasts in kind manifold, each holding in his fore-paw a jewel which shone like a lamp, so that the whole island became as light as day for the lustre of the gems. After awhile, there appeared, from the heart of the island, wild beasts of the land, none knoweth their number save Allah the Most High; amongst which Bulukiya noted lions and 313panthers and lynxes and other ferals; and these land-beasts flocked down to the shore; and, foregathering with the sea-beasts, conversed with them till daybreak, when they separated and each went his own way. Thereupon Bulukiya, terrified by what he had seen, came down from the tree and, making the sea-shore, anointed his feet with the magical juice, and set out once more upon the surface of the water. He fared on days and nights over the Second Sea, till he came to a great mountain skirting which ran a Wady without end, the stones whereof were magnetic iron and its beasts lions and hares and panthers. He landed on the mountain-foot and wandered from place to place till nightfall, when he sat down sheltered by one of the base-hills on the sea-side, to eat of the dried fish thrown up by the sea. Presently, he turned from his meal and behold, a huge panther was creeping up to rend and ravin him; so he anointed his feet in haste with the juice and, descending to the surface of the water, fled walking over the Third Sea, in the darkness; for the night was black and the wind

blew stark. Nor did he stay his course till he reached another island, whereon he landed and found there trees bearing fruits both fresh and dry.[522] So he took of these fruits and ate and praised Allah Almighty; after which he walked for solace about the island till eventide.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Bulukiya (continued the Queen) walked for solace about the island till eventide, when he lay down to sleep. As soon as day brake, he began to explore the place and ceased not for ten days, after which he again made the shore and anointed his feet and, setting out over the Fourth Sea, walked upon it many nights and days, till he came to a third island of fine white sand

without sign of trees or grass. He walked about it awhile but, finding its only inhabitants sakers which nested in the sand, he again anointed his feet and trudged over the Fifth Sea, walking night and day till he came to a little island, whose soil and hills were like crystal. Therein were the 314 veins wherefrom gold is worked; and therein also were marvellous trees whose like he had never seen in his wanderings, for their blossoms were in hue as gold. He landed and walked about for diversion till it was nightfall, when the flowers began to shine through the gloom like stars. Seeing this sight, he marvelled and said, "Assuredly, the flowers of this island are of those which wither under the sun and fall to the earth, where the winds smite them and they gather under the rocks and become the Elixir,[523] which the folk collect and thereof make gold." He slept there all that night and at sunrise he again anointed his feet and, descending to the shore, fared on over the Sixth Sea nights and days, till he came to a fifth island. Here he landed and found, after walking an hour or so, two mountains covered with a multitude of trees, whose fruits were as men's heads hanging by the hair, and others whose fruits were green birds hanging by the feet; also a third kind, whose fruits were like aloes, if a drop of the juice fell on a man it burnt like fire; and others, whose fruits wept and laughed, besides many other marvels which he saw there. Then he returned to the sea-shore and, finding there a tall tree, sat down beneath it till supper-time when he climbed up into the branches to sleep. As he sat considering the wonderful works of Allah behold, the waters became troubled, and there rose therefrom the daughters of the sea, each mermaid holding in her hand a jewel which shone like the morning. They came ashore and, foregathering under the trees, sat down and danced and sported and made merry whilst Bulukiya amused himself with watching and wondering at their gambols, which were prolonged till the morning, when they returned to the sea and disappeared. Then he came down and, anointing his feet, set out on the surface of the Seventh Sea, over which he journeyed two whole months, without getting sight of highland or island or broadland or lowland or shoreland, till he came to the end thereof. And so doing he suffered exceeding hunger, so that he was forced to snatch up fishes from the surface of the sea and devour them raw, for stress of famine. In such case he pushed on till in early forenoon he came to the sixth island, with trees a-growing and rills a-flowing, where he landed and walked about, looking right and left, till he came to an apple-tree and put forth his hand to pluck of the fruit, when lo! one cried out to him from the tree, saying, "An 315 thou draw near to this tree and cut of it aught, I will cut thee in twain." So he looked and saw a giant forty cubits high, being the cubit of the people of that day; whereat he feared with sore fear and refrained from that tree. Then said he to the giant, "Why dost thou forbid me to eat of this tree?" Replied the other, "Because thou art a son of Adam and thy father Adam forgot the covenant of Allah and sinned against Him and ate of the tree." Quoth Bulukiya, "What thing art thou and to whom belongeth this island, with its trees, and how art thou named?" Quoth

the tall one, “My name is Sharáhiyá and trees and island belong to King Sakhr;[524] I am one of his guards and in charge of his dominion,” presently adding, “But who art thou and whence comest thou hither?” Bulukiya told him his story from beginning to end and Sharahiya said, “Be of good cheer,” and brought him to eat. So he ate his fill and, taking leave of the giant, set out again and ceased not faring on over the mountains and sandy deserts for ten days; at the end of which time he saw, in the distance, a dust-cloud hanging like a canopy in air; and, making towards it, he heard a mighty clamour, cries and blows and sounds of mellay. Presently he reached a great Wady, two months’ journey long; and, looking whence the shouts came, he saw a multitude of horsemen engaged in fierce fight and the blood running from them till it railed like a river. Their voices were thunderous and they were armed with lance and sword and iron mace and bow and arrow, and all fought with the utmost fury. At this sight he felt sore affright——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen continued:—When Bulukiya saw the host in fight, he felt sore affright and was perplexed about his case; but whilst he hesitated, behold, they caught sight of him and held their hands one from other and left fighting. Then a troop of them came up to him, wondering at his make, and one of the horsemen said to him, “What art thou and whence camest thou hither and whither art wending; and who showed thee the way that thou hast come to our 316 country?” Quoth he, “I am of the sons of Adam and am come out, distracted for the love of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and preserve!); but I have wandered from my way.” Quoth the horseman, “Never saw we a son of Adam till now, nor did any ever come to this land.” And all marvelled at him and at his speech. “But what are ye, O creatures?” asked Bulukiya; and the rider replied, “We are of the Jánn.” So he said, “O Knight, what is the cause of the fighting amongst you and where is your abiding-place and what is the name of this valley and this land?” He replied, “Our abiding-place is the White Country; and, every year, Allah Almighty commandeth us to come hither and wage war upon the unbelieving Jann.” Asked Bulukiya, “And where is the White Country?” and the horseman answered, “It is behind the mountain Kaf, and distant seventy-five years journey from this place which is termed the Land of Shaddád son of ‘Ád: we are here for Holy War; and we have no other business, when we are not doing battle, than to glorify God and hallow him. Moreover, we have a ruler, King Sakhr hight, and needs must thou go with us to him, that he may look upon thee for his especial delight.” Then they fared on (and he with them) till they came to their abiding place; where he saw a multitude of magnificent tents of green silk, none knoweth their number save Allah the Most High, and in their midst a pavilion of red satin, some thousand cubits in compass, with cords of blue silk and

pegs of gold and silver. Bulukiya marvelled at the sight and accompanied them as they fared on and behold, this was the royal pavilion. So they carried him into the presence of King Sakhr, whom he found seated upon a splendid throne of red gold, set with pearls and studded with gems; the Kings and Princes of the Jann being on his right hand, and on his left his Councillors and Emirs and Officers of state, and a multitude of others. The King seeing him bade introduce him, which they did; and Bulukiya went up to him and saluted him after kissing the ground before him. The King returned his salute and said, "Draw near me, O mortal!" and Bulukiya went close up to him. Hereupon the King, commanding a chair to be set for him by his royal side, bade him sit down and asked him "Who art thou?"; and Bulukiya answered, "I am a man, and one of the Children of Israel." "Tell me thy story," cried King Sakhr, "and acquaint me with all that hath befallen thee and how thou camest to this my land." So Bulukiya related to him all that had occurred in his wanderings from 317 beginning to end——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen continued:—When Bulukiya related to Sakhr what befel him in his wanderings, he marvelled thereat. Then he bade the servants bring food and they spread the tables and set on one thousand and five hundred platters of red gold and silver and copper, some containing twenty and some fifty boiled camels, and others some fifty head of sheep; at which Bulukiya marvelled with exceeding marvel. Then they ate and he ate with them, till he was satisfied and returned thanks to Allah Almighty; after which they cleared the tables and set on fruits, and they ate thereof, glorifying the name of God and invoking blessings on His prophet Mohammed (whom Allah bless and preserve!) When Bulukiya heard them make mention of Mohammed, he wondered and said to King Sakhr, "I am minded to ask thee some questions." Rejoined the King, "Ask what thou wilt," and Bulukiya said, "O King, what are ye and what is your origin and how came ye to know of Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!) that ye draw near to him and love him?" King Sakhr answered, "O Bulukiya, of very sooth Allah created the fire in seven stages, one above the other, and each distant a thousand years' journey from its neighbour. The first stage he named Jahannam[525] and appointed the same for the punishment of the transgressors of the True-believers, who die unrepentant; the second he named Lazá and appointed for Unbelievers: the name of the third is Jahím and is appointed for Gog and Magog.[526] The fourth is called Sa'ír and is appointed 318 for the host of Iblis. The fifth is called Sakar and is prepared for those who neglect prayer. The sixth is called Hatamah and is appointed for Jews and Christians. The seventh is named Háwiyah and is prepared for hypocrites. Such be the seven stages." Quoth Bulukiya, "Haply Jahannam hath least of torture for that it is the uppermost." "Yes," quoth King Sakhr, "the most endurable of them all is Jahannam;

natheless in it are a thousand mountains of fire, in each mountain seventy thousand cities of fire, in each city seventy thousand castles of fire, in each castle seventy thousand houses of fire, in each house seventy thousand couches of fire and in each couch seventy thousand manners of torment. As for the other hells, O Bulukiya, none knoweth the number of kinds of torment that be therein save Allah Most Highest." When Bulukiya heard this, he fell down in a fainting-fit, and when he came to himself, he wept and said, "O King what will be my case?" Quoth Sakhr, "Fear not, and know thou that whoso loveth Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!) the fire shall not burn him, for he is made free therefrom for his sake; and whoso belongeth to his Faith the fire shall fly him. As for us, the Almighty Maker created us of the fire; for the first that he made in Jahannam were two of His host, whom he called Khalít and Malít. Now Khalít was fashioned in the likeness of a lion, with a tail like a tortoise twenty years' journey in length and ending in a member masculine; while Malít was like a pied wolf whose tail was furnished with a member feminine. Then Almighty Allah commanded the tails to couple and copulate and do the deed of kind, and of them were born serpents and scorpions, whose dwelling is in the fire, that Allah may therewith torment those whom He casteth therein; and these increased and multiplied. Then Allah commanded the tails of Khalit and Malit to couple and copulate a second time, and the tail of Malit conceived by the tail of Khalit and bore fourteen children, seven male and seven female, who grew up and intermarried one with other. All were obedient to their sire, save one who disobeyed him and was changed into a worm which is Iblis (the curse of Allah be upon him!). Now Iblis was one of the Cherubim, for he had served Allah till he was raised to the heavens and cherished[527] by the especial favour of the Merciful One, who made him chief 319 of the Cherubim."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen continued:—Iblis served God and became chief of Cherubim. When, however, the Lord created Adam (with whom be peace!), He commanded Iblis to prostrate himself to him, but he drew back; so Allah Almighty expelled him from heaven and cursed him.[528] This Iblis had issue and of his lineage are the devils; and as for the other six males, who were his elders, they are the ancestors of the true-believing Jann, and we are their descendants. Such, O Bulukiya is our provenance.[529] Bulukiya marvelled at the King's words and said, "O King, I pray thee bid one of thy guards bear me back to my native land." "Naught of this may we do," answered Sakhr, "save by commandment of Allah Almighty; however, an thou desire to leave us and return home, I will mount thee on one of my mares and cause her carry thee to the farthest frontiers of my dominions, where thou wilt meet with the troops of another King, Barákhiyá hight, who will

recognize the mare at sight and take thee off her and send her back to us; and this is all we can do for thee, and no more." When Bulukiya heard these words he wept and said, "Do whatso thou wilt." So King Sakhr caused bring the mare and, setting Bulukiya on her back, said to him, "Beware lest thou alight from her or strike her or cry out in her face; for if thou do so she will slay thee; but abide quietly riding on her back till she stop with thee; then dismount and wend thy ways." Quoth Bulukiya, "I hear and I obey;" he then mounted and setting out, rode on a long while between the rows of tents; and stinted not riding till he came to the royal kitchens where he saw the great cauldrons, each holding fifty camels, hung up over the fires which blazed fiercely under them. So he stopped 320there and gazed with a marvel ever increasing till King Sakhr thinking him to be anhungered, bade bring him two roasted camels; and they carried them to him and bound them behind him on the mare's crupper. Then he took leave of them and fared on, till he came to the end of King Sakhr's dominions, where the mare stood still and Bulukiya dismounted and began to shake the dust of the journey from his raiment. And behold, there accosted him a party of men who, recognising the mare, carried her and Bulukiya before their King Barakhiya. So he saluted him, and the King returned his greeting and seated him beside himself in a splendid pavilion, in the midst of his troops and champions and vassal Princes of the Jann ranged to right and left; after which he called for food and they ate their fill and pronounced the Alhamdolillah. Then they set on fruits, and when they had eaten thereof, King Barakhiya, whose estate was like that of King Sakhr, asked his guest, "When didst thou leave King Sakhr?" And Bulukiya answered, "Two days ago." Quoth Barakhiya, "Dost thou know, how many days' journey thou hast come in these two days?" Quoth he, "No," and the King rejoined, "Thou hast come a journey of threescore and ten months."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen continued:— Barakhiya said to Bulukiya, "In two days thou hast come a journey of threescore and ten months; moreover when thou mountest the mare, she was affrighted at thee, knowing thee for a son of Adam, and would have thrown thee; so they bound on her back these two camels by way of weight to steady her." When Bulukiya heard this, he marvelled and thanked Allah Almighty for safety. Then said the King, "Tell me thy adventures and what brought thee to this our land." So he told him his story from first to last, and the King marvelled at his words, and kept Bulukiya with him two months. Upon this Hasib Karim al-Din after he had marvelled at her story, again besought the Serpent-queen saying, "I pray thee of thy goodness and graciousness command one of thy subjects conduct me to the surface of the earth, that I may return to my family;" but she 321answered, "O Hasib, I know that the first thing thou wilt do, after seeing the face of the earth will be to greet thy family and then repair to the Hammam-bath

and bathe; and the moment thou endest thine ablutions will see the last of me, for it will be the cause of my death." Quoth Hasib, "I swear that I will never again enter the Hammam-bath so long as I live, but when washing is incumbent on me, I will wash at home." Rejoined the Queen, "I would not trust thee though thou shouldst swear to me an hundred oaths; for such abstaining is not possible; and I know thee to be a son of Adam for whom no oath is sacred. Thy father Adam made a covenant with Allah the most High, who kneaded the clay whereof He fashioned him forty mornings and made His angels prostrate themselves to him; yet after all his promise did he forget and his oath violate, disobeying the commandment of his Lord." When Hasib heard this, he held his peace and burst into tears; nor did he leave weeping for the space of ten days, at the end of which time he said to the Queen, "Prithee acquaint me with the rest of Bulukiya's adventures." Accordingly, she began again as follows:—Know, O Hasib, that Bulukiya, after abiding two months with King Barakhiya, farewelled him and fared on over wastes and deserts nights and days, till he came to a high mountain which he ascended. On the summit he beheld seated a great Angel glorifying the names of God and invoking blessings on Mohammed. Before him lay a tablet covered with characters, these white and those black,[530] whereon his eyes were fixed, and his two wings were outspread to the full, one to the western and the other to the eastern horizon. Bulukiya approached and saluted the Angel, who returned his salam adding, "Who art thou and whence comest thou and whither wendest thou and what is thy story?" Accordingly, he repeated to him his history, from first to last, and the Angel marvelled mightily thereat, whereupon Bulukiya said to him, "I pray thee in return acquaint me with the meaning of this table and what is writ thereon; and what may be thine occupation and thy name." Replied the Angel, "My name is Michael, and I am charged with the shifts of night and day; and this is my occupation till the Day of Doom." Bulukiya wondered at his 322 words and at his aspect and the vastness of his stature and, taking leave of him, fared onwards, night and day, till he came to a vast meadow over which he walked observing that it was traversed by seven streams and abounded in trees. He was struck by its beauty and in one corner thereof he saw a great tree and under it four Angels. So he drew near to them and found the first in the likeness of a man, the second in the likeness of a wild beast, the third in the likeness of a bird and the fourth in the likeness of a bull, engaged in glorifying Almighty Allah, and saying, "O my God and my Master and my Lord, I conjure Thee, by Thy truth and by the degree of Thy Prophet Mohammed (on whom be blessings and peace!) to vouchsafe Thy mercy and grant Thy forgiveness to all things created in my likeness; for Thou over all things art Almighty!" Bulukiya marvelled at what he heard but continued his journey till he came to another mountain and ascending it, found there a great Angel seated on the summit, glorifying God and hallowing Him and invoking blessings on Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!); and he saw that Angel continually opening and shutting his hands and bending and extending his fingers. He accosted him and saluted him; whereupon the Angel returned his salam

and enquired who he was and how he came thither. So Bulukiya acquainted him with his adventures including his having lost the way; and besought him to tell him, in turn, who he was and what was his function and what mountain was that. Quoth the Angel, "Know, O Bulukiya, that this is the mountain Kaf, which encompasseth the world; and all the countries the Creator hath made are in my grasp. When the Almighty is minded to visit any land with earthquake or famine or plenty or slaughter or prosperity, He biddeth me carry out His commands and I carry them out without stirring from my place; for know thou that my hands lay hold upon the roots of the earth,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen continued:—When the angel said, "And know thou that my hands lay hold upon the roots of the earth," he asked, "And hath Allah created 323 other worlds than this within the mountain Kaf?" The Angel answered, "Yes, He hath made a world white as silver, whose vastness none knoweth save Himself, and hath peopled it with Angels, whose meat and drink are His praise and hallowing and continual blessings upon His Prophet Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!). Every Thursday night[531] they repair to this mountain and worship in congregation Allah until the morning, and they assign the future recompense of their lauds and litanies to the sinners of the Faith of Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!) and to all who make the Ghusl-ablution of Friday; and this is their function until the Day of Resurrection." Asked Bulukiya, "And hath Allah created other mountains behind the mountain Kaf?"; whereto he answered, "Yes, behind this mountain is a range of mountains five hundred years' journey long, of snow and ice, and this it is that wardeth off the heat of Jahannam from the world, which verily would else be consumed thereby. Moreover, behind the mountain Kaf are forty worlds, each one the bigness of this world forty times told, some of gold and some of silver and others of carnelian. Each of these worlds hath its own colour, and Allah hath peopled them with angels, that know not Eve nor Adam nor night nor day, and have no other business than to celebrate His praises and hallow Him and make profession of His Unity and proclaim His Omnipotence and supplicate Him on behalf of the followers of Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!). And know, also, O Bulukiya, that the earths were made in seven stages, one upon another, and that Allah hath created one of His Angels, whose stature and attributes none knoweth but Himself and who beareth the seven stages upon his shoulders. Under this Angel Almighty Allah hath created a great rock, and under the rock a bull, and under the bull a huge fish, and under the fish a mighty ocean."[532] God once told Isa (with whom be peace!) of this fish, and he said, "O Lord show me the fish, that I may look upon it." So the Almighty commanded an angel to take Isa and show him the fish. Accordingly, he took him up and carried him (with whom be peace!) to the sea, wherein the fish

dwelt, and said, “Look, O Isa, upon the fish.” He looked but at first saw nothing, when, suddenly, the fish darted past like lightning. At this sight Isa 324 fell down a-swoon, and when he came to himself, Allah spake to him by inspiration, saying, “O Isa, hast thou seen the fish and comprehended its length and its breadth?” He replied, “By Thy honour and glory, O Lord, I saw no fish; but there passed me by a great bull, whose length was three days’ journey, and I know not what manner of thing this bull is.” Quoth Allah, “O Isa, this that thou sawest and which was three days in passing by thee, was but the head of the fish;[533] and know that every day I create forty fishes like unto this.” And Isa hearing this marvelled at the power of Allah the Almighty. Asked Bulukiya, “What hath Allah made beneath this sea which containeth the fish?”; and the Angel answered, “Under the sea the Lord created a vast abyss of air, under the air fire, and under the fire a mighty serpent, by name Falak; and were it not for fear of the Most Highest, this serpent would assuredly swallow up all that is above it, air and fire and the Angel and his burden, without sensing it.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the angel said to Bulukiya when describing the serpent, “And were it not for fear of the Most Highest, this serpent would assuredly swallow up all that is above it, air, and fire, and the Angel and his burden, without sensing it. When Allah created this serpent He said to it by inspiration:—I will give thee somewhat to keep for me, so open thy mouth. The serpent replied:—Do whatso Thou wilt; and opened his mouth and God placed Hell into his maw, saying:—Keep it until the Day of Resurrection. When that time comes, the Almighty will send His angels with chains to bring Hell and bind it until the Day when all men shall meet; and the Lord will order Hell to go open its gates and there will issue therefrom sparks bigger than the mountains.” When Bulukiya heard these things he wept with sore weeping and, taking leave of the Angel, fared on westwards, till he came in sight of two creatures sitting before a great shut gate. As he drew near, he saw that one of the gatekeepers had the semblance of a lion and the other that of a bull; so he saluted them and they returned his salam and enquired 325 who and whence he was and whither he was bound. Quoth he, “I am of the sons of Adam, a wanderer for the love of Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!) and I have strayed from my way.” Then he asked them what they were and what was the gate before which they sat, and they answered, “We are the guardians of this gate thou seest and we have no other business than the praise and hallowing of Allah and the invocation of blessings on Mohammed (whom may He bless and keep!).” Bulukiya wondered and asked them, “What is within the gate?”; and they answered, “We wot not.” Then quoth he, “I conjure you, by the truth of your glorious Lord, open to me the gate, that

I may see that which is therein." Quoth they, "We cannot, and none may open this gate, of all created beings save Gabriel, the Faithful One, with whom be peace!" Then Bulukiya lifted up his voice in supplication to Allah, saying, "O Lord, send me thy messenger Gabriel, the Faithful One, to open for me this gate that I may see what be therein;" and the Almighty gave ear unto his prayer and commanded the Archangel to descend to earth and open to him the gate of the Meeting-place of the Two Seas. So Gabriel descended and, saluting Bulukiya, opened the gate to him, saying, "Enter this door, for Allah commandeth me to open to thee." So he entered and Gabriel locked the gate behind him and flew back to heaven. When Bulukiya found himself within the gate, he looked and beheld a vast ocean, half salt and half fresh, bounded on every side by mountain-ranges of red ruby whereon he saw angels singing the praises of the Lord and hallowing Him. So he went up to them and saluted them and having received a return of his salam, questioned them of the sea and the mountains. Replied they, "This place is situate under the Arsh or empyreal heaven; and this Ocean causeth the flux and flow of all the seas of the world; and we are appointed to distribute them and drive them to the various parts of the earth, the salt to the salt and the fresh to the fresh,[5341] and this is our employ until the Day of Doom. As for the mountain-ranges they serve to limit and to contain the waters. But thou, whence comest thou and whither art thou bound?" So he told them his story and asked them of the road. They bade him traverse the surface of the ocean which lay before him: so he anointed his feet with the juice of the herb he had with him, and taking leave 326 of the angels, set out upon the face of the sea and sped on over the water nights and days; and as he was faring, behold, he met a handsome youth journeying along like himself, whereupon he greeted him and he returned his greeting. After they parted he espied four great Angels wayfaring over the face of the sea, and their going was like the blinding lightning; so he stationed himself in their road, and when they came up to him, he saluted them and said to them, "I ask you by the Almighty, the Glorious, to tell me your names and whither are ye bound?" Replied the first Angel, "My name is Gabriel and these my companions are called Isráfíl and Míká'íl and Azrá'íl. There hath appeared in the East a mighty dragon, which hath laid waste a thousand cities and devoured their inhabitants; wherefore Allah Almighty hath commanded us to go to him and seize him and cast him into Jahannam." Bulukiya marvelled at the vastness of their stature and fared on, as before, days and nights, till he came to an island where he landed and walked about for a while,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Bulukiya landed on the island and walked about for a while, till he saw a comely young man with light shining from his visage, sitting weeping and lamenting between two built tombs. So he saluted him

and he returned his salutation, and Bulukiya said to him, “Who art thou and what are these two built tombs between which thou sittest, and wherefore this wailing?” He looked at him and wept with sore weeping, till he drenched his clothes with his tears; then said, “Know thou, O my brother, mine is a marvellous story and a wondrous; but I would have thee sit by me and first tell me thy name and thine adventures and who thou art and what brought thee hither; after which I will, in turn, relate to thee my history.” So Bulukiya sat down by him and related to him all that had befallen him from his father’s death,[535] adding, “Such is my history, the whole of it, and Allah 327 alone knoweth what will happen to me after this.” When the youth heard his story, he sighed and said, “O thou unhappy! How few things thou hast seen in thy life compared with mine! Know, O Bulukiya, that unlike thyself I have looked upon our lord Solomon, in his life, and have seen things past count or reckoning. Indeed, my story is strange and my case out of range, and I would have thee abide with me, till I tell thee my history and acquaint thee how I come to be sitting here.” Hearing this much Hasib again interrupted the Queen of the Serpents and said to her, “Allah upon thee, O Queen, release me and command one of thy servants carry me forth to the surface of the earth, and I will swear an oath to thee that I will never enter the Hammam-bath as long as I live.” But she said, “This is a thing which may not be nor will I believe thee upon thine oath.” When he heard this, he wept and all the serpents wept on his account and took to interceding for him with their Queen, saying, “We beseech thee, bid one of us carry him forth to the surface of the earth, and he will swear thee an oath never to enter the bath his life long.” Now when Yamlaykhá (for such was the Queen’s name) heard their appeal, she turned to Hasib and made him swear to her an oath; after which she bade a serpent carry him forth to the surface of the earth. The serpent made ready, but as she was about to go away with him, he turned to Queen Yamlaykha and said, “I would fain have thee tell me the history of the youth whom Bulukiya saw sitting between two tombs.” So she said:—Know, O Hasib, that when Bulukiya sat down by the youth and told him his tale, from first to last, in order that the other might also recount his adventures and explain the cause of his sitting between the two tombs——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Four Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen continued:—When Bulukiya ended his recount, the youth said, “How few things of marvel hast thou seen in thy life, O unhappy! Now I have looked upon our lord Solomon while he was yet living and I have witnessed wonders beyond compt and conception.” And he began to relate

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THE STORY OF JANSHAH.[536]

Know, O my brother, that my sire was a King called Teghmús, who reigned over the land of Kabul and the Banu Shahlán, ten thousand warlike chiefs, each ruling over a hundred walled cities and a hundred citadels; and he was suzerain also over seven vassal princes, and tribute was brought to him from the broad lands between East and West. He was just and equitable in his rule and Allah Almighty had given him all this and had bestowed on him such mighty empire, yet had He not vouchsafed him a son (though this was his dearest wish) to inherit the kingdom after his decease. So one day it befel that he summoned the Olema and astrologers, the mathematicians and almanac-makers, and said, "Draw me my horoscope and look if Allah will grant me a son to succeed me." Accordingly, they consulted their books and calculated his dominant star and the aspects thereof; after which they said to him, "Know, O King, that thou shalt be blessed with a son, but by none other than the daughter of the King of Khorásán." Hearing this Teghmus joyed with exceeding joy and, bestowing on the astrologers and wizards treasure beyond numbering or reckoning, dismissed them. His chief Wazir was a renowned warrior, by name 'Ayn Zár, who was equal to a thousand cavaliers in battle; so him he summoned and, repeating to him what the astrologers had predicted, he said, "O Wazir, it is my will that thou equip thee for a march to Khorasan and demand for me the hand of its King Bahrwán's daughter." Receiving these orders the Wazir at once proceeded to get ready for the journey and encamped without the town with his troops and braves and retinue, whilst King Teghmus made ready as presents for the King of Khorasan fifteen hundred loads of silks and precious stones, pearls and rubies and other gems, besides gold and silver; and he also prepared a prodigious quantity of all that goeth to the equipment of a bride; then, loading them upon camels and mules, delivered them to Ayn Zar, with a letter to the following purport. "After invoking the blessing of Heaven, King Teghmus to King Bahrwan, greeting. 329 Know that we have taken counsel with the astrologers and sages and mathematicians, and they tell us that we shall have boon of a boy-child, and that by none other than thy daughter. Wherefore I have despatched unto thee my Wazir Ayn Zar, with great store of bridal gear, and I have appointed him to stand in my stead and to enter into the marriage-contract in my name. Furthermore I desire that of thy favour thou wilt grant him his request without stay or delay; for it is my own, and all graciousness thou showest him, I take for myself; but beware of crossing me in this, for know, O King Bahrwan, that Allah hath bestowed upon me the Kingdom of Kabul, and hath given me dominion over the Banu Shahlan and vouchsafed me a mighty empire; and if I marry thy daughter, we will be, I and thou, as one thing in kingship; and I will send thee every year as much treasure as will suffice thee. And this is my desire of thee." Then King Teghmus sealed the letter with his own ring and gave it to the Wazir, who departed with a great company and journeyed till he drew

near the capital of Khorasan. When King Bahrwan heard of his approach, he despatched his principal Emirs to meet him,[537] with a convoy of food and drink and other requisites, including forage for the steeds. So they fared forth with the train till they met the Wazir; then, alighting without the city, they exchanged salutations and abode there, eating and drinking, ten days; at the end of which time they mounted and rode on into the town, where they were met by King Bahrwan, who came out to greet the Wazir of King Teghmus and alighting, embraced him and carried him to his citadel. Then Ayn Zar brought out the presents and laid them before King Bahrwan, together with the letter of King Teghmus, which when the King read and understood, he joyed with joy exceeding and welcomed the Wazir, saying, "Rejoice in winning thy wish; and know that if King Teghmus sought of me my life, verily I would give it to him." Then he went in forthright to his daughter and her mother and his kinsfolk, and acquainting them with the King of Kabul's demand, sought counsel of them, and they said, "Do what seemeth good to thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundredth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Bahrwan consulted his daughter and her mother and his kinsfolk and they said, "Do what seemeth good to thee." So he returned straightway to the Minister Ayn Zar and notified to him that his desire had been fulfilled; and the Wazir abode with him two months, at the end of which time he said to him, "We beseech thee to bestow upon us that wherefore we came, so we may depart to our own land." "I hear and obey," answered the King. Then he prepared all the gear wanted for the wedding; and when this was done he assembled his Wazirs and all his Emirs and the Grandees of his realm and the monks and priests who tied the knot of marriage between his daughter and King Teghmus by proxy. And King Bahrwan bade decorate the city after the goodliest fashion and spread the streets with carpets. Then he equipped his daughter for the journey and gave her all manner of presents and rarities and precious metals, such as none may describe; and Ayn Zar departed with the Princess to his own country. When the news of their approach reached King Teghmus, he bade celebrate the wedding festivities and adorn the city; after which he went in unto the Princess and abated her maidenhead; nor was it long before she conceived by him and, accomplishing her months, bare a man-child like the moon on the night of its full. When King Teghmus knew that his wife had given birth to a goodly son, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and, summoning the sages and astrologers and mathematicians, said to them, "I would that ye draw the horoscope of the new-born child with his ascendant and its aspects and acquaint me what shall befal him in his lifetime." So they made their calculations and found them favourable; but, that he would, in his fifteenth year, be exposed to perils and hardships, and that if he survived, he would be happy and fortunate and

become a greater king than his father and a more powerful. The King rejoiced greatly in this prediction and named the boy Janshah. Then he delivered him to the nurses, wet and dry, who reared him excellently well till he reached his fifth year, when his father taught him to read the Evangel and instructed him in the art of arms and lunge of lance and sway of sword, so that in less than seven years he was wont to ride a-hunting, and a-chasing; he became a doughty champion, 331 perfect in all the science of the cavalarice and his father was delighted to hear of his knightly prowess. It chanced one day that King Teghmus and his son accompanied by the troops rode out for sport into the wolds and wilds and hunted till mid-afternoon of the third day, when the Prince started a gazelle of a rare colour, which fled before him. So he gave chase to it, followed by seven of King Teghmus's white slaves all mounted on swift steeds, and rode at speed after the gazelle, which fled before them till she brought them to the sea-shore. They all ran at her to take her as their quarry, but she escaped from them and, throwing herself into the waves,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and First Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Janshah and the Mamelukes ran at the gazelle, to take her as their quarry, she escaped from them and, throwing herself into the waves, swam out to a fishing bark, that was moored near the shore, and sprang on board. Janshah and his followers dismounted and, boarding the boat, made prize of the gazelle and were minded to return to shore with her, when the Prince espied a great island in the offing and said to his merry men, "I have a longing to visit yonder island." They answered, "We hear and obey," and sailed on till they came to the island, where they landed and amused themselves with exploring the place. Then they again embarked and taking with them the gazelle, set out to return homeward, but the murk of evening overtook them and they missed their way on the main. Moreover a strong wind arose and drave the boat into mid-ocean, so that when they awoke in the morning, they found themselves lost at sea. Such was their case; but as regards King Teghmus, when he missed his son, he commanded his troops to make search for him in separate bodies; so they dispersed on all sides and a company of them, coming to the sea-shore, found there the Prince's white slave whom he had left in charge of the horses. They asked him what was come of his master and the other six, and he told them what had passed; whereupon they took him with them and returned to the King and acquainted him with what they had learnt. When Teghmus heard their report, he wept with sore weeping and cast the crown from his 332 head, biting his hands for vexation. Then he rose forthright and wrote letters and despatched them to all the islands of the sea. Moreover he got together an hundred ships and filling them with troops, sent them to sail about in quest of Janshah, while he himself withdrew with his troops to his capital, where he abode in sore concern. As for Janshah's mother, when she heard of his loss she buffeted her face and began the

mourning ceremonies for her son making sure that he was dead. Meanwhile, Janshah and his men ceased not driving before the wind and those in search of them cruised about for ten days till, finding no trace they returned and reported failure to the King. But a stiff gale caught the Prince's craft which went spooning till they made a second island, where they landed and walked about. Presently they came upon a spring of running water in the midst of the island and saw from afar a man sitting hard by it. So they went up to him and saluted him, and he returned their salam, speaking in a voice like the whistle[538] of birds. Whilst Janshah stood marvelling at the man's speech he looked right and left and suddenly split himself in twain, and each half went a different way.[539] Then there came down from the hills a multitude of men of all kinds, beyond count and reckoning; and they no sooner reached the spring, than each one divided into two halves and rushed on Janshah and his Mamelukes to eat them. When the voyagers saw this, they turned and fled seawards; but the cannibals pursued them and caught and ate three of the slaves, leaving only three slaves who with Janshah reached the boat in safety; then launching her made for the water and sailed nights and days without knowing whither their ship went. They killed the gazelle and lived on her flesh, till the winds drove them to a third island which was full of trees and waters and flower-gardens and orchards laden with all fashion of fruits: and streams strayed under the tree-shade: brief, the place was a Garden of Eden. The island pleased the Prince and he said to his companions, "Which of you will land and explore." Then said one of the slaves, "That will I do"; but he replied, 333 "This thing may not be; you must all land and explore the place while I abide in the boat." So he set them ashore,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Prince set them ashore, and they searched the island, East and West, but found no one; then they fared on inland to the heart thereof, till they came to a Castle compassed about with ramparts of white marble, within which was a palace of the clearest crystal and, set in its centre a garden containing all manner fruits beyond description, both fresh and dry, and flowers of grateful odour and trees and birds singing upon the boughs. Amiddlemost the garden was a vast basin of water, and beside it a great open hall with a raised dais whereon stood a number of stools surrounding a throne of red gold, studded with all kinds of jewels and especially rubies. Seeing the beauty of the Castle and of the Garden they entered and explored in all directions, but found no one there, so after rummaging the Castle they returned to Janshah and told him what they had seen. When he heard their report, he cried, "Needs must I solace myself with a sight of it;" so he landed and accompanied them to the palace, which he entered marvelling at the goodliness of the place. They then visited every part of the gardens and ate of the fruits and continued walking till it waxed dark, when they returned to the estrade and sat down, Janshah on

the throne in the centre and the three others on the stools ranged to the right and left. Then the Prince, there seated, called to mind his separation from his father's throne-city[540] and country and friends and kinsfolk; and fell a-weeping and lamenting over their loss, whilst his men wept around him. And as they were thus sorrowing behold, they heard a mighty clamour, that came from seaward, and looking in the direction of the clamour saw a multitude of apes, as they were swarming locusts. Now the castle and the island belonged to these apes, who, finding the strangers' boat moored to the strand, had scuttled it and after repaired to the 334palace, where they came upon Janshah and his men seated. Here the Serpent-queen again broke off her recital saying, "All this, O Hasib, was told to Bulukiya by the young man sitting between the two tombs." Quoth Hasib, "And what did Janshah with the apes?"; so the Queen resumed her tale:—He and his men were sore affrighted at the appearance of the apes, but a company of them came up to the throne whereon he sat and, kissing the earth before him, stood awhile in his presence with their paws upon their breasts in posture of respect. Then another troop brought to the castle gazelles which they slaughtered and skinned; and roasting pieces of the flesh till fit for food they laid them on platters of gold and silver and spreading the table, made signs to Janshah and his men to eat. The Prince and his followers came down from their seats and ate, and the apes ate with them, till they were satisfied, when the apes took away the meat and set on fruits of which they partook and praised Allah the most Highest. Then Janshah asked the apes by signs what they were and to whom the palace belonged, and they answered him by signals, "Know ye that this island belonged of yore to our lord Solomon son of David (on both of whom be peace!), and he used to come hither once every year for his solace,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Janshah asked the apes by signs to whom the palace belonged, they answered him by signals, "Of a truth this place belonged of yore to our lord Solomon son of David (on both of whom be peace!), who used to come hither once every year for his solace, and then wend his ways." Presently the apes continued, "And know, O King, that thou art become our Sultan and we are thy servants; so eat and drink, and whatso thou ever bid us, that will we do." So saying, they severally kissed the earth between the hands of Janshah and all took their departure. The Prince slept that night on the throne and his men on the stools about him, and on the morrow, at daybreak, the four Wazirs or Captains of the apes presented themselves before him, attended by their troops, who ranged themselves about him, rank after rank, until the place was crowded. Then the Wazirs approached and exhorted him by 335signs to do justice amongst them and rule them righteously; after which the apes cried out to one another and went away, all save a small party which remained in presence to serve him. After awhile, there came up a

company of apes with huge dogs in the semblance of horses, each wearing about his head a massive chain; and signed to Janshah and his three followers to mount and go with them. So they mounted, marvelling at the greatness of the dogs, and rode forth, attended by the four Wazirs and a host of apes like swarming locusts, some riding on dogs and others afoot till they came to the sea-shore. Janshah looked for the boat which brought him and finding it scuttled turned to the Wazirs and asked how this had happened to it; whereto they answered, "Know, O King, that, when thou camest to our island, we kenned that thou wouldst be Sultan over us and we feared lest ye all flee from us, in our absence; and embark in the boat; so we sank it." When Janshah heard this, he turned to his Mamelukes and said to them, "We have no means of escaping from these apes, and we must patiently await the ordinance of the Almighty." Then they fared on inland and ceased not faring till they came to the banks of a river, on whose other side rose a high mountain, whereon Janshah saw a multitude of Ghuls. So he turned to the apes and asked them, "What are these Ghuls?" and they answered, "Know, O King, that these Ghuls are our mortal foes and we come hither to do battle with them." Janshah marvelled to see them riding horses, and was startled at the vastness of their bulk and the strangeness of their semblance; for some of them had heads like bulls and others like camels. As soon as the Ghuls espied the army of the apes, they charged down to the river·bank and standing there, fell to pelting them with stones as big as maces; and between them there befel a sore fight. Presently, Janshah, seeing that the Ghuls were getting the better of the apes, cried out to his men, saying, "Uncase your bows and arrows and shoot at them your best shafts and keep them off from us." They did so and slew of the Ghuls much people, when there fell upon them sore dismay and they turned to flee; but the apes, seeing Janshah's prowess, forded the river and headed by their Sultan chased the Ghuls, killing many of them in the pursuit, till they reached the high mountain where they disappeared. And while exploring the said mountain Janshah found a tablet of alabaster, whereon was written, "O thou who enterest this land, know that thou wilt become Sultan over these 336 apes and that from them there is no escape for thee, except by the passes that run east and west through the mountains. If thou take the eastern pass, thou wilt fare through a country swarming with Ghuls and wild beasts, Marids and Ifrits, and thou wilt come, after three months' journeying, to the ocean which encompasseth the earth; but, if thou travel by the western pass, it will bring thee, after four months' journeying, to the head of the Wady of Emmets.[541] When thou hast followed the road, that leads through this mountain, ten days,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Janshah read this much upon the tablet and found, at the end of the inscription, "Then thou wilt come to a great river, whose current is so swift that it blindeth the eyes. Now this river drieth up every

Sabbath,[542] and on the opposite bank lies a city wholly inhabited by Jews, who the faith of Mohammed refuse; there is not a Moslem among the band nor is there other than this city in the land. Better therefore lord it over the apes, for so long as thou shalt tarry amongst them they will be victorious over the Ghuls. And know also that he who wrote this tablet was the lord Solomon, son of David (on both be peace!)." When Janshah read these words, he wept sore and repeated them to his men. Then they mounted again and, surrounded by the army of the apes who were rejoicing in their victory, returned to the castle. Here Janshah abode, Sultaning over them, for a year and a half. And at the end of this time, he one day commanded the ape-army to mount and go forth a-hunting with him, and they rode out into the wolds and wilds, and fared on from place to place, till they approached the Wady of Emmets, which Janshah knew by the description of it upon the alabaster tablet. Here he bade them dismount and they all abode there, eating and drinking a space of 337 ten days, after which Janshah took his men apart one night and said, "I purpose we flee through the Valley of Emmets and make for the town of the Jews; it may be Allah will deliver us from these apes and we will go God's ways." They replied, "We hear and we obey:" so he waited till some little of the night was spent, then, donning his armour and girding his sword and dagger and such like weapons, and his men doing likewise, they set out and fared on westwards till morning. When the apes awoke and missed Janshah and his men, they knew that they had fled. So they mounted and pursued them, some taking the eastern pass and others that which led to the Wady of Emmets, nor was it long before the apes came in sight of the fugitives, as they were about to enter the valley, and hastened after them. When Janshah and his men saw them, they fled into the Emmet-valley; but the apes soon overtook them and would have slain them, when behold, there rose out of the earth a multitude of ants like swarming locusts, as big as dogs, and charged home upon the apes. They devoured many of their foes, and these also slew many of the ants; but help came to the emmets: now an ant would go up to an ape and smite him and cut him in twain, whilst ten apes could hardly master one ant and bear him away and tear him in sunder. The sore battle lasted till the evening but the emmets were victorious. In the gloaming Janshah and his men took to flight and fled along the sole of the Wady——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in the gloaming Janshah and his men took to flight and fled along the sole of the Wady till the morning. With the break of day, the apes were up and at them, which when the Prince saw, he shouted to his men, "Smite with your swords." So they bared their blades and laid on load right and left, till there ran at them an ape, with tusks like an elephant, and smote one of the Mamelukes and cut him in sunder. Then the apes redoubled upon Janshah and he fled with his followers into the lower levels of the valley, where he saw a vast river and by

its side a mighty many of ants. When the emmets espied Janshah they pushed on and surrounded him, and one of the slaves fell to smiting them with 338 his sword and cutting them in twain; whereupon the whole host set upon him and slew him. At this pass, behold, up came the apes from over the mountain and fell in numbers upon Janshah; but he tore off his clothes and, plunging into the river, with his remaining servant, struck out for the middle of the stream. Presently, he caught sight of a tree on the other bank; so he swam up to it and laying hold of one of its branches, hung to it and swung himself ashore, but as for the last Mameluke the current carried him away and dashed him to pieces against the mountain. Thereupon Janshah fell to wringing his clothes and spreading them in the sun to dry, what while there befel a fierce fight between the apes and the ants, until the apes gave up the pursuit and returned to their own land. Meanwhile, Janshah, who abode alone on the river-bank, could do naught but shed tears till nightfall, when he took refuge in a cavern and there passed the dark hours, in great fear and feeling desolate for the loss of his slaves. At daybreak awaking from his sleep he set out again and fared on nights and days, eating of the herbs of the earth, till he came to the mountain which burnt like fire, and thence he made the river which dried up every Sabbath. Now it was a mighty stream and on the opposite bank stood a great city, which was the capital of the Jews mentioned in the tablet. Here he abode till the next Sabbath, when the river dried up and he walked over to the other side and entered the Jew city, but saw none in the streets. So he wandered about till he came to the door of a homestead, which he opened and entering, espied within the people of the house sitting in silence and speaking not a syllable. Quoth he, "I am a stranger and anhungered;" and they signed to him, as to say, "Eat and drink, but speak not."[543] So he ate and drank and slept that night and, when morning dawned, the master of the house greeted him and bade him welcome and asked him, "Whence comest thou and whither art thou bound?" At these words Janshah wept sore and told him all that had befallen him and how his father was King of Kabul; whereat the Jew marvelled and said, "Never heard we of that city, but we have heard from the merchants of the caravans that in that direction lieth a land called Al-Yaman." "How far is that land from this 339 place?" asked Janshah, and the Jew answered, "The Cafilah merchants pretend that it is a two years and three months' march from their land hither." Quoth Janshah, "And when doth the caravan come?" Quoth the Jew, "Next year 'twill come."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Jew was questioned anent the coming of the caravan, he replied, "Next year 'twill come." At these words the Prince wept sore and fell a-sorrowing for himself and his Mamelukes; and lamenting his separation from his mother and father and all which had befallen him in his wanderings. Then said the Jew, "O young man, do not weep, but sojourn with us

till the caravan shall come, when we will send thee with it to thine own country." So he tarried with the Jew two whole months and every day he went out walking in the streets for his solace and diversion. Now it chanced one day, whilst he paced about the main thoroughfares, as of wont, and was bending his steps right and left, he heard a crier crying aloud and saying, "Who will earn a thousand gold pieces and a slave-girl of surpassing beauty and loveliness by working for me between morning and noontide?" But no one answered him and Janshah said in his mind, "Were not this work dangerous and difficult, he would not offer a thousand dinars and a fair girl for half a day's labour." Then he accosted the crier and said, "I will do the work;" so the man carried him to a lofty mansion where they found one who was a Jew and a merchant, seated on an ebony chair, to whom quoth the crier, standing respectfully before him, "O merchant, I have cried every day these three months, and none hath answered, save this young man." Hearing his speech the Jew welcomed Janshah, led him into a magnificent sitting-room and signalled to bring food. So the servants spread the table and set thereon all manner meats, of which the merchant and Janshah ate, and washed their hands. Then wine was served up and they drank; after which the Jew rose and bringing Janshah a purse of a thousand dinars and a slave-girl of rare beauty, said to him, "Take maid and money to thy hire." Janshah took them and seated the girl by his side when the trader resumed, "To-morrow 340 to the work!"; and so saying he withdrew and Janshah slept with the damsel that night. As soon as it was morning, the merchant bade his slaves clothe him in a costly suit of silk whenas he came out of the Hammam-bath. So they did as he bade them and brought him back to the house, whereupon the merchant called for harp and lute and wine and they drank and played and made merry till the half of the night was past, when the Jew retired to his Harim and Janshah lay with his slave-girl till the dawn. Then he went to the bath and on his return, the merchant came to him and said, "Now I wish thee to do the work for me." "I hear and obey," replied Janshah. So the merchant bade his slaves bring two she-mules and set Janshah on one, mounting the other himself. Then they rode forth from the city and fared on from morn till noon, when they made a lofty mountain, to whose height was no limit. Here the Jew dismounted, ordering Janshah to do the same; and when he obeyed the merchant gave him a knife and a cord, saying, "I desire that thou slaughter this mule." So Janshah tucked up his sleeves and skirts and going up to the mule, bound her legs with the cord, then threw her and cut her throat; after which he skinned her and lopped off her head and legs and she became a mere heap of flesh. Then said the Jew, "Slit open the mule's belly and enter it and I will sew it up on thee. There must thou abide awhile and whatsoever thou seest in her belly, acquaint me therewith." So Janshah slit the mule's belly and crept into it, whereupon the merchant sewed it up on him and withdrew to a distance,——
And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the merchant sewed up the mule's belly on Janshah and, withdrawing to a distance, hid himself in the skirts of the mountain. After a while a huge bird swooped down on the dead mule and snatching it up, flew up with it to the top of the mountain, where it set down the quarry and would have eaten it; but Janshah, feeling the bird begin to feed, slit the mule's belly and came forth. When the bird saw him, it took fright at him and flew right away; whereupon he stood up and looking right and left, saw nothing but the carcasses of dead men, mummied by the sun, and exclaimed, 341"There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Then he looked down the precipice and espied the merchant standing at the mountain-foot, looking for him. As soon as the Jew caught sight of him, he called out to him, "Throw me down of the stones which are about thee, that I may direct thee to a way whereby thou mayst descend." So Janshah threw him down some two hundred of the stones, which were all rubies,[544] chrysolites and other gems of price; after which he called out to him, saying, "Show me the way down and I will throw thee as many more." But the Jew gathered up the stones and, binding them on the back of the mule, went his way without answering a word and left Janshah alone on the mountain-top. When the Prince found himself deserted, he began to weep and implore help of Heaven, and thus he abode three days; after 342which he rose and fared on over the mountainous ground two month's space, feeding upon hill-herbs; and he ceased not faring till he came to its skirts and espied afar off a Wady full of fruitful trees and birds harmonious singing the praises of Allah, the One, the Victorious. At this sight he joyed with great joy and stayed not his steps till, after an hour or so, he came to a ravine in the rocks, through which the rain-torrents fell into the valley. He made his way down the cleft till he reached the Wady which he had seen from the mountain-top and walked on therein, gazing right and left, nor ceased so doing until he came in sight of a great castle, towering high in air. As he drew near the gates he saw an old man of comely aspect and face shining with light standing thereat with a staff of carnelian in his hand, and going up to him, saluted him. The Shaykh returned his salam and bade him welcome, saying, "Sit down, O my son." So he sat down at the door of the castle and the old man said to him, "How camest thou to this land, untrodden by son of Adam before thee, and whither art thou bound?" When Janshah heard his words he wept bitterly at the thought of all the hardships he had suffered and his tears choked his speech. Quoth the Shaykh, "O my son, leave weeping; for indeed thou makest my heart ache." So saying, he rose and set somewhat of food before him and said to him, "Eat." He ate and praised Allah Almighty; after which the old man besought him saying, "O my son, I would have thee tell me thy tale and acquaint me with thine adventures." So Janshah related to him all that had befallen him, from first to last, whereat the Shaykh marvelled with exceeding marvel. Then said the Prince, "Prithee inform me who is the lord of this valley and to whom doth

this great castle belong?" Answered the old man, "Know, O my son, this valley and all that is therein and this castle with all it containeth belong to the lord Solomon, son of David (on both be peace!). As for me, my name is Shaykh Nasr,[545] King of the Birds; for thou must know that the lord Solomon committed this castle to my charge,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shaykh Nasr pursued, "Thou must know that the lord Solomon committed this castle to my charge and taught me the language of birds and made me ruler over all the fowls which be in the world; wherefore each and every come hither once in the twelvemonth, and I pass them in review: then they depart; and this is why I dwell here." When Janshah heard this, he wept sore and said to the Shaykh, "O my father, how shall I do to get back to my native land?" Replied the old man, "Know, O my son, that thou art near to the mountain Kaf, and there is no departing for thee from this place till the birds come, when I will give thee in charge to one of them, and he will bear thee to thy native country. Meanwhile tarry with me here and eat and drink and divert thyself with viewing the apartments of this castle." So Janshah abode with Shaykh Nasr, taking his pleasure in the Wady and eating of its fruits and laughing and making merry with the old man, and leading a right joyous life till the day appointed for the birds to pay their annual visit to their Governor. Thereupon the Shaykh said to him, "O Janshah, take the keys of the castle and solace thyself with exploring all its apartments and viewing whatever be therein, but as regards such a room, beware and again beware of opening its door; and if thou gainsay me and open it and enter therethrough nevermore shalt thou know fair fortune." He repeated this charge again and again with much instance; then he went forth to meet the birds, which came up, kind by kind, and kissed his hands. Such was his case; but as regards Janshah, he went round about the castle, opening the various doors and viewing the apartments into which they led, till he came to the room which Shaykh Nasr had warned him not to open or enter. He looked at the door and its fashion pleased him, for it had on it a padlock of gold, and he said to himself, "This room must be goodlier than all the others; would Heaven I wist what is within it, that Shaykh Nasr should forbid me to open its door! There is no help but that I enter and see what is in this apartment; for whatso is decreed unto the creature perforce he must fulfil." So he put out his hand and unlocked the door and entering, found himself before a great basin; and 344 hard by it stood a little pavilion, builded all of gold and silver and crystal, with lattice-windows of jacinth. The floor was paved with green beryl and balass rubies and emeralds and other jewels, set in the ground-work mosaic-fashion, and in the midmost of the pavilion was a jetting fountain in a golden basin, full of water and girt about with figures of beasts and birds, cunningly

wrought of gold and silver and casting water from their mouths. When the zephyr blew on them, it entered their ears and therewith the figures sang out with birdlike song, each in its own tongue. Beside the fountain was a great open saloon with a high daïs whereon stood a vast throne of carnelian, inlaid with pearls and jewels, over which was spread a tent of green silk fifty cubits in width and embroidered with gems fit for seal-rings and purfled with precious metals. Within this tent was a closet containing the carpet of the lord Solomon (on whom be peace!); and the pavilion was compassed about with a vast garden full of fruit-trees and streams; while near the palace were beds of roses and basil and eglantine and all manner sweet-smelling herbs and flowers. And the trees bore on the same boughs fruits fresh and dry and the branches swayed gracefully to the wooing of the wind. All this was in that one apartment and Janshah wondered thereat till he was weary of wonderment; and he set out to solace himself in the palace and the garden and to divert himself with the quaint and curious things they contained. And first looking at the basin he saw that the gravels of its bed were gems and jewels and noble metals; and many other strange things were in that apartment.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Janshah saw many strange things and admirable in that apartment. Then he entered the pavilion and mounting the throne, fell asleep under the tent set up thereover. He slept for a time and, presently awaking, walked forth and sat down on a stool before the door. As he sat, marvelling at the goodliness of that place, there flew up from mid-sky three birds, in dove-form but big as eagles, and lighted on the brink of the basin, where they sported awhile. 345 Then they put off their feathers and became three maidens,[546] as they were moons, that had not their like in the whole world. They plunged into the basin and swam about and disported themselves and laughed, while Janshah marvelled at their beauty and loveliness and the grace and symmetry of their shapes. Presently, they came up out of the water and began walking about and taking their solace in the garden; and Janshah seeing them land was like to lose his wits. He rose and followed them, and when he overtook them, he saluted them and they returned his salam; after which quoth he, “Who are ye, O illustrious Princesses, and whence come ye?” Replied the youngest damsel, “We are from the invisible world of Almighty Allah and we come hither to divert ourselves.” He marvelled at their beauty and said to the youngest, “Have ruth on me and deign kindness to me and take pity on my case and on all that hath befallen me in my life.” Rejoined she, “Leave this talk and wend thy ways”; whereat the tears streamed from his eyes, and he sighed heavily and repeated these couplets:—

She shone out in the garden in garments all of green, ✿ With open vest and collars and flowing hair beseen:

"What is thy name?" I asked her, and she replied, "I'm she ✿ Who roasts the hearts of lovers on coals of love and teen."

Of passion and its anguish to her I made my moan; ✿ "Upon a rock," she answered, "thy plaints are wasted clean."

"Even if thy heart," I told her, "be rock in very deed, ✿ Yet hath God made fair water well from the rock, I ween."[547]

When the maidens heard his verses, they laughed and played and sang and made merry. Then he brought them somewhat of fruit, and they ate and drank and slept with him till the morning, when they donned their feather-suits, and resuming dove shape flew off and went their way. But as he saw them disappearing from sight, his reason well-nigh fled with them, and he gave a great cry and fell down in a fainting fit and lay a-swooning all that day. While 346 he was in this case Shaykh Nasr returned from the Parliament of the Fowls and sought for Janshah, that he might send him with them to his native land, but found him not and knew that he had entered the forbidden room. Now he had already said to the birds, "With me is a young man, a mere youth, whom destiny brought hither from a distant land; and I desire of you that ye take him up and carry him to his own country." And all answered, "We hear and we obey." So he ceased not searching for Janshah till he came to the forbidden door and seeing it open he entered and found the Prince lying a-swoon under a tree. He fetched scented waters and sprinkled them on his face, whereupon he revived and turned——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Tenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Shaykh Nasr saw Janshah lying a-swoon under the tree he fetched him somewhat of scented waters and sprinkled them on his face. Thereupon he revived and turned right and left, but seeing none by him save the Shaykh, sighed heavily and repeated these couplets:—

"Like fullest moon she shines on happiest night, ✿ Soft-sided fair, with slender shape bedight.

Her eye-babes charm the world with gramarye; ✿ Her lips remind of rose and ruby light.

Her jetty locks make night upon her hips; ✿ Ware, lovers, ware ye of that curl's despight!

Yea, soft her sides are, but in love her heart ✿ Out-hardens flint, surpasses syenite:

And bows of eyebrows shower glancey shafts ✿ Despite the distance never fail to smite.

Then, ah, her beauty! all the fair it passes; ✿ Nor any rival her who see the light."

When Shaykh Nasr heard these verses, he said, "O my son, did I not warn thee not to open that door and enter that room? But now, O my son, tell me what thou sawest therein and acquaint me with all that betided thee." So Janshah related to him all that had passed between him and the three maidens, and Shaykh Nasr, who sat listening in silence said, "Know, O my son, that 347 these three maidens are of the daughters of the Jann and come hither every year for a day, to divert themselves and make merry until mid-afternoon, when they return to their own country." Janshah asked, "And

where is their country?"; and the old man answered, "By Allah, O my son, I wot not:" presently adding, "but now take heart and put away this love from thee and come with me, that I may send thee to thine own land with the birds." When Janshah heard this, he gave a great cry and fell down in a trance; and presently he came to himself, and said, "O my father, indeed I care not to return to my native land: all I want is to foregather with these maidens and know, O my father, that I will never again name my people, though I die before thee." Then he wept and cried, "Enough for me that I look upon the face of her I love, although it be only once in the year!" And he sighed deeply and repeated these couplets:—

Would Heaven the Phantom[548] spared the friend at night ✿ And would this love for man were ever dight!
Were not my heart a-fire for love of you, ✿ Tears ne'er had stained my cheeks nor dimmed my sight.
By night and day, I bid my heart to bear ✿ Its griefs, while fires of love my body blight.

Then he fell at Shaykh Nasr's feet and kissed them and wept sore, crying, "Have pity on me, so Allah take pity on thee and aid me in my strait so Allah aid thee!" Replied the old man, "By Allah, O my son, I know nothing of these maidens nor where may be their country; but, O my son, if thy heart be indeed set on one of them, tarry with me till this time next year for they will assuredly reappear; and, when the day of their coming draweth near, hide thyself under a tree in the garden. As soon as they have alighted and doffed their feather-robes and plunged into the lake and are swimming about at a distance from their clothes, seize the vest of her whom thy soul desireth. When they see thee, they will come a-bank and she, whose coat thou hast taken, will accost thee and say to thee with the sweetest of speech and the most witching of smiles, "Give me my dress, O my brother, that I may don it and veil my nakedness withal." But if thou yield to her prayer and 348 give her back the vest thou wilt never win thy wish: nay, she will don it and fly away to her folk and thou wilt nevermore see her again. Now when thou hast gained the vest, clap it under thine armpit and hold it fast, till I return from the Parliament of the Fowls, when I will make accord between thee and her and send thee back to thy native land, and the maiden with thee. And this, O my son, is all I can do for thee, nothing more."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth Shaykh Nasr to Janshah, "Hold fast the feather-robe of her thy soul desireth and give it not back to her till I return from the Parliament of the Fowls. And this, O my son, is all I can do for thee, nothing more." When Janshah heard this, his heart was solaced and he abode with Shaykh Nasr yet another year, counting the days as they passed until the day of the coming of the birds. And when at last the appointed time arrived the old man said to him, "Do as I enjoined thee and charged thee with the maidens in the matter of the feather-dress, for I go to meet the birds;" and Janshah replied, "I hear and I obey, O

my father." Then the Shaykh departed whilst the Prince walked into the garden and hid himself under a tree, where none could see him. Here he abode a first day and a second and a third, but the maidens came not; whereat he was sore troubled and wept and sighed from a heart hard tried; and he ceased not weeping and wailing till he fainted away. When he came to himself, he fell to looking now at the basin and now at the welkin, and anon at the earth and anon at the open country, whilst his heart grieved for stress of love-longing. As he was in this case, behold, the three doves appeared in the firmament, eagle-sized as before, and flew till they reached the garden and lighted down beside the basin. They turned right and left; but saw no one, man or Jann; so they doffed their feather-suits and became three maidens. Then they plunged into the basin and swam about, laughing and frolicking; and all were mother-naked and fair as bars of virgin silver. Quoth the eldest, "O my sister, I fear lest there be some one lying ambushed for us in the pavilion." 349 Answered the second, "O sister, since the days of King Solomon, none hath entered the pavilion, be he man or Jann;" and the youngest added, laughing, "By Allah, O my sisters, if there be any hidden there, he will assuredly take none but me." Then they continued sporting and laughing and Janshah's heart kept fluttering for stress of passion: but he hid behind the tree so that he saw without being seen. Presently they swam out to the middle of the basin leaving their clothes on the bank. Hereupon he sprang to his feet, and running like the darting leven to the basin's brink, snatched up the feather-vest of the youngest damsel, her on whom his heart was set and whose name was Shamsah the Sun-maiden. At this the girls turned and seeing him, were affrighted and veiled their shame from him in the water. Then they swam near shore and looking on his favour saw that he was bright faced as the moon on the night of fullness and asked him, "Who art thou and how camest thou hither and why hast thou taken the clothes of the lady Shamsah?"; and he answered, "Come hither to me and I will tell you my tale." Quoth Shamsah, "What deed is this, and why hast thou taken my clothes, rather than those of my sisters?" Quoth he, "O light of mine eyes, come forth of the water, and I will recount thee my case and acquaint thee why I chose thee out." Quoth she, "O my lord and coolth of my eyes and fruit of my heart, give me my clothes, that I may put them on and cover my nakedness withal; then will I come forth to thee." But he replied, "O Princess of beautiful ones, how can I give thee back thy clothes and slay myself for love-longing? Verily, I will not give them to thee, till Shaykh Nasr, the king of the birds, shall return." Quoth she, "If thou wilt not give me my clothes withdraw a little apart from us, that my sisters may land and dress themselves and lend me somewhat wherewithal to cover my shame." "I hear and obey," answered he, and walked away from them into the pavilion, whereupon the three Princesses came out and the two elder, donning their dress, gave Shamsah somewhat thereof, not enough to fly withal, and she put it on and came forth of the water, and stood before him, as she were the rising full-moon or a browsing gazelle. Then Shamsah entered the pavilion, where Janshah was still sitting on the throne; so she saluted him and

taking seat near him, said, “O fair of face, thou hast undone thyself and me; but tell us thy adventures that we may ken how it is with thee.” At these words he wept till he drenched his 350 dress with his tears; and when she saw that he was distracted for love of her, she rose and taking him by the hand, made him sit by her side and wiped away the drops with her sleeve; and said she, “O fair of face, leave this weeping and tell us thy tale.” So he related to her all that had befallen him and described to her all he had seen,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lady Shamsah said to Janshah, “Tell us thy tale;” so he related to her all that had befallen him; and, after she had lent attentive ear she sighed and said, “O my lord, since thou art so fondly in love with me, give me my dress, that I may fly to my folk, I and my sisters, and tell them what affection thou hast conceived for me, and after I will come back to thee and carry thee to thine own country.” When he heard this, he wept sore and replied, “Is it lawful to thee before Allah to slay me wrongfully?” She asked, “O my lord, why should I do such wrongous deed?”; and he answered, “If I give thee thy gear thou wilt fly away from me, and I shall die forthright.” Princess Shamsah laughed at this and so did her sisters; then said she to him, “Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for I must needs marry thee.” So saying, she bent down to him and embraced him and pressing him to her breast kissed him between the eyes and on his cheeks. They clipped and clasped each other awhile, after which they drew apart and sat down on the throne. Then the eldest Princess went out into the garden and, plucking somewhat of fruits and flowers, brought them into the pavilion; and they ate and drank and laughed and sported and made merry. Now Janshah was singular in beauty and loveliness and slender shape and symmetry and grace, and the Princess Shamsah said to him, “O my beloved, by Allah, I love thee with exceeding love and will never leave thee!” When he heard her words, his breast broadened and he laughed for joy till he showed his teeth; and they abode thus awhile in mirth and gladness and frolic. And when they were at the height of their pleasure and joyance, behold, Shaykh Nasr returned from the Parliament of the Fowls and came in to them; whereupon they all rose to him and saluted 351 him and kissed his hands. He gave them welcome and bade them be seated. So they sat down and he said to Princess Shamsah, “Verily this youth loveth thee with exceeding love; Allah upon thee, deal kindly with him, for he is of the great ones of mankind and of the sons of the kings, and his father ruleth over the land of Kabul and his reign compasseth a mighty empire.” Quoth she, “I hear and I obey thy behest”; and, kissing the Shaykh’s hands, stood before him in respect. Quoth he, “If thou say sooth, swear to me by Allah that thou wilt never betray him, what while thou abidest in the bonds of life.” So she swore a great oath that she would never betray Janshah, but would assuredly marry him, and added, “Know, O Shaykh

Nasr, that I never will forsake him." The Shaykh believed in her oath and said to Janshah, "Thanks be to Allah, who hath made you arrive at this understanding!" Hereupon the Prince rejoiced with exceeding joy, and he and Shamsah abode three months with Shaykh Nasr, feasting and toying and making merry.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that, Janshah and the lady Shamsah abode three months with Shaykh Nasr, feasting and toying and making merry. And at the end of that time she said to Janshah, "I wish to go with thee to thy motherland, where thou shalt marry me and we will abide there." "To hear is to obey," answered he and took counsel with Shaykh Nasr, who said to him, "Go thou home, I commend her to thy care." Then said she, "O Shaykh Nasr, bid him render me my feather-suit." So the Shaykh bade Janshah give it to her, and he went straightways into the pavilion and brought it out for her. Thereupon she donned it and said to him, "Mount my back and shut thine eyes and stop thine ears, so thou mayst not hear the roar of the revolving sphere; and keep fast hold of my feathers, lest thou fall off." He did as she bade him and, as she stretched her wings to fly, Shaykh Nasr said, "Wait a while till I describe to thee the land Kabul, lest you twain miss your way." So she delayed till he had said his say and had bidden them farewell, commending the Prince to her care. She took leave of her sisters and bade them return to her folk and tell them what had befallen her with Janshah; then, rising into the air without stay or delay she flew 352 off, like the wafts of the wind or the lamping leven. Her sisters also took flight and returning home delivered her message to their people. And she stayed not her course from the forenoon till the hour of mid-afternoon prayer (Janshah being still on her back), when she espied afar off a Wady abounding in trees and streams and she said to Janshah, "I am thinking to alight in this valley, that we may solace ourselves amongst its trees and herbage and here rest for the night." Quoth he, "Do what seemeth meet to thee!" So she swooped down from the lift and alighted in the Wady, when Janshah dismounted and kissing her between the eyes,[549] sat with her awhile on the bank of a river there; then they rose and wandered about the valley, taking their pleasure therein and eating of the fruits of the trees, until nightfall, when they lay down under a tree and slept till the morning dawned. As soon as it was day, the Princess arose and, bidding Janshah mount, flew on with him till noon, when she perceived by the appearance of the buildings which Shaykh Nasr had described to her, that they were nearing the city Kabul. So she swooped down from the welkin and alighted in a wide plain, a blooming champaign, wherein were gazelles straying and springs playing and rivers flowing and ripe fruits growing. So Janshah dismounted and kissed her between the eyes; and she asked him, "O my beloved and coolth of mine eyes, knowest thou how many days' journey we have come since yesterday?"; and he answered, "No," when she said, "We have come thirty months' journey."

Quoth he, “Praised be Allah for safety!” Then they sat down side by side and ate and drank and toyed and laughed. And whilst they were thus pleasantly engaged, behold, there came up to them two of the King’s Mamelukes of those who had been of the Prince’s company; one of them was he whom he had left with the horses, when he embarked in the fishing-boat and the other had been of his escort in the chase. As soon as they saw Janshah, both knew him and saluted him; then said they, “With thy leave, we will go to thy sire and bear him the glad tidings of thy coming.” Replied the Prince, “Go ye to my father and acquaint him with my case, and fetch us tents, for we will tarry here seven days to rest ourselves till he make ready his retinue to meet us, that we may enter in stateliest state.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Janshah said to the two Mamelukes, “Go ye to my sire and acquaint him with my case and fetch us tents, for we will abide here seven days to rest ourselves, till he make ready his retinue to meet us, that we may enter in the stateliest state.” So the officers hastened back to King Teghmus and said to him, “Good news, O King of the age!” Asked he, “What good tidings bring ye: is my son Janshah come back?”; and they answered, “Yes, thy son Janshah hath returned from his strangerhood and is now near at hand in the Kiráni mead.” Now when the King heard this, he joyed with great joy and fell down in a swoon for excess of gladness; then, coming to himself, he bade his Wazir give each of the Mamelukes a splendid suit of honour and a sum of money. The minister replied, “I hear and obey,” and forthright did his bidding and said to them, “Take this in turn for the good tidings ye bring, whether ye lie or say sooth.” They replied, “Indeed we lie not, for but now we sat with him and saluted him and kissed his hands and he bade us fetch him tents, for that he would sojourn in the meadow seven days, till such time as the Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees should come out to meet him.” Quoth the King, “How is it with my son?” and quoth they, “He hath with him a Houri, as he had brought her out of Paradise.” At this, King Teghmus bade beat the kettledrums and sound the trumpets for gladness, and despatched messengers to announce the good news to Janshah’s mother and to the wives of the Emirs and Wazirs and Lords of the realm: so the criers spread themselves about the city and acquainted the people with the coming of Prince Janshah. Then the King made ready, and, setting out for the Kirani meadow with his horsemen and footmen, came upon Janshah who was sitting at rest with the lady Shamsah beside him and, behold, all suddenly drew in sight. The Prince rose to his feet and walked forward to meet them; and the troops knew him and dismounted, to salute him and kiss his hands: after which he set out preceded by the men in single file till he came to his sire, who, at sight of his son threw himself from his horse’s back and clasped him to his bosom and wept flooding tears of joy. Then

they took horse again with the retinue riding to the right and left and fared forward till they came to the river-banks; when the troops alighted and pitched 354 their tents and pavilions and standards to the blare of trump and the piping of fife and the dub-a-dub of drum and tom-tom. Moreover the King bade the tent-pitchers set up a pavilion of red silk for the Princess Shamsah, who put off her scanty raiment of feathers for fine robes and, entering the pavilion, there took seat. And as she sat in her beauty, behold, the King and his son Janshah came in to her, and when she saw Teghmus, she rose and kissed ground before him. The King sat down and seating Janshah on his right hand and Princess Shamsah on his left, bade her welcome and said to his son, "Tell me all that hath befallen thee in this thy long strangerhood." So Janshah related to him the whole of his adventures from first to last, whereat he marvelled with exceeding marvel and turning to the Princess, said, "Laud to Allah for that He hath caused thee to reunite me with my son! 'Verily this is of His exceeding bounty!'"[550]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Teghmus said to the lady Shamsah, "Laud to Allah for that He hath caused thee to reunite me with my son! 'Verily this is of His exceeding bounty.' And now I would have thee ask of me what thou wilt, that I may do it in thine honour." Quoth she, "I ask of thee that thou build me a palace in the midst of a flower-garden, with water running under it." And the King answered, "I hear and obey." And behold, up came Janshah's mother, attended by all the wives of the Wazirs and Emirs and nobles and city notables. When her son had sight of her, he rose and leaving the tent, went forth to meet her and they embraced a long while, whilst the Queen wept for excess of joy and with tears trickling from her eyes repeated the following verses:—

Joy so o'ercometh me, for stress of joy ✿ In that which gladdeneth me I fain shed tears:—
Tears are become your nature, O my eyes, ✿ Who weep for joyance as for griefs and fears.

And they complained to each other of all their hearts had suffered from the long separation. Then the King departed to his pavilion 355 and Janshah carried his mother to his own tent, where they sat talking till there came up some of the lady Shamsah's attendants who said, "The Princess is now walking hither in order to salute thee." When the Queen heard this, she rose and going to meet Shamsah, saluted her and seated her awhile by her side. Presently the Queen and her retinue of noble women, the spouses of the Emirs and Grandees, returned with Princess Shamsah to the tent occupied by her daughter-in-law and sat there. Meanwhile, King Teghmus gave great largesse to his levies and lieges and rejoiced in his son with exceeding joy, and they tarried there ten days, feasting and merry-making and living a most joyous life. At the end of this time, the King commanded a march and they all returned to the capital, so he took horse surrounded by all the troops with the Wazirs and Chamberlains to his

right and left: nor ceased they faring till they entered the city, which was decorated after the goodliest fashion; for the folk had adorned the houses with precious stuffs and jewellery and spread costly brocades under the hoofs of the horses. The drums beat for glad tidings and the Grandees of the kingdom rejoiced and brought rich gifts and the lookers on were filled with amazement. Furthermore, they fed the mendicants and Fakirs and held high festival for the space of ten days, and the lady Shamsah joyed with exceeding joy whenas she saw this. Then King Teghmus summoned architects and builders and men of art and bade them build a palace in that garden. So they straightway proceeded to do his bidding; and, when Janshah knew of his sire's command, he caused the artificers to fetch a block of white marble and carve it and hollow it in the semblance of a chest; which being done, he took the feather-vest of Princess Shamsah wherewith she had flown with him through the air: then, sealing the cover with melted lead, he ordered them to bury the box in the foundations and build over it the arches whereon the palace was to rest. They did as he bade them, nor was it long before the palace was finished: then they furnished it and it was a magnificent edifice, standing in the midst of the garden, with streams flowing under its walls.[551] Upon this the King caused Janshah's wedding to be celebrated with the greatest splendour and they brought the bride to the 356 castle in state procession and went their ways. When the lady Shamsah entered, she smelt the scent of her feather-gear——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the lady Shamsah entered the new palace, she smelt the scent of her flying feather-gear and knew where it was and determined to take it. So she waited till midnight, when Janshah was drowned in sleep; then she rose and going straight to the place where the marble-coffer was buried under the arches she hollowed the ground alongside till she came upon it; when she removed the lead wherewith it was soldered and, taking out the feather-suit, put it on. Then she flew high in air and perching on the pinnacle of the palace, cried out to those who were therein, saying, "I pray you fetch me Janshah, that I may bid him farewell." So they told him and he came out and, seeing her on the terrace-roof of the palace, clad in her feather-raiment, asked her, "Why hast thou done this deed?"; and she answered "O my beloved and coolth of mine eyes and fruit of my heart, by Allah, I love thee passing dear and I rejoice with exceeding joy in that I have restored thee to thy friends and country and thou hast seen thy mother and father. And now, if thou love me as I love thee, come to me at Takní, the Castle of Jewels." So saying, she flew away forthright to find her family and friends, and Janshah fell down fainting, being well-nigh dead for despair. They carried the news to King Teghmus, who mounted at once and riding to the palace, found his son lying senseless on the ground; whereat he wept knowing that the swoon was caused by the loss of his love,

and sprinkled rose-water on his face.[552] When the Prince came to himself and saw his sire sitting at his head, he wept at the thought of losing his wife and the King asked what had befallen him. So he replied, "Know, O my father, that the lady Shamsah is of the daughters of the Jann and she hath done such and such" 357(telling him all that had happened); and the King said, "O my son, be not troubled and thus concerned, for I will assemble all the merchants and wayfarers in the land and enquire of them anent that castle. If we can find out where it is, we will journey thither and demand the Princess Shamsah of her people; and we hope in Allah the Almighty that He will give her back to thee and thou shalt consummate thy marriage." Then he went out and, calling his four Wazirs without stay or delay, bade them assemble all the merchants and voyagers in the city and question them of Takni, the Castle of Jewels, adding, "Whoso knoweth it and can guide us thither, I will surely give him fifty thousand gold pieces." The Wazirs accordingly went forth at once and did as the King bade them, but neither trader nor traveller could give them news of Takni, the Castle of Jewels; so they returned and told the King. Thereupon he bade bring beautiful slave-girls and concubines and singers and players upon instruments of music, whose like are not found but with the Kings: and sent them to Janshah, so haply they might divert him from the love of the lady Shamsah. Moreover, he despatched couriers and spies to all the lands and islands and climes, to enquire for Takni, the Castle of Jewels, and they made quest for it two months long, but none could give them news thereof. So they returned and told the King, whereupon he wept bitter tears and going in to his son found Janshah sitting amidst the concubines and singers and players on harp and zither and so forth, not one of whom could console him for the lady Shamsah. Quoth Teghmus, "O my son, I can find none who knoweth this Castle of Jewels; but I will bring thee a fairer than she." When Janshah heard this, his eyes ran over with tears and he recited these two couplets:—

Patience hath fled, but passion fareth not; ✿ And all my frame with pine is fever-hot:

When will the days my lot with Shamsah join? ✿ Lo, all my bones with passion-lowe go rot!

Now there was a deadly feud between King Teghmus and a certain King of Hind, by name Kafíd, who had great plenty of troops and warriors and champions; and under his hand were a thousand puissant chieftains, each ruling over a thousand tribes whereof every one could muster four thousand cavaliers. He reigned over a thousand cities each guarded by a thousand forts 358and he had four Wazirs and under him ruled Emirs, Princes and Sovereigns; and indeed he was a King of great might and prowess whose armies filled the whole earth. Now King Teghmus had made war upon him and ravaged his reign and slain his men and of his treasures had made gain. But when it came to King Kafid's knowledge that King Teghmus was occupied with the love of his son, so that he neglected the affairs of the state and his troops were grown few and weak by reason of his care and concern for his son's state, he summoned his Wazirs and Emirs and said to them, "Ye all know that whilom King Teghmus invaded

our dominions and plundered our possessions and slew my father and brethren, nor indeed is there one of you, but he hath harried his lands and carried off his goods and made prize of his wives and slain some kinsmen of his. Now I have heard this day that he is absorbed in the love of his son Janshah, and that his troops are grown few and weak; and this is the time to take our blood-revenge on him. So make ready for the march and don ye your harness of battle; and let nothing stay or delay you, and we will go to him and fall upon him and slay him and his son, and possess ourselves of his reign."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventeenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kafid, King of Hind, commanded his troops and armies to mount and make for the dominions of King Teghmus, saying, "Get ye ready for the march and don ye your harness of war; and let nothing stay or delay you; so we will go to him and fall upon him and slay him and his son and possess ourselves of his reign." They all answered with one voice, saying, "We hear and obey," and fell at once to equipping themselves and levying troops; and they ceased not their preparations for three months and, when all was in readiness, they beat the drums and sounded the trumps and flew the flags and banners: then King Kafid set out at the head of his host and they fared on till they reached the frontiers of the land of Kabul, the dominions of King Teghmus, where they began to harry the land and do havoc among the folk, slaughtering the old and taking the young prisoners. When the news reached King Teghmus, he was wroth with exceeding wrath [359] and assembling his Grandees and officers of state, said to them, "Know that Kafid hath come to our land and hath entered the realm we command and is resolved to fight us hand to hand; and he leadeth troops and champions and warriors, whose number none knoweth save Allah Almighty; what deme deem ye?" Replied they, "O King of the age, let us go out to him and give him battle and drive him forth of our country; and thus deem we." So he bade them prepare for battle and brought forth to them hauberks and cuirasses and helmets and swords and all manner of warlike gear, such as lay low warriors and do to death the champions of mankind. So the troops and braves and champions flocked together and they set up the standards and beat the drums and sounded the trumpets and clashed the cymbals and piped on the pipes; and King Teghmus marched out at the head of his army, to meet the hosts of Hind. And when he drew near the foe, he called a halt, and encamping with his host in the Zahrán Valley,[553] hard by the frontier of Kabul despatched to King Kafid by messenger the following letter:—"Know that what thou hast done is of the doings of the villain rabble and wert thou indeed a King, the son of a King, thou hadst not done thus, nor hadst thou invaded my kingdom and slain my subjects and plundered their property and wrought unright upon them. Knowest thou not that all this is the fashion of a tyrant? Verily, had I known that thou durst harry my dominions, I had come to

thee before thy coming and had prevented thee this long while since. Yet, even now, if thou wilt retire and leave mischief between us and thee, well and good; but if thou return not, meet me in the listed field and measure thyself with me in cut and thrust." Lastly he sealed his letter and committed to an officer of his army and sent with him spies to spy him out news. The messenger fared forth with the missive and, drawing near the enemy's camp, he descried a multitude of tents of silk and satin, with pennons of blue sendal, and amongst them a great pavilion of red satin, surrounded by a host of guards. He ceased not to advance till he made this tent and found on asking that it was that of King Kafid whom he saw seated on a chair set with jewels, in the midst of his Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees. So he brought out the letter and straightway there came up to him a company of 360 guards, who took it from him and carried it to the King; and Kafid read it and wrote a reply to this purport:—"After the usual invocations, We let King Teghmus know that we mean to take our blood-revenge on thee and wash out our stain and waste thy reign and rend the curtain in twain and slay the old men and enslave the young men. But to-morrow, come thou forth to combat in the open plain, and to show thee thrust and fight will I deign." Then he sealed the letter and delivered it to the messenger, who carried it to King Teghmus——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Kafid delivered the answering letter to the messenger who carried it to King Teghmus and delivered it, after kissing the ground between his hands. Then he reported all that he had seen, saying, "O King of the age, I espied warriors and horsemen and footmen beyond count nor can I assist thee to the amount." When Teghmus read the reply and comprehended its contents, he was with furious rage enraged and bade his Wazir Ayn Zar take horse and fall upon the army of Kafid with a thousand cavaliers, in the middle watch of the night when they would easily ride home and slay all before them. Ayn Zar replied, "I hear and I obey," and at once went forth to do his bidding. Now King Kafid had a Wazir, Ghatrafán[554] by name, whom he bade take five thousand horse and attack the host of King Teghmus in like manner. So Ghatrafan did his bidding and set out on his enterprise marching till midnight. Thus the two parties met halfway and the Wazir Ghatrafan fell upon the Wazir Ayn Zar. Then man cried out against man and there befel sore battle between them till break of day, when Kafid's men were routed and fled back to their King in confusion. As Kafid saw this, he was wroth beyond measure and said to the fugitives, "Woe to you! What hath befallen you, that ye have lost your captains?" and they replied, "O King of the age, as the Wazir Ghatrafan rode forth to fall upon King Teghmus, there appeared to us halfway and when night was half over, the Wazir Ayn Zar, with cavaliers and champions, and we met on the slopes 361 of Wady Zahran; but ere we were ware we found ourselves

in the enemy's midst, eye meeting eye; and we fought a fierce fight with them from midnight till morning, many on either side being slain. Then the Wazir and his men fell to shouting and smiting the elephants on the face till they took fright at their furious blows, and turning tail to flee, trampled down the horsemen, whilst none could see other for the clouds of dust. The blood ran like a rain-torrent and had we not fled, we had all been cut off to the last man." When King Kafid heard this, he exclaimed, "May the sun not bless you and may he be wroth with you and sore be his wrath!" Meanwhile Ayn Zar, the Wazir, returned to King Teghmus and told him what had happened. The King gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced greatly and bade beat the drums and sound the trumpets, in honour of the victory; after which he called the roll of his troops and behold, two hundred of his stoutest champions had fallen. Then King Kafid marched his army into the field and drew them out ordered for battle in fifteen lines of ten thousand horse each, under the command of three hundred captains, mounted on elephants and chosen from amongst the doughtiest of his warriors and his champions. So he set up his standards and banners and beat the drums and blew the trumpets whilst the braves sallied forth, offering battle. As for King Teghmus, he drew out his troops line after line and lo! there were ten of ten thousand horse each, and with him were an hundred champions, riding on his right hand and on his left. Then fared forward to the fight each renowned knight, and the hosts clashed together in their might, whilst the earth for all its wideness was straitened because of the multitude of the cavaliers and ears were deafened by drums and cymbals beating and pipes and hautboys sounding and trumpets blaring and by the thunder of horse-tramp and the shouting of men. The dust arched in canopy over their heads and they fought a sore fight from the first of the day till the fall of darkness, when they separated and each army drew off to its own camp.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that each army drew off to its own camp. Then King Kafid called the roll of his 362 troops and, finding that he had lost five thousand men, raged with great rage; and King Teghmus mustered his men and seeing that of them were slain three thousand riders, the bravest of his braves, was wroth with exceeding wrath. On the morrow King Kafid again pushed into the plain and did duty as before, while each man strave his best to snatch victory for himself; and Kafid cried out to his men, saying, "Is there any of you will sally forth into the field and open us the chapter of fray and fight?" And behold came out from the ranks a warrior named Barkayk, a mighty man of war who, when he reached the King, alighted from his elephant and kissing the earth before him, sought of him leave to challenge the foe to combat singular. Then he mounted his elephant and driving into mid-field, cried out, "Who is for duello, who is for derring-do, who is for knightly devoir?" When King Teghmus heard this, he said to his troops, "Which of you will do

single battle with this sworder?" And behold, a cavalier came out from the ranks, mounted on a charger, mighty of make, and driving up to the King kissed the earth before him and craved his permission to engage Barkayk. Then he mounted again and charged at Barkayk, who said to him, "Who art thou and what art thou called, that thou makest mock of me by coming out against me and challenging me, alone?" "My name is Ghazanfar[555] son of Kamkhíl," replied the Kabul champion; and the other, "I have heard tell of thee in my own country; so up and do battle between the ranks of the braves!" Hearing these words Ghazanfar drew a mace of iron from under his thigh and Barkayk took his good sword in hand, and they laid on load till Barkayk smote Ghazanfar on the head with his blade, but the morion turned the blow and no hurt befel him therefrom; whereupon Ghazanfar, in his turn, dealt Barkayk so terrible a stroke on the head with his mace, that he levelled him down to his elephant's back and slew him. With this out sallied another and crying to Ghazanfar, "Who be thou that thou shouldst slay my brother?"; hurled a javelin at him with such force that it pierced his thigh and nailed his coat of mail to his flesh. Then Ghazanfar, feeling his hurt, hent his sword in hand and smote at Barkayk's brother and cut him in sunder, and he fell to the earth, wallowing in his life-blood; whilst the challenger of Kabul galloped back to King Teghmus. Now when Kafid saw the death of his champions, he cried out to his troops, saying, 363 "Down with you to the plain and strike with might and main!" as also did King Teghmus, and the two armies fought the fiercest of fights. Horse neighed against horse and man cried out upon man and brands were bared, whilst the drums beat and the trumpets blared; and horseman charged upon horseman and every brave of renown pushed forward, whilst the faint-heart fled from the lunge of lance and men heard nought but slogan-cry and the clash and clang of armoury. Slain were the warriors that were slain[556] and they stayed not from the mellay till the decline of the sun in the heavenly dome, when the Kings drew off their armies and returned each to its own camp.[557] Then King Teghmus took tally of his men and found that he had lost five thousand, and four standards had been broken to bits, whereat he was sore an-angered; whilst King Kafid in like manner counted his troops and found that he had lost six hundred, the bravest of his braves, and nine standards were wanting to the full tale. The two armies ceased joining battle and rested on their arms three days' space, after which Kafid wrote a letter and sent it by messenger to a King called Fákun al-Kalb (with whom he claimed kinship by the spindle side): and this kinsman forthwith mustered his men and marched to meet the King of Hind.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Fakun mustered his men and marched to meet the King of Hind: and whileas King Teghmus was sitting at his pleasance, there came one in to him and said, "I see from afar a cloud of dust spireing

high in air and overspreading the lift." So he commanded a company to fare forth and learn the meaning of this; and, crying, "To hear is to obey," they sallied out and presently returned and said to him, "O King, when we drew near the cloud of dust, the wind rent it and it lifted and showed seven standards and under each standard three thousand horse, making for King Kafid's camp." 364 Then King Fakun joined himself to the King of Hind and saluting him, asked, "How is it with thee, and what be this war in which thou warrest?"; and Kafid answered, "Knowest thou not that King Teghmus is my enemy and the murtherer of my father and brothers? Wherefore I am come forth to do battle with him and take my blood-wreak on him." Quoth Fakun, "The blessing of the sun be upon thee!"; and the King of Hind carried King Fakun al-Kalb to his tent and rejoiced in him with exceeding joy. Such was the case of the two hostile Kings; but as regards King Janshah, he abode two months shut up in his palace, without seeing his father or allowing one of the damsels in his service to come in to him; at the end of which time he grew troubled and restless and said to his attendants, "What aileth my father that he cometh not to visit me?" They told him that he had gone forth to do battle with King Kafid, whereupon quoth Janshah, "Bring me my steed, that I may go to my sire." They replied, "We hear and obey," and brought his horse; but he said in himself, "I am taken up with the thought of myself and my love and I deem well to mount and ride for the city of the Jews, where haply Allah shall grant me the boon to meet the merchant who hired me for the ruby-business and may be he will deal with me as he dealt before, for none knoweth whence good cometh." So he took with him a thousand horse and set out, the folk saying, "At last Janshah hath fared forth to join his father in the field, and to fight by his side;" and they stinted not pushing on till dusk, when they halted for the night in a vast meadow. As soon as he knew that all his men were asleep, the Prince rose privily and girding his waist, mounted his horse and rode away intending to make Baghdad, because he had heard from the Jews that a caravan came thence to their city once in every two years and he made up his mind to journey thither with the next Cafilah. When his men awoke and missed the Prince and his horse, they mounted and sought him right and left but, finding no trace of him, rejoined his father and told him what his son had done; whereat he was wroth beyond measure and cast the crown from his head, whilst the sparks were like to fly from his mouth, and he said "There is no Majesty and there is no Might but in Allah! Verily I have lost my son, and the enemy is still before me." But his Wazirs and vassals said to him, "Patience, O King of the age! Patience bringeth weal in wake." Meanwhile Janshah, parted 365 from his lover and pained for his father, was in sore sorrow and dismay, with heart seared and eyes tear-bleared and unable to sleep night or day. But when his father heard the loss his host had endured, he declined battle, and fled before King Kafid; and, retiring to his city, closed the gates and strengthened the walls. Thereupon King Kafid followed him and sat down before the town, offering battle seven nights and eight days, after which he withdrew

to his tents, to tend his wounded while the citizens defended themselves as they best could, fortifying the place and setting up mangonels and other engines on the walls. Such was the condition of the two Kings, and war raged between them for a space of seven years.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kings Teghmus and Kafid continued in this condition for seven years; but, as regards Janshah, he rode through wild and wold and whenever he came to a town he asked anent Takni, the Castle of Jewels, but none knew of it and all answered, "Of a truth we never heard of such place, not even by name." At last he happened to enquire concerning the city of the Jews from a merchant who told him that it was situate in the extreme Orient, adding, "A caravan will start this very month for the city of Mizrakán in Hind; whither do thou accompany us and we will fare on to Khorasan and thence to the city of Shima'ún and Khwárazm, from which latter place the City of the Jews is distant a year and three months' journey." So Janshah waited till the departure of the caravan, when he joined himself thereto and journeyed, till he reached the city of Mizrakan whence, after vainly asking for Takni, the Castle of Jewels, he set out and enduring on the way great hardships and perils galore and the extreme of hunger and thirst, he arrived at the town of Shima'un. Here he made enquiry for the City of the Jews, and they directed him to the road thither. So he fared forth and journeyed days and nights till he came to the place where he had given the apes the slip, and continued his journey thence to the river, on the opposite bank of which stood the City of the Jews. He sat down on the shore and waited till the Sabbath came round and the river dried 366 up by decree of Allah Almighty, when he crossed over to the opposite bank and, entering the city, betook himself to the house wherein he had lodged on his former journey. The Jew and his family saluted him and rejoiced in his return and, setting meat and drink before him, asked, "Where hast thou been during thine absence?"; and he answered, "In the kingdom of Almighty Allah!"[558] He lay with them that night and on the morrow he went out to solace himself with a walk about the city and presently heard a crier crying aloud and saying, "O folk, who will earn a thousand gold pieces and a fair slave-girl and do half a day's work for us?" So Janshah went up to him and said, "I will do this work."[559] Quoth the crier, "Follow me," and carrying him to the house of the Jew merchant, where he had been aforetime, said, "This young man will do thy need." The merchant not recognising him gave him welcome and carried him into the Harim, where he set meat and drink before him, and he ate and drank. Then he brought him the money and formally made over to him the handsome slave-girl with whom he lay that night. As soon as morning dawned, he took the dinars and the damsel and, committing them to his Jew host with whom he had lodged aforetime, returned to the merchant, who mounted and rode out

with him, till they came to the foot of the tall and towering mountain, where the merchant, bringing out a knife and cords, said to Janshah, “Throw the mare.” So he threw her and bound her four legs with the cords and slaughtered her and cut off her head and four limbs and slit her belly, as ordered by the Jew; whereupon quoth he, “Enter her belly, till I sew it up on thee; and whatsoever thou seest therein, tell me of it, for this is the work whose wage thou hast taken.” So Janshah entered the mare’s belly and the merchant sewed it up on him; then, withdrawing to a fair distance, hid himself. And after an hour a great bird swooped down from the lift and, snatching up the carcass in his pounces soared high toward the sky. Then he perched upon the mountain-peak and would have eaten the prey, but Janshah sensing his intent took out his knife and slit the mare’s belly and came forth. The bird was scared at his sight and flew away, and Janshah went up to a place whence he could see below, and looking down, espied the merchant standing at the foot of the mountain, as he 367 were a sparrow. So he cried out to him, “What is thy will, O merchant?” Replied the Jew, “Throw me down of the stones that lie about thee, that I may direct thee in the way down.” Quoth Janshah, “Thou art he who didst with me thus and thus five years ago, and through thee I suffered hunger and thirst and sore toil and much trouble; and now thou hast brought me hither once more and thinkest to destroy me. By Allah, I will not throw thee aught!” So saying, he turned from him and set out for where lived Shaykh Nasr, the King of the Birds.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Janshah took the way for where lived Shaykh Nasr, the King of the Birds. And he ceased not faring on many days and nights, tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted; eating, when he was anhungered, of the growth of the ground and drinking, when he thirsted, of its streams, till he came in sight of the Castle of the lord Solomon and saw Shaykh Nasr sitting at the gate. So he hastened up to him and kissed his hands; and the Shaykh saluted him and bade him welcome and said to him, “O my son, what aileth thee that thou returnest to this place, after I sent thee home with the Princess Shamsah, cool of eyes and broad of breast?” Janshah wept and told him all that had befallen him and how she had flown away from him, saying, “An thou love me, come to me in Takni, the Castle of Jewels;” at which the old man marvelled and said, “By Allah, O my son, I know it not, nor, by the virtue of our lord Solomon, have I ever in my life heard its name!” Quoth Janshah, “What shall I do? I am dying of love and longing.” Quoth Shaykh Nasr, “Take patience until the coming of the birds, when we will enquire at them of Takni, the Castle of Jewels; haply one of them shall wot thereof.” So Janshah’s heart was comforted and, entering the Palace, he went straight to the chamber which gave upon the Lake in which he had seen the three maidens. After this he abode with Shaykh

Nasr for a while and, one day as he was sitting with him, the Shaykh said, “O my son, rejoice for the time of the birds’ coming draweth nigh.” Janshah gladdened to hear the news; and after a few days the birds began to come and 368 Shaykh Nasr said to him, “O my son, learn these names[560] and address thyself with me to meet the birds.” Presently, the fowls came flying up and saluted Shaykh Nasr, kind after kind, and he asked them of Takni, the Castle of Jewels, but they all made answer, “Never heard we of such a place.” At these words Janshah wept and lamented till he swooned away; whereupon Shaykh Nasr called a huge volatile and said to him, “Carry this youth to the land of Kabul,” and described to him the country and the way thither. Then he set Janshah on the bird’s back, saying, “Be careful to sit straight and beware of leaning to either side, else thou wilt be torn to pieces in the air; and stop thine ears from the wind, lest thou be dazed by the noise of the revolving sphere and the roaring of the seas.” Janshah resolved to do his bidding and the bird took flight high in sky and flew with him a day and a night, till he set him down by the King of the Beasts, whose name was Sháh Badrí, and said to his rider, “We have gone astray from the way directed by Shaykh Nasr.” And he would have taken him up again and flown on with him; but Janshah said, “Go thy ways and leave me here; till I die on this spot or I find Takni, the Castle of Jewels, I will not return to my country.” So the fowl left him with Shah Badri, King of the Beasts and flew away. The King thereupon said to him, “O my son, who art thou and whence comest thou with yonder great bird?” So Janshah told him his story from beginning to end, whereat Shah Badri marvelled and said, “By the virtue of the lord Solomon, I know not of this castle; but if any one of the beasts my subjects know it, we will reward him bountifully and send thee by him thither.” Hereat Janshah wept bitterly but presently he took patience and abode with Shah Badri, and after a short time the King of the Beasts said to him, “O my son, take these tablets and commit to memory that which is therein; and when the beasts come, we will question them of the Castle of Jewels.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King of the Beasts said to Janshah, “Commit to memory what is 369 in these tablets; and whenas the beasts come, we will ask them anent that castle.” He did as the King bade him, and before long, up came the beasts, kind after kind, and saluted Shah Badri, who questioned them of Takni, the Castle of Jewels; but they all replied, “We know not this castle, nor ever heard we of it.” At this Janshah wept and lamented for that he had not gone with the bird that brought him from Shaykh Nasr’s castle; but Shah Badri said to him, “Grieve not, O my son, for I have a brother, King Shimákh hight, who is older than I; he was once a prisoner to King Solomon, for that he rebelled against him; nor is there among the Jinn one elder than he and Shaykh Nasr. Belike he knoweth of this castle; at any rate he ruleth over all the Jinn in this country side.” So saying he set Janshah on

the back of a beast and gave him a letter to his brother, commending him to his care. The beast set off with the Prince forthwith and fared on days and nights, till it came to King Shimakh's abiding place. And when it caught sight of the King it stood still afar off; whereupon Janshah alighted and walked on, till he found himself in the presence. Then he kissed hands and presented his brother's letter. The King read the missive and, having mastered the meaning, welcomed the Prince, saying, "By Allah, O my son, in all my born days I never saw nor heard of this castle!" adding (as Janshah burst into tears), "but tell me thy story and who and whence thou art and whither thou art bound." So Janshah related to him his history from beginning to end, at which Shimakh marvelled and said, "O my son, I do not believe that even the lord Solomon ever saw this castle or heard thereof; but O my son,[561] I know a monk in the mountains, who is exceeding old and whom all birds and beasts and Jann obey; for he ceased not his conjurations against the Kings of the Jann, till they submitted themselves to him in their own despite, by reason of the might of his oaths and his magic; and now all the birds and the beasts are his servants. I myself once rebelled against King Solomon and he sent against me this monk, the only being who could overcome me with his craft and his conjurations and his gramarye; then he imprisoned me, and since that time I have been his vassal. He hath travelled in all countries and quarters and knoweth all ways and regions and places and castles and cities; nor do I think there is any 370 place hidden from his ken. So needs must I send thee to him, haply he may direct thee to the Castle of Jewels; and, if he cannot do this, none can; for all things obey him, birds and beasts and the very mountains and come at his beck and call, by reason of his skill in magic. Moreover, by the might of his egromancy he hath made a staff, in three pieces, and this he planteth in the earth and conjureth over it; whereupon flesh and blood issue from the first piece, sweet milk from the second and wheat and barley from the third; then he withdraweth the staff and returneth to his place which is hight the Hermitage of Diamonds. And this magical monk is a cunning inventor and artificer of all manner strange works; and he is a crafty warlock full of guiles and wiles, an arch-deceiver of wondrous wickedness, who hath mastered every kind of magic and witchcraft. His name is Yaghmús and to him I must needs send thee on the back of a big bird with four wings"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shimakh said to Janshah, "I must needs send thee to the monk Yaghmus on the back of a big bird with four wings, each measuring thirty Háshimi[562] cubits in length; and it hath feet like those of an elephant, but it flieth only twice a year." And there was with King Shimakh an officer, by name Timshún, who used every day to carry off two Bactrian[563] camels from the land of Irak and cut them up for the bird that it might eat them. So King

Shimakh bade the fowl take up Janshah and bear him to the cell of the hermit Yaghmus; and it rose into the air and flew on days and nights, till it came to the Mountain of the Citadels and the Hermitage of Diamonds; where Janshah alighted and going up to the hermitage, found Yaghmus the Monk at his devotions. So he entered the chapel and, kissing the ground stood respectfully before the hermit. When Yaghmus saw him, he said, "Welcome, O my son, O parted from thy home and garred ferforth to roam! Tell me the cause 371 of thy coming hither." So Janshah wept and acquainted him with all that had befallen him from beginning to end and that he was in quest of the Castle of Jewels. The Monk marvelled greatly at his story and said, "By Allah, O my son, never in my life heard I of this castle, nor ever saw I one who had heard of it or had seen it, for all I was alive in the days of Noah, Allah's Prophet (on whom be peace!),[564] and I have ruled the birds and beasts and Jinn ever since his time; nor do I believe that Solomon David-son himself knew of it. But wait till the birds and beasts and chiefs of the Jann come to do their homage to me and I will question them of it; peradventure, some one of them may be able to give us news of it and Allah Almighty shall make all things easy to thee." So Janshah homed with the hermit, until the day of the assembly, when all the birds and beasts and Jann came to swear fealty; and Yaghmus and his guest questioned them anent Takni, the Castle of Jewels; but they all replied, "We never saw or heard of such a place." At this, Janshah fell a-weeping and lamenting and humbled himself before the Most High; but, as he was thus engaged, behold, there flew down from the heights of air another bird, big of bulk and black of blee, which had tarried behind the rest, and kissed the hermit's hands. Yaghmus asked it of Takni, the Castle of Jewels, and it answered, saying, "O Monk, when I and my brothers were small chicks we abode behind the Mountain Kaf on a hill of crystal, in the midst of a great desert; and our father and mother used to set out for it every morning and in the evening come back with our food. They went out early one day, and were absent from us a se'nnight and hunger was sore upon us; but on the eighth day they returned, both weeping, and we asked them the reason of their absence. Quoth they:—A Marid swooped down on us and carried us off in his claws to Takni, the Castle of Jewels, and brought us before King Shahlán, who would have slain us; but we told him that we had left behind us a brood of fledgelings; so he spared our lives and let us go. And were my parents yet in the bonds of life they would give thee news of the castle." When Janshah heard this, he wept bitter tears and said to the hermit, "Prithee bid the bird carry me to his father and mother's nest on the 372 crystal hill, behind the Mountain Kaf." So the hermit said, "O bird, I desire thee to obey this youth in whatsoever he may command thee." "I hear and obey thy bidding," replied the fowl; and, taking Janshah on its back, flew with him days and nights without ceasing till it set him down on the Hill of Crystal and there alighted. And having delayed there a resting while, it again set him on its back and flew off and

ceased not flying for two whole days till it reached the spot where the nest was.——
And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the fowl ceased not flying with Janshah two full days; till it reached the spot where the nest was, and set him down there and said, "O Janshah, this is where our nest was." He wept sore and replied, "I pray thee bear me farther on to where thy parents used to forage for food." The bird consented; so it took him up again and flew on with him seven nights and eight days, till it set him down on the top of a high hill Karmús hight and left him there saying, "I know of no land behind this hill." Then it flew away and Janshah sat down on the hill-top and fell asleep. When he awoke, he saw a something gleaming afar off as it were

lightning and filling the firmament with its flashings; and he wondered what this sheen could be without wotting that it was the Castle he sought. So he descended the mountain and made towards the light, which came from Takni, the Castle of Jewels, distant two months' journey from Karmús, the hill whereon he had alit and its foundations were fashioned of red rubies and its buildings of yellow gold. Moreover, it had a thousand turrets builded of precious metals, and stones of price studded and set in the minerals brought from the Main of Murks, and on this account it was named the Castle of Jewels, Takni. It was a vast great castle and the name of its king was King Shahlan, the father of the lady Shamsah and her sisters. Such was the case with Janshah; but as regards Princess Shamsah, when she fled from Janshah, she made straight for the Castle of Jewels and told her father and mother all that had passed between the Prince and herself; how he had wandered the world and seen its marvels and wonders 373 and how fondly he loved her and how dearly she loved him. Quoth they, "Thou hast not dealt righteously with him, as Allah would have thee deal." Moreover King Shahlan repeated the story to his guards and officers of the Marids of the Jinn and bade them bring him every mortal they should see. For the lady Shamsah had said to her parents, "Janshah loveth me with passionate love and forsure he will follow me; for when flying from his father's roof I cried to him:—An thou love me, seek me at Takni, the Castle of Jewels!" Now when Janshah beheld that sheen and shine, he made straight for it wishing to find out what it might be. And as chance would have it, Shamsah had that very day despatched a Marid on an occasion in the direction of the hill Karmus, and on his way thither he caught sight of a man, a mortal; so he hastened up to him and saluted him. Janshah was terrified at his sight, but returned his salam, and the Marid asked, "What is thy name?" and he answered, "My name is Janshah, and I have fallen madly in love with a Jinniyah known as Princess Shamsah, who captivated me by her beauty and loveliness; but despite my dear love she fled from the palace wherein I placed her and behold, I am here in quest of her." Herewith he wept with bitter weeping. The Marid looked at him and his heart burned with pity on hearing the sad tale, and he said, "Weep not, for surely thou art come to thy desire. Know that she loveth thee fondly and hath told her parents of thy love for her, and all in yonder castle love thee for her sake; so be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool of tear." Then he took him on his shoulders and made off with him to the Castle of Jewels, Takni. Thereupon the bearers of fair tidings hastened to report his coming and when the news reached Shamsah and her father and mother, they all rejoiced with exceeding joy, and King Shahlan took horse and rode out, commanding all his guards and Ifrits and Marids honourably to meet the Prince.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Shahlan commanded all his guards and Ifrits and Marids to meet the Prince; and, as soon as he came up with

him, he [374]dismounted and embraced him, and Janshah kissed his hand. Then Shahlan bade put on him a robe of honour of many-coloured silk, laced with gold and set with jewels, and a coronet such as man never saw, and, mounting him on a splendid mare of the steeds of the Kings of the Jinn, took horse himself and, with an immense retinue riding on the right hand and the left, brought him in great state to the Castle. Janshah marvelled at the splendour of this edifice, with its walls builded of rubies and other jewels and its pavement of crystal and jasper and emerald, and fell a-weeping at the memory of his past miseries; but the King and Queen, Shamsah's mother, wiped away his tears and said, "Now no more weeping and be of good cheer, for thou hast won to thy will." Then Shahlan carried him into the inner court of the Castle, where he was received by a multitude of beautiful damsels and pages and black Jinn-slaves, who seated him in the place of honour and stood to do him service, whilst he was lost in amazement at the goodliness of the place, and its walls all edified of precious metals and jewels of price. Presently King Shahlan repaired to his hall of audience, where he sat down on his throne and, bidding the slave-girls and the pages introduce the Prince, rose to receive him and seated him by his side on the throne. Then he ordered the tables to be spread and they ate and drank and washed their hands; after which in came the Queen Shamsah's mother, and saluting Janshah, bade him welcome in these words, "Thou hast come to thy desire after weariness and thine eyes shall now sleep after watching; so praised be Allah for thy safety!" Thus saying, she went away and forthwith returned with the Princess Shamsah, who saluted Janshah and kissed his hands, hanging her head in shame and confusion before him and her parents; after which as many of her sisters as were in the palace came up to him and greeted him in like manner. Then quoth the Queen to him, "Welcome, O my son, our daughter Shamsah hath indeed sinned against thee, but do thou pardon her misdeed for our sakes." When Janshah heard this, he cried out and fell down fainting, whereat the King marvelled and they sprinkled on his face rose-water mingled with musk and civet, till he came to himself and, looking at Princess Shamsah, said, "Praised be Allah who hath brought me to my desire and hath quenched the fire of my heart!" Replied she, "May He preserve thee from the Fire!; but now tell me, O Janshah, what hath befallen thee since our parting and how thou madest thy way to this place; seeing that few even of [375]the Jann ever heard of Takni, the Castle of Jewels; and we are independent of all the Kings nor any wotteth the road hither." Thereupon he related to her every adventure and peril and hardship he had suffered and how he had left his father at war with King Kafid, ending with these words, "And all for thy sake, my lady Shamsah!" Quoth the Queen, "Now hast thou thy heart's desire, for the Princess is thy handmaid, and we give her in free gift to thee." Janshah joyed exceedingly at these words and the Queen added, "Next month, if it be the will of Almighty Allah, we will have a brave wedding and celebrate the marriage festival and after the knot is tied we will send you both back to thy native land, with an escort

of a thousand Marids of our body-guard, the least of whom, an thou bid him slay King Kafid and his folk, would surely destroy them to the last man in the twinkling of an eye. Furthermore if it please thee we will send thee, year after year, a company of which each and every can so do with all thy foes."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the lady Shamsah's mother ended with saying, "And if it so please thee we will send thee, year after year, a company of which each and every can destroy thy foes to the last man." Then King Shahlan sat down on his throne and, summoning his grandees and officers of state, bade them make ready for the marriage-festivities and decorate the city seven days and nights. "We hear and we obey," answered they and busied themselves two months in the preparations, after which they celebrated the marriage of the Prince and Princess and held a mighty festival, never was there its like. Then they brought Janshah in to his bride and he abode with her in all solace of life and delight for two years, at the end of which time he said to her, "Thy father promised to send us to my native land, that we might pass one year there and the next here." Answered she, "I hear and obey," and going in to King Shahlan at nightfall told him what the Prince had said. Quoth he, "I consent; but have patience with me till the first of the month, that I may make ready for your departure." She repeated these words to her husband and they waited till the appointed time, when the King bade 376 his Marids bring out to them a great litter of red gold, set with pearls and jewels and covered with a canopy of green silk, purfled in a profusion of colours and embroidered with precious stones, dazzling with its goodliness the eyes of every beholder. He chose out four of his Marids to carry the litter in whichever of the four quarters the riders might choose. Moreover, he gave his daughter three hundred beautiful damsels to wait upon her and bestowed on Janshah the like number of white slaves of the sons of the Jinn. Then the lady Shamsah took formal leave of her mother and sisters and all her kith and kin; and her father fared forth with them. So the four Marids took up the litter, each by one corner, and rising under it like birds in air, flew onward with it between earth and heaven till midday, when the King bade them set it down and all alighted. Then they took leave of one another and King Shahlan commended Shamsah to the Prince's care, and giving them in charge to the Marids, returned to the Castle of Jewels, whilst the Prince and Princess remounted the litter, and the Marids taking it up, flew on for ten whole days, in each of which they accomplished thirty months' journey, till they sighted the capital of King Teghmus. Now one of them knew the land of Kabul; so when he saw the city, he bade the others let down the litter at that populous place which was the capital.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Marid-guards let down the litter at the capital of King Teghmus who had been routed and had fled from his foes into the city, where he was in sore straits, King Kafid having laid close siege to him. He sought to save himself by making peace with the King of Hind, but his enemy would give him no quarter; so seeing himself without resource or means of relief, he determined to strangle himself and to die and be at rest from this trouble and misery. Accordingly he bade his Wazirs and Emirs farewell and entered his house to take leave of his Harim; and the whole realm was full of weeping and wailing and lamentation and woe. And whilst this rout and hurly-burly was enacting, behold, the Marids descended with the litter upon the palace that was in the citadel, and Janshah bade 377 them set it down in the midst of the Divan. They did his bidding and he alighted with his company of handmaids and Mamelukes; and, seeing all the folk of the city in straits and desolation and sore distress, said to the Princess, "O love of my heart and coolth of mine eyes, look in what a piteous plight is my sire!" Thereupon she bade the Marid-guard fall upon the beleaguering host and slay them, saying, "Kill ye all, even to the last man;" and Janshah commanded one of them, by name Karátash,[565] who was exceeding strong and valiant, to bring King Kafid to him in chains. So they set down the litter and covered it with the canopy; then, having waited till midnight, they attacked the enemy's camp one of them being a match for ten; or at least for eight. And while these smote the foes with iron maces, those mounted their magical elephants and soared high in the lift, and then swooping down and snatching up their opponents, tare them to pieces in mid-air. But Karatash made straight for Kafid's tent where he found him lying in a couch; so he took him up, shrieking for fear, and flew with him to Janshah, who bade the four Marids bind him on the litter and hang him high in the air over his camp, that he might witness the slaughter of his men. They did as the Prince commanded them and left Kafid, who had swooned for fear, hanging between earth and air and buffetting his face for grief. As for King Teghmus, when he saw his son, he well-nigh died for excess of joy and, crying with a loud cry, fell down in a swoon. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when he and his son embraced and wept with sore weeping; for he knew not that the Jinn-guard were battling with King Kafid's men. Then Princess Shamsah accosted the King and kissing his hand, said to him, "Sire, be pleased to go up with me to the palace-roof and witness the slaughter of thy foes by my father's Marids." So he went up to the terrace-roof and sitting down there with his daughter-in-law, enjoyed watching the Marids do havoc among the besiegers and break a way through the length and breadth of them. For one of them smote with his iron mace upon the elephants and their riders and pounded them till man was not to be distinguished from beast; whilst another shouted in the faces of those who fled, so that they fell down

dead; and the third caught up 378a score of horsemen, beasts and all; and, towering with them high in air, cast them down on earth, so that they were torn in pieces. And this was high enjoyment for Janshah and his father and the lady Shamsah.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Five Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Teghmus and his son and daughter-in-law went up to the terrace-roof and enjoyed a prospect of the Jinn-guards battling with the beleaguering host. And King Kafid (still hanging between heaven and earth) also saw the slaughter of his troops and wept sore and buffetted his face; nor did the carnage cease among the army of Hind for two whole days, till they were cut off even to the last man. Then Janshah commanded a Marid, by name Shimwál,

chain up King Kafid with manacles and fetters, and imprison him in a tower called the Black Bulwark. And when his bidding was done, King Teghmus bade beat the drums and despatched messengers to announce the glad news to Janshah's mother, informing her of his approach; whereupon she mounted in great joy and she no sooner espied her son than she clasped him in her arms and swooned away for stress of gladness. They sprinkled rose-water on her face, till she came to herself, when she embraced him again and again wept for excess of joy. And when the lady Shamsah knew of her coming, she came to her and saluted her; and they embraced each other and after remaining embraced for an hour sat down to converse. Then King Teghmus threw open the city-gates and despatched couriers to all parts of the kingdom, to spread the tidings of his happy deliverance; whereupon all his princely Vassals and Emirs and the Grandees of the realm flocked to salute him and give him joy of his victory and of the safe return of his son; and they brought him great store of rich offerings and curious presents. The visits and oblations continued for some time, after which the King made a second and a more splendid bride-feast for the Princess Shamsah and bade decorate the city and held high festival. Lastly they unveiled and paraded the bride before Janshah, with apparel and ornaments of the utmost magnificence, and when her bridegroom went in to her he presented her with an hundred beautiful slave-girls [379] to wait upon her. Some days after this, the Princess repaired to the King and interceded with him for Kafid, saying, "Suffer him return to his own land, and if henceforward he be minded to do thee a hurt, I will bid one of the Jinn-guard snatch him up and bring him to thee." Replied Teghmus, "I hear and I obey," and bade Shimwal bring him the prisoner, who came manacled and fettered and kissed earth between his hands. Then he commanded to strike off his chains and, mounting him on a lame mare, said to him, "Verily Princess Shamsah hath interceded for thee: so begone to thy kingdom, but if thou fall again to thine old tricks, she will send one of the Marids to seize thee and bring thee hither." Thereupon King Kafid set off homewards, in the sorriest of plights,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Kafid set off homewards in the sorriest of plights, whilst Janshah and his wife abode in all solace and delight of life, making the most of its joyance and happiness. All this recounted the youth sitting between the tombs unto Bulukiya, ending with, "And behold, I am Janshah who witnessed all these things, O my brother, O Bulukiya!" Then Bulukiya who was wandering the world in his love for Mohammed (whom Allah bless and keep!) asked Janshah, "O my brother, what be these two sepulchres and why sittest thou between them and what causeth thy weeping?" He answered, "Know, O Bulukiya, that we abode in all solace and delight of life, passing one year at home and the next at Takni, the Castle of Jewels, whither we betook not ourselves but in the litter borne by the

Marids and flying between heaven and earth." Quoth Bulukiya, "O my brother, O Janshah, what was the distance between the Castle and thy home?" Quoth he, "Every day we accomplished a journey of thirty months and the time we took was ten days. We abode on this wise a many of years till, one year we set out for the Castle of Jewels, as was our wont, and on the way thither alighted from the litter in this island to rest and take our pleasure therein. We sat down on the river-bank and ate and drank; after which the Lady Shamsah, having a mind to bathe, put off her clothes and plunged into the 380 water. Her women did likewise and they swam about awhile, whilst I walked on along the bank of the stream leaving them to swim about and play with one another. And behold, a huge shark of the monsters of the deep seized the Princess by the leg, without touching any of the girls; and she cried out and died forthright, whilst the damsels fled out of the river to the pavilion, to escape from the shark. But after awhile they returned and taking up her corpse carried her to the litter. Now when I saw her dead, I fell down fainting and they sprinkled water on my face, till I recovered and wept over her. Then I despatched the Jinn-guards to her parents and family, announcing what had befallen her; and in the shortest time they came to the spot and washed her and shrouded her; after which they buried her by the river-side and made mourning for her. They would have carried me with them to their own country; but I said to King Shahlan, "I beseech thee to dig me a grave beside her tomb, that, when I die, I may be buried by her side in that grave." Accordingly, the King commanded one of his Marids to do as I wished, after which they departed and left me here to weep and mourn for her till I die. And this is my story and the cause of my sojourn between these two tombs." And he repeated these two couplets:[566]——

"The house, sweet heart, is now no home to me ✿ Since thou art gone, nor neighbour neighbourly.

The friend whilome I took to heart, no more ✿ Is friend, and brightest lights lose brilliancy."

But when Bulukiya heard out Janshah's tale he marvelled——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Bulukiya heard out Janshah's tale he wondered and exclaimed, "By Allah, methought I had indeed wandered over the world and compassed it about; but now I forget all I have seen after listening 381 to these adventures of thine!" He was silent a while and then resumed, "I beg thee, of thy favour and courtesy, to direct me in the way of safety." So Janshah directed him into the right road, and Bulukiya farewelled him and went his ways. All this the Serpent-queen related to Hasib Karim al-Din, and he asked her, "But how knowest thou of these things?"; and she answered, "O Hasib, thou must ken that I had occasion, some five-and-twenty years ago, to send one of my largest serpents to Egypt and gave her a letter for Bulukiya, saluting him." So she went there willingly for she had a daughter in the land called Bint Shumukh[567]; and after asking

anent Bulukiya she found him and gave him my missive. He read it and replied to the messenger snake, “Thou comest from the Queen of the Serpents whom I am minded to visit for I have an occasion to her.” She replied, “I hear and obey.” Then she bore him to her daughter of whom she took leave and said to her companion, “Close thine eyes.” So he closed them and opening them again, behold, he found himself on the mountain where I now am. Then his guide carried him to a great serpent, whom he saluted; whereupon quoth she, “Didst thou deliver the missive to Bulukiya?”; and she replied, “Even so; and he hath accompanied me and here he standeth.” Presently Bulukiya asked after me, the Serpent-queen, and the great serpent answered, “She hath gone to the mountain Kaf with all her host, as is her wont in winter; but next summer she will come hither again. As often as she goeth thither, she appointeth me to reign in her room, during her absence; and if thou have any occasion to her, I will accomplish it for thee.” Said he, “I beg thee to bring me the herb, which whoso crusheth and drinketh the juice thereof, sickeneth not neither groweth grey nor dieth.” “I will not bring it,” said the serpent, “till thou tell me what befel thee since thou leftest the Queen of the Serpents, to go with Affan in quest of King Solomon’s tomb.” So he related to her all his travels and adventures, together with the history of Janshah, and said at last, “Grant me my request, that I may return to mine own country.” Replied the serpent, “By the virtue of the lord Solomon, I know not where is to be found the herb whereof thou speakest.” Then she bade the serpent which had brought him thither, carry him back to Egypt: so the messenger obeyed her 382 and said to him, “Shut thine eyes!” He did so and, opening them again, found himself on the mountain Mukattam.[568] “When I returned from the mountain Kaf” (added the Queen) “the serpent, my deputy, informed me of Bulukiya’s visit and gave me his salutations and repeated to me his story and his meeting with Janshah. And this, O Hasib, is how I came to know the adventures of Bulukiya and the history of Janshah.” Thereupon Hasib said to her, “O Queen, deign recount to me what befel Bulukiya as regards his return to Egypt.” She replied, “Know, O Hasib, that when he parted from Janshah he fared on nights and days till he came to a great sea; so he anointed his feet with the juice of the magical herb and, walking over the face of the waters, sped onwards till he came to an island abounding in trees and springs and fruits, as it were the Garden of Eden. He landed and walked about, till he saw an immense tree, with leaves as big as the sails of a ship. So he went up to the tree and found under it a table spread with all manner meats, whilst on a branch of the branches sat a great bird, whose body was of pearls and leek-green emeralds, its feet of silver, its beak of red carnelian and its plumery of precious metals; and it was engaged in singing the praises of Allah the Most High and blessing Mohammed (on whom be benediction and peace!)”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Bulukiya landed and walked about the island he found therein many marvels, especially a bird whose body was of pearls and leek-green emeralds and its plumery of precious metals; and it was engaged in singing the praises of Allah the Most High and blessing Mohammed (upon whom be benediction and peace!). Seeing this he said, "Who and what art thou?" Quoth the bird, "I am one of the birds of Eden and followed Adam when Allah Almighty cast him out thence. And know, O my brother, 383 that Allah also cast out with him four leaves of the trees of the garden, to cover his nakedness withal, and they fell to the ground after awhile. One of them was eaten by a worm, and of it came silk: the gazelles ate the second and thence proceeded musk; the third was eaten by bees and gave rise to honey, whilst the fourth fell in the land of Hind and from it sprang all manner of spices. As for me, I wandered over the face of earth till Allah deigned give me this island for a dwelling-place, and I took up my abode here. And every Friday from night till morning the Saints and Princes[569] of the Faith flock to this place and make pious visitation and eat from this table spread by Allah Almighty; and after they have eaten, the table is taken up again to Heaven: nor doth the food ever waste or corrupt." So Bulukiya ate his fill of the meats and praised the Great Creator. And presently, behold, there came up Al-Khizr[570] (with whom be peace!), at sight of whom Bulukiya rose and saluting him, was about to withdraw, when the bird said to him, "Sit, O Bulukiya, in the presence of Al-Khizr, on whom be peace!" So he sat down again, and Al-Khizr said to him, "Let me know who thou art and tell me thy tale." Thereupon Bulukiya related to him all his adventures from beginning to end and asked, "O my lord, how far is it hence to Cairo?" "Five-and-ninety years' journey," replied the Prophet; whereupon Bulukiya burst into tears; then, falling at Al-Khizr's feet, kissed them and said to him, "I beseech thee deliver me from this strangerhood and thy reward be with Allah, for that I am nigh upon death and know not what to do." Quoth Al-Khizr, "Pray to Allah Almighty that He permit me to carry thee to Cairo, ere thou perish." So Bulukiya wept and humbled himself before Allah who granted his prayer, and by inspiration bade Al-Khizr bear him to his people. Then said the Prophet, "Lift thy head, for Allah hath heard thy prayer and hath inspired me to do what thou desirest; so take fast hold of me with both thy hands and shut thine eyes." The Prince did as he was bidden and Al-Khizr stepped a single step 384 forwards, then said to him, "Open thine eyes!" So Bulukiya opened his eyes and found himself at the door of his palace at Cairo. He turned, to take leave of Al-Khizr, but found no trace of him——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Bulukiya, standing at the gate of his palace, turned to take leave of Al-Khizr, he found no trace of him and entered the palace. When his mother saw him, she cried with a loud cry and swooned away for excess of joy, and they sprinkled water upon her face. After awhile she came to herself and embraced her son and wept with sore weeping, whilst Bulukiya wept and laughed by turns. Then all his friends and kindred came and gave him joy of his safe return, and the news was noised abroad in the land and there came to him presents from all parts. Moreover, they beat the drums and blew the flutes and rejoiced mightily. Then Bulukiya related to them his adventures ending with recounting how Al-Khizr had set him down at his palace-door, whereat they marvelled exceedingly and wept, till all were aweary of weeping. Hasib wondered at the Queen's tale and shed many tears over it; then he again besought her to let him return to his family; but she said, "I fear me, O Hasib, that when thou gettest back to thy country thou wilt fail of thy promise and prove traitor to thine oath and enter the Hammam." But he swore to her another solemn oath that he would never again enter the baths as long as he lived; whereupon she called a serpent and bade her carry him up to the surface of the earth. So the serpent took him and led him from place to place, till she brought him out on the platform-edge of an abandoned cistern and there left him. Upon this he walked to the city and, coming to his house by the last of the day, at the yellowing of the sun, knocked at the door. His mother opened it and seeing her son screamed out and threw herself upon him and wept for excess of joy. His wife heard her mother-in-law weeping; so she came out to her and seeing her husband, saluted him and kissed his hands; and each rejoiced in other with exceeding joy of all three. Then they entered the house and sat down to converse; and presently Hasib asked his mother of the 385 woodcutters, who had left him to perish in the cistern. Quoth she, "They came and told me that a wolf had eaten thee in the Wady. As for them, they are become merchants and own houses and shops, and the world is grown wide for them. But every day they bring me meat and drink, and thus have they done until the present time." Quoth Hasib, "To-morrow do thou go to them and say:—My son Hasib Karim al-Din hath returned from his travels; so come ye to meet him and salute him." Accordingly, when morning dawned, she repaired to the woodcutters' houses and delivered to them her son's message, which when they heard, they changed colour, and saying, "We hear and obey," gave her each a suit of silk, embroidered with gold, adding, "Present this to thy good son[571] and tell him that we will be with him to-morrow." She assented and returning to Hasib gave him their presents and message. Meanwhile, the woodcutters called together a number of merchants and, acquainting them with all that had passed between themselves and Hasib, took counsel with them what they should do. Quoth the merchants, "It behoveth each one of you to give him half his monies and Mamelukes." And they all agreed to do this; so on the next day, each of them took half his wealth and, going in to Hasib, saluted him and kissed his hands. Then they laid before him what they had

brought, saying, “This is of thy bounties, and we are in thy hands.” He accepted their peace-offering and said, “What is past is past: that which befel us was decreed of Allah, and destiny doeth away with dexterity.” Quoth they, “Come, let us walk about and take our solace in the city and visit the Hammam.” Quoth he, “Not so: I have taken an oath never again to enter the baths, so long as I live.” Rejoined they, “At least come to our homes that we may entertain thee.” He agreed to this, and went to their houses and each of them entertained him for a night and a day; nor did they cease to do thus for a whole se’nnight, being seven in number. And now Hasib was master of monies and houses and shops, and the merchants of the city foregathered with him and he told them all that had befallen him. He became one of the chiefs of the guild and abode on this wise awhile, till it happened one day, as he was walking about the streets, that he passed the 386 door of a Hammam, whose keeper was one of his companions. When the bathman, who was standing without, caught his eye he ran up to him and saluted him and embraced him, saying, “Favour me by entering the bath and there wash and be rubbed that I may show thee hospitality.” Hasib refused, alleging that he had taken a solemn oath never again to enter the Hammam; but the bathman was instant with him, saying, “Be my three wives triply divorced, an thou enter not and be washed!” When Hasib heard him thus conjure him, he was confounded and replied, “O my brother, hast thou a mind to ruin my house and make my children orphans and lay a load of sin upon my neck?” But his friend threw himself at his feet and kissed them, saying, “My happiness dependeth upon thy entering, and be the sin on the neck of me!” Then all the servants of the bath set upon Hasib and dragging him in pulled off his clothes. But hardly had he sat down against the wall and begun to pour water on his head when a score of men accosted him, saying, “Rise, O man, and come with us to the Sultan, for thou art his debtor.” Then they despatched one of them as messenger to the Sultan’s Minister, who straightway took horse and rode, attended by threescore Mamelukes, to the baths, where he alighted and going in to Hasib, saluted him and said, “Welcome to thee!” Then he gave the bathman an hundred dinars and, mounting Hasib on a horse he had brought with him, returned with him and all his men to the Sultan’s palace. Here he bade them aid Hasib to dismount and, after seating him comfortably, set food before him; and when they had eaten and drunken and washed their hands, the Wazir clad him in two dresses of honour each worth five thousand dinars and said to him, “Know that Allah hath been merciful to us in sending thee; for the Sultan is nigh upon death by leprosy, and the books tell us that his life is in thy hands.” Then, accompanied by a host of Grandees, he took him wondering withal and carried him through the seven doorways of the palace, till they came to the King’s chamber. Now the name of this King was Karazdán, King of Persia and of the Seven Countries, and under his sway were an hundred sovereign princes sitting on chairs of red gold, and ten thousand valiant captains, under each one’s hand an hundred deputies and as many headsmen armed with sword and axe. They found the King lying on his bed with his face swathed in a

napkin, and groaning for excess of pain. When Hasib saw this ordinance, his wit was dazed for awe of the King; so he [387]kissed the ground before him, and prayed a blessing on him. Then the Grand Wazir, whose name was Shamhúr, rose and welcoming Hasib, seated him on a high chair at the King's right hand;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Shamhur rose to Hasib and seated him on a chair at the right hand of King Karazdan; after which he called for food and the tables were laid. And when they had eaten and drunken and washed their hands, Shamhur stood up (while all present also stood to do him honour) and, approaching Hasib said to him, "We are all thy servants and will give thee whatsoever thou askest, even were it one half the kingdom, so thou wilt but cure the King." Saying this, he led him by the hand to the royal couch, and Hasib, uncovering the King's face, saw that he was at last fatal stage of the disease; so he wondered at their hoping for a cure. But the Wazir kissed his hand and repeated his offers and ended with saying, "All we want of thee is to heal our King:" so he said to the Wazir, "True that I am the son of Allah's prophet, Daniel, but I know nothing of his art: for they put me thirty days in the school of medicine and I learnt nothing of the craft. I would well I knew somewhat thereof and might heal the King." Hearing this, the Grand Wazir said, "Do not multiply words upon us; for though we should gather together to us physicians from the East and from the West, none could cure the King save thou." Answered Hasib, "How can I make him whole, seeing I know neither his case nor its cure?" Quoth the Minister, "His healing is in thy hands," and quoth Hasib, "If I knew the remedy of his sickness, I would heal him." Thereupon the Wazir rejoined, "Thou kennest a cure right well; the remedy of his sickness is the Queen of the Serpents, and thou knowest her abiding-place and hast been with her." When Hasib heard this, he knew that all this came of his entering the Baths, and repented whenas repentance availed him naught; then said he, "What is the Queen of the Serpents? I know her not nor ever in all my life heard I of this name." Retorted the Wazir, "Deny not the knowledge of her, for I have proof that thou knowest her and hast passed two [388]years with her." Repeated Hasib, "Verily, I never saw her nor even heard of her till this moment;" upon which Shamhur opened a book and, after making sundry calculations, raised his head and spake as follows. "The Queen of the Serpents shall foregather with a man who shall abide with her two years; then shall he return from her and come forth to the surface of the earth, and when he entereth the Hammam-bath his belly will become black." Then said he, "Look at thy belly." So Hasib looked at his own belly and behold, it was black: but he persisted in his denial and said, "My belly was black from the day my mother bare me." Said the Wazir, "I had stationed three Mamelukes at the door of every Hammam, bidding them note all who entered and let me know when they found one whose belly was black: so, when

thou enteredst, they looked at thy belly and, finding it black, sent and told me, after we had well-nigh lost hope of coming upon thee. All we want of thee is to show us the place whence thou camest out and after go thy ways; for we have those with us who will take the Queen of the Serpents and fetch her to us." Then all the other Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees flocked about Hasib who sorely repented of his misdeed; and they conjured him, till they were weary, to show them the abode of the Queen; but he ceased not saying, "I never saw nor heard of the matter." Then the Grand Wazir called the hangman and bade him strip Hasib and beat him a sore beating; and so they did till he saw death face to face, for excess of pain, and the Wazir said, "We have proof that thou knowest the abiding-place of the Queen of the Serpents: why wilt thou persist in denial? Show us the place whence thou camest out and go from us; we have with us one who will take her, and no harm shall befal thee." Then he raised him and bade give him a dress of honour of cloth of red gold, embroidered with jewels, and spoke him fair till Hasib yielded and said, "I will show you the place." At this the Wazir rejoiced with great joy and took horse with all his many and rode, guided by Hasib, and never drew rein till they came to the mountain containing the cavern wherein he had found the cistern full of honey. There all dismounted and followed him as he entered, sighing and weeping, and showed them the well whence he had issued; whereupon the Wazir sat down thereby and, sprinkling perfumes upon a chafing-dish, began to mutter charms and conjurations; for he was a crafty magician and diviner and skilled in spiritual arts. 389 He repeated three several formulas of conjuration and between each threw fresh incense upon the fire, crying out and saying, "Come forth, O Queen of the Serpents!;" when behold, the water of the well sank down and a great door opened in the side, from which came a mighty noise of crying like unto thunder, so terrible that they thought the well had caved in and all present fell down fainting; nay, some even died for fright. Presently, there issued from the well a serpent as big as an elephant, casting out sparks, like red hot coals, from its eyes and mouth and bearing on its back a charger of red gold, set with pearls and jewels, in the midst whereof lay a serpent from whose body issued such splendour that the place was illumined thereby; and her face was fair and young and she spoke with most eloquent tongue. The Serpent-queen turned right and left, till her eyes fell upon Hasib, to whom said she, "Where is the covenant thou madest with me, and the oath thou swarest to me, that thou wouldst never again enter the Hammam-bath? But there is no fighting against Fate nor hath any ever fled from that which is written on his forehead. Allah hath appointed the end of my life for thy hand to hend, and it is His will that slain I be and King Karazdan be healed of his malady." So saying, she wept with sore weeping and Hasib wept to see her weep. As for the abominable Wazir Shamhur; he put out his hand to lay hold of her; but she said to him, "Hold thy hand, O accursed, or I will blow upon thee and reduce thee to a heap of black ashes." Then she cried out to Hasib, saying, "Draw near me and take me in thine hand and lay me in the dish that is with you: then set it on thy head; for my

death was fore-ordained, from Eternity without beginning,[572] to be at thy hand, and thou hast no power to avert it." So he took her and laid her in the dish, and put it on his head, when the well returned to its former state. Then they set out on their return to the city, Hasib carrying the dish on his head, and when they were halfway behold, the Queen of the Serpents said to him privily, "Hearken, O Hasib, to my friendly counsel, for all thou hast broken faith with me and been false to thine oath, and hast done this misdeed, but it was fore-ordained from 390 all eternity." He replied "To hear is to obey," and she continued, "It is this: when thou comest to the Wazir's house, he will bid thee behead me and cut me in three; but do thou refuse, saying:—I know not how to slaughter[573] and leave him to do it with his own hand and to work his wicked will. When he hath cut my throat and divided my body into three pieces there will come a messenger, to bid him to the King, so he will lay my flesh in a cauldron of brass and set it upon a brasier before going to the presence and he will say to thee:—Keep up the fire under the cauldron till the scum rise; then skim it off and pour it into a phial to cool. Wait till it cool and then drink it, so shall naught of malady or pain be left in all thy body. When the second scum riseth, skim it off and pour it into a phial against my return from the King, that I may drink it for an ailment I have in my loins. Then will he give thee the phials and go to the King, and when he is gone, do thou light the fire and wait till the first scum rise and set it in a phial; keep it by thee but beware of drinking it, or no good will befal thee. When the second scum riseth, skim it off and put it in a second phial and drink it down as soon as it cools. When the Wazir returneth and asketh thee for the second phial, give him the first and note what shall befal him;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Serpent-queen charged Hasib not to drink of the first scum and carefully to keep the second, saying, "When the Wazir returneth from the King and asketh for the second phial, give him the first and note what shall befal him; then drink the contents of the second phial and thy heart will become the home of wisdom. After this take up the flesh and, laying it in a brazen platter, carry it to the King and give him to eat thereof. When he hath eaten it and it hath settled in his stomach, veil his face with a kerchief and wait by him till noontide, when he will have digested the meat. Then 391 give him somewhat of wine to drink and, by the decree of Allah Almighty, he will be healed of his unhealth and be made whole as he was. And give thou ear to the charge wherewith I charge thee; and keep it in thy memory with carefullest keeping." They ceased not faring till they came to the Wazir's house, and he said to Hasib, "Come in with me!" So he went in and the troops dispersed and fared each his own way; whereupon Hasib set down the platter and the Wazir bade him slay the Queen of the Serpents; but he said, "I know not how to slaughter and never in my born days killed I aught. An thou wilt have her

throat cut, do it with thine own hand." So the Minister Shamhur took the Queen from the platter and slew her, seeing which Hasib wept bitter tears and the Wazir[574] laughed at him, saying, "O weak of wits, how canst thou weep for the killing of a worm?" Then he cut her in three and, laying the pieces in a brass cauldron, set it on the fire and sat down to await the cooking of the flesh. And whilst he was sitting, lo! there came a slave from the King, who said to him, "The King calls for thee without stay or delay;" and he answered saying, "I hear and I obey." So he gave Hasib two phials and bade him drink the first scum and keep the second against his return, even as the Queen of the Serpents had foretold; after which he went away with repeated charges and injunctions; and Hasib tended the fire under the cauldron till the first scum rose, when he skimmed it off and, setting it in one of the phials, kept it by him. He then fed the fire till the second scum rose; then he skimmed it off and, putting it in the other phial, kept it for himself. And when the meat was done, he took the cauldron off the fire and sat awaiting the Wazir who asked him on return, "What hast thou done?;" and answered Hasib, "I did thy bidding to the last word." Quoth the Wazir, "What hast thou done with the first phial?" "I drank its contents but now," replied Hasib, and Shamhur asked, "Thy body feeleth it no change?"; whereto Hasib answered, "Verily, I feel as I were on fire from front to foot." The villain Wazir made no reply hiding the truth but said, "Hand me the second phial, that I may drink what is therein, so haply I may be made whole of this ailing in my loins." So Hasib brought him the first phial and he drank it off, thinking it contained the second scum; but hardly had he 392 done drinking when the phial fell from his hand and he swelled up and dropped down dead; and thus was exemplified in him the saying; "Whoso for his brother diggeth a pit, he shall be the first to fall into it." Now when Hasib saw this, he wondered and feared to drink of the second phial; but he remembered the Serpent-queen's injunction and bethought him that the Wazir would not have reserved the second scum for himself, had there been aught of hurt therein. So he said, "I put my trust in Allah,"[575] and drank off the contents of the phial. No sooner had he done so, than the Most Highest made the waters of wisdom to well up in his heart and opened to him the fountains of knowledge, and joy and gladness overcame him. Then he took the serpent's flesh from the cauldron and, laying it on a platter of brass, went forth from the Wazir's house. On his way to the palace he raised his eyes and saw the seven Heavens and all that therein is, even to the Lote-tree, beyond which there is no passing,[576] and the manner of the revolution of the spheres. Moreover, Allah discovered to him the ordinance of the planets and the scheme of their movements and the fixed stars; and he saw the contour of the land and sea, whereby he became informed with geometry, astrology and astronomy and mathematics and all that hangeth thereby; and he understood the causes and consequences of eclipses of the sun and moon. Then he looked at the earth and saw all minerals and vegetables that are therein and thereon; and he learned their properties, and their virtues, so that he became in an instant versed in medicine and chemistry and natural magic and the art of making gold and

silver. And he ceased not carrying the flesh till he came to the palace, when he went in to King Karazdan, and kissing the ground before him, said, "May thy head survive thy Wazir Shamhur!" The King was mightily angered at the news of the Grand Wazir's death and wept for him, whilst his Emirs and his Grandees and officers also wept. Then said Karazdan, "He was with me but now, in all health, and went away to fetch me the flesh of the Queen of the Serpents, if it should be cooked; what befel him 393 that he is now dead, and what accident hath betided him?" So Hasib told him the whole truth how the Minister had drunk the contents of the phial and had forthwith swelled out and died. The King mourned for his loss with mourning sore and said to Hasib, "What shall I do without Shamhur?" and Hasib answered "Grieve not, O King of the age; for I will cure thee within three days and leave no whit of disease in thy body." At this the King's breast waxed broad and he said, "I wish to be made whole of this affliction, though after a long term of years." So Hasib set the platter before the King and made him eat a slice of the flesh of the Serpent-queen. Then he covered him up and, spreading a kerchief over his face, bade him sleep and sat down by his side. He slept from noonday till sundown, while his stomach digested the piece of flesh, and presently he awoke. Hasib gave him somewhat of wine to drink and bade him sleep again; so he slept till the morning and when dawn appeared, Hasib repeated the treatment making him eat another piece of the flesh; and thus he did with him three days following, till he had eaten the whole, when his skin began to shrink and scale off and he perspired, so that the sweat ran down from his head to his heels. Therewith he became whole and there abode in him no trace of the disease, which when Hasib saw, he said, "There is no help for it but thou go to the Hammam." So he carried him to the bath and washed his body; and when he came forth, it was like a wand of silver and he was restored to health, nay, sounder than he was before he fell ill. Thereupon he donned his richest robes and, seating himself on his throne, deigned make Hasib sit beside him. Then he bade the tables be spread and they ate and washed their hands; after which he called for the service of wine and both drank their fill. Upon this all his Wazirs and Emirs and Captains and the Grandees of his realm and the notables of the lieges came in to him and gave him joy of his recovery; and they beat the drums and adorned the city in token of rejoicing. Then said the King to the assembly, "O Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees, this is Hasib Karim al-Din, who hath healed me of my sickness, and know all here present that I make him my Chief Wazir in the stead of the Wazir Shamhur."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth King Karazdan to his Ministers and high lords, "He who healed me of my sickness is none other than Hasib Karim al-Din here present. Therefore I make him my Chief Wazir in the stead

of the Wazir Shamhur; and whoso loveth him loveth me, and whoso honoureth him honoureth me, and he who obeyeth him obeyeth me." "Hearkening and obedience," answered they and all rising flocked to kiss Hasib's hand and salute him and give him joy of the Wazirate. Then the King bestowed on him a splendid dress of gold brocade, set with pearls and gems, the least of which was worth five thousand gold pieces. Moreover, he presented to him three hundred male white slaves and the like number of concubines, in loveliness like moons, and three hundred Abyssinian[577] slave-girls, beside five hundred mules laden with treasure and sheep and oxen and buffaloes and bulls and other cattle beyond count; and he commanded all his Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees and Notables and Mamelukes and his subjects in general to bring him gifts. Presently Hasib took horse and rode, followed by the Wazirs and Emirs and lords and all the troops, to the house which the King had set apart for him, where he sat down on a chair; and the Wazirs and Emirs came up to him and kissed hands and gave him joy of his Ministership, vying with one another in suit and service. When his mother and his household knew what had happened, they rejoiced with exceeding joy and congratulated him on his good fortune; and his quondam comrades the woodcutters also came and gave him joy. Then he mounted again and, riding to the house of the late Wazir Shamhur, laid hands on all that was therein and transported it to his own abode. On this wise did Hasib, from a dunsical know-nothing, unskilled to read writing, become, by the decree of Allah Almighty, an adept in every science and versed in all manner of knowledge, so that the fame of his learning was blazed abroad over the land and he became renowned as an ocean of 395 lore and skill in medicine and astronomy and geometry and astrology and alchemy and natural magic and the Cabbala and Spiritualism and all other arts and sciences. One day, he said to his mother, "My father Daniel was exceeding wise and learned; tell me what he left by way of books or what not!" So his mother brought him the chest and, taking out the five leaves which had been saved when the library was lost, gave them to him saying, "These five scrolls are all thy father left thee." So he read them and said to her, "O my mother, these leaves are part of a book: where is the rest?" Quoth she, "Thy father made a voyage taking with him all his library and, when he was shipwrecked, every book was lost save only these five leaves. And when he was returned to me by Almighty Allah he found me with child and said to me:—Haply thou wilt bear a boy; so take these scrolls and keep them by thee and whenas thy son shall grow up and ask what his father left him, give these leaves to him and say, Thy father left these as thine only heritance. And lo! here they are." And Hasib, now the most learned of his age, abode in all pleasure and solace and delight of life, till there came to him the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies.[578] And yet, O King, is not this tale of Bulukiya and Janshah more wondrous than the adventures of

22- SINDBAD THE SEAMAN[1] AND SINDBAD THE LANDSMAN.

There lived in the city of Baghdad, during the reign of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, a man named Sindbád the Hammál,[2] one in poor case who bore burdens on his head for hire. It happened to him one day of great heat that whilst he was carrying a heavy load, he became exceeding weary and sweated profusely, the heat and the weight alike oppressing him. Presently, as he was passing the gate of a merchant's house, before which the ground was swept and watered, and there the air was temperate, he sighted a broad bench beside the door; so he set his load thereon, to take rest and smell the air,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Hammal set his load upon the bench to take rest and smell the air, there came out upon him from the court-door a pleasant breeze and a delicious fragrance. He sat down on the edge of the bench, and at once heard from within the melodious sound of lutes and other stringed instruments, and mirth-exciting voices singing and reciting, together with the song of birds warbling and glorifying Almighty Allah in various tunes and tongues; turtles, mocking-birds, merles, nightingales, cushats and stone-curlews,[3] whereat he marvelled in himself and was moved to mighty joy and solace. Then he went up to the gate and saw within a great flower-garden wherein were pages and black slaves and such a train of servants and attendants and so forth as is found only with Kings and Sultans; and his nostrils were greeted with the savoury odours of all manner meats rich and delicate, and delicious and generous wines. So he raised his eyes heavenwards and said, "Glory to Thee, O Lord, O Creator and Provider, who providest whomso Thou wilt without count or stint! O mine Holy One, I cry Thee pardon for all sins and turn to Thee repenting of all offences! O Lord, there is no gainsaying Thee in Thine ordinance and Thy dominion, neither wilt Thou be questioned of that Thou dost, for Thou indeed over all things art Almighty! Extolled be Thy perfection: whom Thou wilt Thou makest poor and whom Thou wilt Thou makest rich! Whom Thou wilt Thou exaltest and whom Thou wilt Thou abasest and

there is no god but Thou! How mighty is Thy majesty and how enduring Thy dominion and how excellent Thy government! Verily, Thou favourest whom Thou wilt of Thy servants, whereby the owner of this place abideth in all joyance of life and delighteth himself with pleasant scents and delicious meats and exquisite wines of all kinds. For indeed Thou appointest unto Thy creatures that which Thou wilt and that which Thou hast fore-ordained unto them; wherefore are some weary and others are at rest and some enjoy fair fortune and affluence, whilst others suffer the extreme of travail and misery, even as I do." And he fell to reciting:—

How many by my labours, that evermore endure, ✿ All goods of life enjoy and in cooly shade recline?

Each morn that dawns I wake in travail and in woe, ✿ And strange is my condition and my burden gars me pine:

Many others are in luck and from miseries are free, ✿ And Fortune never loads them with loads the like o' mine:

They live their happy days in all solace and delight; ✿ Eat, drink and dwell in honour 'mid the noble and the digne:

All living things were made of a little drop of sperm, ✿ Thine origin is mine and my provenance is thine;

Yet the difference and distance 'twixt the twain of us are far ✿ As the difference of savour 'twixt vinegar and wine:

But at Thee, O God All-wise! I venture not to rail ✿ Whose ordinance is just and whose justice cannot fail.

When Sindbad the Porter had made an end of reciting his verses, he bore up his burden and was about to fare on, when there came forth to him from the gate a little foot-page, fair of face and shapely of shape and dainty of dress who caught him by the hand saying, "Come in and speak with my lord, for he calleth for thee." The Porter would have excused himself to the page but the lad would take no refusal; so he left his load with the doorkeeper in the vestibule and followed the boy into the house, which he found to be a goodly mansion, radiant and full of majesty, till he brought him to a grand sitting-room wherein he saw a company of nobles and great lords, seated at tables garnished with all manner of flowers and sweet-scented herbs, besides great plenty of dainty viands and fruits dried and fresh and confections and wines of the choicest vintages. There also were instruments of music and mirth and lovely slave-girls playing and singing. All the company was ranged according to rank; and in the highest place sat a man of worshipful and noble aspect whose beard-sides hoariness had stricken; and he was stately of stature and fair of favour, agreeable of aspect and full of gravity and dignity and majesty. So Sindbad the Porter was confounded at that which he beheld and said in himself, "By Allah, this must be either a piece of Paradise or some King's palace!" Then he saluted the company with much respect praying for their prosperity, and kissing the ground before them, stood with his head bowed down in humble attitude.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Porter, after kissing ground between their hands, stood with his head bowed down in humble attitude. The master of the house bade him draw near and be seated and bespoke him kindly, bidding him welcome. Then he set before him various kinds of viands, rich and delicate and delicious, and the Porter, after saying his Bismillah, fell to and ate his fill, after which he exclaimed, "Praised be Allah whatso be our case![4]" and, washing his hands, 4returned thanks to the company for his entertainment. Quoth the host, "Thou art welcome and thy day is a blessed. But what is thy name and calling?" Quoth the other, "O my lord, my name is Sindbad the Hammal, and I carry folk's goods on my head for hire." The house-master smiled and rejoined, "Know, O Porter that thy name is even as mine, for I am Sindbad the Seaman; and now, O Porter, I would have thee let me hear the couplets thou recitedst at the gate anon." The Porter was abashed and replied, "Allah upon thee! Excuse me, for toil and travail and lack of luck when the hand is empty, teach a man ill manners and boorish ways." Said the host, "Be not ashamed; thou art become my brother; but repeat to me the verses, for they pleased me whenas I heard thee recite them at the gate." Hereupon the Porter repeated the couplets and they delighted the merchant, who said to him:—Know, O Hammal, that my story is a wonderful one, and thou shalt hear all that befel me and all I underwent ere I rose to this state of prosperity and became the lord of this place wherein thou seest me; for I came not to this high estate save after travail sore and perils galore, and how much toil and trouble have I not suffered in days of yore! I have made seven voyages, by each of which hangeth a marvellous tale, such as confoundeth the reason, and all this came to pass by doom of fortune and fate; for from what destiny doth write there is neither refuge nor flight. Know, then, good my lords (continued he) that I am about to relate the

FIRST VOYAGE OF SINDBAD HIGHT THE SEAMAN.[5]

My father was a merchant, one of the notables of my native place, a monied man and ample of means, who died whilst I was yet a child, leaving me much wealth in money and lands and farmhouses. When I grew up, I laid hands on the whole and ate of the best and drank freely and wore rich clothes and lived lavishly, companioning and consorting with youths of my own age, and considering that this course of life would continue for ever and ken no change. Thus did I for a long time, but at last I awoke from my heedlessness and, returning to my senses, I found my wealth 5had become unwealth and my condition ill-conditioned and all I once hent had left my hand. And recovering my reason I was stricken with dismay and confusion and bethought me of a saying of our lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!), which I had heard

aforetime from my father, “Three things are better than other three; the day of death is better than the day of birth, a live dog is better than a dead lion and the grave is better than want.”[6] Then I got together my remains of estates and property and sold all, even my clothes, for three thousand dirhams, with which I resolved to travel to foreign parts, remembering the saying of the poet:—

By means of toil man shall scale the height; ✿ Who to fame aspires mustn’t sleep o’ night:
Who seeketh pearl in the deep must dive, ✿ Winning weal and wealth by his main and might:
And who seeketh Fame without toil and strife ✿ Th’ impossible seeketh and wasteth life.

So taking heart I bought me goods, merchandise and all needed for a voyage and, impatient to be at sea, I embarked, with a company of merchants, on board a ship bound for Bassorah. There we again embarked and sailed many days and nights, and we passed from isle to isle and sea to sea and shore to shore, buying and selling and bartering everywhere the ship touched, and continued our course till we came to an island as it were a garth of the gardens of Paradise. Here the captain cast anchor and making fast to the shore, put out the landing planks. So all on board landed and made furnaces[7] and lighting fires therein, busied themselves in various ways, some cooking and some washing, whilst other some walked about the island for solace, and the crew fell to eating and drinking and playing and sporting. I was one of the walkers but, as we were thus engaged, behold the master who was standing on the gunwale cried out to us at the top of his voice, saying, “Ho there! passengers, run for your lives and hasten back to the ship and leave your gear and save yourselves 6 from destruction, Allah preserve you! For this island whereon ye stand is no true island, but a great fish stationary a-middlemost of the sea, whereon the sand hath settled and trees have sprung up of old time, so that it is become like unto an island;[8] but, when ye lighted fires on it, it felt the heat and moved; and in a moment it will sink with you into the sea and ye will all be drowned. So leave your gear and seek your safety ere ye die!”—

—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the ship-master cried to the passengers, “Leave your gear and seek safety, ere ye die;” all who heard him left gear and goods, clothes washed and unwashed, fire pots and brass cooking-pots, and fled back to the ship for their lives, and some reached it while others (amongst whom was I) did not, for suddenly the island shook and sank into the abysses of the deep, with all that were thereon, and the dashing sea surged over it with clashing waves. I sank with the others down, down into the deep, but Almighty Allah preserved me from drowning and threw in my way a great wooden tub of those that had served the ship’s company for tubbing. I gripped it for the sweetness of life and, bestriding it like one riding, paddled with my feet like oars, whilst the waves tossed me as in sport right and left. Meanwhile the captain made sail and departed with those who had

reached the ship, regardless of the drowning and the drowned; and I ceased not following the vessel with my eyes, till she was hid from sight and I made sure of death. Darkness closed in upon me while in this plight and the winds and waves bore me on all that night and the next day, till the tub 7 brought to with me under the lee of a lofty island, with trees overhanging the tide. I caught hold of a branch and by its aid clambered up on to the land, after coming nigh upon death; but when I reached the shore, I found my legs cramped and numbed and my feet bore traces of the nibbling of fish upon their soles; withal I had felt nothing for excess of anguish and fatigue. I threw myself down on the island ground, like a dead man, and drowned in desolation swooned away, nor did I return to my senses till next morning, when the sun rose and revived me. But I found my feet swollen, so made shift to move by shuffling on my breech and crawling on my knees, for in that island were found store of fruits and springs of sweet water. I ate of the fruits which strengthened me; and thus I abode days and nights, till my life seemed to return and my spirits began to revive and I was better able to move about. So, after due consideration, I fell to exploring the island and diverting myself with gazing upon all things that Allah Almighty had created there; and rested under the trees from one of which I cut me a staff to lean upon. One day as I walked along the marge, I caught sight of some object in the distance and thought it a wild beast or one of the monster-creatures of the sea; but, as I drew near it, looking hard the while, I saw that it was a noble mare, tethered on the beach. Presently I went up to her, but she cried out against me with a great cry, so that I trembled for fear and turned to go away, when there came forth a man from under the earth and followed me, crying out and saying, "Who and whence art thou, and what caused thee to come hither?" "O my lord," answered I, "I am in very sooth, a waif, a stranger, and was left to drown with sundry others by the ship we voyaged in;[9] but Allah graciously sent me a wooden tub; so I saved myself thereon and it floated with me, till the waves cast me up on this island." When he heard this, he took my hand and saying, "Come with me," carried me into a great Sardáb, or underground chamber, which was spacious as a saloon. He made me sit down at its upper end; then he brought me somewhat of food and, being an-hungered, I ate till I was satisfied and refreshed; and when he had put me at mine ease he questioned me of myself, and I told him all that had befallen me from first 8 to last; and, as he wondered at my adventure, I said, "By Allah, O my lord, excuse me; I have told thee the truth of my case and the accident which betided me; and now I desire that thou tell me who thou art and why thou abidest here under the earth and why thou hast tethered yonder mare on the brink of the sea." Answered he, "Know, that I am one of the several who are stationed in different parts of this island, and we are of the grooms of King Mihrján[10] and under our hand are all his horses. Every month, about new-moon tide we bring hither our best mares which have never been covered, and picket them on the sea-shore and hide ourselves in this place under the ground, so that none may espy

us. Presently, the stallions of the sea scent the mares and come up out of the water and seeing no one, leap the mares and do their will of them. When they have covered them, they try to drag them away with them, but cannot, by reason of the leg-ropes; so they cry out at them and butt at them and kick them, which we hearing, know that the stallions have dismounted; so we run out and shout at them, whereupon they are startled and return in fear to the sea. Then the mares conceive by them and bear colts and fillies worth a mint of money, nor is their like to be found on earth's face. This is the time of the coming forth of the sea-stallions; and Inshallah! I will bear thee to King Mihrjan"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

9

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Syce[11] said to Sindbad the Seaman, "I will bear thee to King Mihrjan and show thee our country. And know that hadst thou not happened on us thou hadst perished miserably and none had known of thee: but I will be the means of the saving of thy life and of thy return to thine own land." I called down blessings on him and thanked him for his kindness and courtesy; and, while we were yet talking, behold, the stallion came up out of the sea; and, giving a great cry, sprang upon the mare and covered her. When he had done his will of her, he dismounted and would have carried her away with him, but could not by reason of the tether. She kicked and cried out at him, whereupon the groom took a sword and target[12] and ran out of the underground saloon, smiting the buckler with the blade and calling to his company, who came up shouting and brandishing spears; and the stallion took fright at them and plunging into the sea, like a buffalo, disappeared under the waves.[13] After this we sat awhile, till the rest of the grooms came up, each leading a mare, and seeing me with their fellow-Syce, questioned me of my case and I repeated my story to them. Thereupon they drew near me and spreading the table, ate and invited me to eat; so I ate with them, after which they took horse and mounting me on one of the mares, set out with me and fared on without ceasing, till we came to the capital city of King Mihrjan, and going in to him acquainted him with my story. Then he sent for me, and when they set me before him and salams had been exchanged, he gave me a cordial welcome and wishing me long life bade me tell him my tale. So I related to him all that 10 I had seen and all that had befallen me from first to last, whereat he marvelled and said to me, "By Allah, O my son, thou hast indeed been miraculously preserved! Were not the term of thy life a long one, thou hadst not escaped from these straits; but praised be Allah for safety!" Then he spoke cheerily to me and entreated me with kindness and consideration: moreover, he made me his agent for the port and registrar of all ships that entered the harbour. I attended him regularly, to receive his commandments, and he favoured me and did me all manner of kindness and invested me with costly and splendid robes. Indeed, I was

high in credit with him, as an intercessor for the folk and an intermediary between them and him, when they wanted aught of him. I abode thus a great while and, as often as I passed through the city to the port, I questioned the merchants and travellers and sailors of the city of Baghdad; so haply I might hear of an occasion to return to my native land, but could find none who knew it or knew any who resorted thither. At this I was chagrined, for I was weary of long strangerhood; and my disappointment endured for a time till one day, going in to King Mihrjan, I found with him a company of Indians. I saluted them and they returned my salam; and politely welcomed me and asked me of my country.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman said:—When they asked me of my country I questioned them of theirs and they told me that they were of various castes, some being called Shakiriyah[14] who are the noblest of their castes and neither oppress nor offer violence to any, and others Brahmans, a folk who abstain from wine, but live in delight and solace and merriment and own camels and horses and cattle. Moreover, they told me that the people of India are divided into two-and-seventy castes, and I marvelled at this with exceeding 11 marvel. Amongst other things that I saw in King Mihrjan's dominions was an island called Kásil,[15] wherein all night is heard the beating of drums and tabrets; but we were told by the neighbouring islanders and by travellers that the inhabitants are people of diligence and judgment.[16] In this sea I saw also a fish two hundred cubits long and the fishermen fear it; so they strike together pieces of wood and put it to flight.[17] I also saw another fish, with a head like that of an owl, besides many other wonders and rarities, which it would be tedious to recount. I occupied myself thus in visiting the islands till, one day, as I stood in the port, with a staff in my hand, according to my custom, behold, a great ship, wherein were many merchants, came sailing for the harbour. When it reached the small inner port where ships anchor under the city, the master furled his sails and making fast to the shore, put out the landing-planks, whereupon the crew fell to breaking bulk and landing cargo whilst I stood by, taking written note of them. They were long in bringing the goods ashore so I asked the master, "Is there aught left in thy ship?"; and he answered, "O my lord, there are divers bales of merchandise in the hold, whose owner was drowned from amongst us at one of the islands on our course; so his goods remained in our charge by way of trust and we purpose to sell them and note their price, that we may convey it to his people in the City of Baghdad, the Home of Peace." "What was the merchant's name?" quoth I, and quoth he, "Sindbad the Seaman;" whereupon I straitly considered him and knowing him, cried out to him with a great cry, saying, "O captain, I am that Sindbad the Seaman who travelled with other merchants; and when the fish heaved and thou calledst to us 12 some saved

themselves and others sank, I being one of them. But Allah Almighty threw in my way a great tub of wood, of those the crew had used to wash withal, and the winds and waves carried me to this island, where by Allah's grace, I fell in with King Mihrjan's grooms and they brought me hither to the King their master. When I told him my story, he entreated me with favour and made me his harbour-master, and I have prospered in his service and found acceptance with him. These bales, therefore are mine, the goods which God hath given me."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She continued, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sindbad the Seaman said to the captain, "These bales are mine, the goods which Allah hath given me," the other exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily, there is neither conscience nor good faith left among men!" said I, "O Rais,[18] what mean these words, seeing that I have told thee my case?" And he answered, "Because thou heardest me say that I had with me goods whose owner was drowned, thou thinkest to take them without right; but this is forbidden by law to thee, for we saw him drown before our eyes, together with many other passengers, nor was one of them saved. So how canst thou pretend that thou art the owner of the goods?" "O captain," said I, "listen to my story and give heed to my words, and my truth will be manifest to thee; for lying and leasing are the letter-marks of the hypocrites." Then I recounted to him all that had befallen me since I sailed from Baghdad with him to the time when we came to the fish-island where we were nearly drowned; and I reminded him of certain matters which had passed between us; whereupon both he and the merchants were certified of the truth of my story and recognized me and gave me joy of my deliverance, saying, "By Allah, we thought not that thou hadst escaped drowning! But the Lord hath granted thee new life." Then they delivered my bales to me, and I found my name written thereon, nor was aught thereof lacking. So I opened them and making up a present for King 13 Mihrjan of the finest and costliest of the contents, caused the sailors carry it up to the palace, where I went in to the King and laid my present at his feet, acquainting him with what had happened, especially concerning the ship and my goods; whereat he wondered with exceeding wonder and the truth of all that I had told him was made manifest to him. His affection for me redoubled after that and he showed me exceeding honour and bestowed on me a great present in return for mine. Then I sold my bales and what other matters I owned making a great profit on them, and bought me other goods and gear of the growth and fashion of the island-city. When the merchants were about to start on their homeward voyage, I embarked on board the ship all that I possessed, and going in to the King, thanked him for all his favours and friendship and craved his leave to return to my own land and friends. He farewelled me and bestowed on me great store of the country-stuffs and produce; and I took leave of him and embarked.

Then we set sail and fared on nights and days, by the permission of Allah Almighty; and Fortune served us and Fate favoured us, so that we arrived in safety at Bassorah-city where I landed rejoiced at my safe return to my natal soil. After a short stay, I set out for Baghdad, the House of Peace, with store of goods and commodities of great price. Reaching the city in due time, I went straight to my own quarter and entered my house where all my friends and kinsfolk came to greet me. Then I bought me eunuchs and concubines, servants and negro slaves till I had a large establishment, and I bought me houses, and lands and gardens, till I was richer and in better case than before, and returned to enjoy the society of my friends and familiars more assiduously than ever, forgetting all I had suffered of fatigue and hardship and strangerhood and every peril of travel; and I applied myself to all manner joys and solaces and delights, eating the daintiest viands and drinking the deliciousest wines; and my wealth allowed this state of things to endure. This, then, is the story of my first voyage, and to-morrow, Inshallah! I will tell you the tale of the second of my seven voyages. (Saith he who telleth the tale), Then Sindbad the Seaman made Sindbad the Landsman sup with him and bade him give an hundred gold pieces, saying, "Thou hast cheered us with thy company this day."[191] The 14 Porter thanked him and, taking the gift, went his way, pondering that which he had heard and marvelling mightily at what things betide mankind. He passed the night in his own place and with early morning repaired to the abode of Sindbad the Seaman, who received him with honour and seated him by his side. As soon as the rest of the company was assembled, he set meat and drink before them and, when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry and in cheerful case, he took up his discourse and recounted to them in these words the narrative of

THE SECOND VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN.

Know, O my brother, that I was living a most comfortable and enjoyable life, in all solace and delight, as I told you yesterday,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sindbad the Seaman's guests were all gathered together he thus bespake them:—I was living a most enjoyable life until one day my mind became possessed with the thought of travelling about the world of men and seeing their cities and islands; and a longing seized me to traffic and to make money by trade. Upon this resolve I took a great store of cash and, buying goods and gear fit for travel, bound them up in bales. Then I went down to the river-bank, where I found a noble ship and brand-new about to sail,

equipped with sails of fine cloth and well manned and provided; so I took passage in her, with a number of other merchants, and after embarking our goods we weighed anchor the same day. Right fair was our voyage and we sailed from place to place and from isle to isle; and whenever we anchored we met a crowd of merchants and notables and customers, and we took to buying and selling and bartering. At last Destiny brought us to an island, fair and verdant, in trees abundant, with yellow-ripe fruits luxuriant, and flowers fragrant and birds warbling soft descant; and streams crystalline and radiant; but no sign of man showed to the descrier, 15 no, not a blower of the fire.[20] The captain made fast with us to this island, and the merchants and sailors landed and walked about, enjoying the shade of the trees and the song of the birds, that chanted the praises of the One, the Victorious, and marvelling at the works of the Omnipotent King.[21] I landed with the rest; and, sitting down by a spring of sweet water that welled up among the trees, took out some vivers I had with me and ate of that which Allah Almighty had allotted unto me. And so sweet was the zephyr and so fragrant were the flowers, that presently I waxed drowsy and, lying down in that place, was soon drowned in sleep. When I awoke, I found myself alone, for the ship had sailed and left me behind, nor had one of the merchants or sailors bethought himself of me. I searched the island right and left, but found neither man nor Jinn, whereat I was beyond measure troubled and my gall was like to burst for stress of chagrin and anguish and concern, because I was left quite alone, without aught of worldly gear or meat or drink, weary and heart-broken. So I gave myself up for lost and said, “Not always doth the crock escape the shock.” I was saved the first time by finding one who brought me from the desert island to an inhabited place, but now there is no hope for me. Then I fell to weeping and wailing and gave myself up to an access of rage, blaming myself for having again ventured upon the perils and hardships of voyage, whenas I was at my ease in mine own house in mine own land, taking my pleasure with good meat and good drink and good clothes and lacking nothing, neither money nor goods. And I repented me of having left Baghdad, and this the more after all the travails and dangers I had undergone in my first voyage, wherein I had so narrowly escaped destruction, and exclaimed “Verily we are Allah’s and unto Him we are returning!” I was indeed even as one mad and Jinn-struck and presently I rose and walked about the island, right and left and every whither, unable for trouble to sit or tarry in any one place. Then I climbed a tall tree and looked in all directions, but saw nothing save sky and sea and trees and birds and isles and sands. However, after a while my eager glances fell upon some great white thing, afar off in the 16 interior of the island; so I came down from the tree and made for that which I had seen; and behold, it was a huge white dome rising high in air and of vast compass. I walked all around it, but found no door thereto, nor could I muster strength or nimbleness by reason of its exceeding smoothness and slipperiness. So I marked the spot where I stood and went round about the dome to measure its circumference

which I found fifty good paces. And as I stood, casting about how to gain an entrance the day being near its fall and the sun being near the horizon, behold, the sun was suddenly hidden from me and the air became dull and dark. Methought a cloud had come over the sun, but it was the season of summer; so I marvelled at this and lifting my head looked steadfastly at the sky, when I saw that the cloud was none other than an enormous bird, of gigantic girth and inordinately wide of wing which, as it flew through the air, veiled the sun and hid it from the island. At this sight my wonder redoubled and I remembered a story——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued in these words:—My wonder redoubled and I remembered a story I had heard aforetime of pilgrims and travellers, how in a certain island dwelleth a huge bird, called the "Rukh"[22] which feedeth its young on elephants; and I was certified 17 that the dome which caught my sight was none other than a Rukh's egg. As I looked and wondered at the marvellous works of the Almighty, the bird alighted on the dome and brooded over it with its wings covering it and its legs stretched out behind it on the ground, and in this posture it fell asleep, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! When I saw this, I arose and, unwinding my turband from my head, doubled it and twisted it into a rope, with which I girt my middle and bound my waist fast to the legs of the Rukh, saying in myself, "Peradventure, this bird may carry me to a land of cities and inhabitants, and that will be better than abiding in this desert island." I passed the night watching and fearing to sleep, lest the bird should fly away with me unawares; and, as soon as the dawn broke and morn shone, the Rukh rose off its egg and spreading its wings with a great cry flew up into the air dragging me with it; nor ceased it to soar and to tower till I thought it had reached the limit of the firmament; after which it descended, earthwards, little by little, till it lighted on the top of a high hill. As soon as I found myself on the hard ground, I made haste to unbind myself, quaking for fear of the bird, though it took no heed of me nor even felt me; and, loosing my turband from its feet, I made off with my best speed. Presently, I saw it catch up in its huge claws something from the earth and rise with it high in air, and observing it narrowly I saw it to be a serpent big of bulk and gigantic of girth, wherewith it flew away clean out of sight. I marvelled at this and faring forwards found myself on a peak overlooking a valley, exceeding great and wide and deep, and bounded by vast mountains that spired high in air: none could descry their summits, for the excess of their height, nor was any able to climb up thereto. When I saw this, I blamed myself for that which I had done and said, "Would Heaven I had tarried in the island! 18 It was better than this wild desert; for there I had at least fruits to eat and water to drink, and here are neither trees nor fruits nor streams. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily, as often

as I am quit of one peril, I fall into a worse danger and a more grievous." However, I took courage and walking along the Wady found that its soil was of diamond, the stone wherewith they pierce minerals and precious stones and porcelain and the onyx, for that it is a dense stone and a dure, whereon neither iron nor hardhead hath effect, neither can we cut off aught therefrom nor break it, save by means of lead-stone.[23] Moreover, the valley swarmed with snakes and vipers, each big as a palm tree, that would have made but one gulp of an elephant; and they came out by night, hiding during the day, lest the Rukhs and eagles pounce on them and tear them to pieces, as was their wont, why I wot not. And I repented of what I had done and said, "By Allah, I have made haste to bring destruction upon myself!" The day began to wane as I went along and I looked about for a place where I might pass the night, being in fear of the serpents; and I took no thought of meat and drink in my concern for my life. Presently, I caught sight of a cave nearhand, with a narrow doorway; so I entered and seeing a great stone close to the mouth. I rolled it up and stopped the entrance, saying to myself, "I am safe here for the night; and as soon as it is day, I will go forth and see what destiny will do." Then I looked within the cave and saw at the upper end a great serpent brooding on her eggs, at which my flesh quaked and my hair stood on end; but I raised my eyes to Heaven and, committing 19 my case to fate and lot, abode all that night without sleep till daybreak, when I rolled back the stone from the mouth of the cave and went forth, staggering like a drunken man and giddy with watching and fear and hunger. As in this sore case I walked along the valley, behold, there fell down before me a slaughtered beast; but I saw no one, whereat I marvelled with great marvel and presently remembered a story I had heard aforetime of traders and pilgrims and travellers; how the mountains where are the diamonds are full of perils and terrors, nor can any fare through them; but the merchants who traffic in diamonds have a device by which they obtain them, that is to say, they take a sheep and slaughter and skin it and cut it in pieces and cast them down from the mountain-tops into the valley-sole, where the meat being fresh and sticky with blood, some of the gems cleave to it. There they leave it till midday, when the eagles and vultures swoop down upon it and carry it in their claws to the mountain-summits, whereupon the merchants come and shout at them and scare them away from the meat. Then they come and, taking the diamonds which they find sticking to it, go their ways with them and leave the meat to the birds and beasts; nor can any come at the diamonds but by this device——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued his relation of what befel him in the Mountain of Diamonds, and informed them that the merchants cannot come at the diamonds save by the device aforesaid. So, when I saw the slaughtered beast fall (he pursued) and bethought me of the story, I went up to

it and filled my pockets and shawl-girdle and turband and the folds of my clothes with the choicest diamonds; and, as I was thus engaged, down fell before me another great piece of meat. Then with my unrolled turband and lying on my back, I set the bit on my breast so that I was hidden by the meat, which was thus raised above the ground. Hardly had I gripped it, when an eagle swooped down upon the flesh and, seizing it with his talons, flew up with it high in air and me clinging thereto, and ceased not its flight till it alighted on the head of one of the mountains where, dropping the carcass he fell to rending 20 it; but, behold, there arose behind him a great noise of shouting and clattering of wood, whereat the bird took fright and flew away. Then I loosed off myself the meat, with clothes daubed with blood therefrom, and stood up by its side; whereupon up came the merchant, who had cried out at the eagle, and seeing me standing there, bespoke me not, but was affrighted at me and shook with fear. However, he went up to the carcass and turning it over, found no diamonds sticking to it, whereat he gave a great cry and exclaimed, "Harrow, my disappointment! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah with whom we seek refuge from Satan the stoned!" And he bemoaned himself and beat hand upon hand, saying, "Alas, the pity of it! How cometh this?" Then I went up to him and he said to me, "Who art thou and what causeth thee to come hither?" And I, "Fear not, I am a man and a good man and a merchant. My story is a wondrous and my adventures marvellous and the manner of my coming hither is prodigious. So be of good cheer, thou shalt receive of me what shall rejoice thee, for I have with me great plenty of diamonds and I will give thee thereof what shall suffice thee; for each is better than aught thou couldst get otherwise. So fear nothing." The man rejoiced thereat and thanked and blessed me; then we talked together till the other merchants, hearing me in discourse with their fellow, came up and saluted me; for each of them had thrown down his piece of meat. And as I went off with them I told them my whole story, how I had suffered hardships at sea and the fashion of my reaching the valley. But I gave the owner of the meat a number of the stones I had by me, so they all wished me joy of my escape, saying, "By Allah a new life hath been decreed to thee, for none ever reached yonder valley and came off thence alive before thee; but praised be Allah for thy safety!" We passed the night together in a safe and pleasant place, beyond measure rejoiced at my deliverance from the Valley of Serpents and my arrival in an inhabited land; and on the morrow we set out and journeyed over the mighty range of mountains, seeing many serpents in the valley, till we came to a fair great island, wherein was a garden of huge camphor trees under each of which an hundred men might take shelter. When the folk have a mind to get camphor, they bore into the upper part of the bole with a long iron; whereupon the liquid camphor, which is the sap of the tree, floweth out and they catch it in vessels, where it concreteth like gum; but, after this, the tree 21 dieth and becometh firewood.[24] Moreover, there is in this island a kind of wild beast, called "Rhinoceros,"[25] that pastureth as do steers and buffaloes with us; but it is a huge

brute, bigger of body than the camel and like it feedeth upon the leaves and twigs of trees. It is a remarkable animal with a great and thick horn, ten cubits long, amiddleward its head; wherein, when cleft in twain, is the likeness of a man. Voyagers and pilgrims and travellers declare that this beast called "Karkadan" will carry off a great elephant on its horn and graze about the island and the sea-coast therewith and take no heed of it, till the elephant dieth and its fat, melting in the sun, runneth down into the rhinoceros's eyes and blindeth him, so that he lieth down on the shore. Then comes the bird Rukh and carrieth off both the rhinoceros and that which is on its horn to feed its young withal. Moreover, I saw in this island many kinds of oxen and buffaloes, whose like are not found in our country. Here I sold some of the diamonds which I had by me for gold dinars and silver dirhams and bartered others for the produce of the country; and, loading them upon beasts of burden, fared on with the merchants from valley to valley and town to town, buying and selling and viewing foreign countries and the works and creatures of Allah, till we came to Bassorah-city, where we abode a few days, after which I continued my journey to Baghdad.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sindbad the Seaman returned from his travel to Baghdad, the House of Peace, he arrived at home with great store of diamonds and money and goods. (Continued he) "I foregathered with my friends and relations and gave alms and largesse and bestowed curious gifts and made presents to all my friends and companions. Then I betook myself to eating well and drinking well and wearing fine clothes and making merry with my fellows, and forgot all my sufferings in the pleasures of return to the solace and delight of life, with light heart and broadened breast. And every one who heard of my return came and questioned me of my adventures and of foreign countries, and I related to them all that had befallen me, and the much I had suffered, whereat they wondered and gave me joy of my safe return. This, then, is the end of the story of my second voyage; and to-morrow, Inshallah! I will tell you what befel me in my third voyage." The company marvelled at his story and supped with him; after which he ordered an hundred dinars of gold to be given to the Porter, who took the sum with many thanks and blessings (which he stinted not even when he reached home) and went his way, wondering at what he had heard. Next morning as soon as day came in its sheen and shone, he rose and praying the dawn-prayer, repaired to the house of Sindbad the Seaman, even as he had bidden him, and went in and gave him good-morrow. The merchant welcomed him and made him sit with him, till the rest of the company arrived; and when they had well eaten and drunken and were merry with joy and jollity, their host began by saying:—Hearken, O my brothers, to what I am about to

tell you; for it is even more wondrous than what you have already heard; but Allah alone kenneth what things His Omniscience concealed from man! And listen to

THE THIRD VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN.

As I told you yesterday, I returned from my second voyage overjoyed at my safety and with great increase of wealth, Allah having requited me all that I had wasted and lost, and I abode awhile in Baghdad-city savouring the utmost ease and prosperity and comfort 23 and happiness, till the carnal man was once more seized with longing for travel and diversion and adventure, and yearned after traffic and lucre and emolument, for that the human heart is naturally prone to evil. So making up my mind I laid in great plenty of goods suitable for a sea-voyage and repairing to Bassorah, went down to the shore and found there a fine ship ready to sail, with a full crew and a numerous company of merchants, men of worth and substance; faith, piety and consideration. I embarked with them and we set sail on the blessing of Allah Almighty and on His aidance and His favour to bring our voyage to a safe and prosperous issue and already we congratulated one another on our good fortune and boon voyage. We fared on from sea to sea and from island to island and city to city, in all delight and contentment, buying and selling wherever we touched, and taking our solace and our pleasure, till one day when, as we sailed athwart the dashing sea, swollen with clashing billows, behold, the master (who stood on the gunwale examining the ocean in all directions) cried out with a great cry, and buffeted his face and pluckt out his beard and rent his raiment, and bade furl the sail and cast the anchors. So we said to him, "O Rais, what is the matter?" "Know, O my brethren (Allah preserve you!), that the wind hath gotten the better of us and hath driven us out of our course into mid-ocean, and destiny, for our ill luck, hath brought us to the Mountain of the Zughb, a hairy folk like apes,[26] among whom no man ever fell and came forth alive; and my heart presageth that we all be dead men." Hardly had the master made an end of his speech when the apes were upon us. They surrounded the ship on all sides swarming like locusts and crowding the shore. They were the most frightful of wild creatures, covered with black hair like felt, foul of favour and small of stature, being but four spans high, yellow-eyed and black-faced; none knoweth their language 24 nor what they are, and they shun the company of men. We feared to slay them or strike them or drive them away, because of their inconceivable multitude; lest, if we hurt one, the rest fall on us and slay us, for numbers prevail over courage; so we let them do their will, albeit we feared they would plunder our goods and gear. They swarmed up the cables and gnawed them asunder, and on like wise they did with all the ropes of the ship, so that it fell off from the wind and stranded upon their mountainous coast. Then

they laid hands on all the merchants and crew, and landing us on the island, made off with the ship and its cargo and went their ways, we wot not whither. We were thus left on the island, eating of its fruits and pot-herbs and drinking of its streams till, one day, we espied in its midst what seemed an inhabited house. So we made for it as fast as our feet could carry us and behold, it was a castle strong and tall, compassed about with a lofty wall, and having a two-leaved gate of ebony-wood both of which leaves open stood. We entered and found within a space wide and bare like a great square, round which stood many high doors open thrown, and at the farther end a long bench of stone and brasiers, with cooking gear hanging thereon and about it great plenty of bones; but we saw no one and marvelled thereat with exceeding wonder. Then we sat down in the courtyard a little while and presently falling asleep, slept from the forenoon till sundown, when lo! the earth trembled under our feet and the air rumbled with a terrible tone. Then there came down upon us, from the top of the castle, a huge creature in the likeness of a man, black of colour, tall and big of bulk, as he were a great date-tree, with eyes like coals of fire and eye-teeth like boar's tusks and a vast big gape like the mouth of a well. Moreover, he had long loose lips like camel's, hanging down upon his breast, and ears like two Jarms[27] falling over his shoulder-blades and the nails of his hands were like the claws of a lion.[28] When we saw this frightful giant, we were like to faint and every moment increased our fear and terror; and we became as dead 25 men for excess of horror and affright.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—When we saw this frightful giant we were struck with exceeding terror and horror. And after trampling upon the earth, he sat awhile on the bench; then he arose and coming to us seized me by the arm choosing me out from among my comrades the merchants. He took me up in his hand and turning me over felt me, as a butcher feeleth a sheep he is about to slaughter, and I but a little mouthful in his hands; but finding me lean and fleshless for stress of toil and trouble and weariness, let me go and took up another, whom in like manner he turned over and felt and let go; nor did he cease to feel and turn over the rest of us, one after another, till he came to the master of the ship. Now he was a sturdy, stout, broad-shouldered wight, fat and in full vigour; so he pleased the giant, who seized him, as a butcher seizeth a beast, and throwing him down, set his foot on his neck and brake it; after which he fetched a long spit and thrusting it up his backside, brought it forth of the crown of his head. Then, lighting a fierce fire, he set over it the spit with the Rais thereon, and turned it over the coals, till the flesh was roasted, when he took the spit off the fire and set it like a Kabáb-stick before him. Then he tare the body, limb from limb, as one jointeth a chicken and, rending the flesh with his nails, fell to eating of it and gnawing the bones, till there was nothing left but some of these, which he threw on one side of the

wall. This done, he sat for a while; then he lay down on the stone-bench and fell asleep, snarking and snoring like the gurgling of a lamb or a cow with its throat cut; nor did he awake till morning, when he rose and fared forth and went his ways. As soon as we were certified that he was gone, we began to talk with one another, weeping and bemoaning ourselves for the risk we ran, and saying, "Would Heaven we had been drowned in the sea or that the apes had eaten us! That were better than to be roasted over the coals; by Allah, this is a vile, foul death! But whatso the Lord willeth must come to pass and there is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Him, the Glorious, the Great! We shall assuredly perish miserably and 26 none will know of us; as there is no escape for us from this place." Then we arose and roamed about the island, hoping that haply we might find a place to hide us in or a means of flight, for indeed death was a light matter to us, provided we were not roasted over the fire[29] and eaten. However, we could find no hiding-place and the evening overtook us; so, of the excess of our terror, we returned to the castle and sat down awhile. Presently, the earth trembled under our feet and the black ogre came up to us and turning us over, felt one after other, till he found a man to his liking, whom he took and served as he had done the captain, killing and roasting and eating him: after which he lay down on the bench[30] and slept all night, snarking and snoring like a beast with its throat cut, till daybreak, when he arose and went out as before. Then we drew together and conversed and said one to other, "By Allah, we had better throw ourselves into the sea and be drowned than die roasted; for this is an abominable death!" Quoth one of us, "Hear ye my words! let us cast about to kill him, and be at peace from the grief of him and rid the Moslems of his barbarity and tyranny." Then said I, "Hear me, O my brothers; if there is nothing for it but to slay him, let us carry some of this firewood and planks down to the sea-shore and make us a boat wherein, if we succeed in slaughtering him, we may either embark and let the waters carry us whither Allah willeth, or else abide here till some ship pass, when we will take passage in it. If we fail to kill him, we will embark in the boat and put out to sea; and if we be drowned, we shall at least escape being roasted over a kitchen fire with sliced weasands; whilst, if we escape, we escape, and if we be drowned, we die martyrs." "By Allah," said they all, "this rede is a right;" and we agreed upon this, and set about carrying it out. So we haled down to the beach the pieces of wood which lay about the bench; and, making a boat, moored it to the strand, after which we stowed therein somewhat of victual and returned to 27 the castle. As soon as evening fell the earth trembled under our feet and in came the blackamoor upon us, snarling like a dog about to bite. He came up to us and feeling us and turning us over one by one, took one of us and did with him as he had done before and ate him, after which he lay down on the bench and snored and snorted like thunder. As soon as we were assured that he slept, we arose and taking two iron spits of those standing there, heated them in the fiercest of the fire, till they were red-hot, like burning coals, when we gripped fast hold of them

and going up to the giant, as he lay snoring on the bench, thrust them into his eyes and pressed upon them, all of us, with our united might, so that his eyeballs burst and he became stone blind. Thereupon he cried with a great cry, whereat our hearts trembled, and springing up from the bench, he fell a-groping after us, blind-fold. We fled from him right and left and he saw us not, for his sight was altogether blent; but we were in terrible fear of him and made sure we were dead men despairing of escape. Then he found the door, feeling for it with his hands and went out roaring aloud; and behold, the earth shook under us, for the noise of his roaring, and we quaked for fear. As he quitted the castle we followed him and betook ourselves to the place where we had moored our boat, saying to one another, "If this accursed abide absent till the going down of the sun and come not to the castle, we shall know that he is dead; and if he come back, we will embark in the boat and paddle till we escape, committing our affair to Allah." But, as we spoke, behold, up came the blackamoor with other two as they were Ghuls, fouler and more frightful than he, with eyes like red-hot coals; which when we saw, we hurried into the boat and casting off the moorings paddled away and pushed out to sea.[31] As soon as the ogres caught sight of us, they cried out at us and running down to the sea-shore, fell a-pelting us with rocks, whereof some fell amongst us and others fell into the sea. We paddled with all our might till we were beyond their reach, but the most part of us were slain by the rock-throwing, and the winds and waves sported with us and carried us into the midst of the dashing sea, swollen with billows clashing. We knew not whither we went and my fellows died one after another, till there remained but three, 28 myself and two others;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman thus continued:—Most part of us were slain by the rock-throwing and only three of us remained on board the boat for, as often as one died, we threw him into the sea. We were sore exhausted for stress of hunger, but we took courage and heartened one another and worked for dear life and paddled with main and might, till the winds cast us upon an island, as we were dead men for fatigue and fear and famine. We landed on the island and walked about it for a while, finding that it abounded in trees and streams and birds; and we ate of the fruits and rejoiced in our escape from the black and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; and thus we did till nightfall, when we lay down and fell asleep for excess of fatigue. But we had hardly closed our eyes before we were aroused by a hissing sound, like the sough of wind, and awaking, saw a serpent like a dragon, a seld-seen sight, of monstrous make and belly of enormous bulk which lay in a circle around us. Presently it reared its head and, seizing one of my companions, swallowed him up to his shoulders; then it gulped down the rest of him, and we heard his ribs crack in its belly. Presently it went its way, and we abode in sore amazement and grief for our comrade and mortal fear for ourselves, saying,

“By Allah, this is a marvellous thing! Each kind of death that threateneth us is more terrible than the last. We were rejoicing in our escape from the black ogre and our deliverance from the perils of the sea; but now we have fallen into that which is worse. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah! By the Almighty, we have escaped from the blackamoor and from drowning: but how shall we escape from this abominable and viperish monster?” Then we walked about the island, eating of its fruits and drinking of its streams till dusk, when we climbed up into a high tree and went to sleep there, I being on the topmost bough. As soon as it was dark night, up came the serpent, looking right and left; and, making for the tree whereon we were, climbed up to my comrade and swallowed him down to his shoulders. 29 Then it coiled about the bole[32] with him, whilst I, who could not take my eyes off the sight, heard his bones crack in its belly, and it swallowed him whole, after which it slid down from the tree. When the day broke and the light showed me that the serpent was gone, I came down, as I were a dead man for stress of fear and anguish, and thought to cast myself into the sea and be at rest from the woes of the world; but could not bring myself to this, for verily life is dear. So I took five pieces of wood, broad and long, and bound one crosswise to the soles of my feet and others in like fashion on my right and left sides and over my breast; and the broadest and largest I bound across my head and made them fast with ropes. Then I lay down on the ground on my back, so that I was completely fenced in by the pieces of wood, which enclosed me like a bier.[33] So as soon as it was dark, up came the serpent, as usual, and made towards me, but could not get at me to swallow me for the wood that fenced me in. So it wriggled round me on every side, whilst I looked on, like one dead by reason of my terror; and every now and then it would glide away and come back; but as often as it tried to come at me, it was hindered by the pieces of wood wherewith I had bound myself on every side. It ceased not to beset me thus from sundown till dawn, but when the light of day shone upon the beast it made off, in the utmost fury and extreme disappointment. Then I put out my hand and unbound myself, well-nigh down among the dead men for fear and suffering; and went down to the island-shore, whence a ship afar off in the midst of the waves suddenly struck my sight. So I tore off a great branch of a tree and made signs with it to the crew, shouting out the while; which when the ship’s company saw they said to one another, “We must stand in and see what this 30 is; peradventure ‘tis a man.” So they made for the island and presently heard my cries, whereupon they took me on board and questioned me of my case. I told them all my adventures from first to last, whereat they marvelled mightily and covered my shame[34] with some of their clothes. Moreover, they set before me somewhat of food and I ate my fill and I drank cold sweet water and was mightily refreshed; and Allah Almighty quickened me after I was virtually dead. So I praised the Most Highest and thanked Him for His favours and exceeding mercies, and my heart revived in me after utter despair, till meseemed as if all I had suffered were but a

dream I had dreamed. We sailed on with a fair wind the Almighty sent us till we came to an Island, called Al-Saláhitah,[35] which aboundeth in sandal-wood when the captain cast anchor,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—And when we had cast anchor, the merchants and the sailors landed with their goods to sell and to buy. Then the captain turned to me and said, "Hark'ee, thou art a stranger and a pauper and tellest us that thou hast undergone frightful hardships; wherefore I have a mind to benefit thee with somewhat that may further thee to thy native land, so thou wilt ever bless me and pray for me." "So be it," answered I; "thou shalt have my prayers." Quoth he, "Know then that there was with us a man, a traveller, whom we lost, and we know not if he be alive or dead, for we had no news of him; so I purpose to commit his bales of goods to thy charge, that thou mayst sell them in this island. A part of the proceeds we will give thee as an equivalent for thy pains and service, and the rest we will keep till we return to Baghdad, where we will enquire for his family and 31 deliver it to them, together with the unsold goods. Say me then, wilt thou undertake the charge and land and sell them as other merchants do?" I replied, "Hearkening and obedience to thee, O my lord; and great is thy kindness to me," and thanked him; whereupon he bade the sailors and porters bear the bales in question ashore and commit them to my charge. The ship's scribe asked him, "O master, what bales are these and what merchant's name shall I write upon them?"; and he answered, "Write on them the name of Sindbad the Seaman, him who was with us in the ship and whom we lost at the Rukh's island, and of whom we have no tidings; for we mean this stranger to sell them; and we will give him a part of the price for his pains and keep the rest till we return to Baghdad where, if we find the owner we will make it over to him, and if not, to his family." And the clerk said, "Thy words are apposite and thy rede is right." Now when I heard the captain give orders for the bales to be inscribed with my name, I said to myself, "By Allah, I am Sindbad the Seaman!" So I armed myself with courage and patience and waited till all the merchants had landed and were gathered together, talking and chaffering about buying and selling; then I went up to the captain and asked him, "O my lord, knowest thou what manner of man was this Sindbad, whose goods thou hast committed to me for sale?"; and he answered, "I know of him naught save that he was a man from Baghdad-city, Sindbad hight the Seaman, who was drowned with many others when we lay anchored at such an island and I have heard nothing of him since then." At this I cried out with a great cry and said, "O captain, whom Allah keep! know that I am that Sindbad the Seaman and that I was not drowned, but when thou castest anchor at the island, I landed with the rest of the merchants and crew; and I sat down in a pleasant place by myself and ate somewhat of food I had with me and enjoyed myself

till I became drowsy and was drowned in sleep; and when I awoke, I found no ship and none near me. These goods are my goods and these bales are my bales; and all the merchants who fetch jewels from the Valley of Diamonds saw me there and will bear me witness that I am the very Sindbad the Seaman; for I related to them everything that had befallen me and told them how you forgot me and left me sleeping on the island, and that betided me which betided me." When the passengers and crew heard my words, they gathered about me and some of them believed me and others disbelieved; but presently, 32 behold, one of the merchants, hearing me mention the Valley of Diamonds, came up to me and said to them, "Hear what I say, good people! When I related to you the most wonderful thing in my travels, and I told you that, at the time we cast down our slaughtered animals into the Valley of Serpents (I casting with the rest as was my wont), there came up a man hanging to mine, ye believed me not and gave me the lie." "Yes," quoth they, "thou didst tell us some such tale, but we had no call to credit thee." He resumed, "Now this is the very man, by token that he gave me diamonds of great value and high price whose like are not to be found, requiting me more than would have come up sticking to my quarter of meat; and I companied with him to Bassorah-city, where he took leave of us and went on to his native stead, whilst we returned to our own land. This is he; and he told us his name, Sindbad the Seaman, and how the ship left him on the desert island. And know ye that Allah hath sent him hither, so might the truth of my story be made manifest to you. Moreover, these are his goods for, when he first foregathered with us, he told us of them; and the truth of his words is patent." Hearing the merchant's speech the captain came up to me and considered me straitly awhile, after which he said, "What was the mark on thy bales?" "Thus and thus," answered I, and reminded him of somewhat that had passed between him and me, when I shipped with him from Bassorah. Thereupon he was convinced that I was indeed Sindbad the Seaman and took me round the neck and gave me joy of my safety, saying, "By Allah, O my lord, thy case is indeed wondrous and thy tale marvellous; but lauded be Allah who hath brought thee and me together again, and who hath restored to thee thy goods and gear!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman thus continued:—"Alhamdolillah!" quoth the captain, "lauded be Allah who hath restored unto thee thy goods and gear." Then I disposed of my merchandise to the best of my skill, and profited largely on them whereat I rejoiced with exceeding joy and congratulated myself on my safety and the recovery of my goods. We ceased not to buy and sell at the several islands 33 till we came to the land of Hind, where we bought cloves and ginger and all manner spices; and thence we fared on to the land of Sind, where also we bought and sold. In these Indian seas, I saw wonders without number or count, amongst others a fish like a cow which bringeth forth its young and

suckleth them like human beings; and of its skin bucklers are made.[36] There were eke fishes like asses and camels[37] and tortoises twenty cubits wide.[38] And I saw also a bird that cometh out of a sea-shell and layeth eggs and hatcheth her chicks on the surface of the water, never coming up from the sea to the land.[39] Then we set sail again with a fair wind and the blessing of Almighty Allah; and, after a prosperous voyage, arrived safe and sound at Bassorah. Here I abode a few days and presently returned to Baghdad where I went at once to my quarter and my house and saluted my family and familiars and friends. I had gained on this voyage what was beyond count and reckoning, so I gave alms and largesse and clad the widow and the orphan, by way of thanksgiving for my happy return, and fell to feasting and making merry with my companions 34 and intimates and forgot, while eating well and drinking well and dressing well, everything that had befallen me and all the perils and hardships I had suffered. These, then, are the most admirable things I sighted on my third voyage, and to-morrow, an it be the will of Allah, you shall come to me and I will relate the adventures of my fourth voyage, which is still more wonderful than those you have already heard. (Saith he who telleth the tale), Then Sindbad the Seaman bade give Sindbad the Landsman an hundred golden dinars as of wont and called for food. So they spread the tables and the company ate the night-meal and went their ways, marvelling at the tale they had heard. The Porter after taking his gold passed the night in his own house, also wondering at what his namesake the Seaman had told him, and as soon as day broke and the morning showed with its sheen and shone, he rose and praying the dawn-prayer betook himself to Sindbad the Seaman, who returned his salute and received him with an open breast and cheerful favour and made him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when he caused set on food and they ate and drank and made merry. Then Sindbad the Seaman bespake them and related to them the narrative of

THE FOURTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN.

Know, O my brethren that after my return from my third voyage and foregathering with my friends, and forgetting all my perils and hardships in the enjoyment of ease and comfort and repose, I was visited one day by a company of merchants who sat down with me and talked of foreign travel and traffic, till the old bad man within me yearned to go with them and enjoy the sight of strange countries, and I longed for the society of the various races of mankind and for traffic and profit. So I resolved to travel with them and buying the necessaries for a long voyage, and great store of costly goods, more than ever before, transported them from Baghdad to Bassorah where I took ship with the merchants in question, who were of the chief of the town.

We set out, trusting in the blessing of Almighty Allah; and with a favouring breeze and the best conditions we sailed from island to island and sea to 35 sea, till, one day, there arose against us a contrary wind and the captain cast out his anchors and brought the ship to a standstill, fearing lest she should founder in mid-ocean. Then we all fell to prayer and humbling ourselves before the Most High; but, as we were thus engaged there smote us a furious squall which tore the sails to rags and tatters: the anchor-cable parted and, the ship foundering, we were cast into the sea, goods and all. I kept myself afloat by swimming half the day, till, when I had given myself up for lost, the Almighty threw in my way one of the planks of the ship, whereon I and some others of the merchants scrambled.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued as follows:—And when the ship foundered I scrambled on to a plank with some others of the merchants and, mounting it as we would a horse, paddled with our feet in the sea. We abode thus a day and a night, the wind and waves helping us on, and on the second day shortly before the mid-time between sunrise and noon[40] the breeze freshened and the sea wrought and the rising waves cast us upon an island, well-nigh dead bodies for weariness and want of sleep, cold and hunger and fear and thirst. We walked about the shore and found abundance of herbs, whereof we ate enough to keep breath in body and to stay our failing spirits, then lay down and slept till morning hard by the sea. And when morning came with its sheen and shone, we arose and walked about the island to the right and left, till we came in sight of an inhabited house afar off. So we made towards it, and ceased not walking till we reached the door thereof when lo! a number of naked men issued from it and without saluting us or a word said, laid hold of us masterfully and carried us to their king, who signed us to sit. So we sat down and they set food before us such 36 as we knew not[41] and whose like we had never seen in all our lives. My companions ate of it, for stress of hunger, but my stomach revolted from it and I would not eat; and my refraining from it was, by Allah's favour, the cause of my being alive till now: for no sooner had my comrades tasted of it than their reason fled and their condition changed and they began to devour it like madmen possessed of an evil spirit. Then the savages gave them to drink of cocoa-nut oil and anointed them therewith; and straightway after drinking thereof, their eyes turned into their heads and they fell to eating greedily, against their wont. When I saw this, I was confounded and concerned for them, nor was I less anxious about myself, for fear of the naked folk. So I watched them narrowly, and it was not long before I discovered them to be a tribe of Magian cannibals whose King was a Ghul.[42] All who came to their country or whoso they caught in their valleys or on their roads they brought to this King and fed them upon that food and anointed them with that oil, whereupon their stomachs dilated that they might eat largely,

whilst their reason fled and they lost the power of thought and became idiots. Then they stuffed them with cocoa-nut oil and the aforesaid food, till they became fat and gross, when they slaughtered them by cutting their throats and roasted them for the King's eating; but, as for the savages themselves, they ate human flesh raw.[43] When I saw this, I was sore dismayed 37 for myself and my comrades, who were now become so stupefied that they knew not what was done with them and the naked folk committed them to one who used every day to lead them out and pasture them on the island like cattle. And they wandered amongst the trees and rested at will, thus waxing very fat. As for me, I wasted away and became sickly for fear and hunger and my flesh shrivelled on my bones; which when the savages saw, they left me alone and took no thought of me and so far forgot me that one day I gave them the slip and walking out of their place made for the beach which was distant and there espied a very old man seated on a high place, girt by the waters. I looked at him and knew him for the herdsman, who had charge of pasturing my fellows, and with him were many others in like case. As soon as he saw me, he knew me to be in possession of my reason and not afflicted like the rest whom he was pasturing; so signed to me from afar, as who should say, "Turn back and take the right-hand road, for that will lead thee into the King's highway." So I turned back, as he bade me, and followed the right-hand road, now running for fear and then walking leisurely to rest me, till I was out of the old man's sight. By this time, the sun had gone down and the darkness set in; so I sat down to rest and would have slept, but sleep came not to me that night, for stress of fear and famine and fatigue. When the night was half spent, I rose and walked on, till the day broke in all its beauty and the sun rose over the heads of the lofty hills and athwart the low gravelly plains. Now I was weary and hungry and thirsty; so I ate my fill of herbs and grasses that grew in the island and kept life in body and stayed my stomach, after which I set out again and fared on all that day and the next night, staying my greed with roots and herbs; nor 38 did I cease walking for seven days and their nights, till the morn of the eighth day, when I caught sight of a faint object in the distance. So I made towards it, though my heart quaked for all I had suffered first and last, and behold it was a company of men gathering pepper-grains.[44] As soon as they saw me, they hastened up to me and surrounding me on all sides, said to me, "Who art thou and whence come?" I replied, "Know, O folk, that I am a poor stranger," and acquainted them with my case and all the hardships and perils I had suffered——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—And the men gathering pepper in the island questioned me of my case, when I acquainted them with all the hardships and perils I had suffered and how I had fled from the savages; whereat they marvelled and gave me joy of my safety, saying,

"By Allah, this is wonderful! But how didst thou escape from these blacks who swarm in the island and devour all who fall in with them; nor is any safe from them, nor can any get out of their clutches?" And after I had told them the fate of my companions, they made me sit by them, till they got quit of their work; and fetched me somewhat of good food, which I ate, for I was hungry, and rested awhile, after which they took ship with me and carrying me to their island-home brought me before their King, who returned my salute and received me honourably and questioned me of my case. I told him all that had befallen me, from the day of my leaving Baghdad-city, whereupon he wondered with great wonder at my adventures, he and his courtiers, and bade me sit by him; then he called for food and I ate with him what sufficed me and washed my hands and returned thanks to Almighty Allah for all His favours praising Him and glorifying Him. Then I left the King and walked for solace about the city, 39 which I found wealthy and populous, abounding in market-streets well stocked with food and merchandise and full of buyers and sellers. So I rejoiced at having reached so pleasant a place and took my ease there after my fatigues; and I made friends with the townsfolk, nor was it long before I became more in honour and favour with them and their King than any of the chief men of the realm. Now I saw that all the citizens, great and small, rode fine horses, high-priced and thorough-bred, without saddles or housings, whereat I wondered and said to the King, "Wherefore, O my lord, dost thou not ride with a saddle? Therein is ease for the rider and increase of power." "What is a saddle?" asked he: "I never saw nor used such a thing in all my life;" and I answered, "With thy permission I will make thee a saddle, that thou mayest ride on it and see the comfort thereof." And quoth he, "Do so." So quoth I to him, "Furnish me with some wood," which being brought, I sought me a clever carpenter and sitting by him showed him how to make the saddle-tree, portraying for him the fashion thereof in ink on the wood. Then I took wool and teased it and made felt of it, and, covering the saddle-tree with leather, stuffed it and polished it and attached the girth and stirrup leathers; after which I fetched a blacksmith and described to him the fashion of the stirrups and bridle-bit. So he forged a fine pair of stirrups and a bit, and filed them smooth and tinned[45] them. Moreover, I made fast to them fringes of silk and fitted bridle-leathers to the bit. Then I fetched one of the best of the royal horses and saddling and bridling him, hung the stirrups to the saddle and led him to the King. The thing took his fancy and he thanked me; then he mounted and rejoiced greatly in the saddle and rewarded me handsomely for my work. When the King's Wazir saw the saddle, he asked of me one like it and I made it for him. Furthermore, all the grandees and officers of state came for saddles to me; so I fell to making saddles (having taught the craft to the carpenter and blacksmith), and selling them to all who sought, till I amassed great wealth and became in high honour and great favour with the King and his household and grandees. I abode thus till, one day, as I was sitting with the King in all respect and contentment, he 40 said to me, "Know

thou, O such an one, thou art become one of us, dear as a brother, and we hold thee in such regard and affection that we cannot part with thee nor suffer thee to leave our city; wherefore I desire of thee obedience in a certain matter, and I will not have thee gainsay me." Answered I, "O King, what is it thou desirest of me? Far be it from me to gainsay thee in aught, for I am indebted to thee for many favours and bounties and much kindness, and (praised be Allah!) I am become one of thy servants." Quoth he, "I have a mind to marry thee to a fair, clever and agreeable wife who is wealthy as she is beautiful; so thou mayst be naturalised and domiciled with us: I will lodge thee with me in my palace; wherefore oppose me not neither cross me in this." When I heard these words I was ashamed and held my peace nor could make him any answer,[46] by reason of my much bashfulness before him. Asked he, "Why dost thou not reply to me, O my son?"; and I answered, saying, "O my master, it is thine to command, O King of the age!" So he summoned the Kazi and the witnesses and married me straightway to a lady of a noble tree and high pedigree; wealthy in moneys and means; the flower of an ancient race; of surpassing beauty and grace, and the owner of farms and estates and many a dwelling-place.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued in these words:—Now after the King my master had married me to this choice wife, he also gave me a great and goodly house standing alone, together with slaves and officers, and assigned me pay and allowances. So I became in all ease and contentment and delight and forgot everything which had befallen me of weariness and trouble and hardship; for I loved my wife with fondest love and she loved me no less, and we were as one and abode in the utmost comfort of life and in its happiness. And I said in myself, "When I return to my native land, I will carry her with me." But whatso is predestined to a man, that needs must be, and none knoweth what shall befal him. We lived thus a 41great while, till Almighty Allah bereft one of my neighbours of his wife. Now he was a gossip of mine; so hearing the cry of the keeners I went in to condole with him on his loss and found him in very ill plight, full of trouble and weary of soul and mind. I condoled with him and comforted him, saying, "Mourn not for thy wife who hath now found the mercy of Allah; the Lord will surely give thee a better in her stead and thy name shall be great and thy life shall be long in the land, Inshallah!"[47] But he wept bitter tears and replied, "O my friend, how can I marry another wife and how shall Allah replace her to me with a better than she, whenas I have but one day left to live?" "O my brother," said I, "return to thy senses and announce not the glad tidings of thine own death, for thou art well, sound and in good case." "By thy life, O my friend," rejoined he, "to-morrow thou wilt lose me and wilt never see me again till the Day of Resurrection." I asked, "How so?" and he answered, "This very day they bury my wife, and they bury me with her in one

tomb; for it is the custom with us, if the wife die first, to bury the husband alive with her and in like manner the wife, if the husband die first; so that neither may enjoy life after losing his or her mate." "By Allah," cried I, "this is a most vile, lewd custom and not to be endured of any!" Meanwhile, behold, the most part of the townsfolk came in and fell to condoling with my gossip for his wife and for himself. Presently they laid the dead woman out, as was their wont; and, setting her on a bier, carried her and her husband without the city, till they came to a place in the side of a mountain at the end of the island by the sea; and here they raised a great rock and discovered the mouth of a stone-rivetted pit or well,[48] leading down into a vast underground cavern that ran beneath the mountain. Into this pit they threw the corpse, then tying a rope of palm-fibres under the husband's armpits, they let him down into the cavern, and with him a great pitcher of fresh water and seven scones by way of viaticum.[49] When he came to the bottom, he loosed himself from the rope and they drew it up; and, stopping the mouth of the pit with the great stone, they returned to the 42 city, leaving my friend in the cavern with his dead wife. When I saw this, I said to myself, "By Allah, this fashion of death is more grievous than the first!" And I went in to the King and said to him, "O my lord, why do ye bury the quick with the dead?" Quoth he, "It hath been the custom, thou must know, of our forbears and our olden Kings from time immemorial, if the husband die first, to bury his wife with him, and the like with the wife, so we may not sever them, alive or dead." I asked, "O King of the age, if the wife of a foreigner like myself die among you, deal ye with him as with yonder man?"; and he answered, "Assuredly, we do with him even as thou hast seen." When I heard this, my gall-bladder was like to burst, for the violence of my dismay and concern for myself: my wit became dazed; I felt as if in a vile dungeon; and hated their society; for I went about in fear lest my wife should die before me and they bury me alive with her. However, after a while, I comforted myself, saying, "Haply I shall predecease her, or shall have returned to my own land before she die, for none knoweth which shall go first and which shall go last." Then I applied myself to diverting my mind from this thought with various occupations; but it was not long before my wife sickened and complained and took to her pillow and fared after a few days to the mercy of Allah; and the King and the rest of the folk came, as was their wont, to condole with me and her family and to console us for her loss and not less to condole with me for myself. Then the women washed her and arraying her in her richest raiment and golden ornaments, necklaces and jewellery, laid her on the bier and bore her to the mountain aforesaid, where they lifted the cover of the pit and cast her in; after which all my intimates and acquaintances and my wife's kith and kin came round me, to farewell me in my lifetime and console me for my own death, whilst I cried out among them, saying, "Almighty Allah never made it lawful to bury the quick with the dead! I am a stranger, not one of your kind; and I cannot abear your custom, and had I known it I never would have wedded among you!" They heard me not and paid no heed to my words, but laying hold of me, bound me by force and let

me down into the cavern, with a large gugglet of sweet water and seven cakes of bread, according to their custom. When I came to the bottom, they called out to me to cast myself loose from the cords, but I refused to do so; so they threw them down on me and, closing the mouth of the pit with the stones [43] aforesaid, went their ways,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—When they left me in the cavern with my dead wife and, closing the mouth of the pit, went their ways, I looked about me and found myself in a vast cave full of dead bodies, that exhaled a fulsome and loathsome smell and the air was heavy with the groans of the dying. Thereupon I fell to blaming myself for what I had done, saying, "By Allah, I deserve all that hath befallen me and all that shall befal me! What curse was upon me to take a wife in this city? There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! As often as I say, I have escaped from one calamity, I fall into a worse. By Allah, this is an abominable death to die! Would Heaven I had died a decent death and been washed and shrouded like a man and a Moslem. Would I had been drowned at sea or perished in the mountains! It were better than to die this miserable death!" And on such wise I kept blaming my own folly and greed of gain in that black hole, knowing not night from day; and I ceased not to ban the Foul Fiend and to bless the Almighty Friend. Then I threw myself down on the bones of the dead and lay there, imploring Allah's help and in the violence of my despair, invoking death which came not to me, till the fire of hunger burned my stomach and thirst set my throat aflame when I sat up and feeling for the bread, ate a morsel and upon it swallowed a mouthful of water. After this, the worst night I ever knew, I arose, and exploring the cavern, found that it extended a long way with hollows in its sides; and its floor was strewn with dead bodies and rotten bones, that had lain there from olden time. So I made myself a place in a cavity of the cavern, afar from the corpses lately thrown down and there slept. I abode thus a long while, till my provision was like to give out; and yet I ate not save once every day or second day; nor did I drink more than an occasional draught, for fear my victual should fail me before my death; and I said to myself, "Eat little and drink little; belike the Lord shall vouchsafe deliverance to thee!" One day, as I sat thus, pondering my case [44] and bethinking me how I should do, when my bread and water should be exhausted, behold, the stone that covered the opening was suddenly rolled away and the light streamed down upon me. Quoth I, "I wonder what is the matter: haply they have brought another corpse." Then I espied folk standing about the mouth of the pit, who presently let down a dead man and a live woman, weeping and bemoaning herself, and with her an ampler supply of bread and water than usual.[50] I saw her and she was a beautiful woman; but she saw me not; and they closed up the opening and went away. Then I took the leg-bone of a dead man and, going up to the woman, smote her

on the crown of the head; and she cried one cry and fell down in a swoon. I smote her a second and a third time, till she was dead, when I laid hands on her bread and water and found on her great plenty of ornaments and rich apparel, necklaces, jewels and gold trinkets;[51] for it was their custom to bury women in all their finery. I carried the vivers to my sleeping place in the cavern-side and ate and drank of them sparingly, no more than sufficed to keep the life in me, lest the provaunt come speedily to an end and I perish of hunger and thirst. Yet did I never wholly lose hope in Almighty Allah. I abode thus a great while, killing all the live folk they let down into the cavern and taking their provisions of meat and drink; till one day, as I slept, I was awakened by something scratching and burrowing among the bodies in a corner of the cave and said, "What can this be?" fearing wolves or hyænas. So I sprang up and seizing the leg-bone aforesaid, made for the noise. As soon as the thing was ware of me, it fled from me into the inward of the cavern, and lo! it was a wild beast. However, I followed it to the further end, till I saw afar off a point of light not bigger than a star, now appearing and then disappearing. So I made for it, and as I drew near, it grew larger and brighter, till I was certified that it was a crevice in the rock, leading to the open country; and I said to myself, "There must be some reason for this opening: either it is the mouth of a second pit, such as that by which they let me down, or else it is a natural fissure in the stonery." So I bethought me awhile and nearing the light, found that it came 45 from a breach in the back side of the mountain, which the wild beasts had enlarged by burrowing, that they might enter and devour the dead and freely go to and fro. When I saw this, my spirits revived and hope came back to me and I made sure of life, after having died a death. So I went on, as in a dream, and making shift to scramble through the breach found myself on the slope of a high mountain, overlooking the salt sea and cutting off all access thereto from the island, so that none could come at that part of the beach from the city.[52] I praised my Lord and thanked Him, rejoicing greatly and heartening myself with the prospect of deliverance; then I returned through the crack to the cavern and brought out all the food and water I had saved up and donned some of the dead folk's clothes over my own; after which I gathered together all the collars and necklaces of pearls and jewels and trinkets of gold and silver set with precious stones and other ornaments and valuables I could find upon the corpses; and, making them into bundles with the grave clothes and raiment of the dead, carried them out to the back of the mountain facing the sea-shore, where I established myself, purposing to wait there till it should please Almighty Allah to send me relief by means of some passing ship. I visited the cavern daily and as often as I found folk buried alive there, I killed them all indifferently, men and women, and took their victual and valuables and transported them to my seat on the sea-shore. Thus I abode a long while——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—And after carrying all my victuals and valuables from the cavern to the coast I abode a long while by the sea, pondering my case, till one day I caught sight of a ship passing in the midst of the clashing sea, swollen with dashing billows. So I took a piece of a white shroud I had with me and, tying it to a 46 staff, ran along the sea-shore, making signals therewith and calling to the people in the ship, till they espied me and hearing my shouts, sent a boat to fetch me off. When it drew near, the crew called out to me, saying, "Who art thou and how camest thou to be on this mountain, whereon never saw we any in our born days?" I answered, "I am a gentleman[53] and a merchant, who hath been wrecked and saved myself on one of the planks of the ship, with some of my goods; and by the blessing of the Almighty and the decrees of Destiny and my own strength and skill, after much toil and moil I have landed with my gear in this place where I awaited some passing ship to take me off." So they took me in their boat together with the bundles I had made of the jewels and valuables from the cavern, tied up in clothes and shrouds, and rowed back with me to the ship, where the captain said to me, "How camest thou, O man, to yonder place on yonder mountain behind which lieth a great city? All my life I have sailed these seas and passed to and fro hard by these heights; yet never saw I here any living thing save wild beasts and birds." I repeated to him the story I had told the sailors,[54] but acquainted him with nothing of that which had befallen me in the city and the cavern, lest there should be any of the islandry in the ship. Then I took out some of the best pearls I had with me and offered them to the captain, saying, "O my lord, thou hast been the means of saving me off this mountain. I have no ready money; but take this from me in requital of thy kindness and good offices." But he refused to accept it of me, saying, "When we find a shipwrecked man on the sea-shore or on an island, we take him up and give him meat and drink, and if he be naked we clothe him; nor take we aught from him; nay, when we reach a port of safety, we set him ashore with a present of our own money and entreat him kindly and charitably, for the love of Allah the Most High." So I prayed that his life be long in the land and rejoiced in my escape, trusting to be delivered from my stress and to forget my past mishaps; for every time I remembered being let down into the cave with my dead wife I shuddered in horror. Then we pursued our voyage and sailed from island to island and sea to sea, till we arrived at the Island of 47 the Bell, which containeth a city two days' journey in extent, whence after a six days' run we reached the Island Kala, hard by the land of Hind.[55] This place is governed by a potent and puissant King and it produceth excellent camphor and an abundance of the Indian rattan: here also is a lead mine. At last by the decree of Allah, we arrived in safety at Bassorah-town where I tarried a few days, then went on to Baghdad-city, and, finding my quarter, entered my house with lively pleasure. There I foregathered with my family and friends, who rejoiced in my happy return and gave me joy of my safety. I laid up in my storehouses all the

goods I had brought with me, and gave alms and largesse to Fakirs and beggars and clothed the widow and the orphan. Then I gave myself up to pleasure and enjoyment, returning to my old merry mode of life. Such, then, be the most marvellous adventures of my fourth voyage, but to-morrow if you will kindly come to me, I will tell you that which befel me in my fifth voyage, which was yet rarer and more marvellous than those which forewent it. And thou, O my brother Sindbad the Landsman, shalt sup with me as thou art wont. (Saith he who telleth the tale), When Sindbad the Seaman had made an end of his story, he called for supper; so they spread the table and the guests ate the evening meal; after which he gave the Porter an hundred dinars as usual, and he and the rest of the company went their ways, glad at heart and marvelling at the tales they had heard, for that each story was more extraordinary than that which forewent it. The porter Sindbad passed the night in his own house, in all joy and cheer and wonderment; and, as soon as morning came with its sheen and shone, he prayed the dawn-prayer and repaired to the house of Sindbad the Seaman, who welcomed him and bade him sit with him till the rest of the company arrived, when they ate and drank and made merry and the talk went round amongst them. Presently, their host began the narrative of the fifth voyage——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the host began in these words the narrative of

THE FIFTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN.

Know, O my brothers, that when I had been awhile on shore after my fourth voyage; and when, in my comfort and pleasures and merry-makings and in my rejoicing over my large gains and profits, I had forgotten all I had endured of perils and sufferings, the carnal man was again seized with the longing to travel and to see foreign countries and islands.[56] Accordingly I bought costly merchandise suited to my purpose and, making it up into bales, repaired to Bassorah, where I walked about the river-quay till I found a fine tall ship, newly builded with gear unused and fitted ready for sea. She pleased me; so I bought her and, embarking my goods in her, hired a master and crew, over whom I set certain of my slaves and servants as inspectors. A number of merchants also brought their outfits and paid me freight and passage-money; then, after reciting the Fatihah we set sail over Allah’s pool in all joy and cheer, promising ourselves a prosperous voyage and much profit. We sailed from city to city and from

island to island and from sea to sea viewing the cities and countries by which we passed, and selling and buying in not a few till one day we came to a great uninhabited island, deserted and desolate, whereon was a white dome of biggest bulk half buried in the sands. The merchants landed to examine this dome, leaving me in the ship; and when they drew near, behold, it was a huge Rukh's egg. They fell a-beating it with stones, knowing not what it was, and presently broke it open, whereupon much water ran out of it and the young Rukh appeared within. So they pulled it forth of the shell and cut its throat and took of it great store of meat. Now I was in the ship and knew not what they did; but presently one of the 49 passengers came up to me and said, "O my lord, come and look at the egg that we thought to be a dome." So I looked and seeing the merchants beating it with stones, called out to them, "Stop, stop! do not meddle with that egg, or the bird Rukh will come out and break our ship and destroy us."[57] But they paid no heed to me and gave not over smiting upon the egg, when behold, the day grew dark and dun and the sun was hidden from us, as if some great cloud had passed over the firmament.[58] So we raised our eyes and saw that what we took for a cloud was the Rukh poised between us and the sun, and it was his wings that darkened the day. When he came and saw his egg broken, he cried a loud cry, whereupon his mate came flying up and they both began circling about the ship, crying out at us with voices louder than thunder. I called to the Rais and crew, "Put out to sea and seek safety in flight, before we be all destroyed." So the merchants came on board and we cast off and made haste from the island to gain the open sea. When the Rukhs saw this, they flew off and we crowded all sail on the ship, thinking to get out of their country; but presently the two re-appeared and flew after us and stood over us, each carrying in its claws a huge boulder which it had brought from the mountains. As soon as the he-Rukh came up with us, he let fall upon us the rock he held in his pounces; but the master put about ship, so that the rock missed her by some small matter and plunged into the waves with such violence, that the ship pitched high and then sank into the trough of the sea and the bottom of the ocean appeared to us. Then the she-Rukh let fall her rock, which was bigger than that of her mate, and as Destiny had decreed, it fell on the poop of the ship and crushed it, the rudder flying into twenty pieces; whereupon the vessel foundered and all and everything on board were cast into the main.[59] As for me I struggled for sweet life, till Almighty Allah threw in my way one of the 50 planks of the ship, to which I clung and bestriding it, fell a-paddling with my feet. Now the ship had gone down hard by an island in the midst of the main and the winds and waves bore me on till, by permission of the Most High, they cast me up on the shore of the island, at the last gasp for toil and distress and half dead with hunger and thirst. So I landed more like a corpse than a live man and throwing myself down on the beach, lay there awhile, till I began to revive and recover spirits, when I walked about the island and found it as it were one of the garths and gardens of Paradise. Its trees, in abundance dight, bore

ripe-yellow fruit for freight; its streams ran clear and bright; its flowers were fair to scent and to sight and its birds warbled with delight the praises of Him to whom belong permanence and all-might. So I ate my fill of the fruits and slaked my thirst with the water of the streams till I could no more and I returned thanks to the Most High and glorified Him;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—So when I escaped drowning and reached the island which afforded me fruit to eat and water to drink, I returned thanks to the Most High and glorified Him; after which I sat till nightfall, hearing no voice and seeing none inhabitant. Then I lay down, well-nigh dead for travail and trouble and terror, and slept without surcease till morning, when I arose and walked about under the trees, till I came to the channel of a draw-well fed by a spring of running water, by which well sat an old man of venerable aspect, girt about with a waist-cloth[60] made of the fibre of palm-fronds.[61] Quoth I to myself, "Haply this Shaykh is of those who were wrecked in the ship and hath made his way to this island." So I drew near to him and saluted him, and he returned my salam by signs, but spoke not; and I said to him, "O nuncle 51 mine, what causeth thee to sit here?" He shook his head and moaned and signed to me with his hand as who should say, "Take me on thy shoulders and carry me to the other side of the well-channel." And quoth I in my mind, "I will deal kindly with him and do what he desireth; it may be I shall win me a reward in Heaven for he may be a paralytic." So I took him on my back and carrying him to the place whereat he pointed, said to him, "Dismount at thy leisure." But he would not get off my back and wound his legs about my neck. I looked at them and seeing that they were like a buffalo's hide for blackness and roughness,[62] was affrighted and would have cast him off; but he clung to me and gripped my neck with his legs, till I was well-nigh choked, the world grew black in my sight and I fell senseless to the ground like one dead. But he still kept his seat and raising his legs drummed with his heels and beat harder than palm-rods my back and shoulders, till he forced me to rise for excess of pain. Then he signed to me with his hand to carry him hither and thither among the trees which bore the best fruits; and if ever I refused to do his bidding or loitered or took my leisure he beat me with his feet more grievously than if I had been beaten with whips. He ceased not to signal with his hand wherever he was minded to go; so I carried him about the island, like a captive slave, and he bepissed and conskited my shoulders and back, dismounting not night nor day; and whenas he wished to sleep he wound his legs about my neck and leaned back and slept awhile, then arose and beat me; whereupon I sprang up in haste, unable to gainsay him because of the pain he inflicted on me. And indeed I blamed myself and sore repented me of having taken compassion on him 52 and continued in this condition, suffering fatigue not to be described, till I said

to myself, “I wrought him a weal and he requited me with my ill; by Allah, never more will I do any man a service so long as I live!” And again and again I besought the Most High that I might die, for stress of weariness and misery; and thus I abode a long while till, one day, I came with him to a place wherein was abundance of gourds, many of them dry. So I took a great dry gourd and, cutting open the head, scooped out the inside and cleaned it; after which I gathered grapes from a vine which grew hard by and squeezed them into the gourd, till it was full of the juice. Then I stopped up the mouth and set it in the sun, where I left it for some days, until it became strong wine; and every day I used to drink of it, to comfort and sustain me under my fatigues with that froward and obstinate fiend; and as often as I drank myself drunk, I forgot my troubles and took new heart. One day he saw me drinking and signed to me with his hand, as who should say, “What is that?” Quoth I, “It is an excellent cordial, which cheereth the heart and reviveth the spirits.” Then, being heated with wine, I ran and danced with him among the trees, clapping my hands and singing and making merry; and I staggered under him by design. When he saw this, he signed to me to give him the gourd that he might drink, and I feared him and gave it him. So he took it and, draining it to the dregs, cast it on the ground, whereupon he grew frolicsome and began to clap hands and jig to and fro on my shoulders and he made water upon me so copiously that all my dress was drenched. But presently the fumes of the wine rising to his head, he became helplessly drunk and his side-muscles and limbs relaxed and he swayed to and fro on my back. When I saw that he had lost his senses for drunkenness, I put my hand to his legs and, loosing them from my neck, stooped down well-nigh to the ground and threw him at full length——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,



She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—So I threw the devil off my shoulders, hardly crediting my deliverance from him and fearing lest he should shake off his drunkenness and do me a mischief. Then I took up a great 53 stone from among the trees and coming up to him smote him therewith on the head with all my might and crushed in his skull as he lay dead drunk. Thereupon his flesh and fat and blood being in a pulp, he died and went to his deserts, The Fire, no mercy of Allah be upon him! I then returned, with a heart at ease, to my former station on the sea-shore and abode in that island many days, eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and keeping a look-out for passing ships; till one day, as I sat on the beach, recalling all that had befallen me and saying, "I wonder if Allah will save me alive and restore me to my home and family and friends!" behold, a ship was

making for the island through the dashing sea and clashing waves. Presently, it cast anchor and the passengers landed; so I made for them, and when they saw me all hastened up to me and gathering round me questioned me of my case and how I came thither. I told them all that had betided me, whereat they marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, “He who rode on thy shoulder is called the ‘Shaykh al-Bahr’ or Old Man of the Sea,[63] and none ever felt his legs on neck and came off alive but thou; and those who die under him he eateth: so praised be Allah for thy safety!” Then they set somewhat of food before me, whereof I ate my fill, and gave me somewhat of clothes wherewith I clad myself anew and covered my nakedness; after which they took me up into the ship, and we sailed days and nights, till fate brought us to a place called the City of Apes, builded with lofty houses, all of which gave upon the sea and it had a single gate studded and strengthened with iron nails. Now every night, as soon as it is dusk the dwellers in this city used to come forth of the gates and, putting out to sea in boats and ships, pass the night upon the waters in their fear lest the apes should come down on them from the mountains. Hearing this I was sore troubled remembering what I had before suffered from the ape-kind. Presently I landed to solace myself in the city, but meanwhile the ship set sail without me and I repented of having 54 gone ashore, and calling to mind my companions and what had befallen me with the apes, first and after, sat down and fell a-weeping and lamenting. Presently one of the townsfolk accosted me and said to me, “O my lord, meseemeth thou art a stranger to these parts?” “Yes,” answered I, “I am indeed a stranger and a poor one, who came hither in a ship which cast anchor here, and I landed to visit the town; but when I would have gone on board again, I found they had sailed without me.” Quoth he, “Come and embark with us, for if thou lie the night in the city, the apes will destroy thee.” “Hearkening and obedience,” replied I, and rising, straightway embarked with him in one of the boats, whereupon they pushed off from shore and anchoring a mile or so from the land, there passed the night. At daybreak, they rowed back to the city and landing, went each about his business. Thus they did every night, for if any tarried in the town by night the apes came down on him and slew him. As soon as it was day, the apes left the place and ate of the fruits of the gardens, then went back to the mountains and slept there till nightfall, when they again came down upon the city.[64] Now this place was in the farthest part of the country of the blacks, and one of the strangest things that befel me during my sojourn in the city was on this wise. One of the company with whom I passed the night in the boat, asked me, “O my lord, thou art apparently a stranger in these parts; hast thou any craft whereat thou canst work?”; and I answered, “By Allah, O my brother, I have no trade nor know I any handicraft, for I was a merchant and a man of money and substance and had a ship of my own, laden with great store of 55 goods and merchandise; but it foundered at sea and all were drowned excepting me who saved myself on a piece of plank which Allah vouchsafed to me of His favour.” Upon this he brought me a cotton bag

and giving it to me, said, “Take this bag and fill it with pebbles from the beach and go forth with a company of the townsfolk to whom I will give a charge respecting thee. Do as they do and belike thou shalt gain what may further thy return voyage to thy native land.” Then he carried me to the beach, where I filled my bag with pebbles large and small, and presently we saw a company of folk issue from the town, each bearing a bag like mine, filled with pebbles. To these he committed me, commending me to their care, and saying, “This man is a stranger, so take him with you and teach him how to gather, that he may get his daily bread, and you will earn your reward and recompense in Heaven.” “On our head and eyes be it!” answered they and bidding me welcome, fared on with me till we came to a spacious Wady, full of lofty trees with trunks so smooth that none might climb them. Now sleeping under these trees were many apes, which when they saw us rose and fled from us and swarmed up among the branches; whereupon my companions began to pelt them with what they had in their bags, and the apes fell to plucking of the fruit of the trees and casting them at the folk. I looked at the fruits they cast at us and found them to be Indian[165] or cocoa-nuts; so I chose out a great tree, full of apes, and going up to it, began to pelt them with stones, and they in return pelted me with nuts, which I collected, as did the rest; so that even before I had made an end of my bagful of pebbles, I had gotten great plenty of nuts; and as soon as my companions had in like manner gotten as many nuts as they could carry, we returned to the city, where we arrived at the fag-end of day. Then I went in to the kindly man who had brought me in company with the nut-gatherers and gave him all I had gotten, thanking him for his kindness; but he would not accept them, saying, “Sell them and make profit by the price;” and presently he added (giving me the key of a closet in his house), “Store thy nuts in this safe place and go thou forth every morning and gather them as thou 56 hast done to-day, and choose out the worst for sale and supplying thyself; but lay up the rest here, so haply thou mayst collect enough to serve thee for thy return home.” “Allah requite thee!” answered I and did as he advised me, going out daily with the cocoa-nut gatherers, who commended me to one another and showed me the best-stocked trees.[166] Thus did I for some time, till I had laid up great store of excellent nuts, besides a large sum of money, the price of those I had sold. I became thus at my ease and bought all I saw and had a mind to, and passed my time pleasantly greatly enjoying my stay in the city, till, as I stood on the beach, one day, a great ship steering through the heart of the sea presently cast anchor by the shore and landed a company of merchants, who proceeded to sell and buy and barter their goods for cocoa-nuts and other commodities. Then I went to my friend and told him of the coming of the ship and how I had a mind to return to my own country; and he said, “‘Tis for thee to decide.” So I thanked him for his bounties and took leave of him; then, going to the captain of the ship, I agreed with him for my passage and embarked my cocoa-nuts and what else I possessed. We weighed anchor——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—So I left the City of the Apes and embarked my cocoa-nuts and what else I possessed. We weighed anchor the same day and sailed from island to island and sea to sea; and whenever we stopped, I sold and traded with my cocoa-nuts, and the Lord requited me more than I erst had and lost. Amongst other places, we came to an island abounding in cloves[67] and cinnamon and pepper; and the country people told me that by the side of each pepper-bunch groweth a great leaf which shadeth it from the sun and casteth the water off it in the wet season; but, when the rain ceaseth the leaf turneth over and droopeth down by the 57 side of the bunch.[68] Here I took in great store of pepper and cloves and cinnamon, in exchange for cocoa-nuts, and we passed thence to the Island of Al-Usirát,[69] whence cometh the Comorin aloes-wood and thence to another island, five days' journey in length, where grows the Chinese lign-aloes, which is better than the Comorin; but the people of this island[70] are fouler of condition and religion than those of the other, for that they love fornication and wine-bibbing, and know not prayer nor call to prayer. Thence we came to the pearl-fisheries, and I gave the divers some of my cocoa-nuts and said to them, "Dive for my luck and lot!" They did so and brought up from the deep bight[71] great store of large and priceless pearls; and they said to me, "By Allah, O my master, thy luck is a lucky!" Then we sailed on, with the blessing of Allah (whose name be exalted!); and ceased not sailing till we arrived safely at Bassorah. There I abode a little and then went on to Baghdad, where I entered my quarter and found my house and foregathered with my family and saluted my friends who gave me joy of my safe return, and I laid up all my goods and valuables in my storehouses. Then I distributed alms and largesse and clothed the widow and the orphan and made presents to my relations and comrades; for the Lord had requited me fourfold that I had lost. After which I returned to my old merry way of life and forgot all I had suffered in the great profit and gain I had made. Such, then, is the history of my fifth voyage and its wonderments, and now to supper; and to-morrow, come again and I will tell you what befel me in my sixth voyage; for it was still more wonderful than this. (Saith he who telleth the tale), Then he called for food; and the servants spread the table, and when they had eaten the evening-meal, he bade give Sindbad the 58 porter an hundred golden dinars and the Landsman returned home and lay him down to sleep, much marvelling at all he had heard. Next morning, as soon as it was light, he prayed the dawn-prayer; and, after blessing Mohammed the Cream of all creatures, betook himself to the house of Sindbad the Seaman and wished him a good day. The merchant bade him sit and talked with him, till the rest of the company arrived. Then the servants spread the table and when they had well eaten and drunken and were mirthful and merry, Sindbad the Seaman began in these words the narrative of

THE SIXTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN.

Know, O my brothers and friends and companions all, that I abode some time, after my return from my fifth voyage, in great solace and satisfaction and mirth and merriment, joyance and enjoyment; and I forgot what I had suffered, seeing the great gain and profit I had made till, one day, as I sat making merry and enjoying myself with my friends, there came in to me a company of merchants whose case told tales of travel, and talked with me of voyage and adventure and greatness of pelf and lucre. Hereupon I remembered the days of my return from abroad, and my joy at once more seeing my native land and foregathering with my family and friends; and my soul yearned for travel and traffic. So compelled by Fate and Fortune I resolved to undertake another voyage; and, buying me fine and costly merchandise meet for foreign trade, made it up into bales, with which I journeyed from Baghdad to Bassorah. Here I found a great ship ready for sea and full of merchants and notables, who had with them goods of price; so I embarked my bales therein. And we left Bassorah in safety and good spirits under the safeguard of the King, the Preserver.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—And after embarking my bales and leaving Bassorah in safety and good spirits, we continued our 59 voyage from place to place and from city to city, buying and selling and profiting and diverting ourselves with the sight of countries where strange folk dwell. And Fortune and the voyage smiled upon us, till one day, as we went along, behold, the captain suddenly cried with a great cry and cast his turband on the deck. Then he buffeted his face like a woman and plucked out his beard and fell down in the waist of the ship well nigh fainting for stress of grief and rage, and crying, "Oh and alas for the ruin of my house and the orphanship of my poor children!" So all the merchants and sailors came round about him and asked him, "O master, what is the matter?"; for the light had become night before their sight. And he answered, saying, "Know, O folk, that we have wandered from our course and left the sea whose ways we wot, and come into a sea whose ways I know not; and unless Allah vouchsafe us a means of escape, we are all dead men; wherefore pray ye to the Most High, that He deliver us from this strait. Haply amongst you is one righteous whose prayers the Lord will accept." Then he arose and clomb the mast to see an there were any escape from that strait; and he would have loosed the sails; but the wind redoubled upon the ship and whirled her round thrice and drave her backwards; whereupon her rudder brake and she fell off towards a high mountain. With this the

captain came down from the mast, saying, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great; nor can man prevent that which is fore-ordained of fate! By Allah, we are fallen on a place of sure destruction, and there is no way of escape for us, nor can any of us be saved!” Then we all fell a-weeping over ourselves and bidding one another farewell for that our days were come to an end, and we had lost all hopes of life. Presently the ship struck the mountain and broke up, and all and everything on board of her were plunged into the sea. Some of the merchants were drowned and others made shift to reach the shore and save themselves upon the mountain; I amongst the number, and when we got ashore, we found a great island, or rather peninsula[72] whose base was strewn with wreckage of crafts and goods and gear cast up by the sea from broken ships whose passengers had been drowned; and the quantity confounded compt and calculation. 60 So I climbed the cliffs into the inward of the isle and walked on inland, till I came to a stream of sweet water, that welled up at the nearest foot of the mountains and disappeared in the earth under the range of hills on the opposite side. But all the other passengers went over the mountains to the inner tracts; and, dispersing hither and thither, were confounded at what they saw and became like madmen at the sight of the wealth and treasures wherewith the shores were strewn. As for me I looked into the bed of the stream aforesaid and saw therein great plenty of rubies, and great royal pearls[73] and all kinds of jewels and precious stones which were as gravel in the bed of the rivulets that ran through the fields, and the sands sparkled and glittered with gems and precious ores. Moreover we found in the island abundance of the finest lign-aloes, both Chinese and Comorin; and there also is a spring of crude ambergris[74] which floweth like wax or gum over the stream-banks, for the great heat of the sun, and runneth down to the sea-shore, where the monsters of the deep come up and swallowing it, return into the sea. But it burneth in their bellies; so they cast it up again and it congealeth on the surface of the water, whereby its colour and quantities are changed; and at last, the waves cast it ashore, and the travellers and merchants who know it, collect it and sell it. But as to the raw ambergris which is not swallowed, it floweth over the channel and congealeth on the banks and when the sun shineth on it, it melteth and scenteth the whole valley with a musk-like fragrance: then, when the sun ceaseth from it, it congealeth again. But none can get to this place where is the crude ambergris, because of the mountains 61 which enclose the island on all sides and which foot of man cannot ascend.[75] We continued thus to explore the island, marvelling at the wonderful works of Allah and the riches we found there, but sore troubled for our own case, and dismayed at our prospects. Now we had picked up on the beach some small matter of victual from the wreck and husbanded it carefully, eating but once every day or two, in our fear lest it should fail us and we die miserably of famine and affright. Moreover, we were weak for colic brought on by sea-sickness and low diet, and my companions deceased, one after other, till there was but a small company of us left. Each that died we washed and

shrouded in some of the clothes and linen cast ashore by the tides; and after a little, the rest of my fellows perished, one by one, till I had buried the last of the party and abode alone on the island, with but a little provision left, I who was wont to have so much. And I wept over myself, saying, "Would Heaven I had died before my companions and they had washed me and buried me! It had been better than I should perish and none wash me and shroud me and bury me. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued in these words:—Now after I had buried the last of my party and abode alone on the island, I arose and dug me a deep grave on the sea-shore, saying to myself, "Whenas I grow weak and know that death cometh to me, I will cast myself into the grave and die there, so the wind may drift the sand over me and cover me and I be buried therein."[761] Then I fell to reproaching myself for my little wit in leaving my native land and betaking me again to 62travel, after all I had suffered during my first five voyages, and when I had not made a single one without suffering more horrible perils and more terrible hardships than in its forerunner and having no hope of escape from my present stress; and I repented me of my folly and bemoaned myself, especially as I had no need of money, seeing that I had enough and more than enough and could not spend what I had, no, nor a half of it in all my life. However, after a while Allah sent me a thought and I said to myself, "By God, needs must this stream have an end as well as a beginning; ergo an issue somewhere, and belike its course may lead to some inhabited place; so my best plan is to make me a little boat[771] big enough to sit in, and carry it and launching it on the river, embark therein and drop down the stream. If I escape, I escape, by God's leave; and if I perish, better die in the river than here." Then, sighing for myself, I set to work collecting a number of pieces of Chinese and Comorin aloes-wood and I bound them together with ropes from the wreckage; then I chose out from the broken up ships straight planks of even size and fixed them firmly upon the aloes-wood, making me a boat-raft a little narrower than the channel of the stream; and I tied it tightly and firmly as though it were nailed. Then I loaded it with the goods, precious ores and jewels: and the union pearls which were like gravel and the best of the ambergris crude and pure, together with what I had collected on the island and what was left me of victual and wild herbs. Lastly I lashed a piece of wood on either side, to serve me as oars; and launched it, and embarking, did according to the saying of the poet:—

Fly, fly with life whenas evils threat; ✿ Leave the house to tell of its builder's fate!

Land after land shalt thou seek and find ✿ But no other life on thy wish shall wait:

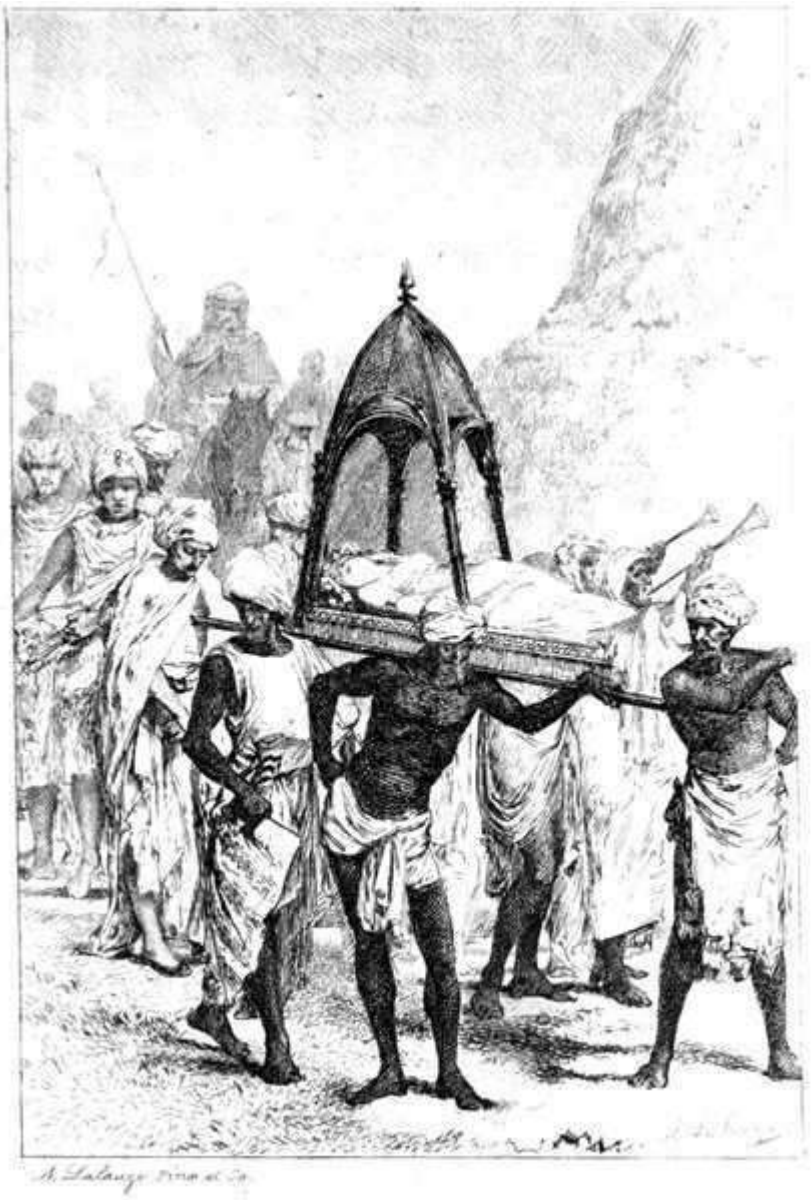
Fret not thy soul in thy thoughts o' night; ✿ All woes shall end or sooner or late.

Whoso is born in one land to die, ✿ There and only there shall gang his gait:

Nor trust great things to another wight, ✿ Soul hath only soul for confederate.[78]

My boat-raft drifted with the stream, I pondering the issue of my affair; and the drifting ceased not till I came to the place where 63it disappeared beneath the mountain. I rowed my conveyance into the place which was intensely dark; and the current carried the raft with it down the underground channel.[79] The thin stream bore me on through a narrow tunnel where the raft touched either side and my head rubbed against the roof, return therefrom being impossible. Then I blamed myself for having thus risked my life, and said, "If this passage grow any straiter, the raft will hardly pass, and I cannot turn back; so I shall inevitably perish miserably in this place." And I threw myself down upon my face on the raft, by reason of the narrowness of the channel, whilst the stream ceased not to carry me along, knowing not night from day, for the excess of the gloom which encompassed me about and my terror and concern for myself lest I should perish. And in such condition my course continued down the channel which now grew wider and then straiter till, sore aweary by reason of the darkness which could be felt, I fell asleep, as I lay prone on the raft, and I slept knowing not an the time were long or short. When I awoke at last, I found myself in the light of Heaven and opening my eyes I saw myself in a broad of the stream and the raft moored to an island in the midst of a number of Indians and Abyssinians. As soon as these blackamoors[80] saw that I was awake, they came up to me and bespoke me in their speech; but I understood not what they said and thought that this was a dream and a vision which had betided me for stress of concern and chagrin. But I was delighted at my escape from the river. When they saw I understood them not and made them no answer, one of them came forward and said to me in Arabic, "Peace be with thee, O my brother! Who art thou and whence faredst thou hither? How camest thou into this river and what manner of land lies behind yonder mountains, for never knew we any one make his way thence to us?" Quoth I, "And 64upon thee be peace and the ruth of Allah and his blessing! Who are ye and what country is this?" "O my brother," answered he, "we are husbandmen and tillers of the soil, who came out to water our fields and plantations; and, finding thee asleep on this raft, laid hold of it and made it fast by us, against thou shouldst awake at thy leisure. So tell us how thou camest hither?" I answered, "For Allah's sake, O my lord, ere I speak give me somewhat to eat, for I am starving, and after ask me what thou wilt." So he hastened to fetch me food and I ate my fill, till I was refreshed and my fear was calmed by a good belly-full and my life returned to me. Then I rendered thanks to the Most High for mercies great and small, glad to be out of the river and rejoicing to be amongst them, and I told them all my adventures from first to last, especially my troubles in the narrow channel.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-second Night,



She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—When I landed and found myself amongst the Indians and Abyssinians and had taken some rest, they consulted among themselves and said to one another, "There is no help for it but we carry him with us and present him to our King, that he may acquaint him with his adventures." So they took me, together with the raft-boat and its lading of monies and merchandise; jewels, minerals and golden gear, and brought me to their King, who was King of Sarandib,[81] telling him what had happened; whereupon he saluted me and bade me welcome. Then he questioned me of my condition and adventures through the man who had spoken Arabic and I repeated to him my story from beginning to end, whereat he marvelled exceedingly and gave me joy of my deliverance; after which I arose and fetched from 65 the raft great store

of precious ores and jewels and ambergris and lign-aloes and presented them to the King, who accepted them and entreated me with the utmost honour, appointing me a lodging in his own palace. So I consorted with the chief of the islanders, and they paid me the utmost respect. And I quitted not the royal palace. Now the Island Sarandib lieth under the equinoctial line, its night and day both numbering twelve hours. It measureth eighty leagues long by a breadth of thirty and its width is bounded by a lofty mountain[82] and a deep valley. The mountain is conspicuous from a distance of three days and it containeth many kinds of rubies and other minerals, and spice-trees of all sorts. The surface is covered with emery wherewith gems are cut and fashioned; diamonds are in its rivers and pearls are in its valleys. I ascended that mountain and solaced myself with a view of its marvels which are indescribable and afterwards I returned to the King.[83] Thereupon, all the travellers and merchants who came to the place questioned me of the affairs of my native land and of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid and his rule and I told them of him and of that wherefor he was renowned, and they praised him because of this; whilst I in turn questioned them of the manners and customs of their own countries and got the knowledge I desired. One day, the King himself asked me of the fashions and form of government of my country, and I acquainted him with the circumstance of the Caliph's sway in the city of Baghdad and the justice of his rule. The King marvelled at my account of his appointments and said, "By Allah, the Caliph's ordinances are indeed wise and his fashions of praiseworthy guise and thou hast made me love him by what thou tellest me; wherefore I have a mind to make him a present and send it by thee." Quoth I, "Hearkening and obedience, O my lord; I will bear thy gift to him and inform him that thou art his sincere lover and true friend." Then I abode with the King in great honour and regard and consideration for a long while till, one day, as I sat in his palace, I heard news of a company of merchants, that were fitting out a ship for Bassorah, and said to myself, "I cannot do better 66 than voyage with these men." So I rose without stay or delay and kissed the King's hand and acquainted him with my longing to set out with the merchants, for that I pined after my people and mine own land. Quoth he, "Thou art thine own master; yet, if it be thy will to abide with us, on our head and eyes be it, for thou gladdenest us with thy company." "By Allah, O my lord," answered I, "thou hast indeed overwhelmed me with thy favours and well-doings; but I weary for a sight of my friends and family and native country." When he heard this, he summoned the merchants in question and commended me to their care, paying my freight and passage-money. Then he bestowed on me great riches from his treasuries and charged me with a magnificent present for the Caliph Harun al-Rashid. Moreover he gave me a sealed letter, saying, "Carry this with thine own hand to the Commander of the Faithful and give him many salutations from us!" "Hearing and obedience," I replied. The missive was written on the skin of the Kháwi[84] (which is finer than lamb-parchment and of yellow colour), with ink of ultramarine and the contents were as follows. "Peace be with thee from the King of Al-Hind, before whom are a thousand

elephants and upon whose palace-crenelles are a thousand jewels. But after (laud to the Lord and praises to His Prophet!): we send thee a trifling gift which be thou pleased to accept. Thou art to us a brother and a sincere friend; and great is the love we bear for thee in heart; favour us therefore with a reply. The gift besitteth not thy dignity: but we beg of thee, O our brother, graciously to accept it and peace be with thee." And the present was a cup of ruby a span high[85] the inside of which was adorned with precious pearls; and a bed covered with the skin of the serpent which swalloweth the elephant, which skin hath spots each like a dinar and whoso sitteth upon it never sickeneth;[86] and an hundred thousand miskals of Indian 67 lign-aloes and a slave-girl like a shining moon. Then I took leave of him and of all my intimates and acquaintances in the island and embarked with the merchants aforesaid. We sailed with a fair wind, committing ourselves to the care of Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) and by His permission arrived at Bassorah, where I passed a few days and nights equipping myself and packing up my bales. Then I went on to Baghdad-city, the House of Peace, where I sought an audience of the Caliph and laid the King's presents before him. He asked me whence they came and I said to him, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I know not the name of the city nor the way thither!" He then asked me, "O Sindbad, is this true which the King writeth?"; and I answered, after kissing the ground, "O my lord, I saw in his kingdom much more than he hath written in his letter. For state processions a throne is set for him upon a huge elephant, eleven cubits high: and upon this he sitteth having his great lords and officers and guests standing in two ranks, on his right hand and on his left. At his head is a man hending in hand a golden javelin and behind him another with a great mace of gold whose head is an emerald[87] a span long and as thick as a man's thumb. And when he mounteth horse there mount with him a thousand horsemen clad in gold brocade and silk; and as the King proceedeth a man precedeth him, crying, This is the King of great dignity, of high authority! And he continueth to repeat his praises in words I remember not, saying at the end of his panegyric, This is the King owning the crown whose like nor Solomon nor the Mihraj[88] ever possessed. Then he is silent and one behind him proclaimeth, saying, He will die! Again I say he will die!; and the other addeth, Extolled be the perfection of the Living who dieth not![89] Moreover by reason of his justice and ordinance and intelligence, there is no Kazi in his city, and all his lieges distinguish between Truth and Falsehood." Quoth the Caliph, "How great is this 68 King! His letter hath shown me this; and as for the mightiness of his dominion thou hast told us what thou hast eye-witnessed. By Allah, he hath been endowed with wisdom as with wide rule." Then I related to the Commander of the Faithful all that had befallen me in my last voyage; at which he wondered exceedingly and bade his historians record my story and store it up in his treasuries, for the edification of all who might see it. Then he conferred on me exceeding great favours, and I repaired to my quarter and entered my home, where I warehoused all my goods and possessions.

Presently, my friends came to me and I distributed presents among my family and gave alms and largesse; after which I yielded myself to joyance and enjoyment, mirth and merry-making, and forgot all that I had suffered. Such, then, O my brothers, is the history of what befel me in my sixth voyage, and to-morrow, Inshallah! I will tell you the story of my seventh and last voyage, which is still more wondrous and marvellous than that of the first six. (Saith he who telleth the tale), Then he bade lay the table, and the company supped with him; after which he gave the Porter an hundred dinars, as of wont, and they all went their ways, marvelling beyond measure at that which they had heard.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sindbad the Seaman had related the history of what befel him in his sixth voyage, and all the company had dispersed, Sindbad the Landsman went home and slept as of wont. Next day he rose and prayed the dawn-prayer and repaired to his namesake's house where, after the company was all assembled, the host began to relate

THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN.

Know, O company, that after my return from my sixth voyage, which brought me abundant profit, I resumed my former life in all possible joyance and enjoyment and mirth and making merry day and night; and I tarried some time in this solace and satisfaction [69] till my soul began once more to long to sail the seas and see foreign countries and company with merchants and hear new things. So having made up my mind, I packed up in bales a quantity of precious stuffs suited for sea-trade and repaired with them from Baghdad-city to Bassorah-town, where I found a ship ready for sea, and in her a company of considerable merchants. I shipped with them and becoming friends, we set forth on our venture, in health and safety; and sailed with a fair wind, till we came to a city called Madínat-al-Sín; but after we had left it, as we fared on in all cheer and confidence, devising of traffic and travel, behold, there sprang up a violent head-wind and a tempest of rain fell on us and drenched us and our goods. So we covered the bales with our cloaks and garments and drugget and canvas, lest they be spoiled by the rain, and betook ourselves to prayer and supplication to Almighty Allah and humbled ourselves before Him for deliverance from the peril that was upon us. But the captain arose and tightening his girdle tucked up his skirts and, after taking refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned, clomb to the mast-head, whence he looked out right and left and gazing at the passengers and crew fell to buffeting his face and plucking out his beard. So we cried to him, "O Rais,

what is the matter?"; and he replied saying, "Seek ye deliverance of the Most High from the strait into which we have fallen and bemoan yourselves and take leave of one another; for know that the wind hath gotten the mastery of us and hath driven us into the uttermost of the seas of the world." Then he came down from the mast-head and opening his sea-chest, pulled out a bag of blue cotton, from which he took a powder like ashes. This he set in a saucer wetted with a little water and, after waiting a short time, smelt and tasted it; and then he took out of the chest a booklet, wherein he read awhile and said weeping, "Know, O ye passengers, that in this book is a marvellous matter, denoting that whoso cometh hither shall surely die, without hope of escape; for that this ocean is called the Sea of the Clime of the King, wherein is the sepulchre of our lord Solomon, son of David (on both be peace!) and therein are serpents of vast bulk and fearsome aspect: and what ship soever cometh to these climes there riseth to her a great fish[90] out of the sea and swalloweth her up with all and everything on board her." Hearing these 70 words from the captain great was our wonder, but hardly had he made an end of speaking, when the ship was lifted out of the water and let fall again and we applied to praying the death-prayer[91] and committing our souls to Allah. Presently we heard a terrible great cry like the loud-pealing thunder, whereat we were terror-struck and became as dead men, giving ourselves up for lost. Then behold, there came up to us a huge fish, as big as a tall mountain, at whose sight we became wild for affright and, weeping sore, made ready for death, marvelling at its vast size and gruesome semblance; when lo! a second fish made its appearance than which we had seen naught more monstrous. So we bemoaned ourselves of our lives and farewelled one another; but suddenly up came a third fish bigger than the two first; whereupon we lost the power of thought and reason and were stupefied for the excess of our fear and horror. Then the three fish began circling round about the ship and the third and biggest opened his mouth to swallow it, and we looked into its mouth and behold, it was wider than the gate of a city and its throat was like a long valley. So we besought the Almighty and called for succour upon His Apostle (on whom be blessing and peace!), when suddenly a violent squall of wind arose and smote the ship, which rose out of the water and settled upon a great reef, the haunt of sea-monsters, where it broke up and fell asunder into planks and all and everything on board were plunged into the sea. As for me, I tore off all my clothes but my gown and swam a little way, till I happened upon one of the ship's planks whereto I clung and bestrode it like a horse, whilst the winds and the waters sported with me and the waves carried me up and cast me down; and I was in most piteous plight for fear and distress and hunger and thirst. Then I reproached myself for what I had done and my soul was weary after a life of ease and comfort; and I said to myself, "O Sindbad, O Seaman, thou repentest not and yet thou art ever suffering hardships and travails; yet wilt thou not renounce sea-travel; or, an thou say, 'I renounce,' thou liest in thy renouncement. Endure then with patience that which thou

sufferest, for verily thou deservest all that betideth thee!”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman continued:—But when I had bestridden the plank, quoth I to myself, “Thou deservest all that betideth thee. All this is decreed to me of Allah (whose name be exalted!), to turn me from my greed of gain, whence ariseth all that I endure, for I have wealth galore.” Then I returned to my senses and said, “In very sooth, this time I repent to the Most High, with a sincere repentance, of my lust for gain and venture; and never will I again name travel with tongue nor in thought.” And I ceased not to humble myself before Almighty Allah and weep and bewail myself, recalling my former estate of solace and satisfaction and mirth and merriment and joyance; and thus I abode two days, at the end of which time I came to a great island abounding in trees and streams. There I landed and ate of the fruits of the island and drank of its waters, till I was refreshed and my life returned to me and my strength and spirits were restored and I recited:—

Oft when thy case shows knotty and tangled skein, ✿ Fate downs from Heaven and straightens every ply:

In patience keep thy soul till clear thy lot ✿ For He who ties the knot can eke untie.

Then I walked about, till I found on the further side, a great river of sweet water, running with a strong current; whereupon I called to mind the boat-raft I had made aforetime and said to myself, “Needs must I make another; haply I may free me from this strait. If I escape, I have my desire and I vow to Allah Almighty to forswear travel; and if I perish I shall be at peace and shall rest from toil and moil.” So I rose up and gathered together great store of pieces of wood from the trees (which were all of the finest sanders-wood, whose like is not albe I knew it not), and made shift to twist creepers and tree-twigs into a kind of rope, with which I bound the billets together and so contrived a raft. Then saying, “An I be saved, ‘tis of God’s grace,” I embarked thereon and committed myself to the current, and it bore me on for the first day and the second and the third after leaving the island; whilst I lay in the raft, eating not and drinking, when I was athirst, of the water of the river, till I was weak and giddy as a chicken, for 72stress of fatigue and famine and fear. At the end of this time I came to a high mountain, whereunder ran the river; which when I saw, I feared for my life by reason of the straitness I had suffered in my former journey, and I would fain have stayed the raft and landed on the mountain-side; but the current overpowered me and drew it into the subterranean passage like an archway; whereupon I gave myself up for lost and said, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!” However, after a little, the raft glided into open air and I saw before me a wide valley, whereinto the river fell with a noise

like the rolling of thunder and a swiftness as the rushing of the wind. I held on to the raft, for fear of falling off it, whilst the waves tossed me right and left; and the craft continued to descend with the current nor could I avail to stop it nor turn it shorewards, till it stopped with me at a great and goodly city, grandly edified and containing much people. And when the townsfolk saw me on the raft, dropping down with the current, they threw me out ropes which I had not strength enough to hold; then they tossed a net over the craft and drew it ashore with me, whereupon I fell to the ground amidst them, as I were a dead man, for stress of fear and hunger and lack of sleep. After a while, there came up to me out of the crowd an old man of reverend aspect, well stricken in years, who welcomed me and threw over me abundance of handsome clothes, wherewith I covered my nakedness. Then he carried me to the Hammam-bath and brought me cordial sherbets and delicious perfumes; moreover, when I came out, he bore me to his house, where his people made much of me and, seating me in a pleasant place, set rich food before me, whereof I ate my fill and returned thanks to God the Most High for my deliverance. Thereupon his pages fetched me hot water, and I washed my hands, and his handmaids brought me silken napkins, with which I dried them and wiped my mouth. Also the Shaykh set apart for me an apartment in a part of his house and charged his pages and slave-girls to wait upon me and do my will and supply my wants. They were assiduous in my service, and I abode with him in the guest-chamber three days, taking my ease of good eating and good drinking and good scents till life returned to me and my terrors subsided and my heart was calmed and my mind was eased. On the fourth day the Shaykh, my host, came in to me and said, "Thou cheerest us with thy company, O my son, and praised be Allah for thy safety! Say: wilt thou now come down with me to 73 the beach and the bazar and sell thy goods and take their price? Belike thou mayst buy thee wherewithal to traffic. I have ordered my servants to remove thy stock-in-trade from the sea and they have piled it on the shore." I was silent awhile and said to myself, "What mean these words and what goods have I?" Then said he, "O my son, be not troubled nor careful, but come with me to the market and if any offer for thy goods what price contenteth thee, take it; but, an thou be not satisfied, I will lay them up for thee in my warehouse, against a fitting occasion for sale." So I bethought me of my case and said to myself, "Do his bidding and see what are these goods!"; and I said to him, "O my nuncle the Shaykh, I hear and I obey; I may not gainsay thee in aught for Allah's blessing is on all thou dost." Accordingly he guided me to the market-street, where I found that he had taken in pieces the raft which carried me and which was of sandal-wood and I heard the broker crying it for sale.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman thus resumed his tale:—I found that the Shaykh had taken to pieces my raft which lay on

the beach and the broker was crying the sandal-wood for sale. Then the merchants came and opened the gate of bidding for the wood and bid against one another till its price reached a thousand dinars, when they left bidding and my host said to me, "Hear, O my son, this is the current price of thy goods in hard times like these: wilt thou sell them for this or shall I lay them up for thee in my storehouses, till such time as prices rise?" "O my lord," answered I, "the business is in thy hands: do as thou wilt." Then asked he, "Wilt thou sell the wood to me, O my son, for an hundred gold pieces over and above what the merchants have bidden for it?" and I answered, "Yes: I have sold it to thee for monies received."[92] So he bade his servants transport the wood to his storehouses and, carrying me back to his house, seated me and counted out to me the purchase money; after which he laid it in bags and setting 74 them in a privy place, locked them up with an iron padlock and gave me its key. Some days after this, the Shaykh said to me, "O my son, I have somewhat to propose to thee, wherein I trust thou wilt do my bidding." Quoth I, "What is it?" Quoth he, "I am a very old man and have no son; but I have a daughter who is young in years and fair of favour and endowed with abounding wealth and beauty. Now I have a mind to marry her to thee, that thou mayst abide with her in this our country, and I will make thee master of all I have in hand for I am an old man and thou shalt stand in my stead." I was silent for shame and made him no answer, whereupon he continued, "Do my desire in this, O my son, for I wish but thy weal; and if thou wilt but do as I say, thou shalt have her at once and be as my son; and all that is under my hand or that cometh to me shall be thine. If thou have a mind to traffic and travel to thy native land, none shall hinder thee, and thy property will be at thy sole disposal; so do as thou wilt." "By Allah, O my uncle," replied I, "thou art become to me even as my father, and I am a stranger and have undergone many hardships: while for stress of that which I have suffered naught of judgment or knowledge is left to me. It is for thee, therefore, to decide what I shall do." Hereupon he sent his servants for the Kazi and the witnesses and married me to his daughter making for us a noble marriage-feast[93] and high festival. When I went in to her, I found her perfect in beauty and loveliness and symmetry and grace, clad in rich raiment and covered with a profusion of ornaments and necklaces and other trinkets of gold and silver and precious stones, worth a mint of money, a price none could pay. She pleased me and we loved each other; and I abode with her in all solace and delight of life, till her father was taken to the mercy of Allah Almighty. So we shrouded him and buried him, and I laid hands on the whole of his property and all his servants and slaves became mine. Moreover, the merchants installed me in his office, for he was their Shaykh and their Chief; and none of them purchased aught but with his knowledge and by his leave. And now his rank passed on to me. When I became acquainted with the townsfolk, I found that at the beginning of each month they were transformed, in that their faces changed and they became like unto birds and they put forth wings wherewith they 75 flew unto the

upper regions of the firmament and none remained in the city save the women and children; and I said in my mind, “When the first of the month cometh, I will ask one of them to carry me with them, whither they go.” So when the time came and their complexion changed and their forms altered, I went in to one of the townsfolk and said to him, “Allah upon thee! carry me with thee, that I might divert myself with the rest and return with you.” “This may not be,” answered he; but I ceased not to solicit him and I importuned him till he consented. Then I went out in his company, without telling any of my family[94] or servants or friends, and he took me on his back and flew up with me so high in air, that I heard the angels glorifying God in the heavenly dome, whereat I wondered and exclaimed, “Praised be Allah! Extolled be the perfection of Allah!” Hardly had I made an end of pronouncing the Tasbíh—praised be Allah!—when there came out a fire from heaven and all but consumed the company; whereupon they fled from it and descended with curses upon me and, casting me down on a high mountain, went away, exceeding wroth with me, and left me there alone. As I found myself in this plight, I repented of what I had done and reproached myself for having undertaken that for which I was unable, saying, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! No sooner am I delivered from one affliction than I fall into a worse.” And I continued in this case knowing not whither I should go, when lo! there came up two young men, as they were moons, each using as a staff a rod of red gold. So I approached them and saluted them; and when they returned my salam, I said to them, “Allah upon you twain; who are ye and what are ye?” Quoth they, “We are of the servants of the Most High Allah, abiding in this mountain;” and, giving me a rod of red gold they had with them, went their ways and left me. I walked on along the mountain-ridge staying my steps with the staff and pondering the case of the two youths, when behold, a serpent came forth from under the mountain, with a man in her[95] jaws, whom she had swallowed even to below his navel, and he was crying out and saying, “Whoso delivereth me, Allah will 76 deliver him from all adversity!” So I went up to the serpent and smote her on the head with the golden staff, whereupon she cast the man forth of her mouth.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sindbad the Seaman thus continued:—When I smote the serpent on the head with my golden staff she cast the man forth of her mouth. Then I smote her a second time, and she turned and fled; whereupon he came up to me and said, "Since my deliverance from yonder serpent hath been at thy hands I will never leave thee, and thou shalt be my comrade on this mountain." "And welcome," answered I; so we fared on along the mountain, till we fell in with a company of folk, and I looked and saw amongst them the very man who had carried me and cast me down there. I went up to him and spake him fair, excusing myself to him and saying, "O my comrade, it is not thus that friend should deal with friend." Quoth he, "It was thou who well-nigh destroyed us by thy Tasbih and thy

glorifying God on my back." Quoth I, "Pardon me, for I had no knowledge of this matter; but, if thou wilt take me with thee, I swear not to say a word." So he relented and consented to carry me with him, but he made an express condition that, so long as I abode on his back, I should abstain from pronouncing the Tasbih or otherwise glorifying God. Then I gave the wand of gold to him whom I had delivered from the serpent and bade him farewell, and my friend took me on his back and flew with me as before, till he brought me to the city and set me down in my own house. My wife came to meet me and saluting me gave me joy of my safety and then said, "Beware of going forth hereafter with yonder folk, neither consort with them, for they are brethren of the devils, and know not how to mention the name of Allah Almighty; neither worship they Him." "And how did thy father with them?" asked I; and she answered, "My father was not of them, neither did he as they; and as now he is dead methinks thou hadst better sell all we have and with the price buy merchandise and journey to thine own country and people, and I with thee; for I care not to tarry in this city, my father and my mother being dead." So I sold all the Shaykh's property piecemeal, and looked for one who should be journeying 77 thence to Bassorah that I might join myself to him. And while thus doing I heard of a company of townsfolk who had a mind to make the voyage, but could not find them a ship; so they bought wood and built them a great ship wherein I took passage with them, and paid them all the hire. Then we embarked, I and my wife, with all our moveables, leaving our houses and domains and so forth, and set sail, and ceased not sailing from island to island and from sea to sea, with a fair wind and a favouring, till we arrived at Bassorah safe and sound. I made no stay there, but freighted another vessel and, transferring my goods to her, set out forthright for Baghdad-city, where I arrived in safety, and entering my quarter and repairing to my house, foregathered with my family and friends and familiars and laid up my goods in my warehouses. When my people who, reckoning the period of my absence on this my seventh voyage, had found it to be seven and twenty years, and had given up all hope of me, heard of my return, they came to welcome me and to give me joy of my safety; and I related to them all that had befallen me; whereat they marvelled with exceeding marvel. Then I forswore travel and vowed to Allah the Most High I would venture no more by land or sea, for that this seventh and last voyage had surfeited me of travel and adventure; and I thanked the Lord (be He praised and glorified!), and blessed Him for having restored me to my kith and kin and country and home. "Consider, therefore, O Sindbad, O Landsman," continued Sindbad the Seaman, "what sufferings I have undergone and what perils and hardships I have endured before coming to my present state." "Allah upon thee, O my Lord!" answered Sindbad the Landsman, "pardon me the wrong I did thee."[961] And they ceased not from friendship and fellowship, abiding in all cheer and pleasures and solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of Societies, and the Shatterer of palaces and the Caterer for Cemeteries to wit, the Cup of Death, and glory be to the Living One who dieth not![971]

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THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINDBAD THE SEAMAN

(*According to the version of the Calcutta Edition*).

Know, O my brothers and friends and companions all, that when I left voyaging and commercing, I said in myself, "Sufficeth me that hath befallen me;" and I spent my time in solace and 79 pleasure. One day as I sat at home there came a knock at the door, and when the porter opened a page entered and said, "The Caliph biddeth thee to him." I went with him to the King's majesty and kissed ground and saluted him; whereupon he welcomed me and entreated me with honour and said, "O Sindbad, I have an occasion for thee: wilt thou do it?" So I kissed his hand and asked him, saying, "O my lord, what occasion hath the master for the slave?"; whereto he answered me, "I am minded that thou travel to the King of Sarandib and carry to him our writ and our gift, for that he hath sent to us a present and a letter." I trembled at these words and rejoined, "By Allah the Omnipotent, O my lord, I have taken a loathing to wayfare, and when I hear the words 'Voyage' or 'Travel,' my limbs tremble for what hath befallen me of hardships and horrors. Indeed I have no desire whatever for this; more by token as I have bound myself by oath not to quit Baghdad." Then I informed the Caliph of all I had passed through from first to last, and he marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, "By the Almighty, O Sindbad, from ages of old such mishaps as happened to thee were never known to happen to any, and thou dost only right never even to talk of travel. For our sake, however, thou wilt go this time and carry our present and our letter to him of Sarandib; and Inshallah—by God's leave!—thou shalt return quickly; and on this wise we shall be under no obligation to the said King." I replied that I heard and obeyed, being unable to oppose his command, so he gave me the gifts and the missive with money to pay my way and I kissed hands and left the presence. Then I dropped down from Baghdad to the Gulf, and with other merchants embarked, and our ship sailed before a fair wind many days and nights till, by Allah's aid, we reached the island of Sarandib. As soon as we had made fast we landed and I took the present and the letter; and, going in with them to the King, kissed ground before him. When he saw me, he said, "Well come, O Sindbad! By Allah Omnipotent we were longing to see thee, and glory be to God who hath again shown us thy face!" Then taking me by the hand he made me sit by his side, rejoicing, and he welcomed me with familiar kindness again and entreated me as a friend. After this he began to converse with me and courteously addressed me and asked, "What was the cause of thy coming to us, O Sindbad?" So after kissing his hand and thanking him I answered, "O my lord, I have brought 80 thee a present from

my master, the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid;" and offered him the present and the letter which he read and at which he rejoiced with passing joy. The present consisted of a mare worth ten thousand ducats, bearing a golden saddle set with jewels; a book; a sumptuous suit of clothes and an hundred different kinds of white Cairene cloths and silks of Suez,[98] Cufa and Alexandria; Greek carpets and an hundred maunds[99] weight of linen and raw silk. Moreover there was a wondrous rarety, a marvellous cup of crystal middlemost of which was the figure of a lion faced by a kneeling man grasping a bow with arrow drawn to the very head, together with the food-tray[100] of Sulayman the son of David (on whom be peace!). The missive ran as follows:—Peace from King Al-Rashid, the aided of Allah (who hath vouchsafed to him and his forefathers noble rank and wide-spread glory), be on the fortunate Sultan. But after. Thy letter came to our hands and we rejoiced thereat; and we have sent the book entituled "Delight of the Intelligent and for Friends the Rare Present,"[101] together with sundry curiosities suitable for Kings; so do thou favour us by accepting them: and peace be with thee! Then the King lavished upon me much wealth and entreated me with all honour; so I prayed for him and thanked him for his munificence. Some days after I craved his leave to depart, but could not obtain it except by great pressing, whereupon I farewelled him and fared forth from his city, with merchants and other companions, homewards-bound without any desire for travel or trade. We continued voyaging and coasting along many islands; but, when we were half-way, we were surrounded by a number of canoes, wherein were men like devils armed with bows and arrows, swords and daggers; habited in mail-coats and other armoury. They fell upon us and wounded and slew all who opposed them; then, having captured the ship and her contents, carried us to an island, where they sold us at the meanest price. Now I was 81 bought by a wealthy man who, taking me to his house, gave me meat and drink and clothing and treated me in the friendliest manner; so I was heartened and I rested a little. One day he asked me, "Dost thou know any art or craft?" and I answered him, "O my lord, I am a merchant and know nothing but trade and traffic." "Dost thou know," rejoined he, "how to use bow and arrow?" "Yes," replied I, "I know that much." Thereupon he brought me a bow and arrows and mounted me behind him upon an elephant: then he set out as night was well nigh over and, passing through a forest of huge growths, came to a tall and sturdy tree up which he made me climb. Then he gave me the bow and arrows, saying, "Sit here now, and when the elephants troop hither in early morning, shoot at them; belike thou wilt hit one; and, if he fall, come and tell me." With this he left me. I hid myself in the tree being in sore terror and trembled till the sun arose; and, when the elephants appeared and wandered about among the trees, I shot my arrows at them and continued till I had shot down one of them. In the evening I reported my success to my master who was delighted in me and entreated me with high honour; and next morning he removed the slain elephant. In this wise I continued, every morning shooting an elephant which my master would remove till, one day, as I was perched in hiding on the tree there came

on suddenly and unexpectedly an innumerable host of elephants whose screaming and trumpeting were such that I imagined the earth trembled under them. All surrounded my tree, whose circumference was some fifty cubits,[102] and one enormous monster came up to it and winding his trunk round the bole haled it up by the roots, and dashed it to the ground. I fell down fainting amongst the beasts when the monster elephant wound his trunk about me and, setting me on his back, went off with me, the others accompanying us. He carried me still unconscious till he reached the place for which he was making, when he rolled me off his back and presently went his ways followed by the others. So I rested a little; and, when my terror had subsided, I looked about me and I found myself among the bones of elephants, whereby I concluded that this was their burial-place, and that 82 the monster elephant had led me thither on account of the tusks.[103] So I arose and walked a whole day and night till I arrived at the house of my master, who saw my colour changed by stress of affright and famine. He rejoiced in my return and said to me, "By Allah, thou hast made my heart sore! I went when thou wast missing and found the tree torn up, and thought that the elephants had slain thee. Tell me how it was with thee." I acquainted him with all that had betided me; whereat he wondered greatly, and rejoiced and at last asked me, "Dost thou know the place?"; whereto I answered, "Yes, O my master!" So we mounted an elephant and fared until we came to the spot; and, when my master beheld the heaps of tusks, he rejoiced greatly; then carrying away as many as he wanted he returned with me home. After this, he entreated me with increased favour and said, "O my son, thou hast shown us the way to great gain, wherefore Allah requite thee! Thou art freed for the Almighty's sake and before His face! The elephants used to destroy many of us on account of our hunting them for their ivories and scrivellos; but Allah hath preserved thee from them, and thou hast profited us by the heaps to which thou hast led us." "O my master," replied I, "God free thy neck from the fire! And do thou grant me, O my master, thy gracious leave to return to my own country." "Yes," quoth he, "thou shalt have that permission. But we have a yearly fair, when merchants come to us from various quarters to buy up these ivories. The time is drawing near; and, when they shall have done their business, I will send thee under their charge and will give thee wherewithal to reach thy home." So I blessed and thanked him and remained with him, treated with respect and honour, for some days, when the merchants came as he had foretold, and bought and sold and bartered; and when they had made their preparations to return, my master came to me and said, "Rise and get thee ready to 83 travel with the traders en route to thy country." They had bought a number of tusks which they had bound together in loads and were embarking them when my master sent me with them, paying for my passage and settling all my debts; besides which he gave me a large present in goods. We set out and voyaged from island to island till we had crossed the sea and landed on the shores of the Persian Gulf, when the merchants brought out and sold their stores: I

also sold what I had at a high profit; and I bought some of the prettiest things in the place for presents and beautiful rareties and everything else I wanted. I likewise bought for myself a beast and we fared forth and crossed the deserts from country to country till I reached Baghdad. Here I went in to the Caliph and, after saluting him and kissing hands, informed him of all that had befallen me; whereupon he rejoiced in my safety and thanked Almighty Allah; and he bade my story be written in letters of gold. I then entered my house and met my family and brethren: and such is the end of the history that happened to me during my seven voyages. Praise be to Allah, the One, the Creator, the Maker of all things in Heaven and Earth!——Now when Shahrazad had ended her story of the two Sindbads, Dinarzad exclaimed, "O my sister, how pleasant is thy tale and how tasteful! How sweet and how grateful!" She replied, "And what is this compared with that I could tell thee to-morrow night?" Quoth the King, "What may it be?" And she said:—It is a tale touching

23- THE CITY OF BRASS.[104]

It is related that there was, in tide of yore and in times and years long gone before, at Damascus of Syria, a Caliph known as Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, the fifth of the Ommiade house. As this Commander of the Faithful was seated one day in his palace, conversing with his Sultans and Kings and the Grandees of his empire, the talk turned upon the legends of past peoples and 84the traditions of our Lord Solomon, David's son (on the twain be peace!), and on that which Allah Almighty had bestowed on him of lordship and dominion over men and Jinn and birds and beasts and reptiles and the wind and other created things; and quoth the Caliph, "Of a truth we hear from those who forewent us that the Lord (extolled and exalted be He!) vouchsafed unto none the like of that which He vouchsafed unto our lord Solomon and that he attained unto that whereto never attained other than he, in that he was wont to imprison Jinns and Marids and Satans in cucurbites of copper and to stop them with lead and seal[105] them with his ring."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph Abd al-Malik bin Marwan sat conversing with his Grandees concerning our lord Solomon, and these noted what Allah had bestowed upon him of lordship and dominion, quoth the Commander of the Faithful, "Indeed he attained unto that whereto never attained other than he, in that he was wont to imprison Jinns and Marids and Satans in cucurbites of copper and stop them with lead and seal them with his ring." Then said Tálib bin Sahl (who was a seeker after treasures and had books that discovered to him hoards and wealth hidden under the earth), "O Commander of the Faithful,—Allah make thy dominion to endure and exalt thy dignity here and hereafter!—my father told me of my grandfather, that he once took ship with a company, intending for the island of Sikiliyah or Sicily, and sailed until there arose against them a contrary wind, which drove them from their course and brought them, after a month, to a great mountain in one of the lands of Allah the Most High, but where that land was they wot not." Quoth my grandfather:—This was in the darkness of the night and as soon as it was day, there came forth to us, from the caves of the mountain, folk black of colour and naked of body, as they were wild beasts, understanding not one word of what was addressed to them; nor was there any of them 85who knew Arabic, save their King who was of their own kind. When he saw the ship, he came down to it with a company of his followers and saluting us, bade us welcome and questioned us of our case and our faith. We told him all concerning ourselves and he said, Be of good cheer for no harm shall befal you. And when we, in turn, asked them of their faith, we

found that each was of one of the many creeds prevailing before the preaching of Al-Islam and the mission of Mohammed, whom may Allah bless and keep! So my shipmates remarked, We wot not what thou sayest. Then quoth the King, No Adam-son hath ever come to our land before you: but fear not, and rejoice in the assurance of safety and of return to your own country. Then he entertained us three days, feeding us on the flesh of birds and wild beasts and fishes, than which they had no other meat; and, on the fourth day, he carried us down to the beach, that we might divert ourselves by looking upon the fisher-folk. There we saw a man casting his net to catch fish, and presently he pulled them up and behold, in them was a cucurbite of copper, stopped with lead and sealed with the signet of Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace! He brought the vessel to land and broke it open, when there came forth a smoke, which rose a-twisting blue to the zenith, and we heard a horrible voice, saying, I repent! I repent! Pardon, O Prophet of Allah! I will never return to that which I did aforetime. Then the smoke became a terrible Giant frightful of form, whose head was level with the mountain-tops, and he vanished from our sight, whilst our hearts were well-nigh torn out for terror; but the blacks thought nothing of it. Then we returned to the King and questioned him of the matter; whereupon quoth he, Know that this was one of the Jinns whom Solomon, son of David, being wroth with them, shut up in these vessels and cast into the sea, after stopping the mouths with melted lead. Our fishermen ofttimes, in casting their nets, bring up such bottles, which being broken open, there come forth of them Jinnis who, deeming that Solomon is still alive and can pardon them, make their submission to him and say, "I repent, O Prophet of Allah!" The Caliph marvelled at Talib's story and said, "Glory be to God! Verily, to Solomon was given a mighty dominion." Now Al-Nábighah al-Zubyání[106] was present, and he said, "Talib hath 86 spoken soothly as is proven by the saying of the All-wise, the Primæval One:—

And Solomon, when Allah to him said, ✿ 'Rise, be thou Caliph, rule with righteous sway:

Honour obedience for obeying thee; ✿ And who rebels imprison him for aye.'

Wherefore he used to put them in copper-bottles and cast them into the sea." The poet's words seemed good to the Caliph, and he said, "By Allah, I long to look upon some of these Solomonic vessels, which must be a warning to whoso will be warned." "O Commander of the Faithful," replied Talib, "it is in thy power to do so, without stirring abroad. Send to thy brother Abd al-Azíz bin Marwán, so he may write to Músá bin Nusayr,[107] governor of the Maghrib or Morocco, bidding him take horse thence to the mountains whereof I spoke and fetch thee therefrom as many of such cucurbites as thou hast a mind to; for those mountains adjoin the frontiers of his province." The Caliph approved his counsel and said "Thou hast spoken sooth, O Talib, and I desire that, touching this matter, thou be my messenger to Musa bin Nusayr; wherefore thou shalt have the White Flag[108] and all thou hast a mind to of monies and honour and so forth; and I will care for thy family during thine absence."

"With love and gladness, O Commander of the Faithful!" answered Talib. "Go, with the blessing of Allah and His aid," quoth the Caliph, and bade write a letter to his brother, Abd al-Aziz, his viceroy in Egypt, and another to Musa bin Nusayr, his viceroy in North-Western Africa, bidding him go himself in quest of the Solomonic bottles, leaving his son to govern in his stead. Moreover, he charged him to engage guides and to spare neither men nor money, nor to be remiss in the matter as he would take no excuse. Then he sealed the two letters and committed them to Talib bin Sahl, bidding him advance the royal ensigns before him and make his utmost speed, and he gave him treasure and horsemen and footmen, to further him on his way, and made provision for the wants of his household 87during his absence. So Talib set out and arrived in due course at Cairo.[109]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Talib bin Sahl set out with his escort and crossed the desert country between Syria and Egypt, where the Governor came out to meet him and entreated him and his company with high honour whilst they tarried with him. Then he gave them a guide to bring them to the Sa'íd or Upper Egypt, where the Emir Musa had his abiding-place; and when the son of Nusayr heard of Talib's coming, he went forth to meet him and rejoiced in him. Talib gave him the Caliph's letter, and he took it reverently and, laying it on his head, cried, "I hear and I obey the Prince of the Faithful." Then he deemed it best to assemble his chief officers and when all were present he acquainted them with the contents of the Caliph's letter and sought counsel of them how he should act. "O Emir," answered they, "if thou seek one who shall guide thee to the place summon the Shaykh 'Abd al-Samad, ibn 'Abd al-Kuddús, al-Samúdí;[110] for he is a man of varied knowledge, who hath travelled much and knoweth by experience all the seas and wastes and wolds and countries of the world and the inhabitants and wonders thereof; wherefore send thou for him and he will surely guide thee to thy desire." So Musa sent for him, and behold, he was a very ancient man shot in years and broken down with lapse of days. The Emir saluted him and said, "O Shaykh Abd al-Samad, our lord the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, hath commanded me thus and thus. I have small knowledge of 88the land wherein is that which the Caliph desireth; but it is told me that thou knowest it well and the ways thither. Wilt thou, therefore, go with me and help me to accomplish the Caliph's need? So it please Allah the Most High, thy trouble and travail shall not go waste." Replied the Shaykh, "I hear and obey the bidding of the Commander of the Faithful; but know, O Emir, that the road thither is long and difficult and the ways few." "How far is it?" asked Musa, and the Shaykh answered, "It is a journey of two years and some months going and the like returning; and the way is full of hardships and terrors and things wondrous and marvellous. Now thou art a champion of the Faith[111] and our country is hard by that of the enemy; and

peradventure the Nazarenes may come out upon us in thine absence; wherefore it behoveth thee to leave one to rule thy government in thy stead." "It is well," answered the Emir and appointed his son Hárún Governor during his absence, requiring the troops to take the oath of fealty to him and bidding them obey him in all he should command. And they heard his words and promised obedience. Now this Harun was a man of great prowess and a renowned warrior and a doughty knight, and the Shaykh Abd al-Samad feigned to him that the place they sought was distant but four months' journey along the shore of the sea, with camping-places all the way, adjoining one another, and grass and springs, adding, "Allah will assuredly make the matter easy to us through thy blessing, O Lieutenant of the Commander of the Faithful!" Quoth the Emir Musa, "Knowest thou if any of the Kings have trodden this land before us?"; and quoth the Shaykh, "Yes, it belonged aforetime to Darius the Greek, King of Alexandria." But he said to Musa privily, "O Emir, take with thee a thousand camels laden with victual and store of gugglets."[112] The Emir asked, "And what shall we do with these?"; and the Shaykh answered, "On our way is the desert of Kayrawán or Cyrene, the which is a vast wold four days' journey long, and lacketh water; nor therein doth sound of voice ever sound nor is soul at any time to be seen. Moreover, there bloweth the Simoon[113] and other hot winds called 89 Al-Juwayb, which dry up the water-skins; but if the water be in gugglets, no harm can come to it." "Right," said Musa and sending to Alexandria, let bring thence great plenty of gugglets. Then he took with him his Wazir and two thousand cavalry, clad in mail cap-à-pie and set out, without other to guide them but Abd al-Samad who forewent them, riding on his hackney. The party fared on diligently, now passing through inhabited lands, then ruins and anon traversing frightful wolds and thirsty wastes and then mountains which spired high in air; nor did they leave journeying a whole year's space till, one morning, when the day broke, after they had travelled all night, behold, the Shaykh found himself in a land he knew not and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Quoth the Emir, "What is to do, O Shaykh?"; and he answered, saying, "By the Lord of the Ka'abah, we have wandered from our road!" "How cometh that?" asked Musa, and Abd al-Samad replied, "The stars were overclouded and I could not guide myself by them." "Where on God's earth are we now?" asked the Emir, and the Shaykh answered, "I know not; for I never set eyes on this land till this moment." Said Musa, "Guide us back to the place where we went astray"; but the other, "I know it no more." Then Musa, "Let us push on; haply Allah will guide us to it or direct us aright of His power." So they fared on till the hour of noon-prayer, when they came to a fair champaign, and wide and level and smooth as it were the sea when calm, and presently there appeared to them, on the horizon some great thing, high and black, in whose midst was as it were smoke rising to the confines of the sky. They made for this, and stayed not in their course till they drew near thereto, when, lo! it was a high castle, firm of foundations and great and gruesome, as it were a towering mountain, builded all of black stone, with frowning

crenelles and a door of gleaming China steel, that dazzled the eyes and dazed the wits. Round about it were a thousand steps and that which appeared afar off as it were smoke was a central dome of lead an hundred cubits high. When the Emir saw this, he marvelled thereat with exceeding marvel and how this place was void of inhabitants; and the Shaykh, after he had certified himself thereof, said, "There is no god but *the* God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God!" Quoth Musa, "I hear thee praise the Lord and hallow Him, and meseemeth thou rejoicest." "O Emir," answered Abd al-Samad, "Rejoice, for Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath delivered us from the 90 frightful wolds and thirsty wastes." "How knowest thou that?" said Musa, and the other, "I know it for that my father told me of my grandfather that he said:—We were once journeying in this land and, straying from the road, we came to this palace and thence to the City of Brass; between which and the place thou seekest is two full months' travel; but thou must take to the sea-shore and leave it not, for there be watering-places and wells and camping-grounds established by King Zú al-Karnayn Iskandar who, when he went to the conquest of Mauritania, found by the way thirsty deserts and wastes and wilds and dug therein water-pits and built cisterns." Quoth Musa, "Allah rejoice thee with good news!" and quoth the Shaykh, "Come, let us go look upon yonder palace and its marvels, for it is an admonition to whoso will be admonished." So the Emir went up to the palace, with the Shaykh and his officers, and coming to the gate, found it open. Now this gate was builded with lofty columns and porticoes whose walls and ceilings were inlaid with gold and silver and precious stones; and there led up to it flights of steps, among which were two wide stairs of coloured marble, never was seen their like; and over the doorway was a tablet whereon were graven letters of gold in the old ancient Ionian character. "O Emir," asked the Shaykh, "shall I read?"; and Musa answered, "Read and God bless thee!; for all that betideth us in this journey dependeth upon thy blessing." So the Shaykh, who was a very learned man and versed in all tongues and characters, went up to the tablet and read whatso was thereon and it was verse like this:—

The signs that here their mighty works portray ✿ Warn us that all must tread the self-same way:
O thou who standest in this stead to hear ✿ Tidings of folk, whose power hath passed for aye,
Enter this palace-gate and ask the news ✿ Of greatness fallen into dust and clay:
Death has destroyed them and dispersed their might ✿ And in the dust they lost their rich display;
As had they only set their burdens down ✿ To rest awhile, and then had rode away.

When the Emir Musa heard these couplets, he wept till he lost his senses and said, "There is no god but *the* God, the Living, the Eternal, who ceaseth not!" Then he entered the palace and was confounded at its beauty and the goodliness of its construction. He diverted himself awhile by viewing the pictures and images 91 therein, till he came to another door, over which also were written verses, and said to the Shaykh, "Come read me these!" So he advanced and read as follows:—

Under these domes how many a company ✿ Halted of old and fared withouten stay:

See thou what might displays on other wights ✿ Time with his shifts which could such lords waylay:

They shared together what they gatherèd ✿ And left their joys and fared to Death-decay:

What joys they joyed! what food they ate! and now ✿ In dust they're eaten, for the worm a prey.

At this the Emir Musa wept bitter tears; and the world waxed yellow before his eyes and he said, "Verily, we were created for a mighty matter!"[114] Then they proceeded to explore the palace and found it desert and void of living thing, its courts desolate and dwelling-places waste laid. In the midst stood a lofty pavilion with a dome rising high in air, and about it were four hundred tombs, builded of yellow marble. The Emir drew near unto these and behold, amongst them was a great tomb, wide and long; and at its head stood a tablet of white marble, whereon were graven these couplets:—

How oft have I fought! and how many have slain! ✿ How much have I witnessed of blessing and bane!

How much have I eaten! how much have I drunk! ✿ How oft have I hearkened to singing-girl's strain!

How much have I bidden! how oft have forbid! ✿ How many a castle and castellain

I have sieged and have searched, and the cloistered maids ✿ In the depths of its walls for my captives were ta'en!

But of ignorance sinned I to win me the meeds ✿ Which won provèd naught and brought nothing of gain:

Then reckon thy reck'ning, O man, and be wise ✿ Ere the goblet of death and of doom thou shalt drain;

For yet but a little the dust on thy head ✿ They shall strew, and thy life shall go down to the dead.

The Emir and his companions wept; then, drawing near unto the pavilion, they saw that it had eight doors of sandal-wood, studded with nails of gold and stars of silver and inlaid with all manner precious stones. On the first door were written these verses:—

92 What I left, I left it not for nobility of soul, ✿ But through sentence and decree that to every man are dight.

What while I lived happy, with a temper haught and high, ✿ My hoarding-place defending like a lion in the fight,

I took no rest, and greed of gain forbad me give a grain ✿ Of mustard-seed to save from the fires of Hell my sprite,

Until stricken on a day, as with arrow, by decree ✿ Of the Maker, the Fashioner, the Lord of Might and Right.

When my death was appointed, my life I could not keep ✿ By the many of my stratagems, my cunning and my sleight:

My troops I had collected availed me not, and none ✿ Of my friends and of my neighbours had power to mend my plight:

Through my life I was wearied in journeying to death ✿ In stress or in solace, in joyance or despight:

So when money-bags are bloated, and dinar unto dinar ✿ Thou addest, all may leave thee with fleeting of the night:

And the driver of a camel and the digger of a grave[115] ✿ Are what thine heirs shall bring ere the morning dawneth bright:

And on Judgment Day alone shalt thou stand before thy Lord, ✿ Overladen with thy sins and thy crimes and thine affright:

Let the world not seduce thee with lurings, but behold ✿ What measure to thy family and neighbours it hath doled.

When Musa heard these verses, he wept with such weeping that he swooned away; then, coming to himself, he entered the pavilion and saw therein a long tomb, awesome to look upon, whereon was a tablet of China steel and Shaykh Abd al-Samad drew near it and read this inscription: “In the name of Everlasting Allah, the Never-beginning, the Never-ending; in the name of Allah who begetteth not nor is He begot and unto whom the like is not; in the name of Allah the Lord of Majesty and Might; in the name of the Living One who to death is never dight!”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shaykh Abd al-Samad, having read the aforesaid, also found the following:—O thou who comest to this place, take warning by that 93 which thou seest of the accidents of Time and the vicissitudes of Fortune and be not deluded by the world and its pomps and vanities and fallacies and falsehoods and vain allurements, for that it is flattering, deceitful and treacherous, and the things thereof are but a loan to us which it will borrow back from all borrowers. It is like unto the dreams of the dreamer and the sleep-visions of the sleeper or as the mirage of the desert, which the thirsty take for water;[116] and Satan maketh it fair for men even unto death. These are the ways of the world; wherefore put not thou thy trust therein neither incline thereto, for it bewrayeth him who leaneth upon it and who committeth himself thereunto in his affairs. Fall not thou into its snares neither take hold upon its skirts, but be warned by my example. I possessed four thousand bay horses and a haughty palace, and I had to wife a thousand daughters of kings, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons: I was blessed with a thousand sons as they were fierce lions, and I abode a thousand years, glad of heart and mind, and I amassed treasures beyond the competence of all the Kings of the regions of the earth, deeming that delight would still endure to me. But there fell on me unawares the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies, the Desolator of domiciles and the Spoiler of inhabited spots, the Murtherer of great and small, babes and children and mothers, he who hath no ruth on the poor for his poverty, or feareth the King for all his bidding or forbidding. Verily, we abode safe and secure in this palace, till there descended upon us the judgement of the Lord of the Three Worlds, Lord of the Heavens, and Lord of the Earths, the vengeance of the Manifest Truth[117] overtook us, when there died of us every day two, till a great company of us had perished. When I saw that destruction had entered our dwellings and had homed with us and in the sea of deaths had drowned us, I summoned a writer and bade him indite these verses and instances and admonitions, the which I let grave, with rule and compass, on these doors and tablets and tombs. Now I had an army of a thousand thousand bridles, men of warrior mien with forearms strong and keen, armed 94 with spears and mail-coats sheen and swords that gleam; so I bade them don their long-hanging hauberks and gird on their biting blades and mount their high-mettled steeds and level their dreadful lances; and

whenas there fell on us the doom of the Lord of heaven and earth, I said to them, “Ho, all ye soldiers and troopers, can ye avail to ward off that which is fallen on me from the Omnipotent King?” But troopers and soldiers availed not unto this and said, “How shall we battle with Him to whom no chamberlain barreth access, the Lord of the door which hath no doorkeeper?” Then quoth I to them, “Bring me my treasures.” Now I had in my treasuries a thousand cisterns in each of which were a thousand quintals[118] of red gold and the like of white silver, besides pearls and jewels of all kinds and other things of price, beyond the attainment of the kings of the earth. So they did that and when they had laid all the treasure in my presence, I said to them, “Can ye ransom me with all this treasure or buy me one day of life therewith?” But they could not! So they resigned themselves to fore-ordained Fate and fortune and I submitted to the judgement of Allah, enduring patiently that which he decreed unto me of affliction, till He took my soul and made me to dwell in my grave. And if thou ask of my name, I am Kúsh, the son of Shaddád son of Ád the Greater. And upon the tablets were engraved these lines:—

An thou wouldst know my name, whose day is done ✿ With shifts of time and changes ‘neath the sun,
Know I am Shaddád’s son, who ruled mankind ✿ And o’er all earth upheld dominion!
All stubborn peoples abject were to me; ✿ And Shám to Cairo and to Adnanwone;[119]
I reigned in glory conquering many kings; ✿ And peoples feared my mischief every one.
Yea, tribes and armies in my hand I saw; ✿ The world all dreaded me, both friends and fone.
When I took horse, I viewed my numbered troops, ✿ Bridles on neighing steeds a million.
And I had wealth that none could tell or count, ✿ Against misfortune treasuring all I won;
Fain had I bought my life with all my wealth, ✿ And for a moment’s space my death to shun;
But God would naught save what His purpose willed; ✿ So from my brethren cut I ‘bode alone:
And Death, that sunders man, exchanged my lot ✿ To pauper hut from grandeur’s mansion,
When found I all mine actions gone and past ✿ Wherefor I’m pledged[120] and by my sin undone.
Then fear, O man, who by a brink dost range, ✿ The turns of Fortune and the chance of Change.

The Emir Musa was hurt to his heart and loathed his life for what he saw of the slaughtering-places of the folk; and, as they went about the highways and bye-ways of the palace, viewing its sitting-chambers and pleasaunces, behold they came upon a table of yellow onyx, upborne on four feet of juniper-wood,[121] and thereon these words graven:—“At this table have eaten a thousand kings blind of the right eye and a thousand blind of the left and yet other thousand sound of both eyes, all of whom have departed the world and have taken up their sojourn in the tombs and the catacombs.” All this the Emir wrote down and left the palace, carrying off with him naught save the table aforesaid. Then he fared on with his host three days’ space, under the guidance of the Shaykh Abd al-Samad, till they came to a high hill, whereon stood a horseman of brass. In his hand he held a lance with a broad head, in brightness like blinding leven, whereon was graven:—“O thou that comest unto me, if

thou know not the way to the City of Brass, rub the hand of this rider and he will turn round and presently stop. Then take the direction whereto he faceth and fare fearless, for it will bring thee, without hardship, to the city aforesaid."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Emir Musa rubbed the horseman's hand he revolved like the dazzling lightning, and stopped facing in a direction other than that wherein they were journeying. So they took the road to which he pointed (which was the right way) and, finding it a beaten track, fared on through their days and nights till they had covered a wide tract of country. Then they came upon a pillar of black stone like a furnace-chimney wherein was one sunken up to his armpits. He had two great wings and four arms, two of them like the arms of the sons of Adam and other two as they were lion's paws, with claws of iron, and he was black and tall and frightful of aspect, with hair like horses' tails and eyes like blazing coals, slit upright in his face. Moreover, he had in the middle of his forehead a third eye, as it were that of a lynx, from which flew sparks of fire, and he cried out saying, "Glory to my Lord, who hath adjudged unto me this grievous torment and sore punishment until the Day of Doom!" When the folk saw him, they lost their reason for affright and turned to flee; so the Emir Musa asked the Shaykh Abd al-Samad, "What is this?"; and he answered, "I know not." Whereupon quoth Musa, "Draw near and question him of his condition; haply he will discover to thee his case." "Allah assain thee, Emir! Indeed, I am afraid of him;" replied the Shaykh; but the Emir rejoined, saying, "Fear not; he is hindered from thee and from all others by that wherein he is." So Abd al-Samad drew near to the pillar and said to him which was therein, "O creature, what is thy name and what art thou and how camest thou here in this fashion?" "I am an Ifrit of the Jinn," replied he, "by name Dáhish, son of Al-A'amash,[122] and am confined here by the All-might, prisoned here by the Providence and punished by the judgement of Allah, till it pleases Him, to whom belong Might and Majesty, to release me." Then said Musa, "Ask him why he is in durance of this column?" So the Shaykh asked him of this, and the Ifrit replied, saying:—Verily my tale is wondrous and my case marvellous, and it is this. One of the 97 sons of Iblis had an idol of red carnelian, whereof I was guardian, and there served it a King of the Kings of the sea, a Prince of puissant power and prow of prowess, over-ruling a thousand thousand warriors of the Jann who smote with swords before him and answered his summons in time of need. All these were under my commandment and obeyed my behest, being each and every rebels against Solomon, son of David, on whom be peace! And I used to enter the belly of the idol and thence bid and forbid them. Now this King's daughter loved the idol and was frequent in prostration to it and assiduous in its service; and she was the fairest woman of her day, accomplished

in beauty and loveliness, elegance and grace. She was described unto Solomon and he sent to her father, saying, "Give me thy daughter to wife and break thine idol of carnelian and testify saying, There is no god but *the* God and Solomon is the Prophet of Allah!, an thou do this, our due shall be thy due and thy debt shall be our debt but, if thou refuse, make ready to answer the summons of the Lord and don thy grave-gear, for I will come upon thee with an irresistible host, which shall fill the waste places of earth and make thee as yesterday that is passed away and hath no return for aye." When this message reached the King, he waxed insolent and rebellious, pride-full and contumacious and he cried to his Wazirs, "What say ye of this? Know ye that Solomon son of David hath sent requiring me to give him my daughter to wife, and break my idol of carnelian and enter his faith!" And they replied, "O mighty King, how shall Solomon do thus with thee? Even could he come at thee in the midst of this vast ocean, he could not prevail against thee, for the Marids of the Jann will fight on thy side and thou wilt ask succour of thine idol whom thou servest, and he will help thee and give thee victory over him. So thou wouldst do well to consult on this matter thy Lord," (meaning the idol aforesaid) "and hear what he saith. If he say, Fight him, fight him, and if not, not." So the King went in without stay or delay to his idol and offered up sacrifices and slaughtered victims; after which he fell down before him, prostrate and weeping, and repeated these verses:—

"O my Lord, well I weet thy puissant hand: ✿ Sulaymán would break thee and see thee bann'd.
O my Lord, to crave succour here I stand ✿ Command and I bow to thy high command!"

98 Then I (continued the Ifrit addressing the Shaykh and those about him), of my ignorance and want of wit and recklessness of the commandment of Solomon and lack of knowledge anent his power, entered the belly of the idol and made answer as follows:—

"As for me, of him I feel naught affright; ✿ For my lore and my wisdom are infinite:
If he wish for warfare I'll show him fight ✿ And out of his body I'll tear his sprite!"

When the King heard my boastful reply, he hardened his heart and resolved to wage war upon the Prophet and to offer him battle; wherefore he beat the messenger with a grievous beating and returned a foul answer to Solomon, threatening him and saying, "Of a truth, thy soul hath suggested to thee a vain thing; dost thou menace me with mendacious words? But gird thyself for battle; for, an thou come not to me, I will assuredly come to thee." So the messenger returned to Solomon and told him all that had passed and whatso had befallen him, which when the Prophet heard, he raged like Doomsday and addressed himself to the fray and levied armies of men and Jann and birds and reptiles. He commanded his Wazir Al-Dimiryát, King of the Jann, to gather together the Marids of the Jinn from all parts, and he collected for him six hundred thousand thousand of devils.[123] Moreover, by his order, his Wazir Ásaf bin Barkhiyá levied him an army of men, to the number of a thousand thousand or more. These all he furnished with arms and armour and mounting, with his host, upon his carpet, look

flight through air, while the beasts fared under him and the birds flew overhead, till he lighted down on the island of the refractory King and encompassed it about, filling earth with his hosts.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Ifrit continued:—So when Solomon the prophet (with whom be peace!) 99 lighted down with his host on the island he sent to our King, saying, "Behold, I am come: defend thy life against that which is fallen upon thee, or else make thy submission to me and confess my apostleship and give me thy daughter to lawful wife and break thine idol and worship the one God, the alone Worshipful; and testify, thou and thine, and say, There is no God but *the* God, and Solomon is the Apostle of Allah![124] This if thou do, thou shalt have pardon and peace; but if not, it will avail thee nothing to fortify thyself in this island, for Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath bidden the Wind obey me; so I will bid it bear me to thee on my carpet and make thee a warning and an example to deter others." But the King made answer to his messenger, saying, "It may not on any wise be as he requireth of me; so tell him I come forth to him." With this reply the messenger returned to Solomon, who thereupon gathered together all the Jinn that were under his hand, to the number of a thousand thousand, and added to them other than they of Marids and Satans from the islands of the sea and the tops of the mountains and, drawing them up on parade, opened his armouries and distributed to them arms and armour. Then the Prophet drew out his host in battle array, dividing the beasts into two bodies, one on the right wing of the men and the other on the left, and bidding them tear the enemies' horses in sunder. Furthermore, he ordered the birds which were in the island to hover over their heads and, whenas the assault should be made, that they should swoop down and tear out the foe's eyes with their beaks and buffet their faces with their wings; and they answered, saying, "We hear and we obey Allah and thee, O Prophet of Allah!" Then Solomon seated himself on a throne of alabaster, studded with precious stones and plated with red gold; and, commanding the wind to bear him aloft, set his Wazir Asaf bin Barkhiya[125] and the kings of mankind on his right and his Wazir Al-Dimiryat and the kings of the Jinn on his left, arraying the beasts and vipers and serpents in the van. Thereupon they all set on us together, and we gave them battle two days over a vast plain; but, on the third day, disaster befel us, and the 100 judgment of Allah the Most High was executed upon us. Now the first to charge upon them were I and my troops, and I said to my companions, "Abide in your places, whilst I sally forth to them and provoke Al-Dimiryat to combat singular." And behold, he came forth to the duello as he were a vast mountain, with his fires flaming and his smoke spireing, and shot at me a falling star of fire; but I swerved from it and it missed me. Then I cast at him in my turn, a flame of fire, and it smote him; but his shaft[126] overcame my fire and he cried out at

me so terrible a cry that meseemed the skies were fallen flat upon me, and the mountains trembled at his voice. Then he commanded his hosts to charge; accordingly they rushed on us and we rushed on them, each crying out upon other, and battle reared its crest rising in volumes and smoke ascending in columns and hearts well nigh cleaving. The birds and the flying Jinn fought in the air and the beasts and men and the foot-faring Jann in the dust and I fought with Al-Dimiryat, till I was aweary and he not less so. At last, I grew weak and turned to flee from him, whereupon my companions and tribesmen likewise took to flight and my hosts were put to the rout, and Solomon cried out, saying, "Take yonder furious tyrant, the accursed, the infamous!" Then man fell upon man and Jinn upon Jinn and the armies of the Prophet charged down upon us, with the wild beasts and lions on their right hand and on their left, rending our horses and tearing our men; whilst the birds hovered overhead in air pecking out our eyes with their claws and beaks and beating our faces with their wings, and the serpents struck us with their fangs, till the most of our folk lay prone upon the face of the earth, like the trunks of date-trees. Thus defeat befel our King and we became a spoil unto Solomon. As to me, I fled from before Al-Dimiryat; but he followed me three months' journey, till I fell down for weariness and he overtook me, and pouncing upon me, made me prisoner. Quoth I, "By the virtue of Him who hath exalted thee and abased me, spare me and bring me into the presence of Solomon, on whom be peace!" So he carried me before Solomon, who received me after the foulest fashion and 101 bade bring this pillar and hollow it out. Then he set me herein and chained me and sealed me with his signet-ring, and Al-Dimiryat bore me to this place wherein thou seest me. Moreover, he charged a great angel to guard me, and this pillar is my prison until Judgment-day.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Jinni who was prisoned in the pillar had told them his tale, from first to last, the folk marvelled at his story and at the frightfulness of his favour, and the Emir Musa said, "There is no God but *the* God! Soothly was Solomon gifted with a mighty dominion." Then said the Shaykh Abd al-Samad to the Jinni, "Ho there! I would fain ask thee of a thing, whereof do thou inform us." "Ask what thou wilt," answered the Ifrit Dahish and the Shaykh said, "Are there hereabouts any of the Ifrits imprisoned in bottles of brass from the time of Solomon (on whom be peace!)?" "Yes," replied the Jinni; "there be such in the sea of Al-Karkar[1127] on the shores whereof dwell a people of the lineage of Noah (on whom be peace!); for their country was not reached by the Deluge and they are cut off there from the other sons of Adam." Quoth Abd al-Samad, "And which is the way to the City of Brass and the place wherein are the cucurbites of Solomon, and what distance lieth between us and it?" Quoth the Ifrit, "It is near at hand," and

directed them in the way thither. So they left him and fared forward till there appeared to them afar off a great blackness and therein two fires facing each other, and the Emir Musa asked the Shaykh, "What is yonder vast blackness and its twin fires?"; and the guide answered, "Rejoice O Emir, for this is the City of Brass, as it is described in the Book of Hidden Treasures which I have by me. Its walls are of black stone and it hath two towers of Andalusian brass,[128] which appear to the beholder in the distance as they were twin fires, and hence is it named the City of Brass." Then they fared on without ceasing till they drew near the city and behold, it was as it were a piece of a mountain or a mass of 102 iron cast in a mould and impenetrable for the height of its walls and bulwarks; while nothing could be more beautiful than its buildings and its ordinance. So they dismounted down and sought for an entrance, but saw none neither found any trace of opening in the walls, albeit there were five-and-twenty portals to the city, but none of them was visible from without. Then quoth the Emir, "O Shaykh, I see to this city no sign of any gate;" and quoth he, "O Emir, thus is it described in my Book of Hidden Treasures; it hath five-and-twenty portals; but none thereof may be opened save from within the city." Asked Musa, "And how shall we do to enter the city and view its wonders?" and Talib son of Sahl, his Wazir, answered, "Allah assain the Emir! let us rest here two or three days and, God willing, we will make shift to come within the walls." Then said Musa to one of his men, "Mount thy camel and ride round about the city, so haply thou may light upon a gate or a place somewhat lower than this fronting us, or Inshallah! a breach whereby we can enter." Accordingly he mounted his beast, taking water and victuals with him, and rode round the city two days and two nights, without drawing rein to rest, but found the wall thereof as it were one block, without breach or way of ingress; and on the third day, he came again in sight of his companions, dazed and amazed at what he had seen of the extent and loftiness of the place, and said, "O Emir, the easiest place of access is this where you have alighted." Then Musa took Talib and Abd al-Samad and ascended the highest hill which overlooked the city. When they reached the top, they beheld beneath them a city, never saw eyes a greater or a goodlier, with dwelling-places and mansions of towering height, and palaces and pavilions and domes gleaming gloriously bright and sconces and bulwarks of strength infinite; and its streams were a-flowing and flowers a-blowing and fruits a-glowing. It was a city with gates impregnable; but void and still, without a voice or a cheering inhabitant. The owl hooted in its quarters; the bird skimmed circling over its squares and the raven croaked in its great thoroughfares weeping and bewailing the dwellers who erst made it their dwelling.[129] The Emir stood awhile, marvelling and 103 sorrowing for the desolation of the city and saying, "Glory to Him whom nor ages nor changes nor times can blight, Him who created all things of His Might!" Presently, he chanced to look aside and caught sight of seven tablets of white marble afar off. So he drew near them and finding inscriptions graven thereon, called the Shaykh and bade him read

these. Accordingly he came forward and, examining the inscriptions, found that they contained matter of admonition and warning and instances and restraint to those of understanding. On the first tablet was inscribed, in the ancient Greek character: "O son of Adam, how heedless art thou of that which is before thee! Verily, thy years and months and days have diverted thee therefrom. Knowest thou not that the cup of death is filled for thy bane which in a little while to the dregs thou shalt drain? Look to thy doom ere thou enter thy tomb. Where be the Kings who held dominion over the lands and abased Allah's servants and built these palaces and had armies under their commands? By Allah, the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies and the Devastator of dwelling-places came down upon them and transported them from the spaciousness of their palaces to the staidness of their burial-places." And at the foot of the tablet were written the following verses:—

"Where are the Kings earth-peopling, where are they? ✿ The built and peopled left they e'er and aye!
They're tombed yet pledged to actions past away ✿ And after death upon them came decay.
Where are their troops? They failed to ward and guard! ✿ Where are the wealth and hoards in treasuries lay?
Th' Empyrean's Lord surprised them with one word, ✿ Nor wealth nor refuge could their doom delay!"

When the Emir heard this, he cried out and the tears ran down his cheeks and he exclaimed, "By Allah, from the world abstaining is the wisest course and the sole assaining!" And he called for pen-case and paper and wrote down what was graven on the first tablet. Then he drew near the second tablet and found these words graven thereon, "O son of Adam, what hath seduced thee from the service of the Ancient of Days and made thee forget that one day thou must defray the debt of death? Wottest thou not that it is a transient dwelling wherein for none there is abiding; and yet thou takest thought unto the world and cleavest fast thereto? Where be the kings who Irak peopled and the four [104]quarters of the globe possessed? Where be they who abode in Ispahan and the land of Khorasan? The voice of the Summoner of Death summoned them and they answered him, and the Herald of Destruction hailed them and they replied, Here are we! Verily, that which they builded and fortified profited them naught; neither did what they had gathered and provided avail for their defence." And at the foot of the tablet were graven the following verses:—

Where be the men who built and fortified ✿ High places never man their like espied?
In fear of Fate they levied troops and hosts, ✿ Availing naught when came the time and tide,
Where be the Kisrás homed in strongest walls? ✿ As though they ne'er had been from home they hied!

The Emir Musa wept and exclaimed, "By Allah, we are indeed created for a grave matter!" Then he copied the inscription and passed on to the third tablet,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Emir Musa passed on to the third tablet, whereon was written, "O son of Adam, the things of this world thou

lovest and prizest and the hest of thy Lord thou spurnest and despisest. All the days of thy life pass by and thou art content thus to aby. Make ready thy viaticum against the day appointed for thee to see and prepare to answer the Lord of every creature that be!" And at the foot were written these verses:—

Where is the wight who peopled in the past ✿ Hind-land and Sind; and there the tyrant played?

Who Zanj[130] and Habash bound beneath his yoke, ✿ And Nubia curbed and low its puissance laid.

Look not for news of what is in his grave. ✿ Ah, he is far who can thy vision aid!

The stroke of death fell on him sharp and sure; ✿ Nor saved him palace, nor the lands he swayed.

105 At this Musa wept with sore weeping and, going on to the fourth tablet, he read inscribed thereon, "O son of Adam, how long shall thy Lord bear with thee and thou every day sunken in the sea of thy folly? Hath it then been stablished unto thee that some day thou shalt not die? O son of Adam, let not the deceits of thy days and nights and times and hours delude thee with their delights; but remember that death lieth ready for thee ambushing, fain on thy shoulders to spring, nor doth a day pass but he mourneth with thee in the morning and nighteth with thee by night. Beware, then, of his onslaught and make provision there-against. As was with me, so it is with thee; thou wastest thy whole life and squanderest the joys in which thy days are rife. Hearken, therefore, to my words and put thy trust in the Lord of Lords; for in the world there is no stability; it is but as a spider's web to thee." And at the foot of the tablet were written these couplets:—

Where is the man who did those labours ply ✿ And based and built and reared these walls on high?

Where be the castles' lords? Who therein dwelt ✿ Fared forth and left them in decay to lie.

All are entombed, in pledge against the day ✿ When every sin shall show to every eye.

None but the Lord Most High endurance hath, ✿ Whose Might and Majesty shall never die.

When the Emir read this, he swooned away and presently coming to himself marvelled exceedingly and wrote it down. Then he drew near the fifth tablet and behold, thereon was graven, "O son of Adam, what is it that distracteth thee from obedience of thy Creator and the Author of thy being, Him who reared thee whenas thou wast a little one, and fed thee whenas thou wast full-grown? Thou art ungrateful for His bounty, albeit He watcheth over thee with His favours, letting down the curtain of His protection over thee. Needs must there be for thee an hour bitterer than aloes and hotter than live coals. Provide thee, therefore, against it; for who shall sweeten its gall or quench its fires? Bethink thee who forewent thee of peoples and heroes and take warning by them, ere thou perish." And at the foot of the tablet were graven these couplets:—

Where be the Earth-kings who from where they 'bode, ✿ Sped and to graveyards with their hoardings yode:

106 Erst on their mounting-days there hadst beheld ✿ Hosts that concealed the ground whereon they rode:

How many a king they humbled in their day! ✿ How many a host they led and laid on load!

But from th' Empyrean's Lord in haste there came ✿ One word, and joy waxed grief ere morning glowed.

The Emir marvelled at this and wrote it down; after which he passed on to the sixth tablet and behold, was inscribed thereon, “O son of Adam, think not that safety will endure for ever and aye, seeing that death is sealed to thy head alway. Where be thy fathers, where be thy brethren, where thy friends and dear ones? They have all gone to the dust of the tombs and presented themselves before the Glorious, the Forgiving, as if they had never eaten nor drunken, and they are a pledge for that which they have earned. So look to thyself, ere thy tomb come upon thee.” And at the foot of the tablet were these couplets:—

Where be the Kings who ruled the Franks of old? ✿ Where be the King who peopled Tingis-wold[131]?

Their works are written in a book which He, ✿ The One, th’ All-father shall as witness hold.

At this the Emir Musa marvelled and wrote it down, saying, “There is no god but *the* God! Indeed, how goodly were these folk!” Then he went up to the seventh tablet and behold, thereon was written, “Glory to Him who fore-ordaineth death to all He createth, the Living One, who dieth not! O son of Adam, let not thy days and their delights delude thee, neither thine hours and the delices of their time, and know that death to thee cometh and upon thy shoulder sitteth. Beware, then, of his assault and make ready for his onslaught. As it was with me, so it is with thee; thou wastest the sweet of thy life and the joyance of thine hours. Give ear, then, to my rede and put thy trust in the Lord of Lords and know that in the world is no stability, but it is as it were a spider’s web to thee and all that is therein shall die and cease to be. Where is he who laid the foundation of Amid[132] and 107 builded it and builded Fárikín[133] and exalted it? Where be the peoples of the strong places? Whenas them they had inhabited, after their might into the tombs they descended. They have been carried off by death and we shall in like manner be afflicted by doom. None abideth save Allah the Most High, for He is Allah the Forgiving One.” The Emir Musa wept and copied all this, and indeed the world was belittled in his eyes. Then he descended the hill and rejoined his host, with whom he passed the rest of the day, casting about for a means of access to the city. And he said to his Wazir Talib bin Sahl and to the chief officers about him, “How shall we contrive to enter this city and view its marvels?: haply we shall find therein wherewithal to win the favour of the Commander of the Faithful.” “Allah prolong the Emir’s fortune!” replied Talib, “let us make a ladder and mount the wall therewith, so peradventure we may come at the gate from within.” Quoth the Emir, “This is what occurred to my thought also, and admirable is the advice!” Then he called for carpenters and blacksmiths and bade them fashion wood and build a ladder plated and banded with iron. So they made a strong ladder and many men wrought at it a whole month. Then all the company laid hold of it and set it up against the wall, and it reached the top as truly as if it had been built for it before that time. The Emir marvelled and said, “The blessing of Allah be upon you. It seems as though ye had taken the measure of the mure, so excellent is your work.” Then said he to his men, “Which of you will mount the ladder and walk along the wall and cast about for a way

of descending into the city, so to see how the case stands and let us know how we may open the gate?" Whereupon quoth one of them, "I will go up, O Emir, and descend and open to you"; and Musa answered, saying, "Go and the blessing of Allah go with thee!" So the man mounted the ladder; but, when he came to the top of the wall, he stood up and gazed fixedly down into the city, then clapped his hands and crying out, at the top of his voice, "By Allah, thou art fair!" cast himself down into the place, and Musa cried, "By Allah, he is a dead man!" But another came up to him and said, "O Emir, this was a madman and doubtless his madness got the better of him and destroyed him. I will go up and open the gate 108 to you, if it be the will of Allah the Most High." "Go up," replied Musa, "and Allah be with thee! But beware lest thou lose thy head, even as did thy comrade." Then the man mounted the ladder, but no sooner had he reached the top of the wall than he laughed aloud, saying, "Well done! well done!"; and clapping palms cast himself down into the city and died forthright. When the Emir saw this, he said, "An such be the action of a reasonable man, what is that of the madman? If all our men do on this wise, we shall have none left and shall fail of our errand and that of the Commander of the Faithful. Get ye ready for the march: verily we have no concern with this city." But a third one of the company said, "Haply another may be steadier than they." So a third mounted the wall and a fourth and a fifth and all cried out and cast themselves down, even as did the first; nor did they leave to do thus, till a dozen had perished in like fashion. Then the Shaykh Abd al-Samad came forward and heartened himself and said, "This affair is reserved to none other than myself; for the experienced is not like the inexperienced." Quoth the Emir, "Indeed thou shalt not do that nor will I have thee go up: an thou perish, we shall all be cut off to the last man since thou art our guide." But he answered, saying, "Peradventure, that which we seek may be accomplished at my hands, by the grace of God Most High!" So the folk all agreed to let him mount the ladder, and he arose and heartening himself, said, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate!" and mounted the ladder, calling on the name of the Lord and reciting the Verses of Safety.[134] When he reached the top of the wall, he clapped his hands and gazed fixedly down into the city; whereupon the folk below cried out to him with one accord, saying, "O Shaykh Abd al-Samad, for the Lord's sake, cast not thyself down!"; and they added, "Verily we are Allah's and unto Him we are returning! If the Shaykh fall, we are dead men one and all." Then he laughed beyond all measure and sat a long hour, reciting the names of Allah Almighty and repeating the Verses of Safety; then he rose and cried out at the top of his voice, saying, "O Emir, have no fear; no hurt shall betide you, for 109 Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) hath averted from me the wiles and malice of Satan, by the blessing of the words, 'In the name of Allah the Compassionating the Compassionate!'" Asked Musa, "What didst thou see, O Shaykh?" and Abd al-Samad answered, "I saw ten maidens, as they were Houris of Heaven calling to me with their

hands”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Shaykh Abd al-Samad answered, “I saw ten maidens like Houris of Heaven,[135] and they calling and signing[136]:—Come hither to us; and meseemed there was below me a lake of water. So I thought to throw myself down, when behold, I espied my twelve companions lying dead; so I restrained myself and recited somewhat of Allah’s Book, whereupon He dispelled from me the damsels’ witchlike wiles and malicious guiles and they disappeared. And doubtless this was an enchantment devised by the people of the city, to repel any who should seek to gaze upon or to enter the place. And it hath succeeded in slaying our companions.” Then he walked on along the wall, till he came to the two towers of brass aforesaid and saw therein two gates of gold, without padlocks or visible means of opening. Hereat he paused as long as Allah pleased[137] and gazed about him awhile, till he espied in the middle of one of the gates, a horseman of brass with hand outstretched as if pointing, and in his palm was somewhat written. So he went up to it and read these words, “O thou who comest to this place, an thou wouldst enter turn the pin in my navel twelve times and the gate will open.” Accordingly, he examined the horseman and finding in his navel a pin of gold, firm-set and fast fixed, he turned it twelve times, whereupon the horseman revolved like the blinding lightning 110 and the gate swung open with a noise like thunder. He entered and found himself in a long passage,[138] which brought him down some steps into a guard-room furnished with goodly wooden benches, whereon sat men dead, over whose heads hung fine shields and keen blades and bent bows and shafts ready notched. Thence, he came to the main gate of the city; and, finding it secured with iron bars and curiously wrought locks and bolts and chains and other fastenings of wood and metal, said to himself, “Belike the keys are with yonder dead folk.” So he turned back to the guard-room and seeing amongst the dead an old man seated upon a high wooden bench, who seemed the chiefest of them, said in his mind, “Who knows but they are with this Shaykh? Doubtless he was the warder of the city, and these others were under his hand.” So he went up to him and lifting his gown, behold, the keys were hanging to his girdle; whereat he joyed with exceeding joy and was like to fly for gladness. Then he took them and going up to the portal, undid the padlocks and drew back the bolts and bars, whereupon the great leaves flew open with a crash like the pealing thunder by reason of its greatness and terribleness. At this he cried out, saying, “Allaho Akbar—God is most great!” And the folk without answered him with the same words, rejoicing and thanking him for his deed. The Emir Musa also was delighted at the Shaykh’s safety and the opening of the city-gate, and the troops all pressed forward to enter; but Musa cried out to them, saying, “O folk, if we all go in at once we shall not

be safe from some ill-chance which may betide us. Let half enter and other half tarry without." So he pushed forwards with half his men, bearing their weapons of war, and finding their comrades lying dead, they buried them; and they saw the doorkeepers and eunuchs and chamberlains and officers reclining on couches of silk and all were corpses. Then they fared on till they came to the chief market-place, full of lofty buildings whereof none overpassed the others, and found all its shops open, with the scales hung out and the brazen vessels ordered and the caravanserais full of all 111 manner goods; and they beheld the merchants sitting on the shop-boards dead, with shrivelled skin and rotted bones, a warning to those who can take warning; and here they saw four separate markets all replete with wealth. Then they left the great bazar and went on till they came to the silk market, where they found silks and brocades, orfrayed with red gold and diapered with white silver upon all manner of colours, and the owners lying dead upon mats of scented goats' leather, and looking as if they would speak; after which they traversed the market-street of pearls and rubies and other jewels and came to that of the schroffs and money-changers, whom they saw sitting dead upon carpets of raw silk and dyed stuffs in shops full of gold and silver. Thence they passed to the perfumers' bazar where they found the shops filled with drugs of all kinds and bladders of musk and ambergris and Nadd-scent and camphor and other perfumes, in vessels of ivory and ebony and Khalanj-wood and Andalusian copper, the which is equal in value to gold; and various kinds of rattan and Indian cane; but the shopkeepers all lay dead nor was there with them aught of food. And hard by this drug-market they came upon a palace, imposingly edified and magnificently decorated; so they entered and found therein banners displayed and drawn sword-blades and strung bows and bucklers hanging by chains of gold and silver and helmets gilded with red gold. In the vestibules stood benches of ivory, plated with glittering gold and covered with silken stuffs, whereon lay men, whose skin had dried up on their bones; the fool had deemed them sleeping; but, for lack of food, they had perished and tasted the cup of death. Now when the Emir Musa saw this, he stood still, glorifying Allah the Most High and hallowing Him and contemplating the beauty of the palace and the massiveness of its masonry and fair perfection of its ordinance, for it was builded after the goodliest and stablest fashion and the most part of its adornment was of green[139] lapis-lazuli; 112 and on the inner door, which stood open, were written in characters of gold and ultramarine, these couplets:—





Consider thou, O man, what these places to thee showed ✿ And be upon thy guard ere thou travel the same road:

And prepare thee good provision some day may serve thy turn ✿ For each dweller in the house needs must yede wi' those who yode

Consider how this people their palaces adorned ✿ And in dust have been pledged for the seed of acts they sowed:

They built but their building availed them not, and hoards ✿ Nor saved their lives nor day of Destiny forslowed:

How often did they hope for what things were undecreed. ✿ And passed unto their tombs before Hope the bounty showed:

And from high and awful state all a-sudden they were sent ✿ To the straitness of the grave and oh! base is their abode:

Then came to them a Crier after burial and cried, ✿ What booted thrones or crowns or the gold to you bestowed:

Where now are gone the faces hid by curtain and by veil, ✿ Whose charms were told in proverbs, those beauties à-la-mode?

The tombs aloud reply to the questioners and cry, ✿ “Death’s canker and decay those rosy cheeks corrode!”
Long time they ate and drank, but their joyaunce had a term; ✿ And the eater eke was eaten, and was eaten by the worm.

When the Emir read this, he wept, till he was like to swoon away,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Emir wept till he was like to swoon away, and bade write down the verses, after which he passed on into the inner palace and came to a vast hall, at each of whose four corners stood a pavilion lofty and spacious, washed with gold and silver and painted in various colours. In the heart of the hall was a great jetting-fountain of alabaster, surmounted by a canopy of brocade, and in each pavilion was a sitting-place and each place had its richly-wrought fountain and tank paved with marble and streams flowing in channels along the floor and meeting in a great and grand cistern of many-coloured marbles. Quoth the Emir to the Shaykh Abd al-Samad, “Come, let us visit yonder pavilion!” So they entered the first and found it full of gold and silver and pearls and jacinths and other precious 113 stones and metals, besides chests filled with brocades, red and yellow and white. Then they repaired to the second pavilion, and, opening a closet there, found it full of arms and armour, such as gilded helmets and Davidean[140] hauberks and Hindi swords and Arabian spears and Chorasmian[141] maces and other gear of fight and fray. Thence they passed to the third pavilion, wherein they saw closets padlocked and covered with curtains wrought with all manner of embroidery. They opened one of these and found it full of weapons curiously adorned with open work and with gold and silver damascene and jewels. Then they entered the fourth pavilion, and opening one of the closets there, beheld in it great store of eating and drinking vessels of gold and silver, with platters of crystal and goblets set with fine pearls and cups of carnelian and so forth. So they all fell to taking that which suited their tastes and each of the soldiers carried off what he could. When they left the pavilions, they saw in the midst of the palace a door of teak-wood marqueteried with ivory and ebony and plated with glittering gold, over which hung a silken curtain purfled with all manner of embroideries; and on this door were locks of white silver, that opened by artifice without a key. The Shaykh Abd al-Samad went valiantly up thereto and by the aid of his knowledge and skill opened the locks, whereupon the door admitted them into a corridor paved with marble and hung with veil-like[142] tapestries embroidered with figures of all manner beasts and birds, whose bodies were of red gold and white silver and their eyes of pearls and rubies, amazing all who looked upon them. Passing onwards they came to a saloon builded all of polished marble, inlaid with jewels, which seemed to the beholder as though the floor were flowing water[143] and whoso walked thereon slipped. The Emir bade the Shaykh strew somewhat upon it, that they might walk over it; which being done, they made shift to fare forwards till they

came 114to a great domed pavilion of stone, gilded with red gold and crowned with a cupola of alabaster, about which were set lattice-windows carved and jewelled with rods of emerald,[144] beyond the competence of any King. Under this dome was a canopy of brocade, reposing upon pillars of red gold and wrought with figures of birds whose feet were of smaragd, and beneath each bird was a network of fresh-hued pearls. The canopy was spread above a jetting fountain of ivory and carnelian, plated with glittering gold and thereby stood a couch set with pearls and rubies and other jewels and beside the couch a pillar of gold. On the capital of the column stood a bird fashioned of red rubies and holding in his bill a pearl which shone like a star; and on the couch lay a damsel, as she were the lucident sun, eyes never saw a fairer. She wore a tight-fitting body-robe of fine pearls, with a crown of red gold on her head, filleted with gems, and on her forehead were two great jewels, whose light was as the light of the sun. On her breast she wore a jewelled amulet, filled with musk and ambergris and worth the empire of the Cæsars; and around her neck hung a collar of rubies and great pearls, hollowed and filled with odoriferous musk. And it seemed as if she gazed on them to the right and to the left.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel seemed to be gazing at the folk to the right and to the left. The Emir Musa marvelled at her exceeding beauty and was confounded at the blackness of her hair and the redness of her cheeks, which made the beholder deem her alive and not dead, and said to her, “Peace be with thee, O damsel!” But Talib ibn Sahl said to him, “Allah preserve thee, O Emir, verily this damsel is dead and there is no life in her; so how shall she return thy salam?”; adding, “Indeed, she is but a corpse embalmed with exceeding art; her eyes were taken out after her death and quicksilver set under them, after which they were restored to their sockets. Wherefore they glisten and when the air moveth the lashes, she 115seemeth to wink and it appeareth to the beholder as though she looked at him, for all she is dead.” At this the Emir marvelled beyond measure and said, “Glory be to God who subjugateth His creatures to the dominion of Death!” Now the couch on which the damsel lay, had steps, and thereon stood two statues of Andalusian copper representing slaves, one white and the other black. The first held a mace of steel[145] and the second a sword of watered steel which dazzled the eye; and between them, on one of the steps of the couch, lay a golden tablet, whereon were written, in characters of white silver, the following words: “In the name of God, the Compassionating, the Compassionate! Praise be to Allah, the Creator of mankind; and He is the Lord of Lords, the Causer of Causes! In the name of Allah, the Never-beginning, the Everlasting, the Ordainer of Fate and Fortune! O son of Adam! what hath befooled thee in this long esperance? What hath unminded thee of the Death-day’s mischance? Knowest thou not that Death calleth for thee and hasteneth to seize upon the soul of

thee? Be ready, therefore, for the way and provide thee for thy departure from the world; for, assuredly, thou shalt leave it without delay. Where is Adam, first of humanity? Where is Noah with his progeny? Where be the Kings of Hind and Irak-plain and they who over earth's widest regions reign? Where do the Amalekites abide and the giants and tyrants of olden tide? Indeed, the dwelling-places are void of them and they have departed from kindred and home. Where be the Kings of Arab and Ajem? They are dead, all of them, and gone and are become rotten bones. Where be the lords so high in stead? They are all done dead. Where are Kora and Haman? Where is Shaddad son of Ad? Where be Canaan and Zu'l-Autád,[146] Lord of the Stakes? By Allah, the Reaper of lives hath 116 reaped them and made void the lands of them. Did they provide them against the Day of Resurrection or make ready to answer the Lord of men? O thou, if thou know me not, I will acquaint thee with my name: I am Tadmurah,[147] daughter of the Kings of the Amalekites, of those who held dominion over the lands in equity and brought low the necks of humanity. I possessed that which never King possessed and was righteous in my rule and did justice among my lieges; yea, I gave gifts and largesse and freed bondsmen and bondswomen. Thus lived I many years in all ease and delight of life, till Death knocked at my door and to me and to my folk befel calamities galore; and it was on this wise. There betided us seven successive years of drought, wherein no drop of rain fell on us from the skies and no green thing sprouted for us on the face of earth.[148] So we ate what was with us of victual, then we fell upon the cattle and devoured them, until nothing was left. Thereupon I let bring my treasures and meted them with measures and sent out trusty men to buy food. They circuited all the lands in quest thereof and left no city unsought, but found it not to be bought and returned to us with the treasure after a long absence; and gave us to know that they could not succeed in bartering fine pearls for poor wheat, bushel for bushel, weight for weight. So, when we despaired of succour, we displayed all our riches and things of price and, shutting the gates of the city and its strong places, resigned ourselves to the deme of our Lord and committed our case to our King. Then we all died,[149] as thou seest us, and left what we had builded and all we had hoarded. This, then, is our story, and after the substance naught abideth but the trace." Then they looked at the foot of the tablet and read these couplets:—

O child of Adam, let not hope make mock and flyte at thee, ✿ From all thy hands have treasurèd, removèd thou shalt be;

I see thou covetest the world and fleeting worldly charms, ✿ And races past and gone have done the same as thou I see.

Lawful and lawless wealth they got; but all their hoarded store, ✿ Their term accomplished, naught delayed of Destiny's decree.

117 Armies they led and puissant men and gained them gold galore; ✿ Then left their wealth and palaces by Fate compelled to flee,

To straitness of the grave-yard and humble bed of dust ✿ Whence, pledged for every word and deed, they never more win free:

As a company of travellers had unloaded in the night ✿ At house that lacketh food nor is o'erfain of company:

Whose owner saith, 'O folk, there be no lodging here for you;' ✿ So packed they who had erst unpacked and farèd hurriedly:

Misliking much the march, nor the journey nor the halt ✿ Had aught of pleasant chances or had aught of goodly gree.

Then prepare thou good provision for to-morrow's journey stored, ✿ Naught but righteous honest life shall avail thee with the Lord!

And the Emir Musa wept as he read, "By Allah, the fear of the Lord is the best of all property, the pillar of certainty and the sole sure stay. Verily, Death is the truth manifest and the sure behest, and therein, O thou, is the goal and return-place evident. Take warning, therefore, by those who to the dust did wend and hastened on the way of the predestined end. Seest thou not that hoary hairs summon thee to the tomb and that the whiteness of thy locks maketh moan of thy doom? Wherefore be thou on the wake ready for thy departure and thine account to make. O son of Adam, what hath hardened thy heart in mode abhorred? What hath seduced thee from the service of thy Lord? Where be the peoples of old time? They are a warning to whoso will be warned! Where be the Kings of Al-Sín and the lords of majestic mien? Where is Shaddad bin Ad and whatso he built and he stablished? Where is Nimrod who revolted against Allah and defied Him? Where is Pharaoh who rebelled against God and denied Him? Death followed hard upon the trail of them all, and laid them low sparing neither great nor small, male nor female; and the Reaper of Mankind cut them off, yea, by Him who maketh night to return upon day! Know, O thou who comest to this place, that she whom thou seest here was not deluded by the world and its frail delights, for it is faithless, perfidious, a house of ruin, vain and treacherous; and salutary to the creature is the remembrance of his sins; wherefore she feared her Lord and made fair her dealings and provided herself with provaunt against the appointed marching-day. Whoso cometh to our city and Allah vouchsafeth him competence to enter it, let him take of the treasure all he can, but touch not 118 aught that is on my body, for it is the covering of my shame[150] and the outfit for the last journey; wherefore let him fear Allah and despoil naught thereof; else will he destroy his own self. This have I set forth to him for a warning from me and a solemn trust to be; wherewith, peace be with ye and I pray Allah to keep you from sickness and calamity."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Emir Musa read this, he wept with exceeding weeping till he swooned away and presently coming to

himself, wrote down all he had seen and was admonished by all he had witnessed. Then he said to his men, “Fetch the camels and load them with these treasures and vases and jewels.” “O Emir,” asked Talib, “shall we leave our damsel with what is upon her, things which have no equal and whose like is not to be found and more perfect than aught else thou takest; nor couldst thou find a goodlier offering wherewithal to propitiate the favour of the Commander of the Faithful?” But Musa answered, “O man, heardest thou not what the Lady saith on this tablet? More by token that she giveth it in trust to us who are no traitors.” “And shall we,” rejoined the Wazir Talib, “because of these words, leave all these riches and jewels, seeing that she is dead? What should she do with these that are the adornments of the world and the ornament of the worldling, seeing that one garment of cotton would suffice for her covering? We have more right to them than she.” So saying he mounted the steps of the couch between the pillars, but when he came within reach of the two slaves, lo! the mace-bearer smote him on the back and the other struck him with the sword he held in his hand and lopped off his head, and he dropped down dead. Quoth the Emir, “Allah have no mercy on thy resting-place! Indeed there was enough in these treasures; and greed of gain assuredly degradeth a man.” Then he bade admit 119 the troops; so they entered and loaded the camels with those treasures and precious ores; after which they went forth and the Emir commanded them to shut the gate as before. They fared on along the sea-shore a whole month, till they came in sight of a high mountain overlooking the sea and full of caves, wherein dwelt a tribe of blacks, clad in hides, with burnooses also of hide and speaking an unknown tongue. When they saw the troops they were startled like shying steeds and fled into the caverns, whilst their women and children stood at the cave-doors, looking on the strangers. “O Shaykh Abd al-Samad,” asked the Emir, “what are these folk?” and he answered, “They are those whom we seek for the Commander of the Faithful.” So they dismounted and setting down their loads, pitched their tents; whereupon, almost before they had done, down came the King of the blacks from the mountain and drew near the camp. Now he understood the Arabic tongue; so, when he came to the Emir he saluted him with the salam and Musa returned his greeting and entreated him with honour. Then quoth he to the Emir, “Are ye men or Jinn?” “Well, we are men,” quoth Musa; “but doubtless ye are Jinn, to judge by your dwelling apart in this mountain which is cut off from mankind, and by your inordinate bulk.” “Nay,” rejoined the black; “we also are children of Adam, of the lineage of Ham, son of Noah (with whom be peace!), and this sea is known as Al-Karkar.” Asked Musa, “O King, what is your religion and what worship ye?”; and he answered, saying, “We worship the God of the heavens and our religion is that of Mohammed, whom Allah bless and preserve!” “And how came ye by the knowledge of this,” questioned the Emir, “seeing that no prophet was inspired to visit this country?” “Know, Emir,” replied the King, “that there appeared to us whilere from out the sea a man, from whom issued a light that illumined the horizons and he cried out, in a voice which was heard of men

far and near, saying:—O children of Ham, reverence to Him who seeth and is not seen and say ye, There is no god but *the* God, and Mohammed is the messenger of God! And he added:—I am Abu al-Abbás al-Khizr. Before this we were wont to worship one another, but he summoned us to the service of the Lord of all creatures; and he taught us to repeat these words, There is no god save *the* God alone, who hath for partner none, and His is the kingdom and His is the praise. He giveth life and death and He over all things is Almighty. Nor 120 do we draw near unto Allah (be He exalted and extolled!) except with these words, for we know none other; but every eve before Friday[151] we see a light upon the face of earth and we hear a voice saying, Holy and glorious, Lord of the Angels and the Spirit! What He willeth is, and what He willeth not, is not. Every boon is of His grace and there is neither Majesty nor is there Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" "But ye," quoth the King, "who and what are ye and what bringeth you to this land?" Quoth Musa, "We are officers of the Sovereign of Al-Islam, the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, who hath heard tell of the lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be peace!) and of that which the Most High bestowed upon him of supreme dominion; how he held sway over Jinn and beast and bird and was wont when he was wroth with one of the Marids, to shut him in a cucurbite of brass and, stopping its mouth on him with lead, whereon he impressed his seal-ring, to cast him into the sea of Al-Karkar. Now we have heard tell that this sea is nigh your land; so the Commander of the Faithful hath sent us hither, to bring him some of these cucurbites, that he may look thereon and solace himself with their sight. Such, then, is our case and what we seek of thee, O King, and we desire that thou further us in the accomplishment of our errand commanded by the Commander of the Faithful." "With love and gladness," replied the black King, and carrying them to the guest-house, entreated them with the utmost honour and furnished them with all they needed, feeding them upon fish. They abode thus three days, when he bade his divers fetch from out the sea some of the vessels of Solomon. So they dived and brought up twelve cucurbites, whereat the Emir and the Shaykh and all the company rejoiced in the accomplishment of the Caliph's need. Then Musa gave the King of the blacks many and great gifts; and he, in turn, made him a present 121 of the wonders of the deep, being fishes in human form,[152] saying "Your entertainment these three days hath been of the meat of these fish." Quoth the Emir, "Needs must we carry some of these to the Caliph, for the sight of them will please him more than the cucurbites of Solomon." Then they took leave of the black King and, setting out on their homeward journey, travelled till they came to Damascus, where Musa went in to the Commander of the Faithful and told him all that he had sighted and heard of verses and legends and instances, together with the manner of the death of Talib bin Sahl; and the Caliph said, "Would I had been with you, that I might have seen what you saw!" Then he took the brazen vessels and opened them, cucurbite after cucurbite, whereupon the devils came forth of them,

saying, “We repent, O Prophet of Allah! Never again will we return to the like of this thing; no never!” And the Caliph marvelled at this. As for the daughters of the deep presented to them by the black King, they made them cisterns of planks, full of water, and laid them therein; but they died of the great heat. Then the Caliph sent for the spoils of the Brazen City and divided them among the Faithful,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph marvelled much at the cucurbites and their contents; then he sent for the spoils and divided them among the Faithful, saying, “Never gave Allah unto any the like of that which he bestowed upon Solomon David-son!” Thereupon the Emir Musa sought leave of him to appoint his son Governor of the Province in his stead, that he might betake himself to the Holy City of Jerusalem, there to worship Allah. So the Commander of the Faithful invested his son Harun with the government and Musa repaired to the Glorious and Holy City, where he died. This, then, is all that hath come down to us of the story of the City of Brass, and 122 God is All-knowing!——Now (continued Shahrazad) I have another tale to tell anent the

24- CRAFT AND MALICE OF WOMEN,[153] OR THE TALE OF THE KING, HIS SON, HIS CONCUBINE AND THE SEVEN WAZIRS.

There was, in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, a puissant King among the Kings of China, the crown of crowned heads, who ruled over many men of war and vassals with wisdom and justice, might and majesty; equitable to his Ryots, liberal to his lieges and dearly beloved by the hearts of his subjects. He was wealthy as he was powerful, but he had grown old without being blessed with a son, and this caused him sore affliction. He could only brood over the cutting off of his seed and the oblivion that would bury his name and the passing of his realm into the stranger's hands. So he secluded himself in his palace, never going in and out or rising and taking rest till the lieges lost all tidings of him and were sore perplexed and began to talk about their King. Some said, "He's dead"; others said, "No, he's not but all resolved to find a ruler who could reign over them and carry out the customs of government." At last, utterly despairing of male issue, he sought the intercession of the Prophet (whom Allah bless and keep!) with the Most High and implored Him, by the glory of His Prophets and Saints and Martyrs and others of the Faithful who were acceptable to Heaven that he would grant him a son, to be the coolth of his eyes and heir to the kingdom after him. Then he rose forthright and, withdrawing to his sitting-saloon, sent for his wife 123who was the daughter of his uncle. Now this Queen was of surpassing beauty and loveliness, the fairest of all his wives and the dearest to him as she was the nearest: and to boot a woman of excellent wit and passing judgement. She found the King dejected and sorrowful, tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted; so she kissed ground between his hands and said, "O King, may my life ransom thy life! may Time never prove thy foe, nor the shifts of Fortune prevail over thee; may Allah grant thee every joy and ward off from thee all annoy! How is it I see thee brooding over thy case and tormented by the displeasures of memory?" He replied, "Thou wottest well that I am a man now shotten in years, who hath never been blessed with a son, a sight to cool his eyes; so I know that my kingdom shall pass away to the stranger in

blood and my name and memory will be blotted out amongst men. 'Tis this causeth me to grieve with excessive grief." "Allah do away with thy sorrows," quoth she: "long ere this day a thought struck me; and yearning for issue arose in my heart even as in thine. One night I dreamed a dream and a voice said to me:—The King thy husband pineth for progeny: if a daughter be vouchsafed to him, she will be the ruin of his realm; if a son, the youth will undergo much trouble and annoy but he will pass through it without loss of life. Such a son can be conceived by thee and thee only and the time of thy conception is when the moon conjoineth with Gemini! I woke from my dream, but after what I heard that voice declare I refrained from breeding and would not consent to bear children." "There is no help for it but that I have a son, Inshallah,—God willing!" cried the King. Thereupon she soothed and consoled him till he forgot his sorrows and went forth amongst the lieges and sat, as of wont, upon his throne of estate. All rejoiced to see him once more and especially the Lords of his realm. Now when the conjunction of the moon and Gemini took place, the King knew his wife carnally and, by order of Allah Almighty she became pregnant. Presently she announced the glad tidings to her husband and led her usual life until her nine months of pregnancy were completed and she bare a male child whose face was as the rondure of the moon on its fourteenth night. The lieges of the realm congratulated one another thereanent and the King commanded an assembly of his Olema and philosophers, astrologers and horoscopists, whom he thus addressed, "I desire you to forecast the fortune of my son and 124 to determine his ascendant[1154] and whatever is shown by his nativity." They replied "'Tis well, in Allah's name, let us do so!" and cast his nativity with all diligence. After ascertaining his ascendant, they pronounced judgement in these words, "We see his lot favourable and his life viable and durable; save that a danger awaiteth his youth." The father was sorely concerned at this saying, when they added "But, O King, he shall escape from it nor shall aught of injury accrue to him!" Hereupon the King cast aside all cark and care and robed the wizards and dismissed them with splendid honoraria; and he resigned himself to the will of Heaven and acknowledged that the decrees of Destiny may not be countervailed. He committed his boy to wet nurses and dry nurses, handmaids and eunuchs, leaving him to grow and fill out in the Harim till he reached the age of seven. Then he addressed letters to his Viceroys and Governors in every clime and by their means gathered together Olema and philosophers and doctors of law and religion, from all countries, to a number of three hundred and three score. He held an especial assembly for them and, when all were in presence, he bade them draw near him and be at their ease while he sent for the food-trays and all ate their sufficiency. And when the banquet ended and the wizards had taken seats in their several degrees, the King asked them, "Wot ye wherefore I have gathered ye together?"; whereto all answered, "We wot not, O King!" He continued, "It is my wish that you select from amongst you fifty men, and from these fifty ten, and from these ten one, that he may teach my son omnem rem scibilem; for whenas I see the youth perfect in all science, I will share my dignity with

the Prince and make him partner with me in my possessions." "Know, O King," they replied, "that among us none is more learned or more excellent than Al-Sindibad,[155] hight the Sage, who woneth in thy capital 125 under thy protection. If such be thy design, summon him and bid him do thy will." The King acted upon their advice and the Sage, standing in the presence, expressed his loyal sentiments with his salutation, whereupon his Sovereign bade him draw nigh and thus raised his rank, saying, "I would have thee to know, O Sage, that I summoned this assembly of the learned and bade them choose me out a man to teach my son all knowledge; when they selected thee without dissenting thought or voice. If, then, thou feel capable of what they claimed for thee, come thou to the task and understand that a man's son and heir is the very fruit of his vitals and core of his heart and liver. My desire of thee is thine instruction of him; and to happy issue Allah guideth!" The King then sent for his son and committed him to Al-Sindibad conditioning the Sage to finish his education in three years. He did accordingly but, at the end of that time, the young Prince had learned nothing, his mind being wholly occupied with play and disport; and when summoned and examined by his sire, behold, his knowledge was as nil. Thereupon the King turned his attention to the learned once more and bade them elect a tutor for his youth; so they asked, "And what hath his governor, Al-Sindibad, been doing?" and when the King answered, "He hath taught my son naught;" the Olema and philosophers and high officers summoned the instructor and said to him, "O Sage, what prevented thee from teaching the King's son during this length of days?" "O wise men," he replied, "the Prince's mind is wholly occupied with disport and play; yet, an the King will make with me three conditions and keep to them, I will teach him in seven months what he would not learn (nor indeed could any other lesson him) within seven years." "I hearken to thee," quoth the King, "and I submit myself to thy conditions;" and quoth Al-Sindibad, "Hear from me, Sire, and bear in mind these three sayings, whereof the first is:—Do not to others what thou wouldest not they do unto thee;[156] and second:—Do naught hastily without consulting the experienced; and thirdly:—Where thou hast power show pity.[157] In teaching this 126 lad I require no more of thee but to accept these three dictes and adhere thereto." Cried the King, "Bear ye witness against me, O all ye here assembled, that I stand firm by these conditions!"; and caused a *procès verbal* to be drawn up with his personal security and the testimony of his courtiers. Thereupon the Sage, taking the Prince's hand, led him to his place, and the King sent them all requisites of provaunt and kitchen-batteries, carpets and other furniture. Moreover the tutor bade build a house whose walls he lined with the whitest stucco painted over with ceruse,[158] and, lastly, he delineated thereon all the objects concerning which he proposed to lecture his pupil. When the place was duly furnished, he took the lad's hand and installed him in the apartment which was amply furnished with belly-timber; and, after stablishing him therein, went forth and fastened the door with seven padlocks. Nor did he visit the

Prince save every third day when he lessoned him on the knowledge to be extracted from the wall-pictures and renewed his provision of meat and drink, after which he left him again to solitude. So whenever the youth was straitened in breast by the tedium and ennui of loneliness, he applied himself diligently to his object-lessons and mastered all the deductions therefrom. His governor seeing this turned his mind into other channel and taught him the inner meanings of the external objects; and in a little time the pupil mastered every requisite. Then the Sage took him from the house and taught him cavalarice and Jerid play and archery. When the pupil had thoroughly mastered these arts, the tutor sent to the King informing him that the Prince was perfect and complete in all things required to figure favourably amongst his peers. Hereat the King rejoiced; and, summoning his Wazirs and Lords of estate to be present at the examination, commanded the Sage to send his son into the presence. Thereupon Al-Sindibad consulted his pupil's horoscope and found it barred by an inauspicious conjunction which would last seven days; so, in sore affright for the youth's life, he said, "Look into thy nativity-scheme." The Prince did so and, recognising the potent, feared for himself and presently asked the Sage, saying, "What dost thou bid me do?" "I bid thee," he answered, "remain silent and speak not a word during this 127 se'nnight; even though thy sire slay thee with scourging. An thou pass safely through this period, thou shalt win to high rank and succeed to thy sire's reign; but an things go otherwise then the behest is with Allah from the beginning to the end thereof." Quoth the pupil, "Thou art in fault, O preceptor, and thou hast shown undue haste in sending that message to the King before looking into my horoscope. Hadst thou delayed till the week had passed all had been well." Quoth the tutor, "O my son, what was to be was; and the sole defaulter therein was my delight in thy scholarship. But now be firm in thy resolve; rely upon Allah Almighty and determine not to utter a single word." Thereupon the Prince fared for the presence and was met by the Wazirs who led him to his father. The King accosted him and addressed him but he answered not; and sought speech of him but he spake not. Whereupon the courtiers were astounded and the monarch, sore concerned for his son, summoned Al-Sindibad. But the tutor so hid himself that none could hit upon his trace nor gain tidings of him; and folk said, "He was ashamed to appear before the King's majesty and the courtiers." Under these conditions the Sovereign heard some of those present saying, "Send the lad to the Serraglio where he will talk with the women and soon set aside this bashfulness;" and, approving their counsel, gave orders accordingly. So the Prince was led into the palace, which was compassed about by a running stream whose banks were planted with all manner of fruit-trees and sweet-smelling flowers. Moreover, in this palace were forty chambers and in every chamber ten slave-girls, each skilled in some instrument of music, so that whenever one of them played, the palace danced to her melodious strains. Here the Prince passed one night; but, on the following morning, the King's favourite concubine happened to cast eyes upon his beauty and loveliness, his symmetrical stature, his brilliancy and his perfect grace, and love gat

hold of her heart and she was ravished with his charms.[159] So she went up to him and threw herself upon him, 128 but he made her no response; whereupon, being dazed by his beauty, she cried out to him and required him of himself and importuned him; then she again threw herself upon him and clasped him to her bosom kissing him and saying, "O King's son, grant me thy favours and I will set thee in thy father's stead; I will give him to drink of poison, so he may die and thou shalt enjoy his realm and wealth." When the Prince heard these words, he was sore enraged against her and said to her by signs, "O accursed one, so it please Almighty Allah, I will assuredly requite thee this thy deed, whenas I can speak; for I will go forth to my father and will tell him, and he shall kill thee." So signing, he arose in rage, and went out from her chamber; whereat she feared for herself. Thereupon she buffeted her face and rent her raiment and tare her hair and bared her head, then went in to the King and cast herself at his feet, weeping and wailing. When he saw her in this plight, he was sore concerned and asked her, "What aileth thee, O damsel? How is it with thy lord, my son? Is he not well?"; and she answered, "O King, this thy son, whom thy courtiers avouch to be dumb, required me of myself and I repelled him, whereupon he did with me as thou seest and would have slain me; so I fled from him, nor will I ever return to him, nor to the palace again, no, never again!" When the King heard this, he was wroth with exceeding wrath and, calling his seven Wazirs, bade them put the Prince to death. However, they said one to other, "If we do the King's Commandment, he will surely repent of having ordered his son's death, for he is passing dear to him and this child came not to him save after despair; and he will round upon us and blame us, saying:—Why did ye not contrive to dissuade me from slaying him?" So they took counsel together, to turn him from his purpose, and the chief Wazir said, "I will warrant you from the King's mischief this day." Then he went in to the presence and prostrating himself craved leave to speak. The King gave him permission, and he said, "O King, though thou hadst a thousand sons, yet were it no light matter to thee to put one of them to death, on the report of a woman, be she true or be she false; and belike this is a lie and a trick of her against thy son; for indeed, O King, I have heard tell great plenty of stories of the malice, the craft and perfidy of women." Quoth the King, "Tell me somewhat of that which hath come to thy knowledge thereof." And the Wazir answered, saying:—Yes, there hath reached me, O King, a tale entituled

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THE KING AND HIS WAZIR'S WIFE.[160]

There was once a King of the Kings, a potent man and a proud, who was devoted to the love of women and one day being in the privacy of his palace, he espied a beautiful woman on the terrace-roof of her house and could not contain himself from falling consumedly in love with her.[161] He asked his folk to whom the house and the

damsel belonged and they said, “This is the dwelling of the Wazir such an one and she is his wife.” So he called the Minister in question and despatched him on an errand to a distant part of the kingdom, where he was to collect information and to return; but, as soon as he obeyed and was gone, the King contrived by a trick to gain access to his house and his spouse. When the Wazir’s wife saw him, she knew him and springing up, kissed his hands and feet and welcomed him. Then she stood afar off, busying herself in his service, and said to him, “O our lord, what is the cause of thy gracious coming? Such an honour is not for the like of me.” Quoth he, “The cause of it is that love of thee and desire thee-wards have moved me to this.” Whereupon she kissed ground before him a second time and said, “By Allah, O our lord, indeed I am not worthy to be the handmaid of one of the King’s servants; whence then have I the great good fortune to be in such high honour and favour with thee?” Then the King put out his hand to her intending to enjoy her person, when she said, “This thing shall not escape us; but take patience, O my King, and abide with thy handmaid all this day, that she may make ready for thee somewhat to eat and drink.” So the 130 King sat down on his Minister’s couch and she went in haste and brought him a book wherein he might read, whilst she made ready the food. He took the book and, beginning to read, found therein moral instances and exhortations, such as restrained him from adultery and broke his courage to commit sin and crime. After awhile, she returned and set before him some ninety dishes of different kinds and colours, and he ate a mouthful of each and found that, while the number was many, the taste of them was one. At this, he marvelled with exceeding marvel and said to her, “O damsel, I see these meats to be manifold and various, but the taste of them is simple and the same.” “Allah prosper the King!” replied she, “this is a parable I have set for thee, that thou mayst be admonished thereby.” He asked, “And what is its meaning?”; and she answered, “Allah amend the case of our lord the King!; in thy palace are ninety concubines of various colours, but their taste is one.”[162] When the King heard this, he was ashamed and rising hastily, went out, without offering her any affront and returned to his palace; but, in his haste and confusion, he forgot his signet-ring and left it under the cushion where he had been sitting and albeit he remembered it he was ashamed to send for it. Now hardly had he reached home when the Wazir returned and, presenting himself before the King, kissed the ground and made his report to him of the State of the province in question. 131 Then he repaired to his own house and sat down on his couch and chancing to put his hand under the cushion, behold, he found the King’s seal-ring. So he knew it and taking the matter to heart, held aloof in great grief from his wife for a whole year, not going in unto her nor even speaking to her, whilst she knew not the reason of his anger.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir held aloof from his wife, whilst she knew not the cause of his wrath. At last, being weary of the longsome neglect, she sent for her sire and told him the case; whereupon quoth he, "I will complain of him to the King, at some time when he is in the presence." So, one day, he went in to the King and, finding the Wazir and the Kazi of the army before him,[163] complained thus saying, "Almighty Allah amend the King's case! I had a fair flower-garden, which I planted with mine own hand and thereon spent my substance till it bare fruit; and its fruitage was ripe for plucking, when I gave it to this thy Wazir, who ate of it what seemed good to him, then deserted it and watered it not, so that its bloom wilted and withered and its sheen departed and its state changed." Then said the Wazir, "O my King, this man saith sooth. I did indeed care for and guard the garden and kept it in good condition and ate thereof, till one day I went thither and I saw the trail of the lion there, wherefore I feared for my life and withdrew from the garden." The King understood him that the trail of the lion meant his own seal-ring, which he had forgotten in the woman's house; so he said, "Return, O Wazir, to thy flower-garden and fear nothing, for the lion came not near it. It hath reached me that he went thither; but, by the honour of my fathers and forefathers, he offered it no hurt." "Hearkening and obedience," answered the Minister and, returning home sent for his wife and made his peace with her and thenceforth put faith in her chastity. This I tell thee, O King (continued the Wazir), for no other purpose save to let thee know how great is their craft 132 and how precipitancy bequeatheth repentance.[164] And I have also heard the following

STORY OF THE CONFECTIONER, HIS WIFE, AND THE PARROT.

Once upon a time there dwelt in Egypt a confectioner who had a wife famed for beauty and loveliness; and a parrot which, as occasion required, did the office of watchman and guard, bell and spy, and flapped her wings did she but hear a fly buzzing about the sugar. This parrot caused abundant trouble to the wife, always telling her husband what took place in his absence. Now one evening, before going out to visit certain friends, the confectioner gave the bird strict injunctions to watch all night and bade his wife make all fast, as he should not return until morning. Hardly had he left the door than the woman went for her old lover, who returned with her and they passed the night together in mirth and merriment, while the parrot observed all. Betimes in the morning the lover fared forth and the husband, returning, was informed by the parrot of what had taken place; whereupon he hastened to his wife's room and beat her with a painful beating. She thought in herself, "Who could have informed against me?" and she asked a woman that was in her confidence whether it was she.

The woman protested by the worlds visible and invisible that she had not betrayed her mistress; but informed her that on the morning of his return home, the husband had stood some time before the cage listening to the parrot's talk. When the wife heard this, she resolved to contrive the destruction of the bird. Some days after, the husband was again invited to the house of a friend [133] where he was to pass the night; and, before departing, he enjoined the parrot with the same injunctions as before; wherefore his heart was free from care, for he had his spy at home. The wife and her confidante then planned how they might destroy the credit of the parrot with the master. For this purpose they resolved to counterfeit a storm; and this they did by placing over the parrot's head a hand-mill (which the lover worked by pouring water upon a piece of hide), by waving a fan and by suddenly uncovering a candle hid under a dish. Thus did they raise such a tempest of rain and lightning, that the parrot was drenched and half-drowned in a deluge. Now rolled the thunder, then flashed the lightning; that from the noise of the hand-mill, this from the reflection of the candle; when thought the parrot to herself, "In very sooth the Flood hath come on, such an one as belike Noah himself never witnessed." So saying she buried her head under her wing, a prey to terror. The husband, on his return, hastened to the parrot to ask what had happened during his absence; and the bird answered that she found it impossible to describe the deluge and tempest of the last night; and that years would be required to explain the uproar of the hurricane and storm. When the shopkeeper heard the parrot talk of last night's deluge, he said: "Surely, O bird, thou art gone clean daft! Where was there, even in a dream, rain or lightning last night? Thou hast utterly ruined my house and ancient family. My wife is the most virtuous woman of the age and all thine accusations of her are lies." So in his wrath he dashed the cage upon the ground, tore off the parrot's head, and threw it from the window. Presently his friend, coming to call upon him, saw the parrot in this condition with head torn off, and without wings or plumage. Being informed of the circumstances he suspected some trick on the part of the woman, and said to the husband, "When your wife leaves home to go to the Hammam-bath, compel her confidante to disclose the secret." So as soon as his wife went out, the husband entered his Harim and insisted on the woman telling him the truth. She recounted the whole story and the husband now bitterly repented having killed the parrot, of whose innocence he had proof. This I tell thee, O King (continued the Wazir), that thou mayst know how great are the craft and malice of women and that to act in haste leadeth to repent at leisure. So the King turned from slaying his son: but, next day, the favourite came in to him and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O King, why [134] dost thou delay to do me justice? Indeed, the Kings have heard that thou commandest a thing and thy Wazir countermandeth it. Now the obedience of Kings is in the fulfilment of their commandments, and every one knows thy justice and equity: so do thou justice for me on the Prince. I also have heard tell a tale concerning

THE FULLER AND HIS SON.

There was once a man which was a fuller, and he used every day to go forth to the Tigris-bank a-cleaning clothes; and his son was wont to go with him that he might swim whilst his father was fulling, nor was he forbidden from this. One day, as the boy was swimming,[165] he was taken with cramp in the forearms and sank, whereupon the fuller plunged into the water and caught hold of him; but the boy clung about him and pulled him down and so father and son were both drowned. Thus it is with thee, O King. Except thou prevent thy son and do me justice on him, I fear lest both of you sink together, thou and he."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the favourite had told her tale of the Fuller and his son, she ended with, "I fear lest both of you sink together, thou and he. Moreover," continued she, "for an instance of the malice of men, I have heard tell a tale concerning

THE RAKE'S TRICK AGAINST THE CHASTE WIFE."

A certain man loved a beautiful and lovely woman, a model of charms and grace, married to a man whom she loved and who loved her. Moreover, she was virtuous and chaste, like unto me, and her rake of a lover found no way to her; so when his patience was at an end, he devised a device to win his will. Now the husband had a young man, whom he had brought up in his house and who was in high trust with him as his steward. So the rake addressed himself to the youth and ceased not insinuating himself into his favour by presents and fair words and deeds, till he became more obedient to him than the hand to the mouth and did whatever he ordered him. One day, he said to him, "Harkye, such an one; wilt thou not bring me into the family dwelling-place some time when the lady is gone out?" "Yes," answered the young steward; so, when his master was at the shop and his mistress gone forth to the Hammam, he took his friend by the hand and, bringing him into the house, showed him the sitting-rooms and all that was therein. Now the lover was determined to play a trick upon the woman; so he took the white of an egg which he had brought with him in a vessel, and spilt it on the merchant's bedding, unseen by the young man; after which he returned thanks and leaving the house went his way. In an hour or so the merchant came home; and, going to the bed to rest himself, found thereon

something wet so he took it up in his hand and looked at it and deemed it man's seed; whereat he stared at the young man with eyes of wrath, and asked him, "Where is thy mistress?"; and he answered, "She is gone forth to the Hammam and will return forthright after she has made her ablutions."[166] When the man heard this, his suspicion concerning the semen was confirmed; and he waxed furious and said, "Go at once and bring her back." The steward accordingly fetched her and when she came before her husband, the jealous man sprang upon her and beat her a grievous beating; then, binding her arms behind her, offered to cut her throat with a knife; but she cried out to the neighbours, who came to her, and she said to them, "This my man hath beaten me unjustly and without cause and is 136minded to kill me, though I know not what is mine offence." So they rose up and asked him, "Why hast thou dealt thus by her?" And he answered, "She is divorced." Quoth they, "Thou hast no right to maltreat her; either divorce her or use her kindly, for we know her prudence and purity and chastity. Indeed, she hath been our neighbour this long time and we wot no evil of her." Quoth he, "When I came home, I found on my bed seed like human sperm, and I know not the meaning of this." Upon this a little boy, one of those present, came forward and said, "Show it to me, nuncle mine!" When he saw it, he smelt it and, calling for fire and a frying-pan, he took the white of egg and cooked it so that it became solid. Then he ate of it and made the husband and the others taste of it, and they were certified that it was white of egg. So the husband was convinced that he had sinned against his wife's innocence, she being clear of all offence, and the neighbours made peace between them after the divorce, and he prayed her pardon and presented her with an hundred gold pieces. And so the wicked lover's cunning trick came to naught. And know, O King, that this is an instance of the malice of men and their perfidy. When the King heard this, he bade his son be slain; but on the next day the second Wazir came forward for intercession and kissed ground in prostration. Whereupon the King said, "Raise thy head: prostration must be made to Allah only."[167] So the Minister rose from before him and said, "O King, hasten not to slay thy son, for he was not granted to his mother by the Almighty but after despair, nor didst thou expect such good luck; and we hope that he will live to become a guerdon to thy reign and a guardian of thy good. Wherefore, have patience, O King; belike he will offer a fit excuse; and, if thou make haste to slay him, thou wilt surely repent, even as the merchant-wight repented." Asked the King, "And how was it with the merchant, O Wazir?"; and the Wazir answered:—O King, I have heard a tale of

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THE MISER AND THE LOAVES OF BREAD.

There was once a merchant, who was a niggard and miserly in his eating and drinking. One day, he went on a journey to a certain town and as he walked in the market-streets, behold, he met an old trot with two scones of bread which looked sound and fair. He asked her, "Are these for sale?"; and she answered, "Yes!" So he beat her down and bought them at the lowest price and took them home to his lodging, where he ate them that day. When morning morrowed, he returned to the same place and, finding the old woman there with other two scones, bought these also; and thus he ceased not during twenty-five days' space when the old wife disappeared. He made enquiry for her, but could hear no tidings of her, till, one day as he was walking about the high streets, he chanced upon her: so he accosted her and, after the usual salutation and with much praise and politeness, asked why she had disappeared from the market and ceased to supply the two cakes of bread? Hearing this, at first she evaded giving him a reply; but he conjured her to tell him her case; so she said, "Hear my excuse, O my lord, which is that I was attending upon a man who had a corroding ulcer on his spine, and his doctor bade us knead flour with butter into a plaster and lay it on the place of pain, where it abode all night. In the morning, I used to take that flour and turn it into dough and make it into two scones, which I cooked and sold to thee or to another; but presently the man died and I was cut off from making cakes."[1681] When the merchant heard this, he repented whenas repentance availed him naught, saying, "Verily, we are Allah's and verily unto Him we are returning! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Him, the Glorious, the Great!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old trot told the merchant the provenance of the scones, he cried, 138"There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" And he repeated the saying of the Most High, "Whatever evil falleth to thee it is from thyself;"[1691] and vomited till he fell sick and repented whenas repentance availed him naught. Moreover, O King (continued the second Wazir), I have heard tell, of the malice of women, a tale of

THE LADY AND HER TWO LOVERS.

Once upon a time there was a man, who was sword-bearer to one of the Kings, and he loved a damsel of the common sort. One day, he sent his page to her with a message, as of wont between them, and the lad sat down with her and toyed with her. She inclined to him and pressed him to her breast and groped him and kissed him whereupon he sought carnal connection of her and she consented; but, as the two were thus, lo! the youth's master knocked at the door. So she pushed the page through a

trapdoor into an underground chamber there and opened the door to his lord, who entered hending sword in hand and sat down upon her bed. Then she came up to him and sported and toyed with him, kissing him and pressing him to her bosom, and he took her and lay with her. Presently, her husband knocked at the door and the gallant asked her, "Who is that?"; whereto she answered, "My husband." Quoth he, "How shall I do?" Quoth she, "Draw thy sword and stand in the vestibule and abuse me and revile me; and when my husband comes in to thee, do thou go forth and wend thy ways." He did as she bade him; and, when the husband entered, he saw the King's sword-bearer standing with naked brand in hand, abusing and threatening his wife; but, when the lover saw him, he was ashamed and sheathing his scymitar, went forth the house. Said the man to his wife, "What means this?"; and she replied, "O man, how blessed is the hour of thy coming! Thou hast saved a True Believer from slaughter, and it happed after this fashion. I was on the house-terrace, spinning,[170] 139 when behold, there came up to me a youth, distracted and panting for fear of death, fleeing from yonder man, who followed upon him as hard as he could with his drawn sword. The young man fell down before me, and kissed my hands and feet, saying, "O Protector, of thy mercy, save me from him who would slay me wrongously!" So I hid him in that underground chamber of ours and presently in came yonder man to me, naked brand in hand, demanding the youth. But I denied him to him, whereupon he fell to abusing and threatening me as thou sawest. And praised be Allah who sent thee to me, for I was distraught and had none to deliver me!" "Well hast thou done, O woman!" answered the husband. "Thy reward is with Allah the Almighty, and may He abundantly requite thy good deed!" Then he went to the trap door and called to the page, saying, "Come forth and fear not; no harm shall befal thee." So he came out, trembling for fear, and the husband said, "Be of good cheer: none shall hurt thee;" condoling with him on what had befallen him; whilst the page called down blessings on his head. Then they both went forth, nor was that Cornuto nor was the page aware of that which the woman had contrived. "This, then, O King," said the Wazir, "is one of the tricks of women; so beware lest thou rely upon their words." The King was persuaded and turned from putting his son to death; but, on the third day, the favourite came in to him and, kissing the ground before him, cried, "O King, do me justice on thy son and be not turned from thy purpose by thy Ministers' prate, for there is no good in wicked Wazirs, and be not as the King of Baghdad, who relied on the word of a certain wicked counsellor of his." Quoth he, "And how was that?" Quoth she:—There hath been told me, O auspicious and well-advised King, a tale of

THE KING'S SON AND THE OGRESS.[171]

A certain King had a son, whom he loved and favoured with exceeding favour, over all his other children; and this son said to him one day, “O my father, I have a mind to fare a-coursing and 140 a-hunting.” So the King bade furnish him and commanded one of his Wazirs to bear him company and do all the service he needed during his trip. The Minister accordingly took everything that was necessary for the journey and they set out with a retinue of eunuchs and officers and pages, and rode on, sporting as they went, till they came to a green and well-grassed champaign abounding in pasture and water and game. Here the Prince turned to the Minister and told him that the place pleased him and he purposed to halt there. So they set down in that site and they loosed the falcons and lynxes and dogs and caught great plenty of game, whereat they rejoiced and abode there some days, in all joyance of life and its delight. Then the King’s son gave the signal for departure; but, as they went along, a beautiful gazelle, as if the sun rose shining from between her horns, that had strayed from her mate, sprang up before the Prince, whereupon his soul longed to make prize of her and he coveted her. So he said to the Wazir, “I have a mind to follow that gazelle;” and the Minister replied, “Do what seemeth good to thee.” Thereupon the Prince rode single-handed after the gazelle, till he lost sight of his companions, and chased her all that day till dusk, when she took refuge in a bit of rocky ground[172] and darkness closed in upon him. Then he would have turned back, but knew not the way; whereat he was sore concerned and said, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!” He sat his mare all night till morning dawned, in quest of relief, but found none; and, when the day appeared, he fared on at hazard fearful, famished, thirsty, and knowing not whither to wend till it was noon and the sun beat down upon him with burning heat. By that time he came in sight of a great city, with massive base and lofty bulwarks; but it was ruined and desolate, nor was there any live thing therein save owl and raven. As he stood among the buildings, marvelling at their ordinance, lo! his eyes fell on a damsel, young, beautiful and lovely, sitting under one of the city walls wailing and weeping copious tears. So he drew nigh to her and asked, “Who art thou and who brought thee 141 hither?” She answered, “I am called Bint al-Tamímah, daughter of Al-Tiyákh, King of the Gray Country. I went out one day to obey a call of nature,[173] when an Ifrit of the Jinn snatched me up and soared with me between heaven and earth; but as he flew there fell on him a shooting-star in the form of a flame of fire and burned him, and I dropped here, where these three days I have hungered and thirsted; but when I saw thee I longed for life.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Prince, when addressed by the daughter of King Al-Tiyakh who said to him, “When I saw thee I longed for life,”

was smitten with ruth and grief for her and took her up on his courser's crupper, saying, "Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; for, if Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) restore me to my people and family, I will send thee back to thine own folk." Then he rode on, praying for deliverance, and presently the damsel said to him, "O King's son, set me down, that I may do an occasion under this wall." So he drew bridle and she alighted. He waited for her a long while as she hid herself behind the wall; and she came forth, with the foulest of favours; which when he saw, his hair stood on end and he quaked for fear of her and he turned deadly pale. Then she sprang up on his steed, behind him, wearing the most loathly of aspects, and presently she said to him, "O King's son, what ails thee that I see thee troubled and thy favour changed?" "I have bethought me of somewhat that troubles me." "Seek aid against it of thy father's troops and his braves." "He whom I fear careth naught for troops, neither can braves affright him." "Aid thyself against him with thy father's monies and treasures." "He whom I fear will not be satisfied with wealth." "Ye hold that ye have in Heaven a God who seeth and is not seen and is Omnipotent and Omniscient." "Yes, we have none but Him." "Then pray thou to Him; haply He will deliver thee from me thine enemy!" So the King's son raised his eyes to heaven and began to pray with his whole heart, saying, 142 "O my God, I implore Thy succour against that which troubleth me." Then he pointed to her with his hand, and she fell to the ground, burnt black as charred coal. Therewith he thanked Allah and praised Him and ceased not to fare forwards; and the Almighty (extolled and exalted be He!) of His grace made the way easy to him and guided him into the right road, so that he reached his own land and came upon his father's capital, after he had despaired of life. Now all this befel by the contrivance of the Wazir, who travelled with him, to the end that he might cause him to perish on the way; but Almighty Allah succoured him. "And this" (said the damsel) "have I told thee, O King, that thou mayst know that wicked Wazirs deal not honestly by nor counsel with sincere intent their Kings; wherefore be thou wise and ware of them in this matter." The King gave ear to her speech and bade put his son to death; but the third Wazir came in and said to his brother Ministers, "I will warrant you from the King's mischief this day," and, going in to him, kissed the ground between his hands and said, "O King, I am thy true counsellor and solicitous for thee and for thine estate, and indeed I rede thee the best of rede; it is that thou hasten not to slay thy son, the coolth of thine eyes and the fruit of thy vitals. Haply his sin is but a slight slip, which this damsel hath made great to thee; and indeed I have heard tell that the people of two villages once destroyed one another, because of a drop of honey." Asked the King, "How was that?"; and the Wazir answered, saying:—Know, O King, that I have heard this story anent

THE DROP OF HONEY.[174]

A certain hunter used to chase wild beasts in wold, and one day he came upon a grotto in the mountains, where he found a hollow full of bees' honey. So he took somewhat thereof in a water-skin he had with him and, throwing it over his shoulder, carried it to 143 the city, followed by a hunting dog which was dear to him. He stopped at the shop of an oilman and offered him the honey for sale and he bought it. Then he emptied it out of the skin, that he might see it, and in the act a drop fell to the ground, whereupon the flies flocked to it and a bird swooped down upon the flies. Now the oilman had a cat, which sprang upon the bird, and the huntsman's dog, seeing the cat, sprang upon it and slew it; whereupon the oilman sprang upon the dog and slew it, and the huntsman in turn sprang upon the oilman and slew him. Now the oilman was of one village and the huntsman of another; and when the people of the two places heard what had passed, they took up arms and weapons and rose one on other in wrath and the two lines met; nor did the sword leave to play amongst them, till there died of them much people, none knoweth their number save Almighty Allah. And amongst other stories of the malice of women (continued the Wazir) I have heard tell, O King, one concerning

THE WOMAN WHO MADE HER HUSBAND SIFT DUST.[175]

A man once gave his wife a dirham to buy rice; so she took it and went to the rice-seller, who gave her the rice and began to jest with her and ogle her, for she was dowered with beauty and loveliness, saying, "Rice is not good but with sugar which if thou wilt have, come in with me for an hour." So, saying, "Give me sugar," she went in with him into his shop and he won his will of her and said to his slave, "Weigh her out a dirham's worth of sugar." But he made the slave a privy sign, and the boy, taking the napkin, in which was the rice, emptied it out and put in earth and dust in its stead, and for the sugar set stones, after which he again knotted up the napkin and left it by her. His object, in doing this, was that she should come to him a second time; so, when she went forth of the shop, he gave her the napkin and she took it, thinking to have in it rice and sugar, and ganged her gait; but when she returned home and, setting it before her husband, went for a cooking-pot, he found in it earth and stones. So, as 144 soon as she came back bringing the pot, he said to her, "Did I tell thee I had aught to build, that thou bringest me earth and stones?" When she saw this, she knew that the rice-seller's slave had tricked her; so she said to her husband, "O man, in my trouble of mind for what hath befallen me, I went to fetch the sieve and brought the cooking-pot." "What hath troubled thee?" asked he; and she answered, "O husband, I dropped the dirham thou gavest me in the market-street and was ashamed to search for it before the folk; yet I grudged to lose the silver, so I gathered up the earth from

the place where it fell and brought it away, thinking to sift it at home. Wherefore I went to fetch the sieve, but brought the cooking-pot instead." Then she fetched the sieve and gave it to her husband, saying, "Do thou sift it; for thine eyes are sharper than mine." Accordingly he sat, sifting the clay, till his face and beard were covered with dust; and he discovered not her trick, neither knew what had befallen her. "This then, O King," said the Wazir, "is an instance of the malice of women, and consider the saying of Allah Almighty:—Surely the cunning of you (women) is great![176] And again:—Indeed, the malice of Satan is weak in comparison with the malice of women."[177] The King gave ear to his Wazir's speech and was persuaded thereby and was satisfied by what he cited to him of the signs of Allah[178]; and the lights of good counsel arose and shone in the firmament of his understanding and he turned from his purpose of slaying his son. But on the fourth day, the favourite came in to him weeping and wailing and, kissing the ground before him, said, "O auspicious King, and lord of good rede, I have made plainly manifest to thee my grievance and thou hast dealt unjustly by me and hast forborne to avenge me on him who hath wronged me, because he is thy son and the darling of thy heart; but Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) will presently succour me against him, even as He succoured the King's son against his father's Wazir." "And how was that?" asked the King; and she answered:—I have heard tell, O King, a tale of

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THE ENCHANTED SPRING.[179]

There was once in times gone by a King who had one son and none other; and, when the Prince grew up to man's estate, he contracted him in marriage to another King's daughter. Now the damsel was a model of beauty and grace and her uncle's son had sought her in wedlock of her sire, but she would none of him. So, when he knew that she was to be married to another, envy and jealousy gat hold of him and he bethought himself and sent a noble present to the Wazir of the bridegroom's father and much treasure, desiring him to use craft for slaying the Prince or contrive to make him leave his intent of espousing the girl and adding, "O Wazir, indeed jealousy moveth me to this for she is my cousin."[180] The Wazir accepted the present and sent an answer, saying, "Be of good cheer and of eyes cool and clear, for I will do all that thou wishest." Presently, the bride's father wrote to the Prince, bidding him to his capital, that he might go in to his daughter; whereupon the King his father gave him leave to wend his way thither, sending with him the bribed Wazir and a thousand horse, besides presents and litters, tents and pavilions. The Minister set out with the Prince, plotting the while in his heart to do him a mischief; and when they came into the desert, he called to mind a certain spring of running water in the mountains there, called Al-Zahrá,[181] whereof whosoever drank from a man became a woman. So he

called a halt of the troops near the fountain and presently mounting steed again, said to the Prince, “Hast thou a mind to go with me and look upon a spring of water near hand?” The Prince mounted, knowing not what should befal him in the future,[182] and they rode on, unattended by 146 any, and without stopping till they came to the spring. The Prince being thirsty said to the Wazir, “O Minister, I am suffering from drouth,” and the other answered, “Get thee down and drink of this spring!” So he alighted and washed his hands and drank, when behold, he straightway became a woman. As soon as he knew what had befallen him, he cried out and wept till he fainted away, and the Wazir came up to him as if to learn what had befallen him and cried, “What aileth thee?” So he told him what had happened, and the Minister feigned to condole with him and weep for his affliction, saying, “Allah Almighty be thy refuge in thine affliction! How came this calamity upon thee and this great misfortune to betide thee, and we carrying thee with joy and gladness, that thou mightest go in to the King’s daughter? Verily, now I know not whether we shall go to her or not; but the rede[183] is thine. What dost thou command me to do?” Quoth the Prince, “Go back to my sire and tell him what hath betided me, for I will not stir hence till this matter be removed from me or I die in my regret.” So he wrote a letter to his father, telling him what had happened, and the Wazir took it and set out on his return to the city, leaving what troops he had with the Prince and inwardly exulting for the success of his plot. As soon as he reached the King’s capital, he went in to him and, telling him what had passed, delivered the letter. The King mourned for his son with sore mourning and sent for the wise men and masters of esoteric science, that they might discover and explain to him this thing which had befallen his son, but none could give him an answer. Then the Wazir wrote to the lady’s cousin, conveying to him the glad news of the Prince’s misfortune, and he when he read the letter rejoiced with great joy and thought to marry the Princess and answered the Minister sending him rich presents and great store of treasure and thanking him exceedingly. Meanwhile, the Prince abode by the stream three days and three nights, eating not nor drinking and committing himself, in his strait, unto Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) who disappointeth not whoso relieth on him. On the fourth night, lo! there came to him a cavalier on a bright-bay steed[184] 147 with a crown on his head, as he were of the sons of the Kings, and said to him, “Who brought thee hither, O youth?” The Prince told him his mishap, how he was wending to his wedding, and how the Wazir had led him to a spring whereof he drank and incurred what had occurred; and as he spoke his speech was broken by tears. Having heard him the horseman pitied his case and said, “It was thy father’s Wazir who cast thee into this strait, for no man alive save he knoweth of this spring;” presently adding, “Mount thee behind me and come with me to my dwelling, for thou art my guest this night.” “Acquaint me who thou art ere I fare with thee,” quoth the Prince; and quoth the other, “I am a King’s son of the Jinn, as thou a King’s son of mankind; so be of good cheer and keep thine eyes clear of

tear, for I will surely do away thy cark and care; and this is a slight thing unto me." So the Prince mounted him behind the stranger, and they rode on, leaving the troops, from the first of the day till midnight, when the King's son of the Jinn asked the Prince, "Knowest thou how many days' march we have covered in this time?" "Not I." "We have come a full year's journey for a diligent horseman." The Prince marvelled at this and said, "How shall I do to return to my people?" "That is not thine affair, but my business. As soon as thou art quit of thy complaint, thou shalt return to thy people in less than the twinkling of an eye; for that is an easy matter to me." When the Prince heard these words he was ready to fly for excess of joy; it seemed to him as he were in the imbroglio of a dream and he exclaimed, "Glory be to Him who can restore the unhappy to happiness!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Prince of the Jinn said to the Prince of mankind, "When thou art quit of thy complaint, thou shalt return to thy folk in less than the twinkling of an eye;" and the King's son rejoiced. They fared on all that night till the morning morrowed when lo! they found themselves in a green and smiling country, full of trees spireing and birds quiring and garths fruit-growing and palaces high-showing and waters a-flowing and odoriferous flowers a-blowing. [148]Here the King's son of the Jinn alighted from his steed and, bidding the Prince do the like, took him by the hand and carried him into one of the palaces, where he found a great King and puissant Sultan; and abode with him all that day eating and drinking, till nightfall. Then the King's son of the Jinn mounted his courser and taking the Prince up behind him, fared on swiftly through the murks and glooms until morning, when lo, they found themselves in a dark land and a desert, full of black rocks and stones, as it were a piece of Hell; and the Prince asked the Jinni, "What is the name of this land?" Answered the other, "It is called the Black Country, and belongs to one of the Kings of the Jinn, by name Zu'l Janáhayn, against whom none of the other Kings may prevail, neither may any enter his dominions save by his permit; so tarry thou here, whilst I go ask leave." So saying, he went away and, returning after awhile, they fared on again, till they ended at a spring of water welling forth of a black rock, and the King's son of the Jinn said to the King's son of men, "Alight!" He dismounted and the other cried, "Drink of this water!" So he drank of the spring without stay or delay; and, no sooner had he done so than, by grace of Allah, he became a man as before. At this he joyed with exceeding joy and asked the Jinni, "O my brother, how is this spring called?" Answered the other, "It is called the Women's Spring, for that no woman drinketh thereof but she becometh a man: wherefore do thou praise Allah the Most High and thank Him for thy restoration and mount." So the Prince prostrated himself in gratitude to the Almighty, after which he mounted again and they fared on diligently all that day, till they returned to the Jinni's

home, where the Prince passed the night in all solace of life. They spent the next day in eating and drinking till nightfall, when the King's son of the Jinn asked the Prince, "Hast thou a mind to return to thy people this very night?" "Yes," he answered; "for indeed I long for them." Then the Jinni called one of his father's slaves, Rájiz[185] hight, and said to him, "Take this young man mounted on thy shoulders, and let not the day dawn ere he be with his father-in-law and his wife." Replied the slave. "Hearkening and obedience, and with love and gladness, and upon my head and eyes!" then, withdrawing awhile, re-appeared in the form of an Ifrit. 149 When the Prince saw this, he lost his senses for affright, but the Jinni said to him, "Fear not; no harm shall befal thee. Mount thy horse and leap him on to the Ifrit's shoulders." "Nay," answered he, "I will leave my horse with thee and bestride his shoulders myself." So he bestrode the Ifrit's shoulders and, when the Jinni cried, "Close thine eyes, O my lord, and be not a craven!" he strengthened his heart and shut his eyes. Thereupon the Ifrit rose with him into the air and ceased not to fly between sky and earth, whilst the Prince was unconscious, nor was the last third of the night come before he lighted down with him on the terrace-roof of his father-in-law's palace. Then said the Ifrit, "Dismount and open thine eyes; for this is the palace of thy father-in-law and his daughter." So he came down and the Ifrit flew away and left him on the roof of the palace. When the day broke and the Prince recovered from his troubles, he descended into the palace and as his father-in-law caught sight of him, he came to meet him and marvelled to see him descend from the roof of the palace, saying, "We see folk enter by the doors; but thou comest from the skies." Quoth the Prince, "Whatso Allah (may He be extolled and exalted!) willeth that cometh to pass." And he told him all that had befallen him, from first to last, whereat the King marvelled and rejoiced in his safety; and, as soon, as the sun rose, bade his Wazir make ready splendid bride-feasts. So did he and they held the marriage festival: after which the Prince, went in unto his bride and abode with her two months, then departed with her for his father's capital. As for the damsel's cousin, he died forthright of envy and jealousy. When the Prince and his bride drew near his father's city, the King came out to meet them with his troops and Wazirs, and so Allah (blessed and exalted be He!) enabled the Prince to prevail against his bride's cousin and his father's Minister. "And I pray the Almighty" (added the damsel) "to aid thee against thy Wazirs, O King, and I beseech thee to do me justice on thy son!" When the King heard this, he bade put his son to death;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the favourite had told her tale to the King she said, "I beseech thee 150 to do me justice by putting thy son to death." Now this was the fourth day, so the fourth Wazir entered and, kissing the ground before him, said, "Allah stablish and protect the King! O King, be deliberate in doing this thou art resolved upon, for the wise man doth naught till he hath

considered the issue thereof, and the proverb saith:—Whoso looketh not to his actions' end, hath not the world to friend; and whoso acteth without consideration, there befalleth him what befel the Hammam-keeper with his wife." "And what betided him?" asked the King. And the Wazir answered:—I have heard tell, O King, a tale of the

WAZIR'S SON AND THE HAMMAM-KEEPER'S WIFE.[186]

There was once a bath-keeper, to whom resorted the notables of the folk and head men, and one day there came in to him a handsome youth of the sons of Wazirs who was fat and bulky of body. So he stood to serve him and when the young man put off his clothes,[187] he saw not his yard, for that it was hidden between his thighs, by reason of the excess of his fat, and there appeared thereof but what was like unto a filbert.[188] At this the bath-keeper fell a-lamenting and smiting hand upon hand, which when the youth saw, he said to him, "What ails thee, O bath-keeper, to lament thus?" And he answered, saying, "O my lord, my lamentation is for thee, because thou art in sore straits, for all thy fair fortune and goodliness and exceeding comeliness, seeing thou hast naught wherewithal to do and receive delight, like unto other men." Quoth the youth, "Thou sayst sooth, but thou mindest me of somewhat I had forgotten." "What is that?" asked the bath-keeper, and the youth answered, "Take this gold piece and fetch me a pretty woman, that I may prove my nature on her." So he took the money and betaking himself to his wife, said to her, "O 151 woman, there is come to me in the bath a young man of the sons of the Wazirs, as he were the moon on the fullest night; but he hath no prickle like other men, for that which he hath is but some small matter like unto a filbert. I lamented over his youth and he gave me this dinar and asked me to fetch him a woman on whom he might approve himself. Now thou art worthier of the money than another, and from this no harm shall betide us, for I will protect thee. So do thou sit with him awhile and laugh at him and take this dinar from him." So the good wife took the dinar and rising, adorned herself and donned the richest of her raiment. Now she was the fairest woman of her time. Then she went out with her husband and he carried her in to the Wazir's son in a privy place. When she came in to him, she looked at him and finding him a handsome youth, fair of favour as he were the moon at full, was confounded at his beauty and loveliness; and on like wise his heart and wit were amazed at the first sight of her and the sweetness of her smile. So he rose forthright and locking the door, took the damsel in his arms and pressed her to his bosom and they embraced, whereupon the young man's yard swelled and rose on end, as it were that of a jackass, and he rode upon her breast and futtered her, whilst she sobbed and sighed and writhed and wriggled under him. Now

the bath-keeper was standing behind the door, awaiting what should betide between them, and he began to call her saying, “O Umm Abdillah, enough! Come out, for the day is long upon thy sucking child.” Quoth the youth, “Go forth to thy boy and come back;” but quoth she, “If I go forth from thee, my soul will depart my body; as regards the child, so I must either leave him to die of weeping or let him be reared an orphan, without a mother.” So she ceased not to abide with him till he had done his desire of her ten times running, while her husband stood at the door, calling her and crying out and weeping and imploring succour. But none came to aid him and he ceased not to do thus, saying, “I will slay myself!”; till at last, finding no way of access to his wife, and being distraught with rage and jealousy, to hear sighing and murmuring and breathing hard under the young man, he went up to the top of the bath and, casting himself down therefrom, died. “Moreover, O King” (continued the Wazir), “there hath reached me another story of the malice of women.” “What is that?” asked the King, and the Wazir said:—Know, O King, that it is anent

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THE WIFE’S DEVICE TO CHEAT HER HUSBAND.

There was once a woman who had no equal in her day for beauty and loveliness and grace and perfection; and a certain lewd youth and an obscene setting eyes on her, fell in love with her and loved her with exceeding passion, but she was chaste and inclined not to adultery. It chanced one day that her husband went on a journey to a certain town, whereupon the young man fell to sending to her many times a day; but she made him no reply At last, he resorted to an old woman, who dwelt hard by, and after saluting her he sat down and complained to her of his sufferings for love of the woman and his longing to enjoy her. Quoth she, “I will warrant thee this; no harm shall befal thee, for I will surely bring thee to thy desire, Inshallah,—an it please Allah the Most High!” At these words he gave her a dinar and went his way. When the morning morrowed she appeared before the woman and, renewing an old acquaintance with her, fell to visiting her daily, eating the undertime with her and the evening meal and carrying away food for her children. Moreover, she used to sport and jest with her, till the wife became corrupted[189] and could not endure an hour without her company. Now she was wont, when she left the lady’s house, to take bread and fat wherewith she mixed a little pepper and to feed a bitch, that was in that quarter; and thus she did day by day, till the bitch became fond of her and followed her wherever she went. One day she took a cake of dough and, putting therein an overdose of pepper, gave it to the bitch to eat, whereupon the beast’s eyes began to shed tears, for the heat of the pepper, and she followed the old woman, weeping.

When the lady saw this, she was amazed and asked the ancient, “O my mother, what ails this bitch to weep?” Answered she, “Learn, O my heart’s love, that hers is a strange story. Know that she was once a close friend of mine, a lovely and accomplished young lady, a model of comeliness [153] and perfect grace. A young Nazarene of the quarter fell in love with her and his passion and pining increased on him, till he took to his pillow, and he sent to her times manifold, begging her to have compassion on him and show him mercy, but she refused, albeit I gave her good counsel, saying:—O my daughter, have pity on him and be kind and consent to all he wisheth. She gave no heed to my advice, until, the young man’s patience failing him, he complained at last to one of his friends, who cast an enchantment on her and changed her human shape into canine form. When she saw what transformation had befallen her and that there was none to pity her case save myself, she came to my house and began to fawn on me and buss my hands and feet and whine and shed tears, till I recognised her and said to her:—How often did I not warn thee?; but my advice profited thee naught.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old trot related to the young lady the tale of the bitch and recounted the case in her cunning and deceit, with the view to gain her consent and said to her, “When the enchanted beast came to me and wept I reminded her:—How often did I not warn thee?; but my advice profited thee naught. However, O my daughter, seeing her misery, I had compassion on her case and kept her by me; and as often as she bethinketh herself of her former estate, she weepeth thus, in pity for herself.” When the lady heard this, she was taken with great alarm and said, “O my mother, by Allah, thou affrightest me with this thy story.” “Why so?” asked the old woman. Answered the lady, “Because a certain handsome young man fell in love with me and hath sent many times to me, but hitherto I have repelled him; and now I fear lest there befal me the like of what befel this bitch.” “O my daughter,” rejoined the old woman, “look thou to what I counsel thee and beware of crossing me, for I am in great fear for thee. If thou know not his abiding-place, describe his semblance to me, that I may fetch him to thee, and let not any one’s heart be angered against thee.” So the lady described him to her, and she showed not to know him and said, “When I go out, I will ask after him.” But [154] when she left the lady, she went straight to the young man and said to him, “Be of good cheer, for I have played with the girl’s wits; so to-morrow at noon wait thou at the head of the street, till I come and carry thee to her house, where thou shalt take thine ease with her the rest of the day and all night long.” At this the young man rejoiced with exceeding joy and gave her two dinars, saying, “When I have won my wish of her, I will give thee ten gold pieces.” Then she returned to the lady and said to her, “I have seen him and spoken with him on this matter. I found him exceeding wroth with thee

and minded to do thee a harm, but I plied him with fair words till he agreed to come to-morrow at the time of the call to noon-prayer." When the lady heard this she rejoiced exceedingly and said, "O my mother, if he keep his promise, I will give thee ten dinars." Quoth the old woman, "Look to his coming from none but from me." When the next morn morrowed she said to the lady, "Make ready the early meal and forget not the wine and adorn thyself and don thy richest dress and decoration, whilst I go and fetch him to thee." So she clad herself in her finest finery and prepared food, whilst the old woman went out to look for the young man, who came not. So she went around searching for him, but could come by no news of him, and she said to herself, "What is to be done? Shall the food and drink she hath gotten ready be wasted and I lose the gold pieces she promised me? Indeed, I will not allow my cunning contrivance to come to naught, but will look her out another man and carry him to her." So she walked about the highways till her eyes fell on a pretty fellow, young and distinguished-looking, to whom the folk bowed and who bore in his face the traces of travel. She went up to him and saluting him, asked, "Hast thou a mind to meat and drink and a girl adorned and ready?" Answered he, "Where is this to be had?" "At home, in my house," rejoined she and carrying him to his own house, knocked at the door. The lady opened to them and ran in again, to make an end of her dressing and perfuming; whilst the wicked old woman brought the man, who was the husband and house-master, into the saloon and made him sit down congratulating herself on her cunning contrivance. Presently in walked the lady, who no sooner set eyes on her husband sitting by the old trot than she knew him and guessed how the case stood; nevertheless, she was not taken aback and without stay or delay bethought her of a device to hoodwink him. So she pulled off her outer boot and 155 cried at her husband, "Is this how thou keepest the contract between us? How canst thou betray me and deal thus with me? Know that, when I heard of thy coming, I sent this old woman to try thee and she hath made thee fall into that against which I warned thee: so now I am certified of thine affair and that thou hast broken faith with me. I thought thee chaste and pure till I saw thee, with my own eyes, in this old woman's company and knew that thou didst frequent loose baggages." So saying, she fell to beating him with her slipper about the head, and crying out, "Divorce me! Divorce me!"; whilst he excused himself and swore to her, by Allah the Most High, that he had never in his life been untrue to her nor had done aught of that whereof she suspected him. But she stinted not to weep and scream and bash him, crying out and saying, "Come to my help, O Moslems!"; till he laid hold of her mouth with his hand and she bit it. Moreover, he humbled himself to her and kissed her hands and feet, whilst she would not be appeased and continued to cuff him. At last, she winked at the old woman to come and hold her hand from him. So she came up to her and kissed her hands and feet, till she made peace between them and they sat down together; whereupon the husband began to kiss her hands, saying, "Allah Almighty requite thee with all good, for that thou hast delivered me from her!" And the old woman marvelled at the wife's

cunning and ready wit. “This, then, O King” (said the Wazir) “is one of many instances of the craft and malice and perfidy of women.” When the King heard this story, he was persuaded by it and turned from his purpose to slay his son;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She said, it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the fourth Wazir had told his tale, the King turned from his purpose to slay his son; but, on the fifth day, the damsel came in to him hending a bowl of poison in hand, calling on Heaven for help and buffeting her cheeks and face, and said to him, “O King, either thou shalt do me justice and avenge me on thy son, or I will drink up this poison-cup and die, and the sin of my blood shall be on thy head at the Day of Doom. These thy Ministers accuse 156 me of malice and perfidy, but there be none in the world more perfidious than men. Hast thou not heard the story of the Goldsmith and the Cashmere[190] singing-girl?” “What befel the twain, O damsel?” asked the King; and she answered, saying:—There hath come to my knowledge, O august King, a tale of

THE GOLDSMITH AND THE CASHMERE SINGING-GIRL.

THERE lived once, in a city of Persia a goldsmith who delighted in women and in drinking wine. One day, being in the house of one of his intimates, he saw painted on the wall the figure of a lutanist, a beautiful damsel, beholder never beheld a fairer or a more pleasant. He looked at the picture again and again, marvelling at its beauty, and fell so desperately in love with it, that he sickened for passion and came near to die. It chanced that one of his friends came to visit him and sitting down by his side, asked how he did and what ailed him, whereto the goldsmith answered, “O my brother, that which ails me is love, and it befel on this wise. I saw the figure of a woman painted on the house-wall of my brother such an one and became enamoured of it.” Hereupon the other fell to blaming him and said, “This was of thy lack of wit; how couldst thou fall in love with a painted figure on a wall, that can neither harm nor profit, that seeth not neither heareth, that neither taketh nor withholdeth.” Said the sick man, “He who painted yonder picture never could have limned it save after the likeness of some beautiful woman.” “Haply,” rejoined his friend, “he painted it from imagination.” “In any case,” replied the goldsmith, “Here am I dying for love of the picture, and if there live the original thereof in the world, I pray Allah Most High to protect my life till I see her.” When those who were present went out, they asked for the painter of the 157 picture and, finding that he had travelled to another town, wrote him a letter, complaining of their comrade’s case and enquiring whether he had drawn the figure

of his own inventive talents or copied it from a living model; to which he replied, “I painted it after a certain singing-girl belonging to one of the Wazirs in the city of Cashmere in the land of Hind.” When the goldsmith heard this, he left Persia for Cashmere-city, where he arrived after much travail. He tarried awhile there till one day he went and clapped up an acquaintance with a certain of the citizens who was a druggist, a fellow of a sharp wit, keen, crafty; and, being one eventide in company with him, asked him of their King and his polity; to which the other answered, saying, “Well, our King is just and righteous in his governance, equitable to his lieges and beneficent to his commons and abhorreth nothing in the world save sorcerers; but, whenever a sorcerer or sorceress falls into his hands, he casteth them into a pit without the city and there leaveth them in hunger to die.” Then he questioned him of the King’s Wazirs, and the druggist told him of each Minister, his fashion and condition, till the talk came round to the singing-girl and he told him, “She belongeth to such a Wazir.” The goldsmith took note of the Minister’s abiding place and waited some days, till he had devised a device to his desire; and one night of rain and thunder and stormy winds, he provided himself with thieves’ tackle and repaired to the house of the Wazir who owned the damsel. Here he hanged a rope-ladder with grappling-irons to the battlements and climbed up to the terrace-roof of the palace. Thence he descended to the inner court and, making his way into the Harim, found all the slave-girls lying asleep, each on her own couch; and amongst them reclining on a couch of alabaster and covered with a coverlet of cloth of gold a damsel, as she were the moon rising on a fourteenth night. At her head stood a candle of ambergris, and at her feet another, each in a candlestick of glittering gold, her brilliancy dimming them both; and under her pillow lay a casket of silver, wherein were her jewels. He raised the coverlet and drawing near her, considered her straitly, and behold, it was the lutanist whom he desired and of whom he was come in quest. So he took out a knife and wounded her in the back parts, a palpable outer wound, whereupon she awoke in terror; but, when she saw him, she was afraid to cry out, thinking he came to steal her goods. So she said to him, “Take the box and what is therein, but slay me not, for I am in thy protection 158 and under thy safeguard[191] and my death will profit thee nothing.” Accordingly, he took the box and went away.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the goldsmith had entered the Wazir’s palace he wounded the damsel slightly in the back parts and, taking the box which contained her jewels, wended his way. And when morning morrowed he donned clothes after the fashion of men of learning and doctors of the law and, taking the jewel-case went in therewith to the King of the city, before whom he kissed the ground and said to him, “O King, I am a devout man; withal a loyal well-wisher to

thee and come hither a pilgrim to thy court from the land of Khorasan, attracted by the report of thy just governance and righteous dealing with thy subjects and minded to be under thy standard. I reached this city at the last of the day and finding the gate locked and barred, threw me down to sleep without the walls; but, as I lay betwixt sleep and wake, behold, I saw four women come up; one riding on a broom-stick, another on a wine-jar, a third on an oven-peel and a fourth on a black bitch,[192] and I knew that they were witches making for thy city. One of them came up to me and kicked me with her foot and beat me with a fox's tail she had in her hand, hurting me grievously, whereat I was wroth and smote her with a knife I had with me, wounding her in the back parts, as she turned to flee from me. When she felt the wound, she fled before me and in her flight let drop this casket, which I picked up and opening, found these costly jewels therein. So do thou take it, for I have no need thereof, being a wanderer in the mountains,[193] who hath rejected the world from my heart and renounced it and all that is in it, seeking only the face of Allah the Most High." Then he set the casket before the King and fared forth. The King opened the box and emptying out all the trinkets it contained, fell to 159 turning them over with his hand, till he chanced upon a necklace whereof he had made gift to the Wazir to whom the girl belonged. Seeing this, he called the Minister in question and said to him, "This is the necklace I gave thee?" He knew it at first sight and answered, "It is; and I gave it to a singing girl of mine." Quoth the King, "Fetch that girl to me forthwith." So he fetched her to him, and he said, "Uncover her back parts and see if there be a wound therein or no." The Wazir accordingly bared her backside and finding a knife-wound there, said, "Yes, O my lord, there is a wound." Then said the King, "This is the witch of whom the devotee told me, and there can be no doubt of it," and bade cast her into the witches' well. So they carried her thither at once. As soon as it was night and the goldsmith knew that his plot had succeeded, he repaired to the pit, taking with him a purse of a thousand dinars, and, entering into converse with the warder, sat talking with him till a third part of the night was passed, when he broached the matter to him, saying, "Know, O my brother, that this girl is innocent of that they lay to her charge and that it was I brought this calamity upon her." Then he told him the whole story, first and last, adding, "Take, O my brother, this purse of a thousand dinars and give me the damsel, that I may carry her to my own land, for these gold pieces will profit thee more than keeping her in prison; moreover Allah will requite thee for us, and we too will both offer up prayers for thy prosperity and safety." When the warder heard this story, he marvelled with exceeding marvel at that device and its success; then taking the money, he delivered the girl to the goldsmith, conditioning that he should not abide one hour with her in the city. Thereupon the goldsmith took the girl and fared on with her, without ceasing, till he reached his own country and so he won his wish. "See, then, O King" (said the damsel), "the malice of men and their wiles. Now thy Wazirs hinder thee from doing me justice on thy son; but to-morrow we shall stand, both thou and I, before the Just Judge, and He shall do me justice on thee, O

King.” When the King heard this, he commanded to put his son to death; but the fifth Wazir came in to him and kissing the ground before him, said, “O mighty King, delay and hasten not to slay thy son: speed will oftentimes repentance breed; and I fear for thee lest thou repent, even as did the man who never laughed for the rest of his days.” “And how was that, O Wazir?” asked the King. Quoth he:—I have heard tell, O King, this tale concerning

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THE MAN WHO NEVER LAUGHED DURING THE REST OF HIS DAYS.

There was once a man who was rich in lands and houses and monies and goods, eunuchs and slaves, and he died and went to the mercy of Allah the Most High; leaving a young son, who, when he grew up, gave himself to feasting and carousing and hearing music and singing and the loud laughter of parasites; and he wasted his substance in gifts and prodigality till he had squandered all the money his father left him——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man, when he had squandered all the money his father had left him and naught thereof remained to him, betook himself to selling his slaves and handmaids, lands and houses and spent the proceeds on like wise, till he was reduced to beggary and must needs labour for his living. He abode thus a year’s space, at the end of which time he was sitting one day under a wall, awaiting who should hire him when behold, there came up to him an old man of comely aspect and apparel and saluted him. The young man asked, “O uncle, hast thou known me aforetime?” and the other answered, “Not so, O my son, I know thee not at all, at all; but I see the trace of gentle breeding on thee despite thy present case.” “O uncle,” rejoined the poor man, “needs must Fate and Fortune be accomplished; but, O uncle, O bright of blee, hast thou any occasion wherein thou wouldst employ me?” Said the other, “I wish, O my son, to employ thee in a slight matter.” “What is it?” quoth the young man, and quoth the stranger, “We are eleven old men in one house, but we have none to serve us; so an thou wilt stay and take service with us, thou shalt have food and clothing to thy heart’s content, besides what cometh to thee of coin and other good; and haply Allah will restore thee thy fortune by our means.” Replied the youth, “Hearkening and obedience!” “But I have a condition to impose on thee.” “What is that?” “O my Son, it is that thou keep our secret in what thou 161seest us do, and if thou see us weep, that thou question us not

of the cause of our weeping." "It is well, O uncle;" "Come with me, O my son, with the blessing of Allah Almighty." So he followed him to the bath, where the old man caused cleanse his body of the crusted dirt, after which he sent one to fetch a handsome garment of linen and clad him therein. Then he carried him to his company which was in his domicile and the youth found a house lofty and spacious and strongly builded, wherein were sitting-chambers facing one another; and saloons, in each one a fountain of water, with the birds warbling over it, and windows on every side, giving upon a fair garden within the house. The old man brought him into one of the parlours, which was variegated with many-coloured marbles, the ceiling thereof being decorated with ultramarine and glowing gold; and the floor bespread with silken carpets. Here he found ten Shayks in mourning apparel, seated one opposite other, weeping and wailing. He marvelled at their case and purposed to ask the reason, when he remembered the condition and held his peace. Then he who had brought him delivered to him a chest containing thirty thousand dinars and said to him, "O my son, spend freely from this chest what is fitting for our entertainment and thine own; and be thou faithful and remember that wherewith I charged thee." "I hear and I obey," answered he and served them days and nights, till one of them died, whereupon his fellows washed him and shrouded him and buried him in a garden behind the house,[194] nor did death cease to take them, one after other, till there remained but the Shaykh who had hired the youth for service. Then the two men, old and young, dwelt together in that house alone for years and years, nor was there with them a third save Allah the Most High, till the elder fell sick; and when the younger despaired of his life, he went up to him and condoling with him, said, "O nuncle mine, I have waited upon you twelve years and have not failed of my duties a single hour, but have been loyal and faithful to you and served you with my might and main." "Yes, O my son," answered the old man, "thou hast served us well until all my comrades are gone to the mercy of Allah (to whom belong honour and glory!) and needs must I die also." "O my lord," said the other, "thou art in danger of death and I would fain have thee 162 acquaint me with the cause of your weeping and wailing and of your unceasing mourning and lamentation and regrets." "O my son," answered the old man, "it concerns thee not to know this, so importune me not of what I may not do: for I have vowed to Almighty Allah that I would acquaint none of His creatures with this, lest he be afflicted with what befel me and my comrades. If, then, thou desire to be delivered from that into which we fell, look thou open not yonder door"[195] and pointed to a certain part of the house; "but, if thou have a mind to suffer what we have suffered, then open it and thou shalt learn the cause of that thou hast seen us do; and whenas thou knowest it, thou shalt repent what time repentance will avail thee not."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the surviving Shaykh of the ten said to the youth, “Beware how thou open yonder door or thou shalt repent what time repentance will avail thee not.” Then his sickness grew on him and he accomplished his term and departed life to the presence of his Lord; and the young man washed him with his own hands and shrouded him and buried him by the side of his comrades; after which he abode alone in the place and took possession of whatsoever was therein. Withal he was uneasy and troubled concerning the case of the old men, till, one day, as he sat pondering the words of his dead master and his injunction not to open the door, he suddenly bethought himself to go and look for it. So he rose up and repaired to the part whither the dead man had pointed and sought till, in a dark unfrequented corner, he found a little door, over which the spider had spun her webs and which was fastened with four padlocks of steel. Seeing this he recalled the old man’s warning and restrained himself and went away; and he held aloof from it seven days, whilst all the time his heart prompted him to open it. On the eighth day his curiosity got the better of him and he said, “Come what will, needs must I open the door and see what will happen to me therefrom. Nothing can avert what is fated and fore-ordained of Allah the Most High; nor doth aught 163befal but by His will.” So saying, he rose and broke the padlocks and opening the door saw a narrow passage, which he followed for some three hours when lo! he came out on the shore of a vast ocean[196] and fared on along the beach, marvelling at this main, whereof he had no knowledge and turning right and left. Presently, a great eagle swooped down upon him from the lift and seizing him in its talons, flew away with him betwixt heaven and earth, till it came to an island in the midst of the sea, where it cast him down and flew away. The youth was dazed and knew not whither he should wend, but after a few days as he sat pondering his case, he caught sight of the sails of a ship in the middlemost of the main, as it were a star in the sky; and his heart clave to it, so haply his deliverance might be therein. He continued gazing at the ship, until it drew nigh, when he saw that it was a foyst builded all of ivory and ebony, inlaid with glistening gold made fast by nails of steel, with oars of sandal and lign-aloes. In it were ten damsels, high-bosomed maids, as they were moons; and when they saw him, they came ashore to him and kissed his hands, saying, “Thou art the King, the Bridegroom!” Then there accosted him a young lady, as she were the sun shining in sky serene bearing in hand a silken napkin, wherein were a royal robe and a crown of gold set with all manner rubies and pearls. She threw the robe over him and set the crown upon his head, after which the damsels bore him on their arms to the foyst, where he found all kinds of silken carpets and hangings of various colours. Then they spread the sails and stretched out into mid-ocean. Quoth the young man:—Indeed, when they put to sea with me, meseemed it was a dream and I knew not whither they were wending with me. Presently, we drew near to land, and I saw the shore full of troops none knoweth their number save Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) and all were magnificently arrayed and clad in complete steel. As soon as the vessel had

made fast to the land, they brought me five marked[197] horses of noble breeds, housed and 164 saddled with gold, inlaid with all manner pearls and high-priced bezel stones. I chose out one of them and mounted it, whilst they led the four others before me. Then they raised the banners and the standards over my head, whilst the troops ranged themselves right and left, and we set out, with drums beating and cymbals clashing, and rode on; whilst I debated in myself whether I were in sleep or on wake; and we never ceased faring, I believing not in that my estate, but taking all this for the imbroglio of a dream, till we drew near to the green mead, full of palaces and gardens and trees and streams and blooms and birds chanting the praises of Allah the One, the Victorious. Hereupon, behold, an army sallied out from amid the palaces and gardens, as it were the torrent when it poureth down,[198] and the host overflowed the mead. These troops halted at a little distance from me and presently there rode forth from amongst them a King, preceded by some of his chief officers on foot. When he came up to the young man (saith the tale-teller) he dismounted also, and the two saluted each other after the goodliest fashion. Then said the King, "Come with us, for thou art my guest." So they took horse again and rode on stirrup touching stirrup in great and stately procession, conversing as they went, till they came to the royal palace, where they alighted together.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the two rode together in stately procession till they entered the palace, when the King taking the young man by the hand, led him into a domed room followed by his suite, and making him sit down on a throne of gold, seated himself beside him. Then he unbound the swathe from his lower face; and behold, the King was a young lady, like the splendid sun shining in the sheeny sky, perfect in beauty and loveliness, brilliancy and grace, arrogance[199] and all perfection. The youth looked upon this singular blessing and embodied boon and 165 was lost in wonder at her charms and comeliness and seemlihead and at the splendour and affluence he saw about him, when she said "Know, O King, that I am the Queen of this land and that all the troops thou hast seen, whether horse or foot, are women, there is no man amongst them; for in this our state the men delve and sow and ear and occupy themselves with the tillage of the earth and the building of towns and other mechanical crafts and useful arts, whilst the women govern and fill the great offices of state and bear arms." At this the youth marvelled with exceeding marvel and, as they were in discourse, behold, in came the Wazir who was a tall gray-haired old woman of venerable semblance and majestic aspect, and it was told him that this was the Minister. Quoth the Queen to her, "Bring us the Kazi and witnesses." So she went out to do this, and the Queen, turning to him, conversed with him in friendly fashion, and enforced herself to reassure his awe of her and do away his shame with speech blander than the zephyr, saying, "Art thou content to be to me baron and I to

thee feme?" Thereupon he arose and would have kissed ground between her hands, but she forbade him and he replied, saying, "O my lady, I am the least of thy slaves who serve thee." "Seest thou all these servants and soldiers and riches and hoards and treasures?" asked she, and he answered, "Yes!" Quoth she, "All these are at thy commandment to dispose of them and give and bestow as seemeth good to thee." Then she pointed to a closed door and said, "All these things are at thy disposal, save yonder door; that shalt thou not open, and if thou open it thou shalt repent when repentance will avail thee naught. So beware! and again I say, beware!" Hardly had she made an end of speaking when the Waziress entered followed by the Kazi and witnesses, all old women, with their hair streaming over their shoulders and of reverend and majestic presence; and the Queen bade them draw up the contract of marriage between herself and the young man. Accordingly, they performed the marriage-ceremony and the Queen made a great bride-feast, to which she bade all the troops; and after they had eaten and drunken, he went in unto his bride and found her a maid virginal. So he did away her hymen, and abode with her seven years in all joyance and solace and delight of life, till, one day of the days, he bethought himself of the forbidden door and said in himself, "Except there were therein treasures greater and grander than any I have seen, she had not forbidden me therefrom." So he rose and opened the 166 door, when, lo! behind it was the very bird which had brought him from the sea-shore to the island, and it said to him, "No welcome to a face that shall never prosper!" When he saw it and heard what it said, he fled from it; but it followed him and seizing him in its talons, flew with him an hour's journey betwixt heaven and earth, till it set him down in the place whence it had first carried him off and flew away. When he came to his senses, he remembered his late estate, great, grand and glorious, and the troops which rode before him and his lordly rule and all the honour and fair fortune he had lost and fell to weeping and wailing.[200] He abode two months on the sea-shore, where the bird had set him down, hoping yet to return to his wife, till, as he sat one night wakeful, mourning and musing, behold, he heard one speaking, albeit he saw no one, and saying, "How great were the delights! Alas, far from thee is the return of that which is past!" When he heard this, he redoubled in his regrets and despaired of recovering his wife and his fair estate that was; so he returned, weary and broken-hearted, to the house where he had dwelt with the old men and knew that they had fared even as he and that this was the cause of their shedding tears and lamenting their lot; wherefore he ever after held them excused. Then, being overcome with chagrin and concern, he took to his chamber and gave himself up to mourning and lamentation; and he ceased not crying and complaining and left eating and drinking and pleasant scents and merriment; nor did he laugh once till the day of his death, when they buried him beside the Shaykhs. "See, then, O King," continued the Wazir "what cometh of precipitance; verily, it is unpraiseworthy and bequeatheth repentance; and in this I give thee true advice and loyal counsel."

When the King heard this story, he turned from slaying his son;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King heard this story he turned from slaying his son; but, on the sixth day, the favourite came in to him hending a naked knife in hand, and said to him, "Know, O my lord, that except thou 167 hearken to my complaint and protect thy right and thine honour against these thy Ministers, who are banded together against me, to do me wrong, I will kill myself with this knife, and my blood will testify against thee on the Day of Doom. Indeed, they pretend that women are full of tricks and malice and perfidy; and they design thereby to defeat me of my due and hinder the King from doing me justice; but, behold, I will prove to thee that men are more perfidious than women by the story of a King among the Kings and how he gained access to the wife of a certain merchant." "And what passed between them?" asked the King, and she answered:—I have heard tell, O august King, a tale of

THE KING'S SON AND THE MERCHANT'S WIFE.

A certain merchant, who was addicted to jealousy, had a wife that was a model of beauty and loveliness; and of the excess of his fear and jealousy of her, he would not abide with her in any town, but built her a pavilion without the city, apart from all other buildings. And he raised its height and strengthened its doors and provided them with curious locks; and when he had occasion to go into the city, he locked the doors and hung the keys about his neck.[201] One day, when the merchant was abroad, the King's son of that city came forth, to take his pleasure and solace in the open country without the walls, and seeing the solitary pavilion, stood still to examine it for a long while. At last he caught sight of a charming lady looking and leaning out of one of the windows,[202] and being smitten with amazement at her grace and charms, cast about for a means of getting to her, but could find none. So he called up one of his pages, who brought him ink-case[203] and paper and wrote her a letter, setting forth his condition for love of her. Then he set 168 it on the pile-point of an arrow and shot it at the pavilion, and it fell in the garden, where the lady was then walking with her maidens. She said to one of the girls, "Hasten and bring me yon letter," for she could read writing;[204] and, when she had read it and understood what he said in it of his love and passion, yearning and longing, she wrote him a merciful reply, to the effect that she was smitten with a yet fiercer desire for him; and then threw the letter down to him from one of the windows of the pavilion. When he saw her, he picked up the reply

and after reading it, came under the window and said to her, “Let me down a thread, that I may send thee this key; which do thou take and keep by thee.” So she let down a thread and he tied the key to it.[205] Then he went away and repairing to one of his father’s Wazirs, complained to him of his passion for the lady and that he could not live without her; and the Minister said, “And how dost thou bid me contrive?” Quoth the Prince, “I would have thee set me in a chest[206] and commit it to the merchant, feigning to him that it is thine and desiring him to keep it for thee in his country-house some days, that I may have my will of her; then do thou demand it back from him.” The Wazir answered, “With love and gladness.” So the Prince returned to his palace and fixing the padlock, the key whereof he had given the lady, on a chest he had by him, entered therein. Then the Wazir locked it upon him and setting it on a mule, carried it to the pavilion of the merchant, who, seeing the Minister, came forth to him and kissed his hands, saying, “Belike our lord the Wazir hath some need or business which we may have the pleasure and honour of accomplishing for him?” Quoth the Minister, “I would have thee set this chest in the safest and best place within thy house and keep it till I seek it of thee.” So the merchant made the porters carry it inside and set it down in one of his store-closets, after which he went out on business. As soon as he was 169 gone, his wife arose and went up to the chest and unlocked it with the key the King’s son had given her, whereupon there came forth a youth like the moon. When she saw him, she donned her richest raiment and carried him to her sitting-saloon, where they abode seven days, eating and drinking and making merry: and as often as her husband came home, she put the Prince back into the chest and locked it upon him. One day the King asked for his son and the Wazir hurried off to the merchant’s place of business and sought of him the chest.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir reached the merchant’s counting-house he asked for the box. The man accordingly repaired in haste to his pavilion, contrary to his custom and knocked at the door. When his wife was ware of him, she hurried the Prince back into the chest, but, in her confusion, forgot to lock it. The merchant bade the porters take it up and carry it to his house in the town. So they took up the box by the lid, whereupon it flew open and lo! the Prince was lying within. When the merchant saw him and knew him for the King’s son, he went out to the Wazir and said to him, “Go in, thou, and take the King’s son; for none of us may lay hands on him.” So the Minister went in and taking the Prince, went away with him. As soon as they were gone, the merchant put away his wife and swore that he would never marry again. And, continued the damsel, I have heard tell, also, O King, a tale of

THE PAGE WHO FEIGNED TO KNOW THE SPEECH OF BIRDS.[207]

A certain man of rank once entered the slave-market and saw a page being cried for sale; so he bought him and carrying him home, said to his wife, “Take good care of him.” The lad abode 170 there for a while till, one day, the man said to his wife, “Go forth to-morrow to the garden and take thy solace therein and amuse thyself and enjoy thyself.” And she replied, “With love and gladness!” Now when the page heard this, he made ready in secret meat and drink and fruits and dessert, and sallied forth with them privily that night to the garden, where he laid the meat under one tree, the wine under another and the fruit and conserves under a third, in the way his mistress must pass. When morning morrowed the husband bade him accompany the lady to that garden carrying with him all the provisions required for the day; so she took horse and riding thither with him, dismounted and entered. Presently, as they were walking about, a crow croaked,[208] and the page said, “Thou sayst sooth;” whereupon his mistress asked him, “Dost thou know what the crow said?” and he answered, “Yes, O my lady, he said, Under yonder tree is meat; go and eat it.” So she said, “I see thou really dost understand them;” then she went up to the tree and, finding a dish of meat ready dressed, was assured that the youth told the truth and marvelled with exceeding marvel. They ate of the meat and walked about awhile, taking their pleasure in the garden, till the crow croaked a second time, and the page again replied, “Thou sayst sooth.” “What said he?” quoth the lady, and quoth the page, “O my lady, he saith that under such a tree are a gugglet of water flavoured with musk and a pitcher of old wine.” So she went up with him to the tree and, finding the wine and water there, redoubled in wonderment and the page was magnified in her eyes. They sat down and drank, then arose and walked in another part of the garden. Presently the crow croaked again and the page said, “Thou sayst sooth.” Said the lady, “What saith he now?” and the page replied, “He saith that under yonder tree are fruits, fresh and dried.” So they went thither and found all as he said and sat down and ate. Then they walked about again till the crow croaked a fourth time, whereupon the page took up a stone and threw it at him. Quoth she, “What said he, that thou shouldst stone him?” “O my lady,” answered he, “he said what I cannot tell thee.” “Say on,” 171 rejoined she, “and be not abashed in my presence, for there is naught between me and thee.” But he ceased not to say, “No,” and she to press him to speak, till at last she conjured him to tell her, and he answered, “The crow said to me:—Do with thy lady even as doth her husband.” When she heard his words she laughed till she fell backward and said, “This is a light matter, and I may not gainsay thee therein.” So saying, she went up to a tree and, spreading the carpet under it, lay down, and called to him to come and do her need, when, lo! her husband, who had followed them unawares and saw

this, called out to the page, saying, "Harkye, boy! What ails thy mistress to lie there, weeping?" Answered the page, "O my lord, she fell off the tree and was killed;[209] and none but Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) restored her to thee. Wherefore she lay down awhile to recover herself by rest." When the lady saw her husband standing by her head, she rose and made a show of weakness and pain, saying, "O my back! O my sides! Come to my help, O my friends! I shall never survive this." So her husband was deceived and said to the page, "Fetch thy mistress's horse and set her thereon." Then he carried her home, the boy holding one stirrup and the man the other and saying, "Allah vouchsafe thee ease and recovery!" "These then, O King," (said the damsel) "are some instances of the craft of men and their perfidy; wherefore let not thy Wazirs turn thee from succouring me and doing me justice." Then she wept, and when the King saw her weeping (for she was the dearest to him of all his slave-girls) he once more commanded to put his son to death; but the sixth Minister entered and kissing ground before him, said, "May the Almighty advance the King! Verily I am a loyal counsellor to thee, in that I counsel thee to deal deliberately in the matter of thy son;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the sixth Wazir said, "O King, deal deliberately in the matter of thy son; for falsehood is as smoke and fact is built on base which shall not be broken; yea, and the light of sooth dispelleth the night of 172 untruth. Know that the perfidy of women is great, even as saith Allah the Most High in His Holy Book, "Verily, the malice of you is great."[210] And indeed a tale hath reached me that a certain woman befooled the Chiefs of the State on such wise as never did any before her." Asked the King, "And how was that?" And the Wazir answered:—I have heard tell a tale, O King, as follows concerning

THE LADY AND HER FIVE SUITORS.[211]

A woman of the daughters of the merchants was married to a man who was a great traveller. It chanced once that he set out for a far country and was absent so long that his wife, for pure ennui, fell in love with a handsome young man of the sons of the merchants, and they loved each other with exceeding love. One day, the youth quarrelled with another man, who lodged a complaint against him with the Chief of Police, and he cast him into prison. When the news came to the merchant's wife his mistress, she well-nigh 173 lost her wits; then she arose and donning her richest clothes repaired to the house of the Chief of Police. She saluted him and presented a written petition to this purport:—"He thou hast clapped in jail is my brother, such and such, who fell out with such an one; and those who testified against him bore false

witness. He hath been wrongfully imprisoned, and I have none other to come in to me nor to provide for my support; therefore I beseech thee of thy grace to release him." When the magistrate had read the paper, he cast his eyes on her and fell in love with her forthright; so he said to her, "Go into the house, till I bring him before me; then I will send for thee and thou shalt take him." "O my lord," replied she, "I have none to protect me save Almighty Allah!: I am a stranger and may not enter any man's abode." Quoth the Wali, "I will not let him go, except thou come to my home and I take my will of thee." Rejoined she, "If it must be so, thou must needs come to my lodging and sit and sleep the siesta and rest the whole day there." "And where is thy abode?" asked he; and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for such a time. Then she went out from him, leaving his heart taken with love of her, and she repaired to the Kazi of the city, to whom she said, "O our lord the Kazi!" He exclaimed, "Yes!" and she continued, "Look into my case, and thy reward be with Allah the Most High!" Quoth he, "Who hath wronged thee?" and quoth she, "O my lord, I have a brother and I have none but that one, and it is on his account that I come to thee; because the Wali hath imprisoned him for a criminal and men have borne false witness against him that he is a wrong-doer; and I beseech thee to intercede for him with the Chief of Police." When the Kazi looked on her, he fell in love with her forthright and said to her, "Enter the house and rest awhile with my handmaids whilst I send to the Wali to release thy brother. If I knew the money-fine which is upon him, I would pay it out of my own purse, so I may have my desire of thee, for thou pleasest me with thy sweet speech." Quoth she, "If thou, O my lord, do thus, we must not blame others." Quoth he, "An thou wilt not come in, wend thy ways." Then said she, "An thou wilt have it so, O our lord, it will be privier and better in my place than in thine, for here are slave-girls and eunuchs and goers-in and comers-out, and indeed I am a woman who wotteth naught of this fashion; but need compelleth." Asked the Kazi, "And where is thy house?"; and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for the 174 same day and time as the Chief of Police. Then she went out from him to the Wazir, to whom she preferred her petition for the release from prison of her brother who was absolutely necessary to her: but he also required her of herself, saying, "Suffer me to have my will of thee and I will set thy brother free." Quoth she, "An thou wilt have it so, be it in my house, for there it will be privier both for me and for thee. It is not far distant and thou knowest that which behoveth us women of cleanliness and adornment." Asked he, "Where is thy house?" "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for the same time as the two others. Then she went out from him to the King of the city and told him her story and sought of him her brother's release. "Who imprisoned him?" enquired he; and she replied, "'Twas thy Chief of Police." When the King heard her speech, it transpierced his heart with the arrows of love and he bade her enter the palace with him, that he might send to the Kazi and release her brother. Quoth she, "O King, this thing is easy to thee, whether I will or nill; and if the King will indeed have this of me, it is of my good fortune; but,

if he come to my house, he will do me the more honour by setting step therein, even as saith the poet:—

O my friends, have ye seen or have ye heard ✿ Of his visit whose virtues I hold so high?"

Quoth the King, "We will not cross thee in this." So she appointed him for the same time as the three others, and told him where her house was.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the woman told the King where her house was and appointed him for the same time as the Wali, the Kazi and the Wazir. Then she left him and betaking herself to a man which was a carpenter, said to him, "I would have thee make me a cabinet with four compartments one above other, each with its door for locking up. Let me know thy hire and I will give it thee." Replied he, "My price will be four dinars; but, O noble lady and well-protected, if thou wilt vouchsafe me thy favours, I will ask nothing of thee." 175 Rejoined she, "An there be no help but that thou have it so, then make thou five compartments with their padlocks;" and she appointed him to bring it exactly on the day required. Said he, "It is well; sit down, O my lady, and I will make it for thee forthright, and after I will come to thee at my leisure." So she sat down by him, whilst he fell to work on the cabinet, and when he had made an end of it she chose to see it at once carried home and set up in the sitting-chamber. Then she took four gowns and carried them to the dyer, who dyed them each of a different colour; after which she applied herself to making ready meat and drink; fruits, flowers and perfumes. Now when the appointed trysting day came, she donned her costliest dress and adorned herself and scented herself, then spread the sitting-room with various kinds of rich carpets and sat down to await who should come. And behold, the Kazi was the first to appear, devancing the rest, and when she saw him, she rose to her feet and kissed the ground before him; then, taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her on the couch and lay with him and fell to jesting and toying with him. By and by, he would have her do his desire, but she said, "O my lord, doff thy clothes and turband and assume this yellow cassock and this head-kerchief,[212] whilst I bring thee meat and drink; and after thou shalt win thy will." So saying, she took his clothes and turband and clad him in the cassock and the kerchief; but hardly had she done this, when lo! there came a knocking at the door. Asked he, "Who is that rapping at the door?" and she answered, "My husband." Quoth the Kazi, "What is to be done, and where shall I go?" Quoth she, "Fear nothing, I will hide thee in this cabinet;" and he, "Do as seemeth good to thee." So she took him by the hand and pushing him into the lowest compartment, locked the door upon him. Then she went to the house-door, where she found the Wali; so she bussed ground before him and taking his hand brought him into the saloon, where she made him sit down and said to him, "O my lord, this house is thy house; this place is thy place, and I am thy handmaid: thou shalt pass all this day

with 176me; wherefore do thou doff thy clothes and don this red gown, for it is a sleeping gown." So she took away his clothes and made him assume the red gown and set on his head an old patched rag she had by her; after which she sat by him on the divan and she sported with him while he toyed with her awhile, till he put out his hand to her. Whereupon she said to him, "O our lord, this day is thy day and none shall share in it with thee; but first, of thy favour and benevolence, write me an order for my brother's release from gaol that my heart may be at ease." Quoth he, "Hearkening and obedience: on my head and eyes be it!"; and wrote a letter to his treasurer, saying:—"As soon as this communication shall reach thee, do thou set such an one free, without stay or delay; neither answer the bearer a word." Then he sealed it and she took it from him, after which she began to toy again with him on the divan when, behold, some one knocked at the door. He asked, "Who is that?" and she answered, "My husband." "What shall I do?" said he, and she, "Enter this cabinet, till I send him away and return to thee." So she clapped him into the second compartment from the bottom and padlocked the door on him; and meanwhile the Kazi heard all they said. Then she went to the house-door and opened it, whereupon lo! the Wazir entered. She bussed the ground before him and received him with all honour and worship, saying, "O my lord, thou exaltest us by thy coming to our house; Allah never deprive us of the light of thy countenance!" Then she seated him on the divan and said to him, "O my lord, doff thy heavy dress and turband and don these lighter vestments." So he put off his clothes and turband and she clad him in a blue cassock and a tall red bonnet, and said to him, "Erst thy garb was that of the Wazirate; so leave it to its own time and don this light gown, which is better fitted for carousing and making merry and sleep." Thereupon she began to play with him and he with her, and he would have done his desire of her; but she put him off, saying, "O my lord, this shall not fail us." As they were talking there came a knocking at the door, and the Wazir asked her, "Who is that?": to which she answered, "My husband." Quoth he, "What is to be done?" Quoth she, "Enter this cabinet, till I get rid of him and come back to thee and fear thou nothing." So she put him in the third compartment and locked the door on him, after which she went out and opened the house-door when lo and behold! in came the King. As soon as she saw him she kissed 177ground before him, and taking him by the hand, led him into the saloon and seated him on the divan at the upper end. Then said she to him, "Verily, O King, thou dost us high honour, and if we brought thee to gift the world and all that therein is, it would not be worth a single one of thy steps us-wards."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King entered the lady's house she said to him, "Had we brought thee to gift the world and all which is therein, it would not be worth a single one of thy steps us-wards." And when he had

taken his seat upon the divan she said, “Give me leave to speak one word.” “Say what thou wilt,” answered he, and she said, “O my lord, take thine ease and doff thy dress and turband.” Now his clothes were worth a thousand dinars; and when he put them off she clad him in a patched gown, worth at the very most ten dirhams, and fell to talking and jesting with him; all this while the folk in the cabinet hearing everything that passed, but not daring to say a word. Presently, the King put his hand to her neck and sought to do his desire of her; when she said, “This thing shall not fail us, but I had first promised myself to entertain thee in this sitting-chamber, and I have that which shall content thee.” Now as they were speaking, some one knocked at the door and he asked her, “Who is that?” “My husband,” answered she, and he, “Make him go away of his own good will, or I will fare forth to him and send him away perforce.” Replied she, “Nay, O my lord, have patience till I send him away by my skilful contrivance.” “And I, how shall I do?” enquired the King; whereupon she took him by the hand and making him enter the fourth compartment of the cabinet, locked it upon him. Then she went out and opened the house door when behold, the carpenter entered and saluted her. Quoth she, “What manner of thing is this cabinet thou hast made me?” “What aileth it, O my lady?” asked he, and she answered, “The top compartment is too strait.” Rejoined he, “Not so;” and she, “Go in thyself and see; it is not wide enough for thee.” Quoth he, “It is wide enough for four,” and entered the fifth compartment, whereupon 178she locked the door on him. Then she took the letter of the Chief of Police and carried it to the treasurer who, having read and understood it, kissed it and delivered her lover to her. She told him all she had done and he said, “And how shall we act now?” She answered, “We will remove hence to another city, for after this work there is no tarrying for us here.” So the twain packed up what goods they had and, loading them on camels, set out forthright for another city. Meanwhile, the five abode each in his compartment of the cabinet without eating or drinking three whole days, during which time they held their water until at last the carpenter could retain his no longer; so he staled on the King’s head, and the King urined on the Wazir’s head, and the Wazir piddled on the Wali and the Wali pissed on the head of the Kazi; whereupon the Judge cried out and said, “What nastiness[213] is this? Doth not what strait we are in suffice us, but you must make water upon us?” The Chief of Police recognised the Kazi’s voice and answered, saying aloud, “Allah increase thy reward, O Kazi!” And when the Kazi heard him, he knew him for the Wali. Then the Chief of Police lifted up his voice and said, “What means this nastiness?” and the Wazir answered, saying, “Allah increase thy reward, O Wali!” whereupon he knew him to be the Minister. Then the Wazir lifted up his voice and said, “What means this nastiness?” But when the King heard and recognised his Minister’s voice, he held his peace and concealed his affair. Then said the Wazir, “May God damn[214] this woman for her dealing with us! She hath brought hither all the Chief Officers of the state, except the King.” Quoth the King, “Hold your peace, for I was the first to fall into the toils of this lewd strumpet.” Whereat cried the carpenter,

"And I, what have I done? I made her a cabinet for four gold pieces, and when I came to seek my hire, she tricked me into entering this compartment and locked the door on me." And they fell to talking with one another, diverting the King and doing away his chagrin. Presently the 179 neighbours came up to the house and, seeing it deserted, said one to other, "But yesterday our neighbour, the wife of such an one, was in it; but now no sound is to be heard therein nor is soul to be seen. Let us break open the doors and see how the case stands, lest it come to the ears of the Wali or the King and we be cast into prison and regret not doing this thing before." So they broke open the doors and entered the saloon, where they saw a large wooden cabinet and heard men within groaning for hunger and thirst. Then said one of them, "Is there a Jinni in this cabinet?" and his fellow, "Let us heap fuel about it and burn it with fire." When the Kazi heard this, he bawled out to them, "Do it not!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the neighbours proposed to heap fuel about the cabinet and to burn it the Kazi bawled out to them, "Do it not!" And they said to one another, "Verily the Jinn make believe to be mortals and speak with men's voices." Thereupon the Kazi repeated somewhat of the Sublime Koran and said to the neighbours, "Draw near to the cabinet wherein we are." So they drew near, and he said, "I am so and so the Kazi, and ye are such an one and such an one, and we are here a company." Quoth the neighbours. "Who brought you here?" And he told them the whole case from beginning to end. Then they fetched a carpenter, who opened the five doors and let out Kazi, Wazir, Wali, King and carpenter in their queer disguises; and each, when he saw how the others were accoutred, fell a-laughing at them. Now she had taken away all their clothes; so every one of them sent to his people for fresh clothes and put them on and went out, covering himself therewith from the sight of the folk. Consider, therefore, O our lord the King (said the Wazir), what a trick this woman played off upon the folk! And I have heard tell also a tale of 180

THE THREE WISHES,[215] OR THE MAN WHO LONGED TO SEE THE NIGHT OF POWER.

A certain man had longed all his life to look upon the Night of Power,[216] and one night it befel that he gazed at the sky and saw the angels, and Heaven's gates thrown open; and he beheld all things prostrating themselves before their Lord, each in its several stead. So he said to his wife, "Harkye, such an one, verily Allah hath shown me the

Night of Power, and it hath been proclaimed to me, from the invisible world, that three prayers will be granted unto me; so I consult thee for counsel as to what shall I ask." Quoth she, "O man, the perfection of man and his delight is in his prickle; therefore do thou pray Allah to greaten thy yard and magnify it." So he lifted up his hands to heaven and said, "O [181]Allah, greaten my yard and magnify it." Hardly had he spoken when his tool became as big as a column and he could neither sit nor stand nor move about nor even stir from his stead; and when he would have carnally known his wife, she fled before him from place to place. So he said to her, "O accursed woman, what is to be done? This is thy list, by reason of thy lust." She replied, "No, by Allah, I did not ask for this length and huge bulk, for which the gate of a street were too strait. Pray Heaven to make it less." So he raised his eyes to Heaven and said, "O Allah, rid me of this thing and deliver me therefrom." And immediately his prickle disappeared altogether and he became clean smooth. When his wife saw this, she said, "I have no occasion for thee, now thou are become pegless as a eunuch, shaven and shorn;" and he answered her, saying, "All this comes of thine ill-omened counsel and thine imbecile judgment. I had three prayers accepted of Allah, wherewith I might have gotten me my good, both in this world and in the next, and now two wishes are gone in pure waste, by thy lewd will, and there remaineth but one." Quoth she, "Pray Allah the Most High to restore thee thy yard as it was." So he prayed to his Lord and his prickle was restored to its first estate. Thus the man lost his three wishes by the ill counsel and lack of wit in the woman; "And this, O King" (said the Wazir), "have I told thee, that thou mightest be certified of the thoughtlessness of women and their inconsequence and silliness and see what cometh of hearkening to their counsel. Wherefore be not persuaded by them to slay thy son, thy heart's core, who shall cause thy remembrance to survive thee." The King gave ear to his Minister's words and forebore to put his son to death; but, on the seventh day, the damsel came in, shrieking, and after lighting a great fire in the King's presence, made as she would cast herself therein; whereupon they laid hands on her and brought her before him. He asked her, "Why hast thou done this?" and she answered, "Except thou do me justice on thy son, I will cast myself into this very fire and accuse thee of this on the Day of Resurrection, for I am aweary of my life, and before coming into thy presence I wrote my last will and testament and gave alms of my goods and resolved upon death. And thou wilt repent with all repentance, even as did the King of having punished the pious woman who kept the Hammam." Quoth the King, "How was that?" and quoth she:—I have heard tell, O King, this tale concerning

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THE STOLEN NECKLACE.

There was once a devotee, a recluse, a woman who had devoted herself to religion. Now she used to resort to a certain King's palace,[217] whose dwellers were blessed by her presence and she was held of them in high honour. One day she entered that palace according to her custom and sat down beside the King's wife. Presently the Queen gave her a necklace, worth a thousand dinars, saying, "Keep this for me, O woman, whilst I go to the Hammam." So she entered the bath, which was in the palace, and the pious woman remaining in the place where the Queen was and awaiting her return laid the necklace on the prayer-carpet and stood up to pray. As she was thus engaged, there came a magpie[218] which snatched up the necklace, while she went out to obey a call of nature and carrying it off, hid it inside a crevice in a corner of the palace-walls. When the Queen came out of the bath, she sought the necklace of the recluse, who also searched for it, but found it not nor could light on any trace of it; so she said to the King's wife, "By Allah, O my daughter, none hath been with me. When thou gavest me the necklace, I laid it on the prayer-carpet, and I know not if one of the servants saw it and took it without my heed, whilst I was engaged in prayer. Almighty Allah only knoweth what is come of it!" When the King heard what had happened, he bade his Queen put the bath-woman to the question by fire and grievous blows,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King bade his Queen question the bath-woman with fire and grievous blows, they tortured her with all manner tortures, but could not bring her to confess or to accuse any. Then he commanded to cast her into prison and manacle and fetter her; and they did as he bade. One day, after this, as the King sat in the inner court of his palace, with the Queen by his side and water flowing around him, he saw the pie fly into a crevice in a corner of the wall and pull out the necklace, whereupon he cried out to a damsel who was with him, and she caught the bird and took the necklace from it. By this the King knew that the pious bath-woman had been wronged and repented of that he had done with her. So he sent for her to the presence and fell to kissing her head and with many tears sought pardon of her. Moreover, he commanded much treasure to be given to her, but she refused and would none of it. However, she forgave him and went away, swearing never again to enter any one's house. So she betook herself to wandering in the mountains and valleys and worshipped God until she died, and Almighty Allah have mercy upon her! And for an instance of the malice of the male sex (continued the damsel), I have heard, O King, tell this tale of

THE TWO PIGEONS.[219]

A pair of pigeons once stored up wheat and barley in their nest during the winter, and when the summer came, the grain shrivelled and became less; so the male pigeon said to his wife, "Thou hast eaten of this grain." Replied she, "No, by Allah, I have never touched it!" But he believed not her words and beat her with his wings and pecked her with his bill, till he killed her. When the cold season returned, the corn swelled out and became as before, whereupon he knew that he had slain his wife wrongously 184 and wickedly, and he repented whenas repentance availed him naught. Then he lay down by her side, mourning over her and weeping for grief, and left meat and drink, till he fell sick and died. "But" (added the damsel), "I know a story of the malice of men more extraordinary than either of these." Quoth the King, "Let us hear what thou hast to tell;" and quoth she:—I have heard tell, O King, this

STORY OF PRINCE BEHRAM AND THE PRINCESS AL-DATMA.

There was once a King's daughter, who had no equal in her time for beauty and loveliness and symmetrical stature and grace, brilliancy, amorous lace and the art of ravishing the wits of the masculine race and her name was Al-Datmá. She used to boast, "Indeed there is none like me in this age." Nor was there one more accomplished than she in horsemanship and martial exercises and all that behoveth a cavalier. So all the Kings' sons sought her to wife; but she would take none of them, saying, "No man shall marry me except he overcome me at lunge of lance and stroke of sword in fair field and patent plain. If any can do this, I will willingly wed him; but, if I overcome him, I will take his horse and clothes and arms and write with fire upon his forehead:—This is the freed man of Al-Datma." Now the sons of the Kings flocked to her from every quarter far and near, and she overcame them and put them to shame, stripping them of their arms and branding them with fire. Presently the son of a King of the Kings of the Persians, by name Behram ibn Tájí, heard of her and journeyed from afar to her father's court, bringing with him men and horses and great store of wealth and royal treasures. When he drew near the city, he sent her parent a rich present and the King came out to meet him and honoured him with the utmost honour. Then the King's son sent a message to him by his Wazir, demanding his daughter's hand in marriage; but the King answered, saying, "O my son, as regards my daughter Al-Datma, I have no power over her, for she hath sworn by her soul to marry none except he overcome her in the listed field." Quoth the Prince, "I journeyed hither from my father's court with no other object but this; I came here to woo and for

thine [185]alliance to sue;" quoth the King, "Thou shalt meet her to-morrow." So next day he sent to bid his daughter who, making ready for battle, donned her harness of war, and the folk, hearing of the coming joust, flocked from all sides to the field. Presently the Princess rode into the lists, armed cap-à-pie and belted and with vizor down, and the Persian King's son came out single-handed to meet her, equipped at all points after the fairest of fashions. Then they drove at each other and fought a great while, wheeling and falsing, advancing and retreating, till the Princess, finding in him such courage and cavalarice as she had seen in none else, began to fear for herself lest he put her to shame before the bystanders and knew that he would assuredly overcome her. So she resolved to trick him and, raising her vizor, lo! her face appeared more brilliant than the full moon, which when he saw, he was confounded by her beauty and his strength failed and his spirit faltered. When she perceived this, she fell upon him at unawares in his moment of weakness, and tare him from his saddle, and he became in her hands as he were a sparrow in the clutches of an eagle, knowing not what was done with him for amazement and confusion. So she took his steed and clothes and armour and, branding him with fire, let him wend his ways. When he recovered from his stupor, he abode several days without meat or drink or sleep for despite and love of the girl which had taken hold upon his heart. Then he sent a letter by certain of his slaves to his father, advising him that he could not return home till he had won his will of the Princess or died for want of her. When his sire got the letter, he was sore concerned for his son and would have succoured him by sending troops and soldiers; but his Wazirs dissuaded him from this and exhorted him to patience; so he committed his affair to Almighty Allah. Meanwhile, the Prince cast about for a means of coming to his desire; and presently, disguising himself as a decrepit old man, with a white beard over his own black beard repaired to a garden of the Princess wherein she used to walk most of her days. Here he sought out the gardener and said to him, "I am a stranger from a far country and from my youth upwards I have been a gardener, and in the grafting of trees and the culture of fruits and flowers and care of the vine none is more skilled than I." When the gardener heard this, he rejoiced in him with exceeding joy and carried him into the garden, where he commended him to his underlings, and the Prince betook himself to the service of the [186]garden and the tending of the trees and the bettering of their fruits and improving the Persian water-wheels and disposing the irrigation-channels. One day, as he was thus employed, lo! he saw some slaves enter the garden, leading mules laden with carpets and vessels, and asked them the meaning of this, to which they answered, "The Princess is minded to take her pleasure." When he heard these words he hastened to his lodging and, fetching some of the jewels and ornaments he had brought with him from home, sat down in the garden and spread somewhat of them out before him, shaking and making a show of extreme old age——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the son of the Persian King, after disguising himself as an old man shotten in years and taking a seat in the garden, spread out somewhat of the jewels and ornaments before him and made a show of shaking and trembling as if for decrepitude and the weakness of extreme senility. After an hour or so a company of damsels and eunuchs entered with the Princess in their midst, as she were the moon among the stars, and dispersed about the garden, plucking the fruits and diverting themselves. Presently they espied a man sitting under one of the trees; and, making towards him (who was the Prince), found him a very old man, whose hands and feet trembled for decrepitude, and before him store of precious jewels and royal ornaments. So they marvelled at his case and asked him what he did there with the jewels; when he answered, "With these trinkets I would fain buy me to wife one of you." They laughed together at him and said, "If one of us marry thee, what wilt thou do with her?" Said he, "I will give her one kiss and divorce her." Then quoth the Princess, "I give thee this damsel to wife." So he rose and coming up to her, leaning on a staff and shivering and staggering, kissed her and gave her the jewels and ornaments; whereat she rejoiced and they, laughing at him, went their way. Next day, they came again to the garden, and finding him seated in the same place, with more jewels and ornaments than before spread in front of him, asked him, "O Shaykh, what wilt thou do with this jewellery?"; and he 187 answered, saying, "I wish therewith to take one of you to wife even as yesterday." So the Princess said, "I marry thee to this damsel;" and he came up to her and kissed her and gave her the jewels, and they all went their ways. But, seeing such generosity to her handmaids, the Princess said in herself, "I have more right to all these fine things than these baggages, and no harm can betide me." So when morning morrowed she went down from her chamber singly into the garden, in the habit of one of her damsels, and presenting herself privily before the Prince, said to him, "O Shaykh, the King's daughter hath sent me to thee, that thou mayst marry me." He looked at her and knew her; so he answered, "With love and gladness," and gave her jewels and ornaments of the finest and costliest. Then he rose to kiss her, and she off her guard and fearing nothing but, when he came up to her, he suddenly laid hold of her with a strong hand and instantly throwing her down, on the ground abated her maidenhead.[220] Then he pulled the beard from his face and said to her, "Dost thou not know me?" Asked she, "Who art thou?" and he answered, "I am Behram, the King's son of Persia, who have changed my favour and am become a stranger to my people and estate for thy sake and have lavished my treasures for thy love." So she rose from under him in silence and answered not his address nor spake a word of reply to him, being dazed for what had befallen her and seeing nothing better than to be silent, for fear of shame; and she bethought herself and said, "If I kill myself it will be useless and if I do him die, his death will profit me naught;" and presently added, "Nothing will serve me but that I elope with him to his

own country." Then she gathered together her monies and treasures and sent to him, acquainting him therewith, to the intent that he also might equip himself with his wealth and needs; and they agreed upon a night on which to depart. So, at the appointed time, they mounted race-horses and set out under cover of the gloom, nor did morning morrow till they had traversed a great distance; and they ceased not faring forwards till they drew near his father's capital in the land of the Persians. When the King heard of his son's coming, he rode out to meet him with his troops and rejoiced in him with exceeding 188 joy. Then, after a few days, he sent the Princess's father a splendid present, and a letter to the effect that his daughter was with him and demanding her wedding equipage. Al-Datma's father came out to meet the messengers with the greatest gladness (for that he had deemed his daughter lost and had grieved sore for her loss): after which he made bride-feasts and, summoning the Kazi and the witnesses, let draw up the marriage-contract between his daughter and the Prince of Persia. He invested the envoys with robes of honour, then he made ready her equipage and despatched it to her; and Prince Behram abode with her till death sundered their union. See therefore, O King (continued the favourite), the malice of men in their dealing with women. As for me, I will not go back from my due till I die. So the King once more commanded to put his son to death; but the seventh Wazir came in to him and kissing the ground before him, said, "O King, have patience with me whilst I speak these words of good counsel to thee; how many patient and slow-moving men unto their hope attain, and how many who are precipitate fall into shameful state! Now I have seen how this damsel hath profligately excited the King by lies to horrible and unnatural cruelties; but I his Mameluke, whom he hath overwhelmed with his favours and bounties, do proffer him true and loyal rede; for that I, O King, know of the malice of women that which none knoweth save myself; and in particular there hath reached me, on this subject, the story of the old woman and the son of the merchant with its warning instances." Asked the King, "And what fell out between them, O Wazir?" and the seventh Wazir answered:—I have heard tell, O King, the tale of

THE HOUSE WITH THE BELVEDERE.[221]

A wealthy merchant had a son who was very dear to him and who said to him one day, "O my father, I have a boon to beg of thee." Quoth the merchant, "O my son, what is it, that I may give it thee and bring thee to thy desire, though it were the light of mine eyes." Quoth the youth, "Give me money, that I may 189 journey with the merchants to the city of Baghdad and see its sights and sail on the Tigris and look upon the palace of the Caliphs[222]; for the sons of the merchants have described these things to me and I long to see them for myself." Said the father, "O my child, O my little son, how can I endure to part from thee?" But the youth replied, "I have said my

say and there is no help for it but I journey to Baghdad with thy consent or e'en without it: such a longing for its sight hath fallen upon me as can only be assuaged by the going thither."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Five Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the merchant's son said to his sire, "There is no help for it but that I journey to Baghdad." Now when the father saw that there was no help for it, he provided his son with goods to the value of thirty thousand gold pieces and sent him with certain merchants in whom he trusted, committing him to their charge. Then he took leave of the youth, who journeyed with his friends the merchants till they reached Baghdad, the House of Peace, where he entered the market and hired him a house, so handsome and delectable and spacious and elegant that on seeing it he well-nigh lost his wits for admiration; for therein were pavilions facing one another, with floors of coloured marbles and ceilings inlaid with gold and lapis lazuli, and its gardens were full of warbling birds. So he asked the door-keeper[223] what was its monthly rent, and he replied, "Ten dinars." Quoth the young man, "Speakest thou soothly or dost thou but jest with me?". Quoth the porter, "By Allah, I 190 speak naught but the truth, for none who taketh up his abode in this house lodgeth in it more than a week[224] or two." "And how is that?" quoth the youth; and quoth the porter, "O my son, whoso dwelleth in this house cometh not forth of it, except sick or dead, wherefore it is known amongst all the folk of Baghdad, so that none offereth to inhabit it, and thus cometh it that its rent is fallen so low." Hearing this the young merchant marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, "Needs must there be some reason for this sickening and perishing." However after considering awhile and seeking refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned, he rented the house and took up his abode there. Then he put away apprehension from his thought and busied himself with selling and buying; and some days passed by without any such ill case befalling him in the house, as the door-keeper had mentioned. One day as he sat upon the bench before his door, there came up a grizzled crone, as she were a snake speckled white and black, calling aloud on the name of Allah, magnifying Him inordinately and, at the same time, putting away the stones and other obstacles from the path.[225] Seeing the youth sitting there, she looked at him and marvelled at his case; whereupon quoth he to her, "O woman, dost thou know me or am I like any thou knowest?" When she heard him speak, she toddled up to him and saluting him with the salam, asked, "How long hast thou dwelt in this house?" Answered he, "Two months, O my mother;" and she said, "It was hereat I marvelled; for I, O my son, know thee not, neither dost thou know me, nor yet art thou like unto any one I know; but I marvelled for that none other than thou hath taken up his abode in 191 this house but hath gone forth from it, dead or dying, saving thee alone. Doubtless, O my son, thou hast perilled thy young years; but I suppose thou hast not gone up to the upper

story neither looked out from the belvedere there." So saying, she went her way and he fell a-pondering her words and said to himself, "I have not gone up to the top of the house; nor did I know that there was a belvedere there." Then he arose forthright and going in, searched the by-ways of the house till he espied, in a wall-corner among the trees, a narrow door between whose posts[226] the spider had woven her webs, and said in himself, "Haply the spider hath not webbed over the door, but because death and doom is within." However, he heartened himself with the saying of God the Most High, "Say, nothing shall befal us but what Allah hath written for us;"[227] and opening the door, ascended a narrow flight of stairs, till he came to the terrace-roof, where he found a belvedere, in which he sat down to rest and solace himself with the view. Presently, he caught sight of a fine house and a well-cared for hard by, surmounted by a lofty belvedere, overlooking the whole of Baghdad, in which sat a damsel fair as a Houri. Her beauty took possession of his whole heart and made away with his reason, bequeathing to him the pains and patience of Job and the grief and weeping of Jacob. And as he looked at her and considered her curiously, an object to enamour an ascetic and make a devotee lovesick, fire was lighted in his vitals and he cried, "Folk say that whoso taketh up his abode in this house dieth or sickeneth. An this be so, yon damsel is assuredly the cause. Would Heaven I knew how I shall win free of this affair, for my wits are clean gone!" Then he descended from the terrace, pondering his case, and sat down in the house, but being unable to rest, he went out and took his seat at the door, absorbed in melancholy thought when, behold, up came the old woman afoot, praising and magnifying Allah as she went. When he saw her, he rose and accosting her with a courteous salam and wishes for her life being prolonged said to her, "O my mother, I was healthy and hearty till thou madest mention to me of the door leading to the belvedere; so I opened it and ascending to the top 192 of the house, saw thence what stole away my senses; and now methinks I am a lost man, and I know no physician for me but thyself." When she heard this, she laughed and said, "No harm shall befal thee Inshallah—so Allah please!" Whereupon he rose and went into the house and coming back with an hundred dinars in his sleeve, said to her, "Take this, O my mother, and deal with me the dealing of lords with slaves and succour me quickly for, if I die, a claim for my blood will meet thee on the Day of Doom." Answered she, "With love and gladness; but, O my son, I expect thou lend me thine aid in some small matter, whereby hangs the winning of thy wish." Quoth he, "What wouldst thou have me do, O my mother?" Quoth she, "Go to the silk-market and enquire for the shop of Abú al-Fath bin Kaydám. Sit thee down on his counter and salute him and say to him, "Give me the face-veil[228] thou hast by thee orfrayed with gold:" for he hath none handsomer in his shop. Then buy it of him, O my son, at his own price however high and keep it till I come to thee to-morrow, Allah Almighty willing." So saying, she went away and he passed the night upon live coals of the Ghazá[229]-wood. Next morning he took a thousand ducats in his pocket and repairing to the silk-market, sought out the shop of Abu al-Fath to whom he was directed by one of the merchants.

He found him a man of dignified aspect, surrounded by pages, eunuchs and attendants; for he was a merchant of great wealth and consideration befriended by the Caliph; and of the blessings which Allah the Most High had bestowed upon him was the damsel who had ravished the young man's heart. She was his wife and had not her match for beauty, nor was her like to be found with any of the sons of the Kings. The young man saluted him and Abu al-Fath returned his salam and bade him be seated. So he sat down by him and said to him, "O merchant, I wish to look at such a face-veil." Accordingly he bade 193 his slave bring him a bundle of silk from the inner shop and opening it, brought out a number of veils, whose beauty amazed the youth. Among them was the veil he sought; so he bought it for fifty gold pieces and bore it home well pleased.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundredth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth after buying the veil of the merchant bore it home; but hardly had he reached the house when lo! up came the old woman. He rose to her and gave her his purchase when she bade him bring a live coal, with which she burnt one of the corners of the veil, then folded it up as before and, repairing to Abu al-Fath's house, knocked at the door. Asked the damsel, "Who is there?"; and she answered, "I, such an one." Now the damsel knew her for a friend of her mother so, when she heard her voice, she came out and opening the door to her, said, "What brought thee here, O my mother? My mamma hath left me and gone to her own house." Replied the old woman, "O my daughter, I know thy mother is not with thee, for I have been with her in her home, and I come not to thee, but because I fear to pass the hour of prayer; wherefore I desire to make my Wuzu-ablution with thee, for I know thou art clean and thy house pure."[230] The damsel admitted the old trot who saluted her and called down blessings upon her. Then she took the ewer and went into the wash-house, where she made her ablutions and prayed in a place there. Presently, she came out again and said to the damsel, "O my daughter, I suspect thy handmaidens have been in yonder place and defiled it; so do thou show me another place where I may pray, for the prayer I have prayed I account null and void." Thereupon the damsel took her by the hand and said to her, "O my mother, come and pray on my carpet, where my husband sits." So she stood there and prayed and worshipped, bowed and prostrated; and presently, 194 she took the damsel unawares and made shift to slip the veil under the cushion, unseen of her. Then she blessed her and went her ways. Now as the day was closing Abu al-Fath came home and sat down upon the carpet, whilst his wife brought him food and he ate of it his sufficiency and washed his hands; after which he leant back upon the cushion. Presently, he caught sight of a corner of the veil protruding from under the cushion; so he pulled it out and considered it straitly, when, knowing it for that he had sold to the young man, he at once suspected his wife of unchastity. Thereupon he called her

and said, “Whence hadst thou this veil?” And she swore an oath to him, saying, “None hath come to me but thou.” The merchant was silent for fear of scandal, and said to himself, “If I open up this chapter, I shall be put to shame before all Baghdad;” for he was one of the intimates of the Caliph and so he could do nothing save hold his peace. So he asked no questions, but said to his wife, whose name was Mahzíyah, “It hath reached me that thy mother lieth ill of heart-ache[231] and all the women are with her, weeping over her; wherefore I order thee to go to her.” Accordingly, she repaired to her mother’s house and found her in the best of health; and she asked her daughter, “What brings thee here at this hour?” So she told her what her husband had said and sat with her awhile; when behold, up came porters, who brought her clothes from her husband’s house, and transporting all her paraphernalia and what not else belonged to her of goods and vessels, deposited them in her mother’s lodging. When the mother saw this, she said to her daughter, “Tell me what hath passed between thee and thy husband, to bring about this.” But she swore to her that she knew not the cause thereof and that there had befallen nothing between them to call for this conduct. Quoth her mother, “Needs must there be a cause for this.” And she answered, saying, “I know of none, and after this, with Almighty Allah be it to make provision!” Whereupon her mother fell a-weeping and lamented her daughter’s separation from the like of this man, by reason of his sufficiency and fortune and the greatness of his rank and dignity. On this wise things abode some days, after which the curst, ill-omened old woman, whose name was Miryam the Koranist,[232] paid a visit to Mahziyah 195 in her mother’s house and saluted her cordially, saying, “What ails thee, O my daughter, O my darling? Indeed, thou hast troubled my mind.” Then she went in to her mother and said to her, “O my sister, what is this business about thy daughter and her husband? It hath reached me that he hath divorced her! What hath she done to call for this?” Quoth the mother, “Belike her husband will return to her by the blessed influence of thy prayers, O Háfizah; so do thou pray for her, O my sister, for thou art a day-faster and a night-prayer.” Then the three fell to talking together and the old woman said to the damsel, “O my daughter, grieve not for, if Allah please, I will make peace between thee and thy husband before many days.” Then she left them and going to the young merchant, said to him, “Get ready a handsome entertainment for us, for I will bring her to thee this very night.” So he sprang up and went forth and provided all that was fitting of meat and drink and so forth, then sat down to await the twain; whilst the old woman returned to the girl’s mother and said to her, “O my sister, we have a splendid bride-feast to-night; so let thy daughter go with me, that she may divert herself and make merry with us and throw off her cark and care, and forget the ruin of her home. I will bring her back to thee even as I took her away.” The mother dressed her daughter in her finest dress and costliest jewels and accompanied her to the door, where she commended her to the old woman’s charge, saying, “‘Ware lest thou let any of Almighty Allah’s creatures look upon her, for thou knowest her husband’s rank with the Caliph; and do not tarry, but bring her back to me as soon as

possible." The old woman carried the girl to the young man's house which she entered, thinking it the place where the wedding was to be held: but as soon as she came into the sitting-saloon——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and First Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that as soon as the damsel entered the sitting-saloon, the youth sprang up to her and flung his arms round her neck and kissed her hands and feet. She was confounded at his loveliness, as well as at the beauty of the place and the profusion of meat and drink, flowers and perfumes that she saw therein, and deemed all was a dream. When the old woman saw her amazement, she said to her, "The name of Allah be upon thee, O my daughter! Fear not; I am here sitting with thee and will not leave thee for a moment. Thou art worthy of him and he is worthy of thee." So the damsel sat down shamefast and in great confusion; but the young man jested and toyed with her and entertained her with laughable stories and loving verses, till her breast broadened and she became at her ease. Then she ate and drank and growing warm with wine, took the lute and sang these couplets:-

My friend who went hath returned once more; ✿ Oh, the welcome light that such beauty shows!
And but for the fear of those arrowy eyes, ✿ From his lovely cheek I had culled the rose.

And when the youth saw that she to his beauty did incline he waxt drunken without wine and his life was a light matter to him compared with his love.[233] Presently the old woman went out and left them alone together to enjoy their loves till the next morning, when she went into them and gave them both good morrow[234] and asked the damsel, "How hast thou passed the night, O my lady?" Answered the girl, "Right well, thanks to thy adroitness and the excellence of thy going-between[235]." Then said the old woman, "Up, let us go back to thy mother." At these words the young man pulled out an hundred sequins and gave them to her, saying, "Take this and leave her with me to-night." So she left them 197 and repaired to the girl's mother, to whom quoth she, "Thy daughter saluteth thee, and the bride's mother hath sworn her to abide with her this night." Replied the mother, "O my sister, bear her my salam, and, if it please and amuse the girl, there is no harm in her staying the night; so let her do this and divert herself and come back to me at her leisure, for all I fear for her is chagrin on account of an angry husband." The old woman ceased not to make excuse after excuse to the girl's mother and to put off cheat upon cheat upon her, till Mahziyah had tarried seven days with the young man, of whom she took an hundred dinars each day for herself; while he enjoyed all the solace of life and coition. But at the end of this time, the girl's mother said to her, "Bring my daughter back to me forthright; for I am uneasy about her, because she hath been so long absent, and I

misdoubt me of this." So the old woman went out saying, "Woe to thee! shall such words be spoken to the like of me? and, going to the young man's house, took the girl by the hand and carried her away (leaving him lying asleep on his bed, for he was drunken with wine) to her mother." She received her with pleasure and gladness and seeing her in redoubled beauty and brilliancy rejoiced in her with exceeding joy, saying, "O my daughter, my heart was troubled about thee and in my uneasiness I offended against this my sister the Koranist with a speech that wounded her." Replied Mahziyah, "Rise and kiss her hands and feet, for she hath been to me as a servant in my hour of need, and if thou do it not thou art no mamma of mine, nor am I thy girl." So the mother went up at once to the old woman and made her peace with her. Meanwhile, the young man recovered from his drunkenness and missed the damsel, but congratulated himself on having enjoyed his desire. Presently Miryam the old Koranist came in to him and saluted him, saying, "What thinkest thou of my feat?" Quoth he, "Excellently well conceived and contrived of thee was that same." Then quoth she, "Come, let us mend what we have marred and restore this girl to her husband, for we have been the cause of their separation and it is unrighteous." Asked he, "How shall I do?" and she answered, "Go to Abu al-Fath's shop and salute him and sit down by him, till thou seest me pass by, when do thou rise in haste and catch hold of my dress and abuse me and threaten me, demanding of me the veil. And do thou say to the merchant:—Thou knowest, O my lord, the face-veil I bought of thee for fifty dinars? It so chanced that my handmaid put it 198 on and burnt a corner of it by accident; so she gave it to this old woman, who took it, promising to get it fine-drawn[236] and return it, and went away, nor have I seen her from that day to this." "With joy and good will," replied the young man, and rising forthright, walked to the shop of the silk merchant, with whom he sat awhile till behold, the old woman passed telling her beads on a rosary she held in hand; whereupon he sprang up and laying hold of her dress began to abuse and rail at her, whilst she answered him with fair words, saying, "Indeed, my son, thou art excusable." So the people of the bazar flocked round the two, saying, "What is the matter?" and he replied, "O folk, I bought of this merchant a veil for fifty dinars and gave it to my slave-girl, who wore it awhile, then sat down to fumigate it with perfume. Presently a spark flew out of the censer and, lighting on the edge of the veil, burnt a hole in it. So we committed it to this pestilent old woman, that she might give it to who should fine-draw it and return it to us; but from that time we have never set eyes on her again till this day." Answered the old woman, "This young man speaks sooth. I had the veil from him, but I took it with me into one of the houses where I am wont to visit and forgot it there, nor do I know where I left it; and, being a poor woman, I feared its owner and dared not face him." Now the girl's husband was listening to all they said,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the young man seized the old woman and spoke to her of the veil as she had primed him, the girl's husband was listening to all they said, from beginning to end, and when he heard the tale which the crafty old woman had contrived with the young man, he rose to his feet and said, "Allah Almighty! I crave pardon of the Omnipotent One for my sins and for what my heart suspected!" And he praised the Lord who had discovered to him the truth. Then he accosted the old woman and said to her, "Dost thou use to visit 199 us?"[237] Replied she, "O my son, I visit you and other than you, for the sake of alms; but from that day to this, none hath given me news of the veil." Asked the merchant, "Hast thou enquired at my house?" and she answered, "O my lord, I did indeed go to thy house and ask; but they told me that the person of the house[238] had been divorced by the merchant; so I went away and asked no farther; nor have I enquired of anybody else until this day." Hereupon the merchant turned to the young man and said. "Let the old woman go her way; for the veil is with me." So saying he brought it out from the shop and gave it to the fine-drawer before all present. Then he betook himself to his wife and, giving her somewhat of money, took her to himself again, after making abundance of excuses to her and asking pardon of Allah, because he knew not what the old woman had done. (Said the Wazir), This then, O King, is an instance of the malice of women and for another to the same purport, I have heard tell the following tale anent

THE KING'S SON AND THE IFRIT'S MISTRESS.[239]

A certain King's son was once walking alone for his pleasure, when he came to a green meadow, abounding in trees laden with fruit and birds singing on the boughs, and a river running athwart it. The place pleased him; so he sat down there and taking out some dried fruits he had brought with him, began to eat, when lo! he espied a great smoke rising up to heaven and, taking fright, he climbed up into a tree and hid himself among the branches. Thence he saw an Ifrit rise out of the midst of the stream bearing on his head a chest of marble, secured by a padlock. He set down the chest on the meadow-sward and opened it and there came forth a damsel of mortal race like the sun shining in the sheeny sky. After seating her he solaced himself by gazing on her awhile, then laid his head in her lap and fell asleep, whereupon she lifted up his head and laying it on the chest, rose and walked about. Presently, 200 she chanced to raise her eyes to the tree wherein was the Prince, and seeing him, signed to him to come down. He refused, but she swore to him, saying, "Except thou come down and do as I bid thee, I will wake the Ifrit and point thee out to him, when he will straightway kill thee." The King's son fearing she would do as she said, came down, whereupon she

kissed his hands and feet and besought him to do her need. To this he consented and, when he had satisfied her wants, she said to him, “Give me this seal-ring I see on thy finger.” So he gave her his signet and she set it in a silken kerchief she had with her, wherein were more than fourscore others. When the Prince saw this, he asked her, “What dost thou with all these rings?” and she answered, “In very sooth this Ifrit carried me off from my father’s palace and shut me in this box, which he beareth about on his head wherever he goeth, with the keys about him; and he hardly leaveth me one moment alone of the excess of his jealousy over me, and hindereth me from what I desire. When I saw this, I swore that I would deny my last favours to no man whatsoever, and these rings thou seest are after the tale of the men who have had me; for after coition I took from each a seal-ring and laid it in this kerchief.” Then she added, “And now go thy ways, that I may look for another than thyself, for the Ifrit will not awake yet awhile.” Hardly crediting what he had heard, the Prince returned to his father’s palace, but the King knew naught of the damsel’s malice (for she feared not this and took no count thereof), and seeing that his son had lost his ring, he bade put him to death.[240] Then he rose from his place and entered his palace; but his Wazirs came in to him and prevailed with him to abandon his purpose. The same night, the King sent for all of them and thanked them for having dissuaded him from slaying his son; and the Prince also thanked them, saying, “It was well done of you to counsel my father to let me live and Inshallah! I will soon requite you abundantly.” Then he related to them how he had lost the ring, and they offered up prayers for his long life and advancement and withdrew. “See then, O King,” (said the Wazir), “the malice of women and what they do unto men.” The King hearkened to the Minister’s counsel and again countermanded his order to slay his son. Next morning, it being the eighth day, as the King sat in his audience-chamber in the midst of his Grandees and Emirs and Wazirs and 201 Olema, the Prince entered, with his hand in that of his governor, Al-Sindibad, and praised his father and his Ministers and lords and divines in the most eloquent words and thanked them for having saved his life; so that all who were present wondered at his eloquence and fluency of speech. His father rejoiced in him with exceeding, all-surpassing joy, and calling him to him, kissed him between the eyes. Then he called his preceptor, Al-Sindibad, and asked him why his son had kept silence these seven days, to which he replied, “O our lord, the truth is, it was I who enjoined him to this, in my fear for him of death: I knew this from the day of his birth; and, when I took his nativity, I found it written in the stars that, if he should speak during this period, he would surely die; but now the danger is over, by the King’s fortune.” At this the King was glad and said to his Wazirs, “If I had killed my son, would the fault have fallen on me or the damsel or on the preceptor, Al-Sindibad?” But all present refrained from replying, and Al-Sindibad said to the Prince, “Answer thou, O my son.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Al-Sindibad said, "Answer thou, O my son," the Prince replied, "I have heard tell that a merchant at whose house certain guests once alighted sent his slave-girl to the market to buy a jar of clotted milk.[241] So she bought it and set out on her return home; but on the way there passed over her a kite, holding and squeezing a serpent in its claws, and a drop of the serpent's venom fell into the milk-jar, unknown of the girl. So, when she 202 came back, the merchant took the milk from her and drank of it, he and his guests; but hardly had it settled in their stomachs when they all died.[242] Now consider, O King, whose was the fault in this matter?" Thereupon some present said, "It was the fault of the company who drank the milk without examining it." And other some, "That of the girl, who left the jar without cover." But Al-Sindibad asked the Prince, "What sayest thou, O my son?" Answered he, "I say that the folk err; it was neither the fault of the damsel nor of the company, for their appointed hour was come, their divinely-decreed provision was exhausted and Allah had fore-ordained them to die thus."[243] When the courtiers heard this, they marvelled greatly and lifted up their voices, blessing the King's son, and saying, "O our lord, thou hast made a reply *sans peur*, and thou art the sagest man of thine age *sans reproche*." "Indeed, I am no sage," answered the Prince; "the blind Shaykh and the son of three years and the son of five years were wiser than I." Said the bystanders, "O youth, tell us the stories of these three who were wiser than thou art, O youth." Answered he:—With all my heart. I have heard tell this tale concerning

THE SANDAL-WOOD MERCHANT AND THE SHARPERS.[244]

There once lived an exceeding rich merchant, who was a great traveller and who visited all manner of places. One day, being minded to journey to a certain city, he asked those who came thence, saying, "What kind of goods brought most profit there?" and they answered, "Chanders-wood; for it selleth at a high 203 price." So he laid out all his money in sandal and set out for that city; and arriving there at close of day, behold, he met an old woman driving her sheep. Quoth she to him, "Who art thou, O man?" and quoth he, "I am a stranger, a merchant." "Beware of the townsfolk," said she, "for they are cheats, rascals, robbers who love nothing more than imposing on the foreigner that they may get the better of him and devour his substance. Indeed I give thee good counsel." Then she left him and on the morrow there met him one of the citizens who saluted him and asked him, "O my lord, whence comest thou?" Answered the merchant, "From such a place." "And what merchandise hast thou brought with thee?" enquired the other; and replied he,

"Chanders-wood, for it is high of price with you." Quoth the townsman, "He blundered who told thee that; for we burn nothing under our cooking-pots save sandal-wood, whose worth with us is but that of fuel." When the merchant heard this he sighed and repented and stood balanced between belief and unbelief. Then he alighted at one of the khans of the city, and, when it was night, he saw a merchant make fire of chanders-wood under his cooking-pot. Now this was the man who had spoken with him and this proceeding was a trick of his. When the townsman saw the merchant looking at him, he asked, "Wilt thou sell me thy sandal-wood for a measure[245] of whatever thy soul shall desire?" "I sell it to thee," answered the merchant; and the buyer transported all the wood to his own house and stored it up there; whilst the seller purposed to take an equal quantity of gold for it. Next morning the merchant, who was a blue-eyed man, went out to walk in the city but, as he went along, one of the townsfolk, who was blue-eyed and one-eyed to boot, caught hold of him, saying, "Thou art he who stole my eye and I will never let thee go."[246] The merchant denied this, saying, "I never stole it: the thing is impossible." Whereupon the folk collected round them and besought the one-eyed man to grant him till the morrow, that he might give him the 204 price of his eye. So the merchant procured one to be surety for him, and they let him go. Now his sandal had been rent in the struggle with the one-eyed man; so he stopped at a cobbler's stall and gave it to him, saying, "Mend it and thou shalt have of me what shall content thee." Then he went on, till he came to some people sitting at play of forfeits and sat down with them, to divert his cark and care. They invited him to play with them and he did so; but they practised on him and overcoming him, offered him his choice,[247] either to drink up the sea or disburse all the money he had. "Have patience with me till to-morrow," said he, and they granted him the delay he sought; whereupon he went away, sore concerned for what had betided him and knowing not how he should do, and sat down in a solitary place heart-heavy, care-full, thought-opprest. And behold, the old woman passed by and seeing him thus, said to him, "Peradventure the townsfolk have gotten the better of thee, for I see thee troubled at that which hath befallen thee: recount to me what aileth thee." So he told her all that had passed from first to last, and she said, "As for him who diddled thee in the matter of the chanders-wood, thou must know that with us it is worth ten gold pieces a pound. But I will give thee a rede, whereby I trust thou shalt deliver thyself; and it is this. Go to such and such a gate whereby lives a blind Shaykh, a cripple, who is knowing, wise as a wizard and experienced; and all resort to him and ask him what they require, when he counsels them what will be for their advantage; for he is versed in craft[248] and magic and trickery. Now he is a sharper and the sharpers resort to him by night; therefore, I repeat, go thou to his lodging and hide thyself from thine adversaries, so thou mayst hear what they say, unseen of them; for he telleth them which party got the better and which got the worse; and haply thou shalt learn from them some plan which may avail to deliver thee from them."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman said to the merchant, "Go this night to that expert who is frequented by the townsfolk and hide thine identity: haply shalt thou hear from him some plea which shall deliver thee from thine adversaries." So he went to the place she mentioned and hid himself albeit he took seat near the blind man. Before long, up came the Shaykh's company who were wont to choose him for their judge: they saluted the oldster and one another and sat down round him, whereupon the merchant recognised his four adversaries. The Chief set somewhat of food before them and they ate; then each began to tell what had befallen him during his day, and amongst the rest came forward he of the chanders-wood and told the Shaykh how he had bought of one man sandal below its price, and had agreed to pay for it a Sá'a or measure of whatever the seller should desire.[249] Quoth the old man, "Thine opponent hath the better of thee." Asked the other, "How can that be?"; and the Shaykh answered, "What if he say, I will take the measure full of gold or silver, wilt thou give it to him?" "Yes," replied the other, "I will give it to him and still be the gainer." And the Shaykh answered, "And if he say, I will take the measure full of fleas,[250] half male and half female, what wilt thou do?" So the sharper knew that he was worsted. Then came forward the one-eyed man and said, "O Shaykh, I met to-day a blue-eyed man, a stranger to the town; so I picked a quarrel with him and caught hold of him, saying:—'Twas thou robbedst me of my eye; nor did I let him go, till some became surety for him that he should return to me to-morrow and satisfy me for my eye." Quoth the oldster, "If he will he may have 206 the better of thee and thou the worse." "How so?" asked the sharper; and the Chief said, "He may say to thee, Pluck out thine eye, and I will pluck out one of mine; then we will weigh them both, and if thine eye be of the same weight as mine, thou sayest sooth in what thou avouchest. So wilt thou owe him the legal price of his eye and be stone blind, whilst he will still see with his other eye." So the sharper knew that the merchant might baffle him with such plea. Then came the cobbler; and said, "O Shaykh, a man brought me his sandal-shoe to-day, saying, Mend this; and I asked him, What wage wilt thou give me?; when he answered, Thou shalt have of me what will content thee. Now nothing will content me but all the wealth he hath." Quoth the oldster, "An he will, he may take his sandal from thee and give thee nothing." "How so?" quoth the cobbler, and quoth the Shaykh, "He has but to say to thee, The Sultan's enemies are put to the rout; his foes are waxed weak and his children and helpers are multiplied. Art thou content or no? If thou say, I am content,[251] he will take his sandal and go away; and if thou say, I am not content, he will take his sandal and beat thee therewith over the face and neck." So the cobbler owned himself worsted. Then came forward the gamester and said, "O Shaykh, I played at forfeits with a man to-day and beat him and quoth I to him:—If thou drink the sea I will give thee all my wealth; and

if not I will take all that is thine." Replied the Chief, "An he will he may worst thee." "How so?" asked the sharper, and the Shaykh answered, "He hath but to say, Hold for me the mouth of the sea in thine hand and give it me and I will drink it. But thou wilt not be able to do this; so he will baffle thee with this plea." When the merchant heard this, he knew how it behoved him to deal with his adversaries. Then the sharpers left the Shaykh and the merchant returned to his lodging. Now when morning morrowed, the gamester came to him and summoned him to drink the sea; so he said to him, "Hold for me its mouth and I will drink it up." Whereupon he confessed himself beaten and redeemed his forfeit by paying 207 an hundred gold pieces. Then came the cobbler and sought of him what should content him. Quoth the merchant, "Our lord the Sultan hath overcome his foes and hath destroyed his enemies and his children are multiplied. Art thou content or no?" "I am content," replied the cobbler and, giving up the shoe[252] without wage, went away. Next came the one-eyed man and demanded the legal price of his eye. Said the merchant, "Pluck out thine eye, and I will pluck out mine: then we will weigh them, and if they are equal in weight, I will acknowledge thy truth, and pay thee the price of thine eye; but, if they differ, thou liest and I will sue thee for the price of mine eye." Quoth the one-eyed man, "Grant me time;" but the merchant answered, saying, "I am a stranger and grant time to none, nor will I part from thee till thou pay." So the sharper ransomed his eye by paying him an hundred ducats and went away. Last of all came the buyer of the chanders-wood and said, "Take the price of thy ware." Asked the merchant, "What wilt thou give me?"; and the other answered, "We agreed for a Sá'a-measure of whatever thou shouldst desire; so, if thou wilt, take it full of gold and silver." "Not I," rejoined the merchant, "Not I! nothing shall serve me but I must have it full of fleas, half male and half female." Said the Sharper, "I can do nothing of the kind;" and, confessing himself beaten, returned him his sandal-wood and redeemed himself from him with an hundred sequins, to be off his bargain. Then the merchant sold the chanders-wood at his own price and, quitting that city of sharpers, returned to his own land.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the merchant had sold his chanders-wood and had taken the money he quitted that city and returned to his own land. Then the Prince continued, "But this is not more wondrous than the tale of the three-year-old child." "What may that be?" asked the King, and the Prince answered:—I have heard tell this tale of

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THE DEBAUCHEE AND THE THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILD.

Know, O King that a certain profligate man, who was addicted to the sex, once heard of a beautiful and lovely woman who dwelt in a city other than his own. So he journeyed thither, taking with him a present, and wrote her a note, setting forth all that he suffered of love-longing and desire for her and how his passion for her had driven him to forsake his native land and come to her and he ended by praying for an assignation. She gave him leave to visit her and, as he entered her abode, she stood up and received him with all honour and worship, kissing his hands and entertaining him with the best entertainment of meat and drink. Now she had a little son, but three years old, whom she left and busied herself in cooking rice.[253] Presently the man said to her, "Come, let us go and lie together;" but she replied, "My son is sitting looking at us." Quoth the man, "He is a little child, understanding not neither knowing how to speak." Quoth the woman, "Thou wouldst not say thus, an thou knew his intelligence." When the boy saw that the rice was done, he wept with bitter weeping and his mother said to him, "What gars thee weep, O my son?" "Ladle me out some rice," answered he, "and put clarified butter in it." So she ladled him out somewhat of rice and put butter therein; and the child ate a little, then began to weep again. Quoth she, "What ails thee now, O my son?"; and quoth he, "O mother mine, I want some sugar with my rice." At this said the man, who was an-angered, "Thou art none other than a curst child." "Curst thyself, by Allah," answered the boy, "seeing thou weariest thyself and journeyest from city to city, in quest of adultery. As for me, I wept because I had somewhat in my eye, and my tears brought it ought; and now I have eaten rice with butter and sugar and am content; so which is the curst of us twain?" The man was confounded at this rebuke from a little child and forthright grace entered him and he was reclaimed. Wherefore he laid not a finger on the woman, but went out from her and returned to his 209 own country, where he lived a contrite life till he died. As for the story of the five-year-old child (continued the Prince), I have heard tell, O King, the following anent

THE STOLEN PURSE.

Four merchants once owned in common a thousand gold pieces; so they laid them mingled together in one purse and set out to buy merchandise therewith. They happened as they wended their way on a beautiful garden; so they left the purse with a woman who had care of the garden, saying to her, "Mind thee, thou shalt not give it back save when all four of us in person demand it of thee." She agreed to this and

they entered and strolled awhile about the garden-walks and ate and drank and made merry, after which one of them said to the others, “I have with me scented fuller’s-earth; come, let us wash our heads therewith in this running water.” Quoth another, “We lack a comb;” and a third, “Let us ask the keeper; belike she hath a comb.” Thereupon one of them arose and accosting the care-taker, said to her, “Give me the purse.” Said she, “Not until ye be all present or thy fellows bid me give it thee.” Then he called to his companions (who could see him but not hear him) saying, “She will not give it me;” and they said to her, “Give it him,” thinking he meant the comb. So she gave him the purse and he took it and made off as fast as he could. When the three others were weary of waiting, they went to the keeper and asked her, “Why wilt thou not give him the comb?” Answered she, “He demanded naught of me save the purse, and I gave not that same but with your consent, and he went his way with it.” When they heard her words they buffeted their faces and, laying hands upon her, said, “We authorized thee only to give him the comb;” and she rejoined, “He named not a comb to me.” Then they seized her and haled her before the Kazi, to whom they related their claim and he condemned her to make good the purse and bound over sundry of her debtors to answer for her.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kazi condemned the care-taker to make good the purse and bound over sundry of her debtors to answer for her. So she went forth, confounded and knowing not her way out of the difficulty. Presently she met a five-year-old boy who, seeing her troubled, said to her, “What ails thee, O my mother?” But she gave him no answer, contemning him because of his tender age, and he repeated his question a second time and a third time till, at last, she told him all that had passed,[254] not forgetting the condition that she was to keep the purse until all four had demanded it of her. Said the boy, “Give me a dirham to buy sweetmeats withal and I will tell thee how thou mayst acquit thyself.” So she gave him a silver and said to him, “What hast thou to say?” Quoth he, “Return to the Kazi, and say to him, It was agreed between myself and them that I should not give them the purse, except all four of them were present. Let them all four come and I will give them the purse, as was agreed.” So she went back to the Kazi and said to him as the boy had counselled; and he asked the merchants, “Was it thus agreed between you and this woman?”; and they answered, “Yes.” Quoth the Kazi, “Then bring me your comrade and take the purse.” So they went in quest of their fellow, whilst the keeper came off scot-free and went her way without let or hindrance. And Allah is Omniscient![255] When the King and his Wazir and those present 211 in the assembly heard the Prince’s words they said to his father, “O our lord the King, in very sooth thy son is the most accomplished man of his time;” and they called down blessings

upon the King and the Prince. Then the King strained his son to his bosom and kissed him between the eyes and questioned him of what had passed between the favourite and himself; and the Prince sware to him, by Almighty Allah and by His Holy Prophet that it was she who had required him of love which he refused, adding, "Moreover, she promised me that she would give thee poison to drink and kill thee, so should the kingship be mine; whereupon I waxed wroth and signed to her:—O accursed One, whenas I can speak I will requite thee! So she feared me and did what she did." The King believed his words and sending for the favourite said to those present, "How shall we put this damsel to death?" Some counselled him to cut out her tongue and other some to burn it with fire; but, when she came before the King, she said to him, "My case with thee is like unto naught save the tale of the fox and the folk." "How so?" asked he; and she said:—I have heard, O King, tell a

STORY OF THE FOX AND THE FOLK.[256]

A fox once made his way into a city by the wall and, entering a currier's storehouse, played havoc with all therein and spoiled the 212 skins for the owner. One day, the currier set a trap for him and taking him, beat him with the hides, till he fell down senseless, whereupon the man deeming him to be dead, cast him out into the road by the city-gate. Presently, an old woman who was walking by, seeing the fox said, "This is a fox whose eye, hung about a child's neck, is salutary against weeping." So she pluckt out his right eye and went away. Then passed a boy, who said, "What does this tail on this fox?"; and cut off his brush. After a while, up came a man and saying, "This is a fox whose gall cleareth away film and dimness from the eyes, if they be anointed therewith like kohl," took out his knife to slit up the fox's paunch. But Reynard said in himself, "We bore with the plucking out of the eye and the cutting off of the tail; but, as for the slitting of the paunch, there is no putting up with that!" So saying, he sprang up and made off through the gate of the city, hardly believing in his escape. Quoth the King, "I excuse her, and in my son's hands be her doom. If he will, let him torture her, and if he will, let him kill her." Quoth the Prince, "Pardon is better than vengeance and mercy is of the quality of the noble;" and the King repeated, "'Tis for thee to decide, O my son." So the Prince set her free, saying, "Depart from our neighbourhood and Allah pardon what is past!" Therewith the King rose from his throne of estate and seating his son thereon, crowned him with his crown and bade the Grandees of his realm swear fealty and commanded them do homage to him. And he said, "O folk, indeed, I am stricken in years and desire to withdraw apart and devote myself only to the service of my Lord; and I call you to witness that I divest myself of the kingly dignity, even as I have divested myself of my crown and set it on my son's head." So the troops and officers swore fealty to the Prince, and his father gave himself up to the worship of his Lord nor stinted from this, whilst his son abode in his

kingship, doing justice and righteousness; and his power was magnified and his sultanate strengthened and he abode in all delight and solace of life, till there came to him the Certainty.

25- JUDAR[257] AND HIS BRETHREN.

There was once a man and a merchant named Omar and he had for issue three sons, the eldest called Sálim, the youngest Júdar, and the cadet Salím. He reared them all till they came to man's estate, but the youngest he loved more than his brothers, who, seeing this, waxed jealous of Judar and hated him. Now when their father, who was a man shotten in years, saw that his two eldest sons hated their brother, he feared lest after his death trouble should befal him from them. So he assembled a company of his kinsfolk, together with divers men of learning and property-distributors of the Kazi's court, and bidding bring all his monies and cloth, said to them, "O folk, divide ye this money and stuff into four portions according to the law." They did so, and he gave one part to each of his sons and kept the fourth himself, saying, "This was my good and I have divided it among them in my lifetime; and this that I have kept shall be for my wife, their mother, wherewithal to provide for her subsistence whenas she shall be a widow."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the merchant had divided his money and stuff into four portions, he said, "This share shall be for my wife, their mother, wherewithal to provide for her subsistence whenas she shall be a widow." A little while after this he died, and neither of the two elder brothers was content with his share,[258] but sought more of Judar, saying, "Our father's wealth is in thy hands." So he appealed to the judges; and the Moslems who had been present at the partition came and bore witness of that which they knew, wherefore the judge forbade 214 them from one another; but Judar and his brothers wasted much money in bribes to him. After this, the twain left him awhile; presently, however, they began again to plot against him and he appealed a second time to the magistrate, who once more decided in his favour; but all three lost much money which went to the judges. Nevertheless Sálim and Salím forbore not to seek his hurt and to carry the case from court to court,[259] he and they losing till they had given all their good for food to the oppressors and they became poor, all three. Then the two elder brothers went to their mother and flouted her and beat her, and seizing her money drave her away. So she betook herself to her son Judar and told him how his brothers had dealt with her and fell to cursing the twain. Said he, "O my mother, do not curse them, for Allah will requite each of them according to his deed." But, O mother mine, see, I am become poor, and so are

my brethren, for strife occasioneth loss ruin-rife, and we have striven amain, and fought, I and they, before the judges, and it hath profited us naught: nay, we have wasted all our father left us and are disgraced among the folk by reason of our testimony one against other. Shall I then contend with them anew on thine account and shall we appeal to the judges? This may not be! Rather do thou take up thine abode with me, and the scone I eat I will share with thee. Do thou pray for me and Allah will give me the means of thine alimony. Leave them to receive of the Almighty the recompense of their deed, and console thyself with the saying of the poet who said:—

If a fool oppress thee bear patiently; ✿ And from Time expect thy revenge to see:
Shun tyranny; for if mount oppressed ✿ A mount, ‘twould be shattered by tyranny.

And he soothed and comforted her till she consented and took up her dwelling with him. Then he gat him a net and went a-fishing every day in the river or the banks about Bulák and old Cairo or some other place in which there was water; and one day he would earn ten coppers,[260] another twenty and another thirty, which he 215 spent upon his mother and himself, and they ate well and drank well. But, as for his brothers, they plied no craft and neither sold nor bought; misery and ruin and overwhelming calamity entered their houses and they wasted that which they had taken from their mother and became of the wretched naked beggars. So at times they would come to their mother, humbling themselves before her exceedingly and complaining to her of hunger; and she (a mother’s heart being pitiful) would give them some mouldy, sour-smelling bread or, if there were any meat cooked the day before, she would say to them, “Eat it quick and go ere your brother come; for ‘twould be grievous to him and he would harden his heart against me, and ye would disgrace me with him.” So they would eat in haste and go. One day among days they came in to their mother, and she set cooked meat and bread before them. As they were eating, behold, in came their brother Judar, at whose sight the parent was put to shame and confusion, fearing lest he should be wroth with her; and she bowed her face earthwards abashed before her son. But he smiled in their faces, saying, “Welcome, O my brothers! A blessed day![261] How comes it that ye visit me this blessed day?” Then he embraced them both and entreated them lovingly, saying to them, “I thought not that ye would have left me desolate by your absence nor that ye would have forborne to come and visit me and your mother.” Said they, “By Allah, O our brother, we longed sore for thee and naught withheld us but abashment because of what befel between us and thee; but indeed we have repented much. ‘Twas Satan’s doing, the curse of Allah the Most High be upon him! And now we have no blessing but thyself and our mother.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Judar entered his place and saw his brothers, he welcomed them both, saying, “And I have no blessing but you twain.” And his mother exclaimed, “Allah whiten thy face, and increase thy prosperity, for thou art the most generous of us all, O my son!” Then he said “Welcome to you both! Abide with me; for the Lord is bountiful 216 and good aboundeth with me.” So he made peace with them, and they supped and nighted with him; and next morning, after they had broken their fast, Judar shouldered his net and went out, trusting in The Opener[262] whilst the two others also went forth and were absent till midday, when they returned and their mother set the noon-meal before them. At nightfall Judar came home, bearing meat and greens, and they abode on this wise a month’s space, Judar catching fish and selling it and spending their price on his mother and his brothers, and these eating and frolicking till, one day, it chanced he went down to the river-bank and throwing his net, brought it up empty. He cast it a second time, but again it came up empty and he said in himself, “No fish in this place!” So he removed to another and threw the net there, but without avail. And he ceased not to remove from place to place till nightfall, but caught not a single sprat[263] and said to himself, “Wonderful! Hath the fish fled the river or what?” Then he shouldered the net and made for home, chagrined, concerned, feeling for his mother and brothers and knowing not how he should feed them that night. Presently, he came to a baker’s oven and saw the folk crowding for bread, with silver in their hands, whilst the baker took no note of them. So he stood there sighing, and the baker said to him, “Welcome to thee, O Judar! Dost thou want bread?” But he was silent and the baker continued, “An thou have no dirhams, take thy sufficiency and thou shalt get credit.” So Judar said, “Give me ten coppers’ worth of bread and take this net in pledge.” Rejoined the baker, “Nay, my poor fellow, the net is thy gate of earning thy livelihood, and if I take it from thee, I shall close up against thee the door of thy subsistence. Take thee ten Nusfs’ worth of bread and take these other ten, and to-morrow bring me fish for the twenty.” “On my head and eyes be it!” quoth Judar and took the bread and money saying, “To-morrow the Lord will dispel the trouble of my case and will provide me the means of acquittance.” Then he bought meat and vegetables and carried them home to his mother, who cooked them and they supped and went to bed. Next morning he arose at daybreak and took the net, and his mother said to him, “Sit down and 217 break thy fast.” But he said, “Do thou and my brothers breakfast,” and went down to the river about Bulak where he ceased not to cast once, twice, thrice; and to shift about all day, without aught falling to him, till the hour of mid-afternoon prayer, when he shouldered his net and went away sore dejected. His way led him perforce by the booth of the baker who, when he saw him, counted out to him the loaves and the money, saying, “Come, take it and go; an it be not to-day, ‘twill be to-morrow.” Judar would have excused himself, but the baker said to him, “Go! There needeth no excuse; an thou had netted aught, it would be with thee; so

seeing thee empty-handed, I knew thou hadst gotten naught; and if to-morrow thou have no better luck, come and take bread and be not abashed, for I will give thee credit." So Judar took the bread and money and went home. On the third day also he sallied forth and fished from tank to tank until the time of afternoon-prayer, but caught nothing; so he went to the baker and took the bread and silver as usual. On this wise he did seven days running, till he became disheartened and said in himself, "To-day I go to the Lake Kárún."[264] So he went thither and was about to cast his net, when there came up to him unawares a Maghrabí, a Moor, clad in splendid attire and riding a she-mule with a pair of gold-embroidered saddle-bags on her back and all her trappings also orfrayed. The Moor alighted and said to him, "Peace be upon thee, O Judar, O son of Omar!" "And on thee likewise be peace, O my lord the pilgrim!" replied the fisherman. Quoth the Maghrabi, "O Judar, I have need of thee and, given thou obey me, thou shalt get great good and shalt be my companion and manage my affairs for me." Quoth Judar, "O my lord, tell me what is in thy mind and I will obey thee, without demur." Said the Moor, "Repeat the Fatihah, the Opening Chapter of the Koran."[265] So he recited it with him and the Moor bringing out a silken cord, said to Judar, "Pinion my elbows behind me with this cord, as fast as fast can be, and cast me into the lake; then wait a little while; and, if thou see me put forth my hands above the water, raising them high ere my body show, 218 cast thy net over me and drag me out in haste; but if thou see me come up feet foremost, then know that I am dead; in which case do thou leave me and take the mule and saddle-bags and carry them to the merchants' bazar, where thou wilt find a Jew by name Shamáyah. Give him the mule and he will give thee an hundred dinars, which do thou take and go thy ways and keep the matter secret with all secrecy." So Judar tied his arms tightly behind his back and he kept saying, "Tie tighter." Then said he, "Push me till I fall into the lake:" so he pushed him in and he sank. Judar stood waiting some time till, behold, the Moor's feet appeared above the water, whereupon he knew that he was dead. So he left him and drove the mule to the bazar, where seated on a stool at the door of his storehouse he saw the Jew who spying the mule, cried, "In very sooth the man hath perished," adding, "and naught undid him but covetise." Then he took the mule from Judar and gave him an hundred dinars, charging him to keep the matter secret. So Judar went and bought what bread he needed, saying to the baker, "Take this gold piece!"; and the man summed up what was due to him and said, "I still owe thee two days' bread"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Judar, when the baker after summing up what was due to him said, "I still owe thee two days' bread," replied, "Good," and went on to the butcher, to whom he gave a gold piece and took meat, saying, "Keep the rest of the dinar on account." Then he bought vegetables and

going home, found his brothers importuning their mother for victual, whilst she cried, "Have patience till your brother come home, for I have naught." So he went in to them and said, "Take and eat;" and they fell on the food like cannibals. Then he gave his mother the rest of his gold saying, "If my brothers come to thee, give them wherewithal to buy food and eat in my absence." He slept well that night and next morning he took his net and going down to Lake Karun stood there and was about to cast his net, when behold, there came up to him a second Maghribi, riding on a she-mule more handsomely accoutred than he of the day before and having with him a pair of saddle-bags of which each 219 pocket contained a casket. "Peace be with thee, O Judar!" said the Moor: "And with thee be peace, O my lord, the pilgrim!" replied Judar. Asked the Moor, "Did there come to thee yesterday a Moor riding on a mule like this of mine?" Hereat Judar was alarmed and answered, "I saw none," fearing lest the other say, "Whither went he?" and if he replied, "He was drowned in the lake," that haply he should charge him with having drowned him; wherefore he could not but deny. Rejoined the Moor, "Harkye, O unhappy![266] this was my brother, who is gone before me." Judar persisted, "I know naught of him." Then the Moor enquired, "Didst thou not bind his arms behind him and throw him into the lake, and did he not say to thee:—If my hands appear above the water first, cast thy net over me and drag me out in haste; but, if my feet show first, know that I am dead and carry the mule to the Jew Shamayah, who shall give thee an hundred dinars." Quoth Judar, "Since thou knowest all this why and wherefore dost thou question me?"; and quoth the Moor, "I would have thee do with me as thou didst with my brother." Then he gave him a silken cord, saying, "Bind my hands behind me and throw me in, and if I fare as did my brother, take the mule to the Jew and he will give thee other hundred dinars." Said Judar, "Come on;" so he came and he bound him and pushed him into the lake, where he sank. Then Judar sat watching and after awhile, his feet appeared above the water and the fisher said, "He is dead and damned! Inshallah, may Maghribis come to me every day, and I will pinion them and push them in and they shall die; and I will content me with an hundred dinars for each dead man." Then he took the mule to the Jew, who seeing him asked, "The other is dead?" Answered Judar, "May thy head live!"; and the Jew said, "This is the reward of the covetous!" Then he took the mule and gave Judar an hundred dinars, with which he returned to his mother. "O my son," said she, "whence hast thou this?" So he told her, and she said, "Go not again to Lake Karun, indeed I fear for thee from the Moors." Said he, "O my mother, I do but cast them in by their own wish, and what am I to do? This craft bringeth me an hundred dinars a day and I return speedily; wherefore, by Allah, I will not leave 220 going to Lake Karun, till the trace of the Mağháribah[267] is cut off and not one of them is left." So, on the morrow which was the third day, he went down to the lake and stood there, till there came up a third Moor, riding on a mule with saddle-bags and still more richly accoutred than the first two, who said to him, "Peace be with thee, O Judar, O

son of Omar!" And the fisherman saying in himself, "How comes it that they all know me?" returned his salute. Asked the Maghribi, "Have any Moors passed by here?" "Two," answered Judar. "Whither went they?" enquired the Moor, and Judar replied, "I pinioned their hands behind them and cast them into the lake, where they were drowned, and the same fate is in store for thee." The Moor laughed and rejoined, saying, "O unhappy! every life hath its term appointed." Then he alighted and gave the fisherman the silken cord, saying, "Do with me, O Judar, as thou didst with them." Said Judar, "Put thy hands behind thy back, that I may pinion thee, for I am in haste, and time flies." So he put his hands behind him and Judar tied him up and cast him in. Then he waited awhile; presently the Moor thrust both hands forth of the water and called out to him, saying, "Ho, good fellow, cast out thy net!" So Judar threw the net over him and drew him ashore, and lo! in each hand he held a fish as red as coral. Quoth the Moor, "Bring me the two caskets that are in the saddle-bags." So Judar brought them and opened them to him, and he laid in each casket a fish and shut them up. Then he pressed Judar to his bosom and kissed him on the right cheek and the left, saying, "Allah save thee from all stress! By the Almighty, hadst thou not cast the net over me and pulled me out, I should have kept hold of these two fishes till I sank and was drowned, for I could not get ashore of myself." Quoth Judar, "O my lord the pilgrim, Allah upon thee, tell me the true history of the two drowned men and the truth anent these two fishes and the Jew."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Tenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Judar asked the Maghribi, saying, "Prithee tell me first of the drowned men," the Maghribi answered:—Know, O Judar, that these drowned men were my two brothers, by name Abd al-Salám and Abd al-Ahad. My own name is Abd al-Samad, and the Jew also is our brother; his name is Abd al-Rahím and he is no Jew, but a true believer of the Maliki school. Our father, whose name was Abd al-Wadúd,[268] taught us magic and the art of solving mysteries and bringing hoards to light, and we applied ourselves thereto, till we compelled the Ifrits and Marids of the Jinn to do us service. By-and-by, our sire died and left us much wealth, and we divided amongst us his treasures and talismans, till we came to the books, when we fell out over a volume called "The Fables of the Ancients," whose like is not in the world, nor can its price be paid of any, nor is its value to be evened with gold and jewels; for in it are particulars of all the hidden hoards of the earth and the solution of every secret. Our father was wont to make use of this book, of which we had some small matter by heart, and each of us desired to possess it, that he might acquaint himself with what was therein. Now when we fell out there was in our company an old man by name Cohen Al-Abtan,[269] who had reared our sire and taught him divination and gramarye, and he said to us, "Bring

me the book." So we gave it him and he continued:—Ye are my son's sons, and it may not be that I should wrong any of you. So whoso is minded to have the volume, let him address himself to achieve the treasure of Al-Shamardal[270] and bring me the celestial planisphere and the Kohl-phial and the seal-ring and the sword. For the ring hath a Marid that serveth it called Al-Ra'ad al-Kásif;[271] and whoso hath possession thereof, neither King nor Sultan may prevail against him; and if he will, he may therewith make himself master of the earth, in all the length and breadth thereof. As for the brand, if its bearer draw it and brandish it 222 against an army, the army will be put to the rout; and if he say the while, "Slay yonder host," there will come forth of that sword lightning and fire, that will kill the whole many. As for the planisphere, its possessor hath only to turn its face toward any country, east or west, with whose sight he hath a mind to solace himself, and therein he will see that country and its people, as they were between his hands and he sitting in his place; and if he be wroth with a city and have a mind to burn it, he hath but to face the planisphere towards the sun's disc, saying, "Let such a city be burnt," and that city will be consumed with fire. As for the Kohl-phial, whoso pencilleth his eyes therefrom, he shall espy all the treasures of the earth. And I make this condition with you which is that whoso faileth to hit upon the hoards shall forfeit his right; and that none save he who shall achieve the treasure and bring me the four precious things which be therein shall have any claim to take this book. So we all agreed to this condition, and he continued, "O my sons, know that the treasure of Al-Shamardal is under the commandment of the sons of the Red King, and your father told me that he had himself essayed to open the treasure, but could not; for the sons of the Red King fled from him into the land of Egypt and took refuge in a lake there, called Lake Karun, whither he pursued them, but could not prevail over them, by reason of their stealing into that lake, which was guarded by a spell."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Cohen Al-Abtan had told the youths this much, he continued his tale as follows, "So your father returned empty-handed and unable to win to his wish; and after failing he complained to me of his ill-success, whereupon I drew him an astrological figure and found that the treasure could be achieved only by means of a young fisherman of Cairo, hight Judar bin Omar, the place of foregathering with whom was at Lake Karun, for that he should be the means of capturing the sons of the Red King and that the charm would not be dissolved, save if he should bind the hands of the treasure-seeker behind him and cast him into the lake, there to do battle with the sons of the Red King. And he whose lot it was to 223 succeed would lay hands upon them; but, if it were not destined to him he should perish and his feet appear above water. As for him who was successful, his hands would show first, whereupon it behoved that Judar should cast

the net over him and draw him ashore." Now quoth my brothers Abd al-Salam and Abd al-Ahad, "We will wend and make trial, although we perish;" and quoth I, "And I also will go;" but my brother Abd al-Rahím (he whom thou sawest in the habit of a Jew) said, "I have no mind to this." Thereupon we agreed with him that he should repair to Cairo in the disguise of a Jewish merchant, so that, if one of us perished in the lake, he might take his mule and saddle-bags and give the bearer an hundred dinars. The first that came to thee the sons of the Red King slew, and so did they with my second brother; but against me they could not prevail and I laid hands on them. Cried Judar, "And where is thy catch?" Asked the Moor, "Didst thou not see me shut them in the caskets?" "Those were fishes," said Judar. "Nay," answered the Maghribi, "they are Ifrits in the guise of fish. But, O Judar," continued he, "thou must know that the treasure can be opened only by thy means: so say, wilt thou do my bidding and go with me to the city Fez and Mequinez[272] where we will open the treasure?; and after I will give thee what thou wilt and thou shalt ever be my brother in the bond of Allah and return to thy family with a joyful heart." Said Judar, "O my lord the pilgrim, I have on my neck a mother and two brothers,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Judar said to the Maghribi, "I have on my neck a mother and two brothers, whose provider I am; and if I go with thee, who shall give them bread to eat?" Replied the Moor, "This is an idle excuse! if it be but a matter of expenditure, I will give thee a 224 thousand ducats for thy mother, wherewith she may provide herself till thou come back: and indeed thou shalt return before the end of four months." So when Judar heard mention of the thousand dinars, he said, "Here with them, O Pilgrim, and I am thy man;" and the Moor, pulling out the money, gave it to him, whereupon he carried it to his mother and told her what had passed between them, saying, "Take these thousand dinars and expend of them upon thyself and my brothers, whilst I journey to Marocco with the Moor, for I shall be absent four months, and great good will betide me; so bless me, O my mother!" Answered she, "O my son, thou desolatest me and I fear for thee." "O my mother," rejoined he, "no harm can befal him who is in Allah's keeping, and the Maghribi is a man of worth;" and he went on to praise his condition to her. Quoth she, "Allah incline his heart to thee! Go with him, O my son; peradventure, he will give thee somewhat." So he took leave of his mother and rejoined the Moor Abd al-Samad, who asked him, "Hast thou consulted thy mother?" "Yes," answered Judar; "and she blessed me." "Then mount behind me," said the Maghribi. So Judar mounted the mule's crupper and they rode on from noon till the time of mid-afternoon prayer, when the fisherman was an-hungered; but seeing no victual with the Moor, said to him, "O my lord the pilgrim, belike thou hast forgotten to bring us aught to eat by the way?" Asked the Moor, "Art thou hungry?" and Judar answered, "Yes." So Abd al-

Samad alighted and made Judar alight and take down the saddle-bags[273]; then he said to him, “What wilt thou have, O my brother?” “Anything.” “Allah upon thee, tell me what thou hast a mind to.” “Bread and cheese.” “O my poor fellow! bread and cheese besit thee not; wish for something good.” “Just now everything is good to me.” “Dost thou like nice browned chicken?” “Yes!” “Dost thou like rice and honey?” “Yes!” And the Moor went on to ask him if he liked this dish and that dish till he had named four-and-twenty kinds of meats; and Judar thought to himself, “He must be daft! Where are all these dainties to come from, seeing he hath neither cook nor kitchen? But I’ll say to him, ‘Tis enough!” So he cried, “That will do: thou makest me long for all these meats, and I see nothing.” Quoth the Moor, “Thou art welcome, O Judar!” and, putting his hand into the saddle-bags, pulled out a golden 225 dish containing two hot browned chickens. Then he thrust his hand a second time and drew out a golden dish, full of kabobs[274]; nor did he stint taking out dishes from saddle-bags, till he had brought forth the whole of the four-and-twenty kinds he had named, whilst Judar looked on. Then said the Moor, “Fall to, poor fellow!”, and Judar said to him, “O my lord, thou carriest in yonder saddle-bags kitchen and kitcheners!” The Moor laughed and replied, “These are magical saddle-bags and have a servant, who would bring us a thousand dishes an hour, if we called for them,” Quoth Judar, “By Allah, a meat thing in saddle-bags!” Then they ate their fill and threw away what was left; after which the Moor replaced the empty dishes in the saddle-bags and putting in his hand, drew out an ewer. They drank and making the Wuzu-ablution, prayed the mid-afternoon prayer; after which Abd al-Samad replaced the ewer and the two caskets in the saddle-bags and throwing them over the mule’s back, mounted and cried, “Up with thee and let us be off,” presently adding, “O Judar, knowest thou how far we have come since we left Cairo?” “Not I, by Allah,” replied he, and Abd al-Samad, “We have come a whole month’s journey.” Asked Judar, “And how is that?”; and the Moor answered, “Know, O Judar, that this mule under us is a Marid of the Jinn who every day performeth a year’s journey; but, for thy sake, she hath gone an easier pace.” Then they set out again and fared on westwards till nightfall, when they halted and the Maghribi brought out supper from the saddle-bags, and in like manner, in the morning, he took forth wherewithal to break their fast. So they rode on four days, journeying till midnight and then alighting and sleeping until morning, when they fared on again; and all that Judar had a mind to, he sought of the Moor, who brought it out of the saddle-bags. On the fifth day, they arrived at Fez and Mequinez and entered the city, where all who met the Maghribi saluted him and kissed his hands; and he continued riding through the streets, till he came to a certain door, at which he knocked, whereupon it opened and out came a girl 226 like the moon, to whom said he, “O my daughter, O Rahmah,[275] open us the upper chamber.” “On my head and eyes, O my papa!” replied she and went in, swaying her hips to and fro with a graceful and swimming gait like a thirsting gazelle, movements that ravished Judar’s

reason, and he said, “This is none other than a King’s daughter.” So she opened the upper chamber, and the Moor, taking the saddle-bags from the mule’s back, said, “Go, and God bless thee!” when lo! the earth clove asunder and swallowing the mule, closed up again as before. And Judar said, “O Protector! praised be Allah, who hath kept us in safety on her back!” Quoth the Maghribi, “Marvel not, O Judar. I told thee that the mule was an Ifrit; but come with us into the upper chamber.” So they went up into it, and Judar was amazed at the profusion of rich furniture and pendants of gold and silver and jewels and other rare and precious things which he saw there. As soon as they were seated, the Moor bade Rahmah bring him a certain bundle[276] and opening it, drew out a dress worth a thousand dinars, which he gave to Judar, saying, “Don this dress, O Judar, and welcome to thee!” So Judar put it on and became a fair ensample of the Kings of the West. Then the Maghribi laid the saddle-bags before him, and, putting in his hand, pulled out dish after dish, till they had before them a tray of forty kinds of meat, when he said to Judar, “Come near, O my master! eat and excuse us”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirteenth Night,



She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Maghribi having served up in the pavilion a tray of forty kinds of meat, said to Judar, “Come near, O my master, and excuse us for that we know not what meats thou desirest; but tell us what thou hast a mind to, and we will set it before thee without delay.” Replied Judar, “By Allah, O my lord the pilgrim, I love all kinds of meat and unlove none; so ask me not of aught, but bring all 227 that cometh to thy thought, for save eating to do I have nought.” After this he tarried twenty days with the Moor, who clad him in new clothes every day, and all this time they ate from the saddle-bags; for the Maghribi bought neither meat nor bread nor aught else, nor cooked, but brought everything out of the bags, even to various sorts of fruit. On the twenty-first day, he said, “O Judar, up with thee; this is the day appointed for opening the hoard of Al-Shamardal.” So he rose and

they went afoot[277] without the city, where they found two slaves, each holding a she-mule. The Moor mounted one beast and Judar the other, and they ceased not riding till noon, when they came to a stream of running water, on whose banks Abd al-Samad alighted saying, "Dismount, O Judar!" Then he signed with his hand to the slaves and said, "To it!" So they took the mules and going each his own way, were absent awhile, after which they returned, one bearing a tent, which he pitched, and the other carpets, which he spread in the tent and laid mattresses, pillows and cushions there-around. Then one of them brought the caskets containing the two fishes; and another fetched the saddle-bags; whereupon the Maghribi arose and said, "Come, O Judar!" So Judar followed him into the tent and sat down beside him; and he brought out dishes of meat from the saddle-bags and they ate the undurn meal. Then the Moor took the two caskets and conjured over them both, whereupon there came from within voices that said, "Adsumus, at thy service, O diviner of the world! Have mercy upon us!" and called aloud for aid. But he ceased not to repeat conjurations and they to call for help, till the two caskets flew in sunder, the fragments flying about, and there came forth two men, with pinioned hands saying, "Quarter, O diviner of the world! What wilt thou with us?" Quoth he, "My will is to burn you both with fire, except ye make a covenant with me, to open to me the treasure of Al-Shamardal." Quoth they, "We promise this to thee, and we will open the treasure to thee, so thou produce to us Judar bin Omar, the fisherman, for the hoard may not be opened but by his means, nor can any enter therein save Judar." Cried the Maghribi, "Him of whom ye speak, I have brought, and he is here, listening to you and 228looking at you." Thereupon they covenanted with him to open the treasure to him, and he released them. Then he brought out a hollow wand and tablets of red carnelian which he laid on the rod; and after this he took a chafing-dish and setting charcoal thereon, blew one breath into it and it kindled forthwith. Presently he brought incense and said, "O Judar, I am now about to begin the necessary conjurations and fumigations, and when I have once begun, I may not speak, or the charm will be naught; so I will teach thee first what thou must do to win thy wish." "Teach me," quoth Judar. "Know," quoth the Moor, "that when I have recited the spell and thrown on the incense, the water will dry up from the river's bed and discover to thee a golden door, the bigness of the city-gate, with two rings of metal thereon; whereupon do thou go down to the door and knock a light knock and wait awhile; then knock a second time a knock louder than the first and wait another while; after which give three knocks in rapid succession, and thou wilt hear a voice ask:—Who knocketh at the door of the treasure, unknowing how to solve the secrets? Do thou answer:—I am Judar the fisherman son of Omar: and the door will open and there will come forth a figure with a brand in hand who will say to thee: If thou be that man, stretch forth thy neck, that I may strike off thy head. Then do thou stretch forth thy neck and fear not; for, when he lifts his hand and smites thee with the sword, he will fall down before thee, and in a little thou wilt see him a body sans soul; and the stroke shall not hurt thee nor shall any harm befal thee; but, if thou

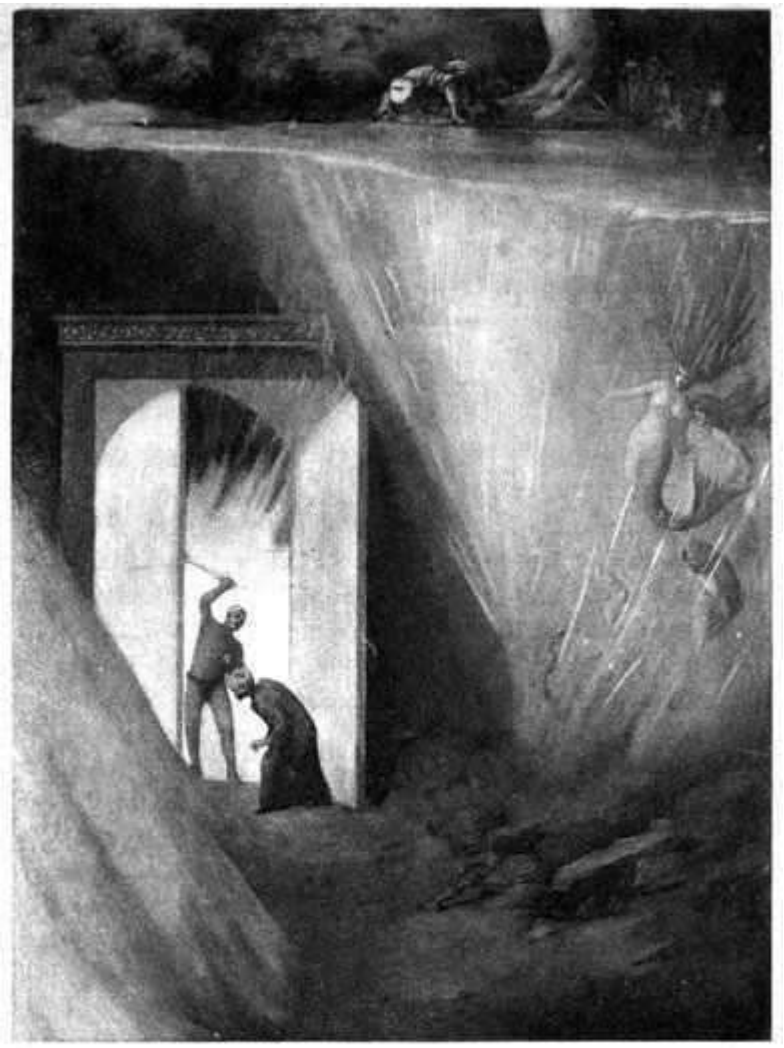
gainsay him, he will slay thee. When thou hast undone his enchantment by obedience, enter and go on till thou see another door, at which do thou knock, and there will come forth to thee a horseman riding a mare with a lance on his shoulder and say to thee:—What bringeth thee hither, where none may enter ne man ne Jinni? And he will shake his lance at thee. Bare thy breast to him and he will smite thee and fall down forthright and thou shalt see him a body without a soul; but if thou cross him he will kill thee. Then go on to the third door, whence there will come forth to thee a man with a bow and arrows in his hand and take aim at thee. Bare thy breast to him and he will shoot at thee and fall down before thee, a body without a soul; but if thou oppose him, he will kill thee. Then go on to the fourth door"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Maghribi said to Judar, "Go on to the fourth door and knock and it shall be opened to thee, when there will come forth to thee a lion huge of bulk which will rush upon thee, opening his mouth and showing he hath a mind to devour thee. Have no fear of him, neither flee from him: but when he cometh to thee, give him thy hand and he will bite at it and fall down straightway, nor shall aught of hurt betide thee. Then enter the fifth door, where thou shalt find a black slave, who will say to thee, Who art thou? Say, I am Judar! and he will answer, If thou be that man, open the sixth door. Then do thou go up to the door and say, O Isa, tell Musa to open the door; whereupon the door will fly open and thou wilt see two dragons, one on the left hand and another on the right, which will open their mouths and fly at thee, both at once. Do thou put forth to them both hands and they will bite each a hand and fall down dead; but an thou resist them, they will slay thee. Then go on to the seventh door and knock, whereupon there will come forth to thee thy mother and say:—Welcome, O my son! Come, that I may greet thee! But do thou reply, Hold off from me and doff thy dress. And she will make answer:—O my son, I am thy mother and I have a claim upon thee for suckling thee and for rearing thee: how then wouldst thou strip me naked? Then do thou say, Except thou put off thy clothes, I will kill thee! and look to thy right where thou wilt see a sword hanging up. Take it and draw it upon her, saying, Strip! whereupon she will wheedle thee and humble herself to thee; but have thou no ruth on her nor be beguiled, and as often as she putteth off aught, say to her, off with the lave; nor do thou cease to threaten her with death, till she doff all that is upon her and fall down, whereupon the enchantment will be dissolved and the charms undone, and thou wilt be safe as to thy life. Then enter the hall of the treasure, where thou wilt see the gold lying in heaps; but pay no heed to aught thereof, but look to a closet at the upper end of the hall, where thou wilt see a curtain drawn. Draw back the curtain and thou wilt descry the enchanter, Al-Shamardal, lying upon a couch of gold, with something at his head

round and shining like the moon, which is the 230celestial planisphere. He is baldrick'd with the sword[278]; on his finger is the ring and about his neck hangs a chain, to which hangs the Kohl-phial. Bring me the four talismans, and beware lest thou forget aught of that which I have told thee, or thou wilt repent and there will be fear for thee." And he repeated his directions a second and a third and a fourth time, till Judar said, "I have them by heart: but who may face all these enchantments that thou namest and endure against these mighty terrors?" Replied the Moor, "O Judar, fear not, for they are semblances without life;" and he went on to hearten him, till he said, "I put my trust in Allah." Then Abd al-Samad threw perfumes on the chafing-dish, and addressed himself to reciting conjurations for a time when, behold, the water disappeared and uncovered the river-bed and discovered the door of the treasure, whereupon Judar went down to the door and knocked. Therewith he heard a voice saying, "Who knocketh at the door of the treasure, unknowing how to solve the secrets?" Quoth he, "I am Judar son of Omar;" whereupon the door opened and there came forth a figure with a drawn sword, who said to him, "Stretch forth thy neck." So he stretched forth his neck and the species smote him and fell down, lifeless. Then he went on to the second door and did the like, nor did he cease to do thus, till he had undone the enchantments of the first six doors and came to the seventh door, whence there issued forth to him his mother, saying, "I salute thee, O my son!" He asked, "What art thou?", and she answered, "O my son, I am thy mother who bare thee nine months and suckled thee and reared thee." Quoth he, "Put off thy clothes." Quoth she, "Thou art my son, how wouldst thou strip me naked?" But he said "Strip, or I will strike off thy head with this sword;" and he stretched out his hand to the brand and drew it upon her saying, "Except thou strip, I will slay thee." Then the strife became long between them and as often as he redoubled on her his threats, she put off somewhat of her clothes and he said to her, "Doff the rest," 231with many menaces; while she removed each article slowly and kept saying, "O my son, thou hast disappointed my fosterage of thee," till she had nothing left but her petticoat-trousers. Then said she, "O my son, is thy heart stone? Wilt thou dishonour me by discovering my shame? Indeed, this is unlawful, O my son!" And he answered, "Thou sayest sooth; put not off thy trousers." At once, as he uttered these words, she cried out, "He hath made default; beat him!" Whereupon there fell upon him blows like rain-drops and the servants of the treasure flocked to him and dealt him a tunding which he forgot not in all his days; after which they thrust him forth and threw him down without the treasure and the hoard-doors closed of themselves, whilst the waters of the river returned to their bed.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the servants of the treasure beat Judar and cast him out and the hoard-doors closed of themselves, whilst the river-waters returned to their bed, Abd al-Samad the Maghribi took Judar up in haste and repeated conjurations over him, till he came to his senses but still dazed as with drink, when he asked him, "What hast thou done, O wretch?" Answered Judar, "O my brother, I undid all the opposing enchantments, till I came to my mother and there befel between her and myself a long contention. But I made her doff her clothes, O my brother, till but her trousers remained upon her and she said to me, Do not dishonour me; for to discover one's shame is forbidden. So I left her her trousers out of pity, and behold, she cried out and said, He hath made default; beat him!

Whereupon there came out upon me folk, whence I know not, and tunding me with a belabouring which was a Sister of Death, thrust me forth; nor do I know what befel me after this." Quoth the Moor, "Did I not warn thee not to swerve from my directions? Verily, thou hast injured me and hast injured thyself: for if thou hadst made her take off her petticoat-trousers, we had won to our wish; but now thou must abide with me till this day next year." Then he cried out to the two slaves, who struck the tent forthright and loaded it on the beasts; then they were absent awhile and presently returned with the two mules; and the twain mounted 232 and rode back to the city of Fez, where Judar tarried with the Maghribi, eating well and drinking well and donning a grand dress every day, till the year was ended and the anniversary day dawned. Then the Moor said to him, "Come with me, for this is the appointed day." And Judar said, "'Tis well." So the Maghribi carried him without the city, where they found the two slaves with the mules, and rode on till they reached the river. Here the slaves pitched the tent and furnished it; and the Moor brought forth the tray of food and they ate the morning meal; after which Abd al-Samad brought out the wand and the tablets as before and, kindling the fire in the chafing-dish, made ready the incense. Then said he, "O Judar, I wish to renew my charge to thee." "O my lord the pilgrim," replied he, "if I have forgotten the bastinado, I have forgotten the injunctions."[279] Asked the Moor, "Dost thou indeed remember them?" and he answered, "Yes." Quoth the Moor, "Keep thy wits, and think not that the woman is thy very mother; nay, she is but an enchantment in her semblance, whose purpose is to find thee defaulting. Thou camest off alive the first time; but, an thou trip this time, they will slay thee." Quoth Judar, "If I slip this time, I deserve to be burnt of them." Then Abd al-Samad cast the perfumes into the fire and recited the conjurations, till the river dried up; whereupon Judar descended and knocked. The door opened and he entered and undid the several enchantments, till he came to the seventh door and the semblance of his mother appeared before him, saying, "Welcome,[280] O my son!" But he said to her, "How am I thy son, O accursed? Strip!" And she began to wheedle him and put off garment after garment, till only her trousers remained; and he said to her, "Strip, O accursed!" So she put off her trousers and became a body without a soul. Then he entered the hall of the treasures, where he saw gold lying in heaps, but paid no heed to it and passed on to the closet at the upper end, where he saw the enchanter Al-Shamardal lying on a couch of gold, baldrick'd with the sword, with the ring on his finger, the Kohl-phial on his breast and the celestial planisphere hanging over his head. So he loosed the sword and taking the ring, the Kohl-phial and the planisphere, went forth, when behold, a band of music sounded 233 for him and the servants of the treasure cried out, saying, "Mayest thou be assained with that thou hast gained, O Judar!" Nor did the music leave sounding, till he came forth of the treasure to the Maghribi, who gave up his conjurations and fumigations and rose up and embraced him and saluted him. Then Judar made over to him the four hoarded talismans, and he

took them and cried out to the slaves, who carried away the tent and brought the mules. So they mounted and returned to Fez-city, where the Moor fetched the saddle-bags and brought forth dish after dish of meat, till the tray was full, and said, “O my brother, O Judar, eat!” So he ate till he was satisfied, when the Moor emptied what remained of the meats and other dishes and returned the empty platters to the saddle-bags. Then quoth he, “O Judar, thou hast left home and native land on our account and thou hast accomplished our dearest desire; wherefore thou hast a right to require a reward of us. Ask, therefore, what thou wilt, it is Almighty Allah who giveth unto thee by our means.[281] Ask thy will and be not ashamed, for thou art deserving.” “O my lord,” quoth Judar, “I ask first of Allah the Most High and then of thee, that thou give me yonder saddle-bags.” So the Maghribi called for them and gave them to him, saying, “Take them, for they are thy due; and, if thou hadst asked of me aught else instead, I had given it to thee. Eat from them, thou and thy family; but, my poor fellow, these will not profit thee, save by way of provaunt, and thou hast wearied thyself with us and we promised to send thee home rejoicing. So we will join to these other saddle-bags, full of gold and gems, and forward thee back to thy native land, where thou shalt become a gentleman and a merchant and clothe thyself and thy family; nor shalt thou want ready money for thine expenditure. And know that the manner 234 of using our gift is on this wise. Put thy hand therein and say:—O servant of these saddle-bags, I conjure thee by the virtue of the Mighty Names which have power over thee, bring me such a dish! And he will bring thee whatsoever thou askest, though thou shouldst call for a thousand different dishes a day.” So saying, he filled him a second pair of saddle-bags half with gold and half with gems and precious stones; and, sending for a slave and a mule, said to him, “Mount this mule, and the slave shall go before thee and show thee the way, till thou come to the door of thy house, where do thou take the two pair of saddle-bags and give him the mule, that he may bring it back. But admit none into thy secret; and so we commend thee to Allah!” “May the Almighty increase thy good!” replied Judar and, laying the two pairs of saddle-bags on the mule’s back, mounted and set forth. The slave went on before him and the mule followed him all that day and night, and on the morrow he entered Cairo by the Gate of Victory,[282] where he saw his mother seated, saying, “Alms, for the love of Allah!” At this sight he well-nigh lost his wits and alighting, threw himself upon her: and when she saw him she wept. Then he mounted her on the mule and walked by her stirrup,[283] till they came to the house, where he set her down and, taking the saddle-bags, left the she-mule to the slave, who led her away and returned with her to his master, for that both slave and mule were devils. As for Judar, it was grievous to him that his mother should beg; so, when they were in the house, he asked her, “O my mother, are my brothers well?”; and she answered, “They are both well.” Quoth he, “Why dost thou beg by the wayside?” Quoth she, “Because I am hungry, O my son,” and he, “Before I went away, I gave thee an hundred dinars one day, the like the next and a thousand on the day of my departure.” “O my son, they cheated me and took the

money from me, saying:—We will buy goods with it. Then they drove me away, and I fell to begging by the wayside, for stress of hunger." "O my mother, no harm shall befal thee, now I am come; so have no concern, for these saddle-bags are full of gold and gems, and 235good aboundeth with me." "Verily, thou art blessed, O my son! Allah accept of thee and increase thee of His bounties! Go, O my son, fetch us some victual, for I slept not last night for excess of hunger, having gone to bed supperless." "Welcome to thee, O my mother! Call for what thou wilt to eat, and I will set it before thee this moment; for I have no occasion to buy from the market, nor need I any to cook." "O my son, I see naught with thee." "I have with me in these saddle-bags all manner of meats." "O my son, whatever is ready will serve to stay hunger." "True, when there is no choice, men are content with the smallest thing; but where there is plenty, they like to eat what is good: and I have abundance; so call for what thou hast a mind to." "O my son, give me some hot bread and a slice of cheese." "O my mother, this befitteth not thy condition." "Then give me to eat of that which befitteth my case, for thou knowest it." "O my mother," rejoined he, "what suit thine estate are browned meat and roast chicken and peppered rice and it becometh thy rank to eat of sausages and stuffed cucumbers and stuffed lamb and stuffed ribs of mutton and vermicelli with broken almonds and nuts and honey and sugar and fritters and almond cakes." But she thought he was laughing at her and making mock of her; so she said to him, "Yauh! Yauh![284] what is come to thee? Dost thou dream or art thou daft?" Asked he, "Why deemest thou that I am mad?" and she answered, "Because thou namest to me all manner rich dishes. Who can avail unto their price, and who knoweth how to dress them?" Quoth he, "By my life! thou shalt eat of all that I have named to thee, and that at once;" and quoth she, "I see nothing;" and he, "Bring me the saddle-bags." So she fetched them and feeling them, found them empty. However, she laid them before him and he thrust in his hand and pulled out dish after dish, till he had set before her all he had named. Whereupon asked she, "O my son, the saddle-bags are small and moreover they were empty; yet hast thou taken thereout all these dishes. Where then were they all?"; and he answered, "O my mother, know that these 236saddle-bags, which the Moor gave me, are enchanted and they have a servant whom, if one desire aught, he hath but to adjure by the Names which command him, saying, "O servant of these saddle-bags, bring me such a dish! and he will bring it."" Quoth his mother, "And may I put out my hand and ask of him?" Quoth he, "Do so." So she stretched out her hand and said, "O servant of the saddle-bags, by the virtue of the Names which command thee, bring me stuffed ribs." Then she thrust in her hand and found a dish containing delicate stuffed ribs of lamb. So she took it out, and called for bread and what else she had a mind to: after which Judar said to her, "O my mother, when thou hast made an end of eating, empty what is left of the food into dishes other than these, and restore the empty platters to the saddle-bags carefully." So she arose and laid them up in a safe place. "And look, O mother mine, that thou keep this secret,"

added he; “and whenever thou hast a mind to aught, take it forth of the saddle-bags and give alms and feed my brothers, whether I be present or absent.” Then he fell to eating with her and behold, while they were thus occupied, in came his two brothers, whom a son of the quarter[285] had apprised of his return, saying, “Your brother is come back, riding on a she-mule, with a slave before him, and wearing a dress that hath not its like.” So they said to each other, “Would to Heaven we had not evilly entreated our mother! There is no hope but that she will surely tell him how we did by her, and then, oh our disgrace with him!” But one of the twain said, “Our mother is soft-hearted, and if she tell him, our brother is yet tenderer over us than she; and, given we excuse ourselves to him, he will accept our excuse.” So they went in to him and he rose to them and saluting them with the friendliest salutation, bade them sit down and eat. So they ate till they were satisfied, for they were weak with hunger; after which Judar said to them, “O my brothers, take what is left and distribute it to the poor and needy.” “O brother,” replied they, “let us keep it to sup withal.” But he answered, “When suppertime cometh, ye shall have more than this.” So they took the rest of the victual and going out, gave it to every poor man who passed by them, saying, “Take and eat,” till nothing was left. Then they brought back the dishes and Judar said to his mother, 237“Put them in the saddle-bags.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Judar, when his brethren had finished their under-meal, said to his mother, “Put back the platters in the saddle-bags.” And when it was eventide, he entered the saloon and took forth of the saddle-bags a table of forty dishes; after which he went up to the upper room and, sitting down between his brothers, said to his mother, “Bring the supper.”[286] So she went down to the saloon and, finding there the dishes ready, laid the tray and brought up the forty dishes, one after other. Then they ate the evening meal, and when they had done, Judar said to his brothers, “Take and feed the poor and needy.” So they took what was left and gave alms thereof, and presently he brought forth to them sweetmeats, whereof they ate, and what was left he bade them give to the neighbours. On the morrow, they brake their fast after the same fashion, and thus they fared ten days, at the end of which time quoth Sálim to Salím, “How cometh it that our brother setteth before us a banquet in the morning, a banquet at noon, and a banquet at sundown, besides sweetmeats late at night, and all that is left he giveth to the poor? Verily, this is the fashion of Sultans. Yet we never see him buy aught, and he hath neither kitchener nor kitchen, nor doth he light a fire. Whence hath he this great plenty? Hast thou not a mind to discover the cause of all this?” Quoth Salím, “By Allah, I know not: but knowest thou any who will tell us the truth of the case?” Quoth Sálim, “None will tell us save our mother.” So they laid a plot and repairing to their mother one day, in their brother’s absence, said to her, “O our mother, we are

hungry." Replied she, "Rejoice, for ye shall presently be satisfied;" and going into the saloon, sought of the servant of the saddle-bags hot meats, which she took out and set before her sons. "O our mother," cried they, "this meat is hot; yet hast thou not cooked, neither kindled a fire." 238 Quoth she, "It cometh from the saddle-bags;" and quoth they, "What manner of thing be these saddle-bags?" She answered, "They are enchanted; and the required is produced by the charm:" she then told her sons their virtue, enjoining them to secrecy. Said they, "The secret shall be kept, O our mother, but teach us the manner of this." So she taught them the fashion thereof and they fell to putting their hands into the saddle-bags and taking forth whatever they had a mind to. But Judar knew naught of this. Then quoth Sálim privily to Salím, "O my brother, how long shall we abide with Judar servant-wise and eat of his alms? Shall we not contrive to get the saddle-bags from him and make off with them?" "And how shall we make shift to do this?" "We will sell him to the galleys." "How shall we do that?" "We two will go to the Raís, the Chief Captain of the Sea of Suez and bid him to an entertainment, with two of his company. What I say to Judar do thou confirm, and at the end of the night I will show thee what I will do." So they agreed upon the sale of their brother and going to the Captain's quarters said to him, "O Rais, we have come to thee on an errand that will please thee." "Good," answered he; and they continued, "We two are brethren, and we have a third brother, a lewd fellow and good-for-nothing. When our father died, he left us some money, which we shared amongst us, and he took his part of the inheritance and wasted it in frowardness and debauchery, till he was reduced to poverty, when he came upon us and cited us before the magistrates, avouching that we had taken his good and that of his father, and we disputed the matter before the judges and lost the money. Then he waited awhile and attacked us a second time, until he brought us to beggary; nor will he desist from us, and we are utterly weary of him; wherefore we would have thee buy him of us." Quoth the Captain, "Can ye cast about with him and bring him to me here? If so, I will pack him off to sea forthright." Quoth they "We cannot manage to bring him here; but be thou our guest this night and bring with thee two of thy men, not one more; and when he is asleep, we will aid one another to fall upon him, we five, and seize and gag him. Then shalt thou carry him forth the house, under cover of the night, and after do thou with him as thou wilt." Rejoined the Captain, "With all my heart! Will ye sell him for forty dinars?" and they, "Yes, come after nightfall to 239 such a street, by such a mosque, and thou shalt find one of us awaiting thee." And he replied, "Now be off." Then they repaired to Judar and waited awhile, after which Sálim went up to him and kissed his hand. Quoth Judar, "What ails thee, O my brother?" And he made answer, saying, "Know that I have a friend, who hath many a time bidden me to his house in thine absence and hath ever hospitably entreated me, and I owe him a thousand kindnesses, as my brother here wotteth. I met him to-day and he invited me to his house, but I said to him:—I cannot leave my brother Judar.

Quoth he, Bring him with thee; and quoth I:—He will not consent to that; but if ye will be my guests, thou and thy brothers[287] * * * * * (for his brothers were sitting with him); and I invited them thinking that they would refuse. But he accepted my invitation for all of them, saying, Look for me at the gate of the little mosque,[288] and I will come to thee, I and my brothers. And now I fear they will come and am ashamed before thee. So wilt thou hearten my heart and entertain them this night, for thy good is abundant, O my brother? Or if thou consent not, give me leave to take them into the neighbours' houses." Replied Judar, "Why shouldst thou carry them into the neighbours' houses? Is our house then so strait or have we not wherewith to give them supper? Shame on thee to consult me! Thou hast but to call for what thou needest and have rich viands and sweetmeats and to spare. Whenever thou bringest home folk in my absence, ask thy mother, and she will set before thee victual more than enough. Go and fetch them; blessings have descended upon us through such guests." So Sálim kissed his hand and going forth, sat at the gate of the little mosque till after sundown, when the Captain and his men came up to him, and he carried them to the house. When Judar saw them he bade them welcome and seated them and made friends of them, knowing not what the future had in store for him at their hands. Then he called to his mother for supper, and she fell to taking dishes out of the saddle-bags, whilst he said, "Bring such and such meats," till she had set forty different dishes before them. They ate their sufficiency and the tray was taken away, the sailors thinking the while that this liberal 240 entertainment came from Sálim. When a third part of the night was past, Judar set sweetmeats before them and Sálim served them, whilst his two brothers sat with the guests, till they sought to sleep. Accordingly Judar lay down and the others with him, who waited till he was asleep, when they fell upon him together and gagging and pinioning him, before he was awake, carried him forth of the house,[289] under cover of the night,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventeenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that they seized Judar and carrying him forth of the house under cover of the night, at once packed him off to Suez, where they shackled him and set him to work as a galley-slave; and he ceased not to serve thus in silence a whole year.[290] So far concerning Judar; but as for his brothers, they went in next morning to his mother and said to her, "O our mother, our brother Judar is not awake." Said she, "Do ye wake him." Asked they, "Where lieth he?" and she answered, "With the guests." They rejoined, "Haply he went away with them whilst we slept, O mother. It would seem that he had tasted of strangerhood and yearned to get at hidden hoards; for we heard him at talk with the Moors, and they said to him, We will take thee with us and open the treasure to thee." She enquired, "Hath he then been in company with Moors?;" and they replied, saying, "Were they not our guests yesternight?" And she, "Most like he hath gone with them, but Allah will direct him

on the right way; for there is a blessing upon him and he will surely come back with great good." But she wept, for it was grievous to her to be parted from her son. Then said they to her, "O accursed woman, dost thou love Judar with all this love, whilst as for us, whether we be absent or present, thou neither joyest in us nor sorrowest for us? Are we not thy sons, even as Judar is thy son?" She said, "Ye are indeed my sons: but ye are reprobates who deserve no favour of me, for since 241 your father's death I have never seen any good in you; whilst as for Judar, I have had abundant good of him and he hath heartened my heart and entreated me with honour; wherefore it behoveth me to weep for him, because of his kindness to me and to you." When they heard this, they abused her and beat her; after which they sought for the saddle-bags, till they found the two pairs and took the enchanted one and all the gold from one pouch and jewels from the other of the unenchanted, saying, "This was our father's good." Said their mother, "Not so, by Allah!; it belongeth to your brother Judar, who brought it from the land of the Magharibah." Said they, "Thou liest, it was our father's property; and we will dispose of it, as we please." Then they divided the gold and jewels between them; but a brabble arose between them concerning the enchanted saddle-bags, Sálim saying, "I will have them;" and Salím, saying, "I will take them;" and they came to high words. Then said she, "O my sons, ye have divided the gold and the jewels, but this may not be divided, nor can its value be made up in money; and if it be cut in twain, its spell will be voided; so leave it with me and I will give you to eat from it at all times and be content to take a morsel with you. If ye allow me aught to clothe me, 'twill be of your bounty, and each of you shall traffic with the folk for himself. Ye are my sons and I am your mother; wherefore let us abide as we are, lest your brother come back and we be disgraced." But they accepted not her words and passed the night, wrangling with each other. Now it chanced that a Janissary[291] of the King's guards was a guest in the house adjoining Judar's and heard them through the open window. So he looked out and listening, heard all the angry words that passed between them and saw the division of the spoil. Next morning he presented himself before the King of Egypt, whose name was Shams al-Daulah,[292] and told him all he had heard, whereupon he sent for Judar's brothers and put them to the question, till they confessed; and he took the two pairs of saddle-bags from them and clapped them in prison, appointing a sufficient 242 daily allowance to their mother. Now as regards Judar, he abode a whole year in service at Suez, till one day, being in a ship bound on a voyage over the sea, a wind arose against them and cast the vessel upon a rock projecting from a mountain, where she broke up and all on board were drowned and none gat ashore save Judar. As soon as he landed he fared on inland, till he reached an encampment of Badawi, who questioned him of his case, and he told them he had been a sailor.[293] Now there was in camp a merchant, a native of Jiddah, who took pity on him and said to him, "Wilt thou take service with me, O Egyptian, and I will clothe thee and carry thee with me to Jiddah?" So Judar took service with him

and companied him to Jiddah, where he showed him much favour. After awhile, his master the merchant set out on a pilgrimage to Meccah, taking Judar with him, and when they reached the city, the Cairene repaired to the Haram temple, to circumambulate the Ka'abah. As he was making the prescribed circuits,[294] he suddenly saw his friend Abd al-Samad the Moor doing the like;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Judar, as he was making the circuits, suddenly saw his friend Abd al-Samad also circumambulating; and when the Maghribi caught sight of him, he saluted him and asked him of his state; whereupon Judar wept and told him all that had befallen him. So the Moor carried him to his lodging and entreated him with honour, clothing him in a dress of which the like was not, and saying to him, "Thou hast seen the end of thine ills, O Judar." Then he drew out for him a geomantic figure, which showed what had befallen Sálim and Salím and said to Judar, "Such and such things have befallen thy brothers and they are now in the King of Egypt's prison; but thou art right welcome to abide with me and accomplish thine 243 ordinances of pilgrimage and all shall be well." Replied Judar, "O my lord, let me go and take leave of the merchant with whom I am and after I will come back to thee." "Dost thou owe money?" asked the Moor, and he answered, "No." Said Abd al-Samad, "Go thou and take leave of him and come back forthright, for bread hath claims of its own from the ingenuous." So Judar returned to the merchant and farewelled him, saying, "I have fallen in with my brother."[295] "Go bring him here," said the merchant, "and we will make him an entertainment." But Judar answered, saying, "He hath no need of that; for he is a man of wealth and hath many servants." Then the merchant gave Judar twenty dinars, saying, "Acquit me of responsibility";[296] and he bade him adieu and went forth from him. Presently, he saw a poor man, so he gave him the twenty ducats and returned to the Moor, with whom he abode till they had accomplished the pilgrimage-rites when Abd al-Samad gave him the seal-ring, that he had taken from the treasure of Al-Shamardal, saying, "This ring will win thee thy wish, for it enchanteth and hath a servant, by name Al-Ra'ad al-Kásif; so whatever thou hast a mind to of the wants of this world; rub this ring and its servant will appear and do all thou biddest him." Then he rubbed the ring before him, whereupon the Jinni appeared, saying, "Adsum, O my lord! Ask what thou wilt and it shall be given thee. Hast thou a mind to people a ruined city or ruin a populous one? to slay a king or to rout a host?" "O Ra'ad," said Abd al-Samad, "this is become thy lord; do thou serve him faithfully." Then he dismissed him and said to Judar, "Rub the ring and the servant will appear; and do thou command him to do whatever thou desirest, for he will not gainsay thee. Now go to thine own country and take care of the ring, for by means of it thou wilt baffle thine enemies; and be not ignorant of its puissance." "O my lord," quoth Judar, "with thy leave, I will set out homewards."

Quoth the Maghribi, “Summon the Jinni and mount upon his back; and if thou say to him:—Bring me to my native city this very day, he will not disobey thy commandment.” So he took leave of Moor Abd al-Samad and rubbed the ring, whereupon Al-Ra’ad presented himself, 244 saying, “Adsum; ask and it shall be given to thee.” Said Judar, “Carry me to Cairo this day;” and he replied, “Thy will be done;” and, taking him on his back, flew with him from noon till midnight, when he set him down in the courtyard of his mother’s house and disappeared. Judar went in to his mother, who rose weeping, and greeted him fondly, and told him how the King had beaten his brothers and cast them into gaol and taken the two pairs of saddle-bags; which when he heard, it was no light matter to him and he said to her, “Grieve not for the past; I will show thee what I can do and bring my brothers hither forthright.” So he rubbed the ring, whereupon its servant appeared, saying, “Here am I! Ask and thou shalt have.” Quoth Judar, “I bid thee bring me my two brothers from the prison of the King.” So the Jinni sank into the earth and came not up but in the midst of the gaol where Sálim and Salím lay in piteous plight and sore sorrow for the plagues of prison,[297] so that they wished for death, and one of them said to the other, “By Allah, O my brother, affliction is longsome upon us! How long shall we abide in this prison? Death would be relief.” As he spoke, behold, the earth clove in sunder and out came Al-Ra’ad, who took both up and plunged with them into the earth. They swooned away for excess of fear, and when they recovered, they found themselves in their mother’s house and saw Judar seated by her side. Quoth he, “I salute you, O my brothers! you have cheered me by your presence.” And they bowed their heads and burst into tears. Then said he, “Weep not, for it was Satan and covetise that led you to do thus. How could you sell me? But I comfort myself with the thought of Joseph, whose brothers did with him even more than ye did with me, because they cast him into the pit.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Judar said to his brothers, “How could you do with me thus?” But repent unto Allah and crave pardon of Him, and He will forgive you both, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Merciful. As for me, I pardon you and welcome you: no harm shall befal you. Then he comforted them and set their hearts at ease and related to them all he had suffered, till he fell in with Shaykh Abd al-Samad, and told them also of the seal-ring. They replied, “O our brother, forgive us this time; and, if we return to our old ways, do with us as thou wilt.” Quoth he, “No harm shall befal you; but tell me what the King did with you.” Quoth they, “He beat us and threatened us with death and took the two pairs of saddle-bags from us.” “Will he not care?”[298] said Judar, and rubbed the ring, whereupon Al-Ra’ad appeared. When his brothers saw him, they were affrighted and

thought Judar would bid him slay them; so they fled to their mother, crying, “O our mother, we throw ourselves on thy generosity; do thou intercede for us, O our mother!” And she said to them, “O my sons, fear nothing!” Then said Judar to the servant, “I command thee to bring me all that is in the King’s treasury of goods and such; let nothing remain and fetch the two pairs of saddle-bags he took from my brothers.” “I hear and I obey,” replied Al-Ra’ad; and, disappearing straightway gathered together all he found in the treasury and returned with the two pairs of saddle-bags and the deposits therein and laid them before Judar, saying, “O my lord, I have left nothing in the treasury.” Judar gave the treasure to his mother bidding her keep it and laying the enchanted saddle-bags before him, said to the Jinni, “I command thee to build me this night a lofty palace and overlay it with liquid gold and furnish it with magnificent furniture: and let not the day dawn, ere thou be quit of the whole work.” Replied he, “Thy bidding shall be obeyed;” and sank into the earth. Then Judar brought forth food and they ate and took their ease and lay down to sleep. Meanwhile, Al-Ra’ad summoned his attendant Jinn and bade them build the palace. So some of them fell to hewing stones and some to building, whilst others plastered and painted and furnished; nor did the day dawn 246 ere the ordinance of the palace was complete; whereupon Al-Ra’ad came to Judar and said to him, “O my lord, the palace is finished and in best order, an it please thee to come and look on it.” So Judar went forth with his mother and brothers and saw a palace, whose like there was not in the whole world; and it confounded all minds with the goodliness of its ordinance. Judar was delighted with it while he was passing along the highway and withal it had cost him nothing. Then he asked his mother, “Say me, wilt thou take up thine abode in this palace?” and she answered, “I will, O my son,” and called down blessings upon him. Then he rubbed the ring and bade the Jinni fetch him forty handsome white handmaids and forty black damsels and as many Mamelukes and negro slaves. “Thy will be done,” answered Al-Ra’ad and betaking himself, with forty of his attendant Genii to Hind and Sind and Persia, snatched up every beautiful girl and boy they saw, till they had made up the required number. Moreover, he sent other fourscore, who fetched comely black girls, and forty others brought male chattels and carried them all to Judar’s house, which they filled. Then he showed them to Judar, who was pleased with them and said, “Bring for each a dress of the finest.” “Ready!” replied the servant. Then quoth he, “Bring a dress for my mother and another for myself, and also for my brothers.” So the Jinni fetched all that was needed and clad the female slaves, saying to them, “This is your mistress: kiss her hands and cross her not, but serve her, white and black.” The Mamelukes also dressed themselves and kissed Judar’s hands; and he and his brothers arrayed themselves in the robes the Jinni had brought them and Judar became like unto a King and his brothers as Wazirs. Now his house was spacious; so he lodged Sálim and his slave-girls in one part thereof and Salím and his slave-girls in another, whilst he and his mother took up their abode in the new palace; and each in his own place was like a Sultan. So far concerning them; but as regards

the King's Treasurer, thinking to take something from the treasury, he went in and found it altogether empty, even as saith the poet:—

'Twas as a hive of bees that greatly thrived; ✿ But, when the bee-swarm fled, 'twas clean unhived.[299]

247 So he gave a great cry and fell down in a fit. When he came to himself, he left the door open and going in to King Shams al-Daulah, said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful,[300] I have to inform thee that the treasury hath become empty during the night." Quoth the King, "What hast thou done with my monies which were therein?" Quoth he, "By Allah, I have not done aught with them nor know I what is come of them! I visited the place yesterday and saw it full; but to-day when I went in, I found it clean empty, albeit the doors were locked, the walls were unpierced[301] and the bolts[302] are unbroken; nor hath a thief entered it." Asked the King, "Are the two pairs of saddle-bags gone?" "Yes," replied the Treasurer; whereupon the King's reason flew from his head——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Treasurer informed the King that all in the treasury had been plundered, including the two pairs of saddle-bags, the King's reason flew from his head and he rose to his feet, saying, "Go thou before me." Then he followed the Treasurer to the treasury and he found nothing there, whereat he was wroth with him; and he said to them, "O soldiers! know that my treasury hath been plundered during the night, and I know not who did this deed and dared thus to outrage me, without fear of me." Said they, "How so?"; and he replied, "Ask the Treasurer." So they questioned him, and he answered, saying, "Yesterday I visited the treasury and it was full, but this morning when I entered it I found it empty, though the walls were unpierced and the doors unbroken." They all marvelled at this and could make the King 248 no answer, when in came the Janissary, who had denounced Sálim and Salím, and said to Shams al-Daulah, "O King of the age, all this night I have not slept for that which I saw." And the King asked, "And what didst thou see?" "Know, O King of the age," answered the Kawwás, "that all night long I have been amusing myself with watching builders at work; and, when it was day, I saw a palace ready edified, whose like is not in the world. So I asked about it and was told that Judar had come back with great wealth and Mamelukes and slaves and that he had freed his two brothers from prison, and built this palace, wherein he is as a Sultan." Quoth the King, "Go, look in the prison." So they went thither and not finding Sálim and Salím, returned and told the King, who said, "It is plain now who be the thief; he who took Sálim and Salím out of prison it is who hath stolen my monies." Quoth the Wazir, "O my lord, and who is he?"; and quoth the King, "Their brother Judar, and he hath taken the two pairs of saddle-bags; but, O Wazir, do thou send him an Emir with fifty men to seal up his goods and lay hands on him and his brothers and bring them to me, that I may hang them." And he was sore enraged and

said, “Ho, off with the Emir at once, and fetch them, that I may put them to death.” But the Wazir said to him, “Be thou merciful, for Allah is merciful and hasteth not to punish His servants, whenas they sin against Him. Moreover, he who can build a palace in a single night, as these say, none in the world can vie with him; and verily I fear lest the Emir fall into difficulty for Judar. Have patience, therefore, whilst I devise for thee some device of getting at the truth of the case, and so shalt thou win thy wish, O King of the age.” Quoth the King, “Counsel me how I shall do, O Wazir.” And the Minister said, “Send him an Emir with an invitation; and I will make much of him for thee and make a show of love for him and ask him of his estate; after which we will see. If we find him stout of heart, we will use sleight with him, and if weak of will, then do thou seize him and do with him thy desire.” The King agreed to this and despatched one of his Emirs, Othman hight, to go and invite Judar and say to him, “The King biddeth thee to a banquet;” and the King said to him, “Return not, except with him.” Now this Othman was a fool, proud and conceited; so he went forth upon his errand, and when he came to the gate of Judar’s palace, he saw before the door an eunuch seated upon a chair of gold, who at his approach rose not, but 249 sat as if none came near, though there were with the Emir fifty footmen. Now this eunuch was none other than Al-Ra’ad al-Kasif, the servant of the ring, whom Judar had commanded to put on the guise of an eunuch and sit at the palace-gate. So the Emir rode up to him and asked him, “O slave, where is thy lord?”; whereto he answered, “In the palace;” but he stirred not from his leaning posture; whereupon the Emir Othman waxed wroth and said to him, “O pestilent slave, art thou not ashamed, when I speak to thee, to answer me, sprawling at thy length, like a gallows-bird?” Replied the eunuch, “Off and multiply not words.” Hardly had Othman heard this, when he was filled with rage and drawing his mace[303] would have smitten the eunuch, knowing not that he was a devil; but Al-Ra’ad leapt upon him and taking the mace from him, dealt him four blows with it. Now when the fifty men saw their lord beaten, it was grievous to them; so they drew their swords and ran to slay the slave; but he said, “Do ye draw on us, O dogs?” and rose at them with the mace, and every one whom he smote, he broke his bones and drowned him in his blood. So they fell back before him and fled, whilst he followed them, beating them, till he had driven them far from the palace-gate; after which he returned and sat down on his chair at the door, caring for none.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the eunuch having put to flight the Emir Othman, the King’s Officer, and his men, till they were driven far from Judar’s gate, returned and sat down on his chair at the door, caring for none. But as for the Emir and his company, they returned, discomfited and tunded, to King Shams al-Daulah, and Othman said, “O King of the age, when I came to the palace gate, I espied an eunuch seated there 250 in a chair of gold and he was passing proud for,

when he saw me approach, he stretched himself at full length albeit he had been sitting in his chair and entreated me contumeliously, neither offered to rise to me. So I began to speak to him and he answered without stirring, whereat wrath gat hold of me and I drew the mace upon him, thinking to smite him. But he snatched it from me and beat me and my men therewith and overthrew us. So we fled from before him and could not prevail against, him." At this, the King was wroth and said, "Let an hundred men go down to him." Accordingly, the hundred men went down to attack him; but he arose and fell upon them with the mace and ceased not smiting them till he had put them to the rout; when he regained his chair; upon which they returned to the King and told him what had passed, saying, "O King of the age, he beat us and we fled for fear of him." Then the King sent two hundred men against him, but these also he put to the rout, and Shams Al-Daulah said to his Minister, "I charge thee, O Wazir, take five hundred men and bring this eunuch in haste, and with him his master Judar and his brothers." Replied the Wazir, "O King of the age, I need no soldiers, but will go down to him alone and unarmed." "Go," quoth the King, "and do as thou seest suitable." So the Wazir laid down his arms and donning a white habit,[304] took a rosary in his hand and set out afoot alone and unattended. When he came to Judar's gate, he saw the slave sitting there; So he went up to him and seating himself by his side courteously, said to him, "Peace be with thee!"; whereto he replied, "And on thee be peace, O mortal! What wilt thou?" When the Wazir heard him say "O mortal," he knew him to be of the Jinn and quaked for fear; then he asked him, "O my lord, tell me, is thy master Judar here?" Answered the eunuch, "Yes, he is in the palace." Quoth the Minister, "O my lord, go thou to him and say to him:—King Shams Al-Daulah saluteth thee and biddeth thee honour his 251 dwelling with thy presence and eat of a banquet he hath made for thee." Quoth the eunuch, "Tarry thou here, whilst I consult him." So the Wazir stood in a respectful attitude, whilst the Marid went up to the palace and said to Judar, "Know, O my lord, that the King sent to thee an Emir and fifty men, and I beat them and drove them away. Then he sent an hundred men and I beat them also; then two hundred, and these also I put to the rout. And now he hath sent thee his Wazir unarmed, bidding thee visit him and eat of his banquet. What sayst thou?" Said Judar, "Go, bring the Wazir hither." So the Marid went down and said to him, "O Wazir, come speak with my lord." "On my head be it," replied he and going in to Judar, found him seated, in greater state than the King, upon a carpet, whose like the King could not spread, and was dazed and amazed at the goodliness of the palace and its decoration and appointments, which made him seem as he were a beggar in comparison. So he kissed the ground before Judar and called down blessings on him; and Judar said to him, "What is thy business, O Wazir?" Replied he, "O my lord, thy friend King Shams Al-Daulah saluteth thee with the salam and longeth to look upon thy face; wherefore he hath made thee an entertainment. So say, wilt thou heal his heart and eat of his banquet?" Quoth Judar, "If he be indeed my friend, salute him and bid him come to me." "On my head be it," quoth the Minister.

Then Judar bringing out the ring rubbed it and bade the Jinni fetch him a dress of the best, which he gave to the Wazir, saying, "Don this dress and go tell the King what I say." So the Wazir donned the dress, the like whereof he had never donned, and returning to the King told him what had passed and praised the palace and that which was therein, saying, "Judar biddeth thee to him." So the King called out, "Up, ye men; mount your horses and bring me my steed, that we may go to Judar!" Then he and his suite rode off for the Cairene palace. Meanwhile Judar summoned the Marid and said to him, "It is my will that thou bring me some of the Ifrits at thy command in the guise of guards and station them in the open square before the palace, that the King may see them and be awed by them; so shall his heart tremble and he shall know that my power and majesty be greater than his." Thereupon Al-Ra'ad brought him two hundred Ifrits of great stature and strength, in the guise of guards, magnificently armed and equipped, and when the King came and saw these tall burly fellows his heart feared them. Then he entered the palace, 252 and found Judar sitting in such state as nor King nor Sultan could even. So he saluted him and made his obeisance to him; yet Judar rose not to him nor did him honour nor said "Be seated," but left him standing,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King entered, Judar rose not to him, nor did him honour nor even said "Be seated!"; but left him standing,[305] so that fear entered into him and he could neither sit nor go away and said to himself, "If he feared me, he would not leave me thus unheeded; peradventure he will do me a mischief, because of that which I did with his brothers." Then said Judar, "O King of the age, it beseemeth not the like of thee to wrong the folk and take away their good." Replied the King, "O my lord, deign excuse me, for greed impelled me to this and fate was thereby fulfilled; and, were there no offending, there would be no forgiving." And he went on to excuse himself for the past and pray to him for pardon and indulgence till he recited amongst other things this poetry:—

O thou of generous seed and true nobility, ✿ Reproach me not for that which came from me to thee:
We pardon thee if thou have wrought us any wrong ✿ And if I wrought the wrong I pray thee pardon me!

And he ceased not to humble himself before him, till he said, "Allah pardon thee!" and bade him be seated. So he sat down and Judar invested him with garments of pardon and immunity and ordered his brothers spread the table. When they had eaten, he clad the whole of the King's company in robes of honour and gave them largesse; after which he bade the King depart. So he went forth and thereafter came every day to visit Judar and held not his Divan save in his house: wherefore friendship and familiarity waxed great between them, and they abode thus awhile, till one day the King, being alone with his Minister, said to him, 253 "O Wazir, I fear lest Judar slay

me and take the kingdom away from me." Replied the Wazir, "O King of the age, as for his taking the kingdom from thee, have no fear of that, for Judar's present estate is greater than that of the King, and to take the kingdom would be a lowering of his dignity; but, if thou fear that he kill thee, thou hast a daughter: give her to him to wife and thou and he will be of one condition." Quoth the King, "O Wazir, be thou intermediary between us and him"; and quoth the Minister, "Do thou invite him to an entertainment and pass the night with him in one of thy saloons. Then bid thy daughter don her richest dress and ornaments and pass by the door of the saloon. When he seeth her, he will assuredly fall in love with her, and when we know this, I will turn to him and tell him that she is thy daughter and engage him in converse and lead him on, so that thou shalt seem to know nothing of the matter, till he ask her of thee to wife. When thou has married him to the Princess, thou and he will be as one thing and thou wilt be safe from him; and if he die, thou wilt inherit all he hath, both great and small." Replied the King, "Thou sayst sooth, O my Wazir," and made a banquet and invited thereto Judar who came to the Sultan's palace and they sat in the saloon in great good cheer till the end of the day. Now the King had commanded his wife to array the maiden in her richest raiment and ornaments and carry her by the door of the saloon. She did as he told her, and when Judar saw the Princess, who had not her match for beauty and grace, he looked fixedly at her and said, "Ah!"; and his limbs were loosened; for love and longing and passion and pine were sore upon him; desire and transport gat hold upon him and he turned pale. Quoth the Wazir, "May no harm befal thee, O my lord! Why do I see thee change colour and in suffering?" Asked Judar, "O Wazir, whose daughter is this damsel? Verily she hath enthralled me and ravished my reason." Replied the Wazir, "She is the daughter of thy friend the King; and if she please thee, I will speak to him that he marry thee to her." Quoth Judar, "Do so, O Wazir, and as I live, I will bestow on thee what thou wilt and will give the King whatsoever he shall ask to her dowry; and we will become friends and kinsfolk." Quoth the Minister, "It shall go hard but thy desire be accomplished." Then he turned to the King and said in his ear, "O King of the age, thy friend Judar seeketh alliance with thee and will have me ask of thee for him the hand of thy daughter, the Princess Asiyah; so disappoint me not, but 254 accept my intercession, and what dowry soever thou askest he will give thee." Said the King, "The dowry I have already received, and as for the girl, she is his handmaid; I give her to him to wife and he will do me honour by accepting her."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir whispered the King, "Judar seeketh alliance with thee by taking thy daughter to wife," the other replied, "The dowry I have already received, and the girl is his handmaid; he will do me honour by accepting her." So they spent the rest of that night together and on the

morrow the King held a court, to which he summoned great and small, together with the Shaykh al-Islam.[306] Then Judar demanded the Princess in marriage and the King said, "The dowry I have received." Thereupon they drew up the marriage-contract and Judar sent for the saddle-bags containing the jewels and gave them to the King as settlement upon his daughter. The drums beat and the pipes sounded and they held high festival, whilst Judar went in unto the girl. Thenceforward he and the King were as one flesh and they abode thus for many days, till Shams al-Daulah died; whereupon the troops proclaimed Judar Sultan, and he refused; but they importuned him, till he consented and they made him King in his father-in-law's stead. Then he bade build a cathedral-mosque over the late King's tomb in the Bundukániyah[307] quarter and endowed it. Now the quarter of Judar's house was called Yamániyah; but, when he became Sultan he built therein a congregational mosque and other buildings, wherefore the quarter was named after him and was called the Judariyah[308] quarter. Moreover, he made his brother Sálim his 255 Wazir of the right and his brother Salím his Wazir of the left hand; and thus they abode a year and no more; for, at the end of that time, Sálim said to Salím, "O my brother, how long is this state to last? Shall we pass our whole lives in slavery to our brother Judar? We shall never enjoy luck or lordship whilst he lives," adding, "so how shall we do to kill him and take the ring and the saddle-bags?" Replied Salím, "Thou art craftier than I; do thou device, whereby we may kill him." "If I effect this," asked Sálim, "wilt thou agree that I be Sultan and keep the ring and that thou be my right-hand Wazir and have the saddle-bags?" Salím answered, "I consent to this;" and they agreed to slay Judar their brother for love of the world and of dominion. So they laid a snare for Judar and said to him, "O our brother, verily we have a mind to glory in thee and would fain have thee enter our houses and eat of our entertainment and solace our hearts." Replied Judar, "So be it, in whose house shall the banquet be?" "In mine," said Sálim "and after thou hast eaten of my victual, thou shalt be the guest of my brother." Said Judar, "'Tis well," and went with him to his house, where he set before him poisoned food, of which when he had eaten, his flesh rotted from his bones and he died.[309] Then Sálim came up to him and would have drawn the ring from his finger, but it resisted him; so he cut off the finger with a knife. Then he rubbed the ring and the Marid presented himself, saying, "Adsum! Ask what thou wilt." Quoth Sálim, "Take my brother Salím and put him to death and carry forth the two bodies, the poisoned and the slaughtered, and cast them down before the troops." So the Mahrid took Salím and slew him; then, carrying the two corpses forth, he cast them down before the chief officers of the army, 256 who were sitting at table in the parlour of the house. When they saw Judar and Salím slain, they raised their hands from the food and fear gat hold of them and they said to the Marid, "Who hath dealt thus with the Sultan and the Wazir?" Replied the Jinni, "Their brother Sálim." And behold, Sálim came up to them and said, "O soldiers, eat and make merry, for Judar is dead and I have taken to me the seal-ring,

whereof the Marid before you is the servant; and I bade him slay my brother Salím lest he dispute the kingdom with me, for he was a traitor and I feared lest he should betray me. So now I am become Sultan over you; will ye accept of me? If not, I will rub the ring and bid the Marid slay you all, great and small."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sálim said to the officers, "Will ye accept me as your Sultan, otherwise I will rub the ring and the Marid shall slay you all, great and small?"; they replied, "We accept thee to King and Sultan." Then he bade bury his brothers and summoned the Divan; and some of the folk followed the funeral, whilst others forewent him in state procession to the audience-hall of the palace, where he sat down on the throne and they did homage to him as King; after which he said, "It is my will to marry my brother Judar's wife." Quoth they, "Wait till the days of widowhood are accomplished."[310] Quoth he, "I know not days of widowhood nor aught else. As my head liveth, I needs must go in unto her this very night." So they drew up the marriage-contract and sent to tell the Princess Asiyah, who replied, "Bid him enter." Accordingly, he went in to her and she received him with a show of joy and welcome; but by and by she gave him poison in water and made an end of him. Then she took the ring and broke it, that none might possess it thenceforward, and tore up the saddle-bags; after which she sent to the Shaykh al-Islam and other great Officers of state, telling them what had passed and saying to them, "Choose you out a King to rule over you." And this is 257 all that hath come down to us of the Story of Judar and his Brethren.[311] But I have also heard, O King, a tale called the

26- HISTORY OF GHARIB AND HIS BROTHER AJIB.[312]

There was once in olden time a King of might, Kundamir hight, who had been a brave and doughty man of war, a Kahramán,[313] in his day, but was grown passing old and decrepit. Now it pleased Allah to vouchsafe him, in his extreme senility, a son, whom he named Ajíb[314]—the Wonderful—because of his beauty and loveliness; so he committed the babe to the midwives and wet-nurses and handmaids and serving-women, and they reared him till he was full seven years old, when his father gave him in charge to a divine of his own folk and faith. The priest taught him the laws and tenets of their Misbelief and instructed him in philosophy and all manner of other knowledge, and it needed but three full-told years ere he was proficient therein and his spirit waxed resolute and his judgment mature; and he became learned, eloquent and philosophic[315]; consorting with the wise and disputing with the 258 doctors of the law. When his father saw this of him, it pleased him and he taught him to back the steed and stab with spear and smite with sword, till he grew to be an accomplished cavalier, versed in all martial exercises; and, by the end of his twentieth year, he surpassed in all things all the folk of his day. But his skill in weapons made him grow up a stubborn tyrant and a devil arrogant, using to ride forth a-hunting and a-chasing amongst a thousand horsemen and to make raids and razzias upon the neighbouring knights, cutting off caravans and carrying away the daughters of Kings and nobles; wherefore many brought complaints against him to his father, who cried out to five of his slaves and when they came said, "Seize this dog!" So they seized Prince Ajib and, pinioning his hands behind him, beat him by his father's command till he lost his senses; after which the King imprisoned him in a chamber so dark one might not know heaven from earth or length from breadth; and there he abode two days and a night. Then the Emirs went in to the King and, kissing the ground between his hands, interceded with him for the Prince, and he released him. So Ajib bore with his father for ten days, at the end of which he went in to him as he slept by night and smote his neck. When the day rose, he mounted the throne of his sire's estate and bade his men arm themselves cap-à-pie in steel and stand with drawn swords in front of him and on his right hand and on his left. By and by, the Emirs and Captains entered and finding their King slain and his son Ajib seated on the throne were confounded in mind and knew not what to do. But Ajib said to them, "O folk, verily ye see what your King hath gained. Whoso obeyeth me, I will honour him, and whoso gainsayeth me, I will do with him that which I did with my sire." When they heard these words they feared lest he do them a mischief; so they replied, "Thou art our King and the son of our

King;" and kissed ground before him; whereupon he thanked them and rejoiced in them. Then he bade bring forth money and apparel and clad them in sumptuous robes of honour and showered largesse upon them, wherefore they all loved him and obeyed him. In like manner he honoured the governors of the Provinces and the Shaykhs of the Badawin, both tributary and independent, so that the whole kingdom submitted to him and the folk obeyed him and he reigned and bade and forbade in peace and quiet for a time of five months. One night, however, he dreamed a dream as he lay 259slumbering; whereupon he awoke trembling, nor did sleep visit him again till the morning. As soon as it was dawn he mounted his throne and his officers stood before him, right and left. Then he called the oneiromants and the astrologers and said to them, "Expound to me my dream!" "What was the dream?" asked they; and he answered, "As I slept last night, I saw my father standing before me, with his yard uncovered, and there came forth of it a thing the bigness of a bee, which grew till it became as a mighty lion, with claws like hangers. As I lay wondering at this lo! it ran upon me and smiting me with its claws, rent my belly in sunder; whereupon I awoke startled and trembling. So expound ye to me the meaning of this dream." The interpreters looked one at other; and, after considering, said, "O mighty King, this dream pointeth to one born of thy sire, between whom and thee shall befal strife and enmity, wherein he shall get the better of thee: so be on thy guard against him, by reason of this thy vision." When Ajib heard their words, he said, "I have no brother whom I should fear; so this your speech is mere lying." They replied, "We tell thee naught save what we know;" but he was an-angered with them and bastinadoed them. Then he rose and, going in to the paternal palace, examined his father's concubines and found one of them seven months gone with child; whereupon he gave an order to two of his slaves, saying, "Take this damsel, ye twain, and carry her to the sea-shore and drown her." So they took her forthright and, going to the sea-shore, designed to drown her, when they looked at her and seeing her to be of singular beauty and loveliness said to each other, "Why should we drown this damsel? Let us rather carry her to the forest and live with her there in rare love-liasse." Then they took her and fared on with her days and nights till they had borne her afar off and had brought her to a bushy forest, abounding in fruit-trees and streams, where they both thought at the same time to win their will of her; but each said, "I will have her first." So they fell out one with the other concerning this, and while so doing a company of blackamoors came down upon them, and they drew their swords and both sides fell to laying on load. The mellay waxed hot with cut and thrust; and the two slaves fought their best; but the blacks slew them both in less than the twinkling of an eye. So the damsel abode alone and wandered about the forest, eating of its fruits and drinking of its founts, till in due time she gave birth 260to a boy, brown but clean-limbed and comely, whom she named Gharíb, the Stranger, by reason of her strangerhood. Then she cut his navel-string and wrapping him in some of her own clothes, gave him to

suck, harrowed at heart, and with vitals sorrowing for the estate she had lost and its honour and solace.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel abode in the bush harrowed at heart and a-sorrowed; but she suckled her babe albeit she was full of grief and fear for her loneliness. Now behold, one day, there came horsemen and footmen into the forest with hawks and hounds and horses laden with partridges and cranes and wild geese and divers and other waterfowl; and young ostriches and hares and gazelles and wild oxen and lynxes and wolves and lions.[316] Presently, these Arabs entered the thicket and came upon the damsel, sitting with her child on her breast a-suckling him: so they drew near and asked her, "Say art thou a mortal or a Jinniyah?" Answered she, "I am a mortal, O Chiefs of the Arabs." Thereupon they told their Emir, whose name was Mardás, Prince of the Banú Kahtán,[317] and who had come forth that day to hunt with five hundred of his cousins and the nobles of his tribe, and who in the course of the chase had happened upon her. He bade them bring her before him, which they did and she related to him her past from first to last, whereat he marvelled. Then he cried to his kinsmen and escort to continue the chase, after which they took her and returned to their encampment, where the Emir appointed her a separate dwelling-place and five damsels to serve her; and he loved her with exceeding love 261 and went in to her and lay with her. She conceived by him straightway, and, when her months were accomplished, she bare a man child and named him Sahím al-Layl.[318] He grew up with his brother Gharib among the nurses and throve and waxed upon the lap of the Emir Mardas who, in due time committed the two boys to a Fakih for instruction in the things of their faith; after which he gave them in charge to valiant knights of the Arabs, for training them to smite with sword and lunge with lance and shoot with shaft; so by the time they reached the age of fifteen, they knew all they needed and surpassed each and every brave of their tribe; for Gharib would undertake a thousand horse and Sahim al-Layl no fewer. Now Mardas had many enemies, and the men of his tribe were the bravest of all the Arabs, being doughty cavaliers, none might warm himself at their fire.[319] In his neighbourhood was an Emir of the Arabs, Hassán bin Sábit hight, who was his intimate friend; and he took to wife a noble lady of his tribe and bade all his friends to the wedding, amongst them Mardas lord of the Banu Kahtan, who accepted his invitation and set forth with three hundred riders of his tribe, leaving other four hundred to guard the women. Hassan met him with honour and seated him in the highest stead. Then came all the cavaliers to the bridal and he made them bride-feasts and held high festival by reason of the marriage, after which the Arabs departed to their dwelling-places. When Mardas came in sight of his camp, he saw slain men lying about and birds hovering over them right and left; and his heart sank within him

at the sight. Then he entered the camp and was met by Gharib, clad in complete suit of ring-mail, who gave him joy of his safe return. Quoth Mardas, "What meaneth this case, O Gharib?"; and quoth Gharib, "Al-Hamal bin Májid attacked us with five hundred horsemen of his tribe." Now the reason of this was that the Emir Mardas had a daughter called Mahdíyah, seer never saw fairer than she, and Al-Hamal, lord of 262 the Banu Nabhán,[320] heard of her charms; whereupon he took horse with five hundred of his men and rode to Mardas to demand her hand; but he was not accepted and was sent away disappointed.[321] So he awaited till Mardas was absent on his visit to Hassan, when he mounted with his champions and, falling upon the camp of the Banu Kahtan, slew a number of their knights and the rest fled to the mountains. Now Gharib and his brother had ridden forth a-hunting and chasing with an hundred horse and returned not till midday, when they found that Al-Hamal had seized the camp and all therein and had carried off the maidens, among whom was Mahdiyah, driving her away with the captives. When Gharib saw this, he lost his wits for rage and cried out to Sahim, saying, "O my brother, O son of an accursed dam,[322] they have plundered our camp and carried off our women and children! Up and at the enemy, that we may deliver the captives!" So Gharib and Sahim and their hundred horse rushed upon the foe, and Gharib's wrath redoubled, and he reaped a harvest of heads slain, giving the champions death-cup to drain, till he won to Al-Hamal and saw Mahdiyah among the captives. Then he drave at the lord of the Banu Nabhan braves; with his lance lunged him and from his destrier hurled him; nor was the time of mid-afternoon prayer come before he had slain the most part of the foe and put to rout the rest and rescued the captives; whereupon he returned to the camp in triumph, bearing the head of Al-Hamal on the point of his lance and improvising these couplets:—

I am he who is known on the day of fight, ✿ And the Jinn of earth at my shade take fright:

And a sword have I when my right hand wields, ✿ Death hastens from left on mankind to alight;

263 I have eke a lance and who look thereon ✿ See a crescent-head of the liveliest light.[323]

And Gharib I'm hight of my tribe the brave ✿ And if few my men I feel naught affright.

Hardly had Gharib made an end of these verses when up came Mardas who, seeing the slain and the vultures, was sore troubled and with fluttering heart asked the cause. The youth, after due greetings, related all that had befallen the tribe in his step-sire's absence. So Mardas thanked him and said, "Thou hast well requited our fosterage-pains in rearing thee, O Gharib!"; then he alighted and entered his pavilion, and the men stood about him, all the tribe praising Gharib and saying, "O our Emir, but for Gharib, not one of the tribe had been saved!" And Mardas again thanked him.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Mardas, hearing the tribesmen's praises of Gharib, again thanked him for his derring-do. But the youth, when he had

delivered Mahdiyah from Al-Hamal whom he slew, was smitten by the shaft of her glances and fell into the nets of her allurements, wherefore his heart could not forget her and he became drowned in love and longing and the sweets of sleep forsook him and he had no joy of drink or meat. He would spur his horse up to the mountain tops, where he would spend the day in composing verses and return at nightfall; and indeed manifest upon him were the signs of affection and distraction. He discovered his secret to one of his companions and it became noised abroad in the camp, till it reached the ears of Mardas, who thundered and lightened and 264 rose up and sat down and snarked and snorted and reviled the sun and the moon, saying, "This is the reward of him who reareth the sons of adultery! But except I kill Gharib, I shall be put to shame."[324] Then he consulted one of the wise men of his tribe and after telling his secret took counsel with him of killing the youth. Quoth the elder, "O Emir, 'twas but yesterday that he freed thy daughter from captivity. If there be no help for it but thou must slay him, let it be by the hand of another than thyself, so none of the folk may misdoubt of thee." Quoth Mardas, "Advise me how I may do him die, for I look to none but to thee for his death." "O Emir," answered the other, "wait till he go forth to hunt and chase, when do thou take an hundred horse and lie in wait for him in some cave till he pass; then fall upon him unawares and cut him in pieces, so shalt thou be quit of his reproach." Said Mardas, "This should serve me well;" and chose out an hundred and fifty of his furious knights and Amalekites[325] whom he lessoned to his will. Then he watched Gharib till one day, he went forth to hunt and rode far away amongst the dells and hills; whereupon Mardas followed him with his men, ill-omened wights, and lay in wait for him by the way against he should return from the chase that they might sally forth and slay him. But as they lay in ambush among the trees behold, there fell upon them five hundred true Amalekites, who slew sixty of them and made fourscore and ten prisoners and trussed up Mardas with his arms behind his back. Now the reason of this was that when Gharib put Al-Hamal and his men to the sword, the rest fled and 265 ceased not flying till they reached their lord's brother and told him what had happened, whereat his Doom-day rose and he gathered together his Amalekites and choosing out five hundred cavaliers, each fifty ells high,[326] set out with them in quest of blood-revengement for his brother. By the way he fell in with Mardas and his companions and there happened between them what happened; after which he bade his men alight and rest, saying, "O folk, the idols have given us an easy blood-wreak; so guard ye Mardas and his tribesmen, till I carry them away and do them die with the foulest of deaths." When Mardas saw himself a prisoner, he repented of what he had done and said, "This is the reward of rebelling against the Lord!" Then the enemy passed the night rejoicing in their victory, whilst Mardas and his men despaired of life and made sure of doom. So far concerning them; but as regards Sahim al-Layl, who had been wounded in the fight with Al-Hamal, he went in to his sister Mahdiyah, and she rose to him and kissed his hands,

saying, “May thy two hands ne’er wither nor thine enemies have occasion to be blither! But for thee and Gharib, we had not escaped captivity among our foes. Know, however, O my brother, that thy father hath ridden forth with an hundred and fifty horse, purposing to slaughter Gharib; and thou wottest it would be sore loss and foul wrong to slay him, for that it was he who saved your shame and rescued your good.” When Sahim heard this, the light in his sight became night, he donned his battle-harness; and, mounting steed, rode for the place where Gharib was a-hunting. He presently came up with him and found that he had taken great plenty of game; so he accosted him and saluted him and said, “O my brother, why didst thou go forth without telling me?” Replied Gharib, “By Allah, naught hindered me but that I saw thee wounded and thought to give thee rest.” Then said Sahim, “O my brother, beware of my sire!” and told him how Mardas was abroad with an hundred and fifty men, seeking to slay him. Quoth Gharib, “Allah shall cause his treason to cut his own throat.” Then the brothers set out camp-wards, but night overtook them by the way and they rode on in the darkness, till they drew near the Wady wherein the enemy lay and heard the neighing of steeds in the gloom; whereupon said Sahim, “O my brother, my father and his men are ambushed in yonder valley; 266let us flee from it.” But Gharib dismounted and throwing his bridle to his brother, said to him, “Stay in this stead till I come back to thee.” Then he went on till he drew in sight of the folk, when he saw that they were not of his tribe and heard them naming Mardas and saying, “We will not slay him, save in his own land.” Wherefore he knew that nuncle Mardas was their prisoner, and said, “By the life of Mahdiyah, I will not depart hence till I have delivered her father, that she may not be troubled!” Then he sought and ceased not seeking till he hit upon Mardas and found him bound with cords; so he sat down by his side and said to him, “Heaven deliver thee, O uncle, from these bonds and this shame!” When Mardas saw Gharib his reason fled, and he said to him, “O my son, I am under thy protection: so deliver me in right of my fosterage of thee!” Quoth Gharib, “If I deliver thee, wilt thou give me Mahdiyah?” Quoth the Emir, “O my son, by whatso I hold sacred, she is thine to all time!” So he loosed him, saying, “Make for the horses, for thy son Sahim is there:” and Mardas crept along like a snake till he came to his son, who rejoiced in him and congratulated him on his escape. Meanwhile, Gharib unbound one after another of the prisoners, till he had freed the whole ninety and they were all far from the foe. Then he sent them their weapons and war-horses, saying to them, “Mount ye and scatter yourselves round about the enemy and cry out, Ho, sons of Kahtan! And when they awake, do ye remove from them and encircle them in a thin ring.”[327] So he waited till the last and third watch of the night, when he cried out, “Ho, sons of Kahtan!” and his men answered in like guise, crying, “Ho, sons of Kahtan,” as with one voice; and the mountains echoed their slogan, so that it seemed to the raiders as though the whole tribe of Banu Kahtan were assailing them; wherefore they all snatched up their arms and fell upon one another——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the raiders[328] awoke from sleep and heard Gharib and his men crying 267 out, “Ho, sons of Kahtan!”; they imagined that the whole tribe was assailing them; wherefore they snatched up their arms and fell one upon other with mighty slaughter. Gharib and his men held aloof, and they fought one another till daybreak, when Gharib and Mardas and their ninety warriors came down upon them and killed some of them and put the rest to flight. Then the Banu Kahtan took the horses of the fugitives and the weapons of the slain and returned to their tribal camp, whilst Mardas could hardly credit his deliverance from the foe. When they reached the encampment, the stay-at-home folk all came forth to meet them and rejoiced in their safe return. Then they alighted and betook them to their tents; and all the youths of the tribe flocked to Gharib’s stead and great and small saluted him and did him honour. But when Mardas saw this and the youths encircling his stepson he waxed more jealous of Gharib than before and said to his kinsfolk, “Verily, hatred of Gharib groweth on my heart, and what irketh me most is that I see these flocking about him! And to-morrow he will demand Mahdiyah of me.” Quoth his confidant, “O Emir, ask of him somewhat he cannot avail to do.” This pleased Mardas who passed a pleasant night and on the morrow, as he sat on his stuffed carpet, with the Arabs about him, Gharib entered, followed by his men and surrounded by the youth of the tribe, and kissed the ground before Mardas who, making a show of joy, rose to do him honour and seated him beside himself. Then said Gharib, “O uncle, thou madest me a promise; do thou fulfil it.” Replied the Emir, “O my son, she is thine to all time; but thou lackest wealth.” Quoth Gharib, “O uncle, ask of me what thou wilt, and I will fall upon the Emirs of the Arabs in their houses and on the Kings in their towns and bring thee fee[329] enough to fence the land from East to West.” “O my son,” quoth 268 Mardas, “I have sworn by all the Idols that I would not give Mahdiyah save to him who should take my blood-wite of mine enemy and do away my reproach.” “O uncle,” said Gharib, “tell me with which of the Kings thou hast a feud, that I may go to him and break his throne upon his pate.” “O my son,” replied Mardas, “I once had a son, a champion of champions, and he went forth one day to chase and hunt with an hundred horse. They fared on from valley to valley, till they had wandered far away amongst the mountains and came to the Wady of Blossoms and the Castle of Hám bin Shays bin Shaddád bin Khalad. Now in this place, O my son, dwelleth a black giant, seventy cubits high, who fights with trees from their roots uptorn; and when my son reached his Wady, the tyrant sallied out upon him and his men and slew them all, save three braves, who escaped and brought me the news. So I assembled my champions and fared forth to fight the giant, but could not prevail against him; wherefore I was baulked of my revenge and swore that I would not give my daughter in marriage save to him who should avenge me of my

son." Said Gharib, "O uncle, I will go to this Amalekite and take the wreak of thy son on him with the help of Almighty Allah." And Mardas, answered, saying, "O Gharib, if thou get the victory over him, thou wilt gain of him such booty of wealth and treasures as fires may not devour." Cried Gharib, "Swear to me before witnesses thou wilt give me her to wife, so that with heart at ease I may go forth to find my fortune." Accordingly, Mardas swore this to him and took the elders of the tribe to witness; whereupon Gharib fared forth, rejoicing in the attainment of his hopes, and went in to his mother, to whom he related what had passed. "O my son," said she, "know that Mardas hateth thee and doth but send thee to this mountain, to bereave me of thee; then take me with thee and let us depart the tents of this tyrant." But he answered, "O my mother, I will not depart hence till I win my wish and foil my foe." Thereupon he slept till morning arose with its sheen and shone, and hardly had he mounted his charger when his friends, the young men, came up to him; two hundred stalwart knights armed cap-à-pie and cried out to him, saying, "Take us with thee; we will help thee and company thee by the way." And he rejoiced in them and cried, "Allah requite you for us with good!" adding, "Come, my friends, let us go." So they set out and fared on the first day and the second day till evening, when they halted at the 269 foot of a towering mount and baited their horses. As for Gharib, he left the rest and walked on into that mountain, till he came to a cave whence issued a light. He entered and found, at the higher facing end of the cave a Shaykh, three hundred and forty years old, whose eyebrows overhung his eyes and whose moustachios hid his mouth. Gharib at this sight was filled with awe and veneration, and the hermit said to him, "Methinks thou art of the idolaters, O my son, stone-worshipping[330] in the stead of the All-powerful King, the Creator of Night and Day and of the sphere rolling on her way." When Gharib heard his words, his side muscles quivered and he said, "O Shaykh, where is this Lord of whom thou speakest, that I may worship him and take my fill of his sight?" Replied the Shaykh, "O my son, this is the Supreme Lord, upon whom none may look in this world. He seeth and is not seen. He is the Most High of aspect and is present everywhere in His works. He it is who maketh all the made and ordereth time to vade and fade; He is the Creator of men and Jinn and sendeth the Prophets to guide His creatures into the way of right. Whoso obeyeth Him, He bringeth into Heaven, and whoso gainsayeth Him, He casteth into Hell." Asked Gharib, "And how, O uncle, saith whoso worshippeth this puissant Lord who over all hath power?" "O my son," answered the Shaykh, "I am of the tribe of Ad, which were transgressors in the land and believed not in Allah. So He sent unto them a Prophet named Húd, but they called him liar and he destroyed them by means of a deadly wind; but I believed together with some of my tribe, and we were saved from destruction.[331] Moreover, I was present with the tribe of Thamúd and saw what befel them with their Prophet Sálih. After Salih, the Almighty 270 sent a prophet, called Abraham the Friend,[332] to Nimrod son of Canaan, and there befel what befel between

them. Then my companions died in the Saving Faith and I continued in this cave to serve Allah the Most High, who provideth my daily bread without my taking thought." Quoth Gharib, "O uncle, what shall I say, that I may become of the troop of this mighty Lord?" "Say," replied the old man:—"There is no god but *the* God and Abraham is the Friend of God." So Gharib embraced the Faith of Submission[333] with heart and tongue and the Shaykh said to him, "May the sweetness of belief and devotion be stablished in thy heart!" Then he taught him somewhat of the biblical ordinances and scriptures of Al-Islam and said to him, "What is thy name?"; and he replied, "My name is Gharib." Asked the old man, "Whither art thou bound, O Gharib?" So he told him all his history, till he came to the mention of the Ghúl of the Mountain whom he sought,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib became a Moslem and told the Shaykh his past, from first to last, till he came to the mention of the Mountain-Ghul whom he sought, the old man asked him, "O Gharib, art thou mad that thou goest forth against the Ghul of the Mountain single handed?" and he answered, "O my lord, I have with me two hundred horse." "O Gharib," rejoined the hermit, "hadst thou ten thousand riders yet shouldest thou not prevail against him, for his name is *The-Ghul-who-eateth-men-we-pray-Allah-for-safety*, and he is of the children of Ham. His father's name was Hindi, who peopled Hind and named it, and he left this son after him, whom he called Sa'adan the Ghul. Now the same was, O my son, 271 even in his sire's lifetime, a cruel tyrant and a rebellious devil and had no other food than flesh of the sons of Adam. His father when about to die forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden and he redoubled in his frowardness, till Hindi banished him and drove him forth the Land of Hind, after battles and sore travail. Then he came to this country and fortifying himself herein, established his home in this place, whence he is wont to sally forth and cut the road of all that come and go, presently returning to the valley he haunteth. Moreover, he hath begotten five sons, warlike warlocks, each one of whom will do battle with a thousand braves, and he hath flocked the valley with his booty of treasure and goods besides horses and camels and cattle and sheep. Wherefore I fear for thee from him; so do thou implore Almighty Allah to further thee against him by the Tahlíl, the formula of Unity, and when thou drivest at the Infidels, cry:—God is most Great! for, saying, There is no god but *the* God confoundeth those who misbelieve." Then the Shaykh gave him a steel mace, an hundred pounds in weight, with ten rings which clashed like thunder whenas the wielder brandished it, and a sword forged of a thunderbolt,[334] three ells long and three spans broad, wherewith if one smote a rock, the stroke would cleave it in sunder. Moreover he gave him a hauberk and target and a book and said to him, "Return to thy tribe and expound unto them Al-Islam." So Gharib left him, rejoicing

in his new Faith, and fared till he found his companions, who met him with salams, saying, “What made thee tarry thus?” Whereupon he related to them that which had befallen him and expounded to them Al-Islam, and they all islamised. Early next morning, Gharib mounted and rode to the hermit to farewell him, after which he set out to return to his camp when behold, on his way, there met him a horseman cap-à-pie armed so that only his eyes appeared, who made at him, 272 saying, “Doff what is on thee, O scum[335] of the Arabs; or I will do thee die!” Therewith Gharib drave at him and there befel between them a battle such as would make a new-born child turn grey and melt the flinty rock with its sore affray; but presently the Badawi did off his face-veil, and lo! it was Gharib’s half-brother Sahim al-Layl. Now the cause of his coming thither was that when Gharib set out in quest of the Mountain-Ghul, Sahim was absent and on his return, not seeing his brother, he went in to his mother, whom he found weeping. He asked the reason of her tears and she told him what had happened of his brother’s journey, whereupon, without allowing himself aught of rest, he donned his war-gear and mounting rode after Gharib, till he overtook him and there befel between them what befel. When, therefore, Sahim discovered his face, Gharib knew him and saluted him, saying, “What moved thee to do this?” Quoth Sahim, “I had a mind to measure myself with thee in the field and make trial of my lustihood in cut and thrust.” Then they rode together and on the way Gharib expounded Al-Islam to Sahim, who embraced the Faith; nor did they cease riding till they were hard upon the valley. Meanwhile, the Mountain-Ghul espied the dust of their horses’ feet and said to his sons, “O my sons, mount and fetch me yonder loot.” So the five took horse and made for the party. When Gharib saw the five Amalekites approaching, he plied shovel-iron upon his steed’s flank and cried out, saying, “Who are ye, and what is your race and what do ye require?” Whereupon Falhún bin Sa’adan, the eldest of the five, came out and said, “Dismount ye and bind one another[336] and we will drive you to our father, that he may roast various of you and boil various, for it is long since he has tasted the flesh of Adam-son.” When Gharib heard these words he drove at Falhun, shaking his mace, so that the rings rang like the roaring thunder and the giant was confounded. Then he smote him a light blow with the mace between the shoulders, and he fell to the ground like a tall-trunked palm-tree; whereupon Sahim and some of his men fell upon him and pinioned him; then, putting a rope about his neck, they haled 273 him along like a cow. Now when his brothers saw him a prisoner, they charged home upon Gharib, who took three[337] of them captive and the fifth fled back to his sire, who said to him, “What is behind thee and where are the brothers of thee?” Quoth he, “Verily, a beardless youth, forty cubits high, hath taken them prisoner.” Quoth Sa’adan, “May the sun pour no blessing on you!” and, going down from his hold, tore up a huge tree, with which he went in quest of Gharib and his folk; and he was on foot, for that no horse might carry him, because of the bigness of his body. His son followed him and the twain went on till they came up with Gharib and

his company, when the Ghul fell upon them, without word said, and slew five men with his club. Then he made at Sahim and struck at him with his tree, but Sahim avoided the blow and it fell harmless; whereat Sa'adan was wroth and throwing down the weapon, sprang upon Sahim and caught him in his pounces as the sparrow-hawk catcheth up the sparrow. Now when Gharib saw his brother in the Ghul's clutches, he cried out, saying, "Allaho Akbar—God is most Great! Oh the favour of Abraham the Friend, the Muhammad,[338] the Blessed One (whom Allah keep and assain!)"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib saw his brother in the clutches of the Ghul, he cried out, saying "Oh the favour of Ibrahim, the Friend, the Blessed one (whom Allah keep and assain!)"; and drave his charger at Sa'adan, shaking his mace, till the rings loud rang. Then he cried out again, "God is most Great!" and smote the Ghul on the flat of the ribs with his mace, whereupon he fell to the ground, insensible, and loosed his grip on Sahim; nor did he come to himself ere he was pinioned and shackled. When his son saw this, he turned and fled; but Gharib drove steed after him and smiting him with his mace between the shoulders, threw him from his horse. So they bound 274 him with his father and brethren and haltering them with ropes, haled them all six along like baggage-camels, till they reached the Ghul's castle, which they found full of goods and treasures and things of price; and there they also came upon twelve hundred Ajamis, men of Persia, bound and shackled. Gharib sat down on Sa'adan's chair, which had aforetime belonged to Sásá[339] bin Shays bin Shaddad bin Ad causing Sahim to stand on his right and his companions on his either hand, and sending for the Ghul of the Mountain, said to him, "How findest thou thyself, O accursed?" Replied Sa'adan, "O my lord, in the sorriest of plights for abasement and mortification; my sons and I, we are bound with ropes like camels." Quoth Gharib, "It is my will that you enter my faith, the faith Al-Islam hight, and acknowledge the Unity of the All-knowing King whose All-might created Light and Night and every thing,—there is no God but He, the Requiting King!—and confess the mission and prophethood of Abraham the Friend (on whom be peace!)." So the Ghul and his sons made the required profession after the goodliest fashion, and Gharib bade loose their bonds; whereupon Sa'adan wept and would have kissed his feet, he and his sons: but Gharib forbade them and they stood with the rest who stood before him. Then said Gharib, "Harkye, Sa'adan!"; and he replied, "At thy service, O my lord!" Quoth Gharib, "What are these captives?" "O my lord," quoth the Ghul, "these are my game from the land of the Persians and are not the only ones." Asked Gharib, "And who is with them?"; and Sa'adan answered, "O my lord, there is with them the Princess Fakhr Táj, daughter of King Sabúr of Persia,[340] and an hundred damsels like moons." When Gharib heard this, he 275 marvelled and said, "O Emir, how came ye by these?" Replied Sa'adan, "I went forth one night with my sons

and five of my slaves in quest of booty, but finding no spoil in our way, we dispersed over wilds and wolds and fared on, hoping we might happen on somewhat of prey and not return empty-handed, till we found ourselves in the land of the Persians. Presently, we espied a dust-cloud and sent on to reconnoitre one of our slaves, who was absent a while and presently returned and said:—O my lord, this is the Princess Fakhr Taj, daughter of Sabur, King of the Persians, Turcomans and Medes; and she is on a journey, attended by two thousand horse. Quoth I, Thou hast gladdened us with good news! We could have no finer loot than this. Then I and my sons fell upon the Persians and slew of them three hundred men and took the Princess and twelve hundred cavaliers prisoners, together with all that was with her of treasure and riches and brought them to this our castle." Quoth Gharib, "Hast thou offered any violence to the Princess Fakhr Taj?" Quoth Sa'adan, "Not I, as thy head liveth and by the virtue of the Faith I have but now embraced!" Gharib replied, "It was well done of thee, O Sa'adan, for her father is King of the world and doubtless he will despatch troops in quest of her and lay waste the dwellings of those who took her. And whoso looketh not to issue and end hath not Fate to friend. But where is the damsel?" Said Sa'adan, "I have set apart a pavilion for her and her damsels;" and said Gharib, "Show me her lodging," whereto Sa'adan rejoined, "Hearkening and obedience!" So he carried him to the pavilion, and there he found the Princess mournful and cast down, weeping for her former condition of dignity and delight. When Gharib saw her, he thought the moon was near him and magnified Allah, the All-hearing, the All-seeing. The Princess also looked at him and saw him a princely cavalier, with valour shining from between his eyes and testifying for him and not against him; so she rose and kissed his hands, then fell at his feet, saying, "O hero of the age, I am under thy protection; guard me from this Ghul, for I fear lest he do away my maidenhead and after devour me. So take me to serve thine handmaidens." Quoth Gharib, "Thou art safe and thou shalt be restored to thy father and the seat of thy worship." Whereupon she prayed that he might live long and have advancement in rank and honour. Then he bade unbind the Persians and, turning to the Princess, said to her, "What brought thee forth of thy palace [276] to the wilds and wastes, so that the highway-robbers made prize of thee?" She replied, "O my lord, my father and all the people of his realm, Turks and Daylamites, are Magians, fire worshipping, and not the All-powerful King. Now in our country is a monastery called the Monastery of the Fire, whither every year the daughters of the Magians and worshippers of the Fire resort at the time of their festival and abide there a month, after which they return to their houses. So I and my damsels set out, as of wont, attended by two thousand horse, whom my father sent with me to guard me; but by the way this Ghul came out against us and slew some of us and, taking the rest captive, imprisoned us in this hold. This, then, is what befel me, O valiant champion, whom Allah guard against the shifts of Time!" And Gharib said, "Fear not; for I will bring thee to thy palace and the seat of thy honours." Wherefore she blessed him and kissed his hands and feet. Then he went out from her,

after having commanded to treat her with respect, and slept till morning, when he made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed a two-bow prayer, after the rite of our father Abraham the Friend (on whom be peace!), whilst the Ghul and his sons and Gharib's company all did the like after him. Then he turned to the Ghul and said to him, "O Sa'adan, wilt thou not show me the Wady of Blossoms?"[341] "I will, O my lord," answered he. So Gharib and his company and Princess Fakhr Taj and her maidens all rose and went forth, whilst Sa'adan commanded his slaves and slave-girls to slaughter and cook and make ready the morning-meal and bring it to them among the trees. For the Giant had an hundred and fifty handmaids and a thousand chattels to pasture his camels and oxen and sheep. When they came to the valley, they found it beautiful exceedingly and passing all degree; and birds on tree sang joyously and the mocking-nightingale trilled out her melody, and the cushat filled with her moan the mansions made by the Deity,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib and his merry men and the Giant and his tribe reached the Wady of Blossoms they found birds flying free; the cushat filling with her moan the mansions made by the Deity, the bulbul singing as if 'twere human harmony and the merle whom to describe tongue faileth utterly; the turtle, whose plaining maddens men for love-ecstasy and the ringdove and the popinjay answering her with fluency. There also were trees laden with all manner of fruitery, of each two kinds,[342] the pomegranate, sweet and sour upon branches growing luxuriantly, the almond-apricot,[343] the camphor-apricot[344] and the almond Khorasan hight; the plum, with whose branches the boughs of the myrobalan were entwined tight; the orange, as it were a cresset flaming light, the shaddock weighed down with heavy freight; the lemon, that cures lack of appetite, the citron against jaundice of sovereign might, and the date, red and yellow-bright, the especial handiwork of Allah the Most High. Of the like of this place saith the enamoured poet:—

When its birds in the lake make melody, ✿ The lorn lover yearneth its sight to see:

'Tis as Eden breathing a fragrant breeze, ✿ With its shade and fruits and rills flowing free.

Gharib marvelled at the beauty of that Wady and bade them set up there the pavilion of Fakhr Taj the Chosroite; so they pitched it among the trees and spread it with rich tapestries. Then he sat down and the slaves brought food and they ate their sufficiency; after which quoth Gharib, "Harkye, Sa'adan!": and quoth he, "At thy service, O my lord." "Hast thou aught of wine?" asked 278Gharib, and Sa'adan answered, "Yes, I have a cistern full of old wine." Said Gharib, "Bring us some of it." So Sa'adan sent ten slaves, who returned with great plenty of wine, and they ate and

drank and were mirthful and merry. And Gharib bethought him of Mahdiyah and improvised these couplets:—

I mind our union days when ye were nigh, ✿ And flames my heart with love's consuming lowe.

By Allah, ne'er of will I quitted you: ✿ But shifts of Time from you compelled me go:

Peace and fair luck and greetings thousand-fold ✿ To you, from exiled lover's pining woe.

They abode eating and drinking and taking their pleasure in the valley for three days, after which they returned to the castle. Then Gharib called Sahim and said to him, "Take an hundred horse and go to thy father and mother and thy tribe, the Banu Kahtan, and bring them all to this place, here to pass the rest of their days, whilst I carry the Princess of Persia back to her father. As for thee, O Sa'adan, tarry thou here with thy sons, till I return to thee." Asked Sa'adan, "And why wilt thou not carry me with thee to the land of the Persians?"; and Gharib answered, "Because thou stolest away King Sabur's daughter and if his eye fall on thee, he will eat thy flesh and drink thy blood." When the Ghul heard this, he laughed a loud laugh, as it were the pealing thunder, and said, "O my lord, by the life of thy head, if the Persians and Medes united against me, I would make them quaff the cup of annihilation." Quoth Gharib, "'Tis as thou sayest;[345] but tarry thou here in fort till I return to thee;" and quoth the Ghul, "I hear and I obey." Then Sahim departed with his comrades of the Banu Kahtan for the dwelling-places of their tribe, and Gharib set out with Princess Fakhr Taj and her company, intending for the cities of Sabur, King of the Persians. Thus far concerning them; but as regards King Sabur, he abode awaiting his daughter's return from the Monastery of the Fire, and when the appointed time passed by and she came not, flames raged in his heart. Now he had forty Wazirs, whereof the oldest, wisest and chiefest was hight Daydán: so he said to him, "O Minister, verily my daughter delayeth her return and I have no news of her though the appointed time is past; so do thou send a courier to the Monastery of the Fire to learn what 279 is come of her." "Hearkening and obedience," replied Daydan; and, summoning the chief of the couriers, said to him, "Wend thou forthright to the Monastery." So he lost no time and when he reached it, he asked the monks of the King's daughter, but they said, "We have not seen her this year." So the courier returned to the city of Isbánír[346] and told the Wazir, who went in to the King and acquainted him with the message. Now when Sabur heard this, he cast his crown on the ground, tore his beard and fell down in a trance. They sprinkled water upon him, and presently he came to himself, tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted, and repeated the words of the poet:—

When I far-parted patience call and tears, ✿ Tears came to call but Patience never hears:

What, then, if Fortune parted us so far? ✿ Fortune and Perfidy are peers and feres!

Then he called ten of his captains and bade them mount with a thousand horse and ride in different directions, in quest of his daughter. So they mounted forthright and departed each with his thousand; whilst Fakhr Taj's mother clad herself and her women in black and strewed ashes on her head and sat weeping and lamenting. Such

was their case;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Sabur sent his troops in quest of his daughter, whose mother clad herself and her women in black. Such was their case; but as regards the strange adventures of Gharib and the Princess, they journeyed on ten days, and on the eleventh day, appeared a dust-cloud which rose to the confines of the sky; whereupon Gharib called the Emir of the Persians and said to him, "Go learn the cause thereof." "I hear and obey," replied he and drave his charger, till he came under the cloud of dust, where he saw folk and enquired of them. 280 Quoth one of them, "We are of the Banu Hattál and are questing for plunder; our Emir is Samsám bin Al-Jiráh and we are five thousand horse." The Persians returned in haste and told their saying to Gharib, who cried out to his men of the Banu Kahtan and to the Persians, saying, "Don your arms!" They did as he bade them and presently up came the Arabs who were shouting, "A plunder! a plunder!" Quoth Gharib, "Allah confound you, O dogs of Arabs!" Then he loosed his horse and drove at them with the career of a right valiant knight, shouting, "Allaho Akbar! Ho for the faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!" And there befel between them great fight and sore fray and the sword went round in sway and there was much said and say; nor did they leave fighting till fled the day and gloom came, when they drew from one another away. Then Gharib numbered his tribesmen and found that five of the Banu Kahtan had fallen and three-and-seventy of the Persians; but of the Banu Hattal they had slain more than five hundred horse. As for Samsam, he alighted and sought nor meat nor sleep, but said, "In all my life I never saw such a fighter as this youth! Anon he fighteth with the sword and anon with the mace; but, to-morrow I will go forth on champion wise and defy him to combat of twain in battle plain where edge and point are fain and I will cut off these Arabs." Now, when Gharib returned to his camp, the Princess Fakhr Taj met him, weeping and affrighted for the terror of that which had befallen, and kissed his foot in the stirrup, saying, "May thy hands never wither nor thy foes be blither, O champion of the age! Alhamdolillah—Praise to God—who hath saved thee alive this day! Verily, I am in fear for thee from yonder Arabs." When Gharib heard this, he smiled in her face and heartened and comforted her, saying, "Fear not, O Princess! Did the enemy fill this wild and wold yet would I scatter them, by the might of Allah Almighty." She thanked him and prayed that he might be given the victory over his foes; after which she returned to her women and Gharib went to his tent, where he cleansed himself of the blood of the Infidels, and they lay on guard through the night. Next morning, the two hosts mounted and sought the plain where cut and thrust ruled sovereign. The first to prick into the open was Gharib, who drave his charger till he was near the Infidels and cried out, "Who is for jousting with me? Let no sluggard or weakling come out to me!" Whereupon there

rushed forth a giant Amalekite of the lineage of the tribe of Ad, armed with an 281iron flail twenty pounds in weight, and drove at Gharib, saying, "O scum of the Arabs, take what cometh to thee and learn the glad tidings that thy last hour is at hand!" So saying, he aimed a blow at Gharib, but he avoided it and the flail sank a cubit into the ground. Now the Badawi was bent double with the blow; so Gharib smote him with his mace and clove his forehead in sunder; and he fell down dead and Allah hurried his soul to Hell-fire. Then Gharib charged and wheeled and called for champions; so there came out to him a second and a third and a fourth and so on, till ten had come forth to him and he slew them all. When the Infidels saw his form of fight and his swashing blows they hung back and forebore to fare forth to him, whereupon Samsam looked at them and said, "Allah never bless you! I will go forth to him." So he donned his battle-gear and driving his charger into mid-field where he fronted the foe and cried out to Gharib, saying, "Fie on thee, O dog of the Arabs! hath thy strength waxed so great that thou shouldst defy me in the open field and slaughter my men?" And Gharib replied, "Up and take blood-revenge for the slaughter of thy braves!" So Samsam ran at Gharib who awaited him with broadened breast and heart enheartened, and they smote each at other with maces, till the two hosts marvelled and every eye was fixed on them. Then they wheeled about in the field and struck at each other two strokes; but Gharib avoided Samsam's stroke which wreak had wroke and dealt him a buffet that beat in his breastbone and cast him to the ground—stone dead. Thereupon all his host ran at Gharib as one man, and he ran at them, crying, "God is most Great! Help and Victory for us and shame and defeat for those who misbelieve the faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be peace!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Samsam's tribesmen rushed upon Gharib as one man, he ran at them crying, "God is most Great! Help and Victory for us and shame and defeat for the Miscreant!" Now when the Infidels heard the name of the All-powerful King, the One, the All-conquering, whom the sight comprehendeth not, but He comprehendeth 282the sight,[347] they looked at one another and said, "What is this say that maketh our side-muscles tremble and weakeneth our resolution and causeth the life to fail in us? Never in our lives heard we aught goodlier than this saying!" adding, "Let us leave fighting, that we may ask its meaning." So they held their hands from the battle and dismounted; and their elders assembled and held counsel together, seeking to go to Gharib and saying, "Let ten of us repair to him!" So they chose out ten of their best, who set out for Gharib's tents. Now he and his people had alighted and returned to their camp, marvelling at the withdrawal of the Infidels from the fight. But, presently, lo and behold! the ten came up and seeking speech of Gharib, kissed the earth before him and wished him glory and lasting life. Quoth he to them, "What made you leave fighting?"; and quoth they,

"O, my lord, thou didst affright us with the words thou shoutest out at us." Then asked Gharib, "What calamity do ye worship?"; and they answered, "We worship Wadd and Suwá'a and Yaghús,[348] lords of the tribe of Noah"; and Gharib, "We serve none but Allah Almighty, Maker of all things and Provider of all livings. He it is who created the heavens and the earth and stablished the mountains, who made water to well from the stones and the trees to grow and feedeth wild beasts in wold; for He is Allah, the One, the All-powerful Lord." When they heard this, their bosoms broadened to the words of Unity-faith, and they said, "Verily, this be a Lord high and great, compassionating and 283 compassionate!"; adding, "And what shall we say, to become of the Moslems, of those which submit themselves to Him?" Quoth Gharib, "Say:—There is no god but *the* God and Abraham is the Friend of God." So the ten made veracious profession of the veritable religion and Gharib said to them, "An the sweet savour of Al-Islam be indeed stablished in your hearts, fare ye to your tribe and expound the faith to them; and if they profess, they shall be saved, but if they refuse we will burn them with fire." So the ten elders returned and expounded Al-Islam to their people and set forth to them the path of truth and creed, and they embraced the Faith of Submission with heart and tongue. Then they repaired on foot to Gharib's tent and kissing ground between his hands wished him honour and high rank, saying, "O our lord, we are become thy slaves; so command us what thou wilt, for we are to thee audient and obedient and we will never depart from thee, since Allah hath guided us into the right way at thy hands." Replied he, "Allah abundantly requite you! Return to your dwellings and march forth with your good and your children and forego me to the Wady of Blossoms and the castle of Sásá bin Shays,[349] whilst I carry the Princess Fakhr Taj, daughter of Sabur, King of the Persians, back to her father and return to you." "Hearkening and obedience," said they and straightway returned to their encampment, rejoicing in Al-Islam, and expounded the True Faith to their wives and children, who became Believers. Then they struck their tents and set forth, with their good and cattle, for the Wady of Blossoms. When they came in sight of the castle of Shays, Sa'adan and his sons sallied forth to them, but Gharib had charged them, saying, "If the Ghul of the Mountain come out to you and offer to attack you, do ye call upon the name of Allah the All-creator, and he will leave his hostile intent and receive you hospitably." So when he would have fallen upon them they called aloud upon the name of Almighty Allah and straightway he received them kindly and asked them of their case. They told him all that had passed between Gharib and themselves, whereupon he rejoiced in them and 284 lodged them with him and loaded them with favours. Such was their case; but as regards Gharib, he and his, escorting the Princess fared on five days' journey towards the City of Isbanir, and on the sixth day they saw a dust-cloud. So Gharib sent one of the Persians to learn the meaning of this and he went and returned, swiftlier than bird in flight, saying, "O my lord, these be a thousand horse of our comrades, whom the King hath sent in quest of his daughter

Fakhr Taj." When Gharib heard this, he commanded his company to halt and pitch the tents. So they halted and waited till the new comers reached them, when they went to meet them and told Túmán, their captain, that the Princess was with them; whereupon he went in to Gharib and kissing the ground before him, enquired for her. Gharib sent him to her pavilion, and he entered and kissed her hands and feet and acquainted her with what had befallen her father and mother. She told him in return all that had betided her and how Gharib had delivered her from the Ghul of the Mountain,—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King's daughter, Fakhr Taj, had told Tuman all that had befallen her from the Mountain-Ghul, and how he had imprisoned her and would have devoured her but for Gharib, adding, "And indeed, it behoveth my sire to give him the half of his reign," Tuman arose and returned to Gharib and kissed his hands and feet and thanked him for his good dealing, saying, "With thy leave, O my lord, I will return to Isbanir City and deliver to our King the good news of his daughter's approach." "Go," replied Gharib, "and take of him the gift of glad tidings." So Tuman returned with all diligence to Isbanir, the Cities, and entering the palace, kissed ground before the King, who said to him, "What is there of new, O bringer of good news?" Quoth Tuman, "I will not speak thee, till thou give me the gift of glad tidings." Quoth the King, "Tell me thy glad tidings and I will content thee." So Tuman said, "O King, I bring thee joyful intelligence of the return of Princess Fakhr Taj." When Sabur heard his daughter's name, he fell down fainting and they sprinkled rose-water on him, till he recovered 285 and cried to Tuman, "Draw near to me and tell me all the good which hath befallen her." So he came forward and acquainted him with all that had betided the Princess; and Sabur beat hand upon hand, saying, "Unhappy thou, O Fakhr Taj!"[350] And he bade give Tuman ten thousand gold pieces and conferred on him the government of Isfáhán City and its dependencies. Then he cried out to his Emirs, saying, "Mount, all of you, and fare we forth to meet the Princess Fakhr Taj!"; and the Chief Eunuch went in to the Queen-mother and told her and all the Harim the good news, whereat she rejoiced and gave him a robe of honour and a thousand dinars. Moreover, the people of the city heard of this and decorated the market streets and houses. Then the King and Tuman took horse and rode till they had sight of Gharib, when Sabur footed it and made some steps towards Gharib, who also dismounted and advanced to meet him; and they embraced and saluted each other, and Sabur bent over Gharib's hand and kissed it and thanked him for his favours.[351] They pitched their pavilions in face of each other and Sabur went in to his daughter, who rose and embracing him told him, all that had befallen her and how Gharib had rescued her from the clutches of the Ghul of the Mountain. Quoth the King, "By thy life, O Princess of fair ones, I will overwhelm him with gifts!"; and quoth she, "O my papa,

make him thy son-in-law, that he may be to thee a force against thy foes, for he is passing valiant." Her father replied, "O my daughter, knowst thou not that King Khirad Sháh seeketh thee in marriage and that he hath cast the brocade[352] and hath given an hundred thousand dinars in settlement, and he is King of Shiraz and its dependencies and is lord of empire and horsemen and footmen?" But when the Princess heard these words she said, "O my papa! I desire not that whereof thou speakest, and if thou constrain me to that I have no mind to, I will slay myself." So Sabur left her and went in to Gharib, who rose to him; and they sat awhile together; but the King could not take his fill of looking upon him; and he said in his mind, "By Allah, my daughter is 286 excusable if she love this Badawi!" Then he called for food and they ate and passed the night together. On the morrow, they took horse and rode till they arrived at the City of Isbanir and entered, stirrup to stirrup, and it was for them a great day. Fakhr Taj repaired to her palace and the abiding-place of her rank, where her mother and her women received her with cries of joy and loud lullilooings. As for King Sabur, he sat down on his throne and seated Gharib on his right hand, whilst the Princes and Chamberlains, the Emirs, Wazirs and Nabobs stood on either hand and gave him joy of the recovery of his daughter. Said Sabur, "Whoso loveth me let him bestow a robe of honour on Gharib," and there fell dresses of honour on him like drops of rain. Then Gharib abode the King's guest ten days, when he would have departed, but Sabur clad him in an honourable robe and swore him by his faith that he should not march for a whole month. Quoth Gharib, "O King, I am plighted to one of the girls of the Arabs and I desire to go in to her." Quoth the King, "Whether is the fairer, thy betrothed or Fakhr Taj?" "O King of the age," replied Gharib, "what is the slave beside the lord?" And Sabur said, "Fakhr Taj is become thy handmaid, for that thou didst rescue her from the pounces of the Ghul, and she shall have none other husband than thyself." Thereupon Gharib rose and kissed ground, saying, "O King of the age, thou art a sovereign and I am but a poor man, and belike thou wilt ask a heavy dowry." Replied the King, "O my son, know that Khirad Shah, lord of Shiráz and dependencies thereof, seeketh her in marriage and hath appointed an hundred thousand dinars to her dower; but I have chosen thee before all men, that I may make thee the sword of my kingship and my shield against vengeance."[353] Then he turned to his Chief Officers and said to them, "Bear witness[354] against me, O Lords of mine Empire, that I marry my daughter Fakhr Taj to my son Gharib."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sabur, King of Ajam-land said to his Chief Officers, "Bear ye 287 witness against me that I marry my daughter, Fakhr Taj, to my son Gharib!" With that he joined palms[355] with him and she became his wife. Then said Gharib, "Appoint me a dower and I will bring it to thee, for I have in the Castle of Sasa wealth and treasures beyond count." Replied Sabur, "O my son, I

want of thee neither treasure nor wealth and I will take nothing for her dower save the head of Jamrkán King of Dasht and the city of Ahwáz.[356]" Quoth Gharib, "O King of the age, I will fetch my folk forthright and go to thy foe and spoil his realm." Quoth Sabur, "Allah requite thee with good!" and dismissed the lords and commons, thinking, "If Gharib go forth against Jamrkan, he will never more return." When morning morrowed the King mounted with Gharib and bidding all his troops take horse rode forth to the plain, where he said to his men, "Do ye tilt with spears and gladden my heart." So the champions of Persia-land played one against other, and Gharib said, "O King of the age, I have a mind to tilt with the horsemen of Ajam-land, but on one condition." Asked the King, "What is that?"; and answered Gharib, "It is that I shall don a light tunic and take a headless lance, with a pennon dipped in saffron, whilst the Persian champions sally forth and tilt against me with sharp spears. If any conquer me, I will render myself to him: but, if I conquer him I will mark him on the breast and he shall leave the plain." Then the King cried to the commander of the troops to bring forward the champions of the Persians; so he chose out from amongst the Princes one thousand two hundred of his stoutest champions, and the King said to them, in the Persian tongue, "Whoso slayeth this Badawi may ask of me what he will." So they strove with one another for precedence and charged down upon Gharib and truth was distinguished from falsehood and jest from earnest. Quoth Gharib, "I put my trust in Allah, the God of Abraham the Friend, the Deity who hath power over all and from whom naught is hidden, the One, the Almighty, whom the sight comprehendeth not!" Then an Amalekite-like giant of the Persian champions rushed out to him, but Gharib let him not stand long 288 before him ere he marked him and covered his breast with saffron, and as he turned away, he smote him on the nape with the shaft of his lance, and he fell to the ground and his pages bore him from the lists.[357] Then a second champion came forth against him and he overcame him and marked him on the breast; and thus did he with a third and a fourth and a fifth; and there came out against him champion after champion till he had overcome them all and marked them on the breast; for Almighty Allah gave him the victory over them and they fared forth vanquisht from the plain. Then the servants set food and strong wine before them and they ate and drank, till Gharib's wits were dazed by the drink. By and by, he went out to obey a call of Nature and would have returned, but lost his way and entered the palace of Fakhr Taj. When she saw him, her reason fled and she cried out to her women saying, "Go forth from me to your own places!" So they withdrew and she rose and kissed Gharib's hand, saying, "Welcome to my lord, who delivered me from the Ghul! Indeed I am thine handmaid for ever and ever." Then she drew him to her bed and embraced him, whereupon desire was hot upon him and he broke her seal and lay with her till the morning. Meanwhile the King thought that he had departed; but on the morrow he went in to him and Sabur rose to him and made him sit by his side. Then entered the tributary kings and kissing the ground stood ranged in rows on the right and left and fell to talking of Gharib's valour and saying,

"Extolled be He who gave him such prowess albeit he is so young in years!" As they were thus engaged, behold all espied from the palace-windows the dust of horse approaching and the King cried out to his scouts, saying, "Woe to you! Go and bring me news of yonder dust!" So a cavalier took horse and riding off, returned after a while, and said, "O King, we found under that dust an hundred horse belonging to an Emir hight Sahim al-Layl." Gharib hearing these words, cried out, "O my lord, this is my brother, whom I had sent on an errand, and I will go forth to meet him." So saying, he mounted, with his hundred men of the Banu Kahtan and a thousand Persians, and rode to meet his brother in great state, but greatness belongeth to God alone.[358] When the two came up with each other, they 289 dismounted and embraced, and Gharib said to Sahim, "O my brother, hast thou brought our tribe to the Castle of Sasa and the Wady of Blossoms?" "O my brother," replied Sahim, "when the perfidious dog Mardas heard that thou hadst made thee master of the stronghold belonging to the Mountain-Ghul, he was sore chagrined and said:—Except I march hence, Gharib will come and carry off my daughter Mahdiyah without dower. So he took his daughter and his goods and set out with his tribe for the land of Irak, where he entered the city of Cufa and put himself under the protection of King Ajib, seeking to give him his daughter to wife." When Gharib heard his brother's story, he well-nigh gave up the ghost for rage and said, "By the virtue of the faith of Al-Islam, the faith of Abraham the Friend, and by the Supreme Lord, I will assuredly go to the land of Irak and fierce war upon it I will set on foot." Then they returned to the city and going in to the King, kissed ground before him. He rose to Gharib and saluted Sahim; after which the elder brother told him what had happened and he put ten captains at his commandment, under each one's hand ten thousand horse of the doughtiest of the Arabs and the Ajams, who equipped themselves and were ready to depart in three days. Then Gharib set out and journeyed till he reached the Castle of Sasa whence the Ghul and his sons came forth to meet him and dismounting, kissed his feet in the stirrups. He told them all that had passed and the giant said, "O my lord, do thou abide in this thy castle, whilst I with my sons and servants repair to Irak and lay waste the city Al-Rusták[359] and bring to thy hand all its defenders bound in straitest bond." But Gharib thanked him and said, "O Sa'adan, we will all go." So he made him ready and the whole body set out for Irak, leaving a thousand horse to guard the Castle. Thus far concerning them; but as regards Mardas, he arrived with his tribe in the land of Irak bringing with him a handsome present and fared for Cufa-city which he entered. Then, he presented himself before Ajib and kissed ground between his hands and, after wishing him what is 290 wished to kings, said, "O my lord, I come to place myself under thy protection."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that Mardas, coming into the presence of Ajib, said to him, "I come to place myself under thy protection!" Quoth Ajib, "Tell me who hath wronged thee, that I may protect thee against him, though it were Sabur, King of the Persians and Turcomans and Daylamites." Quoth Mardas, "O King of the Age, he who hath wronged me is none other than a youth whom I reared in my bosom. I found him in his mother's lap in a certain valley and took her to wife. She brought me a son, whom I named Sahim al-Layl, and her own son, Gharib hight, grew up on my knees and became a blasting thunderbolt and a lasting calamity,[360] for he smote Al-Hamal,[361] Prince of the Banu Nabhan, and slew footmen and threw horsemen. Now I have a daughter, who befitteth thee alone, and he sought her of me; so I required of him the head of the Ghul of the Mountain, wherefore he went to him and, after engaging him in singular combat, made the master his man and took the Castle of Sasa bin Shays bin Shaddad bin Ad, wherein are the treasures of the ancients and the hoards of the moderns. Moreover, I hear that, become a Moslem, he goeth about, summoning the folk to his faith. He is now gone to bear the Princess of Persia, whom he delivered from the Ghul, back to her father, King Sabur, and will not return but with the treasures of the Persians." When Ajib heard the story of Mardas he changed colour to yellow and was in ill case and made sure of his own destruction; then he said, "O Mardas, is the youth's mother with thee or with him?"; and Mardas replied, "She is with me in my tents." Quoth Ajib, "What is her name?"; quoth Mardas, "Her name is Nusrah." "'Tis very she," rejoined Ajib and sent for her to the presence. Now when she came before him, he looked on her and knew her and asked her, "O accursed, where are the two slaves I sent 291 with thee?"; and she answered, "They slew each other on my account;" whereupon Ajib bared his blade and smote her and cut her in twain. Then they dragged her away and cast her out; but trouble and suspicion entered Ajib's heart and he cried, "O Mardas, give me thy daughter to wife." He rejoined, "She is one of thine handmaids: I give her to thee to wife, and I am thy slave." Said Ajib, "I desire to look upon this son of an adulteress, Gharib, that I may destroy him and cause him taste all manner of torments." Then he bade give Mardas, to his daughter's dowry, thirty thousand dinars and an hundred pieces of silk brocaded and fringed with gold and an hundred pieces of silk-bordered stuffs and kerchiefs and golden collars. So he went forth with this mighty fine dowry and set himself to equip Mahdiyah in all diligence. Such was their case; but as regards Gharib, he fared on till he came to Al-Jazírah, which is the first town of Al-Irak[362] and is a walled and fortified city and he hard by it called a halt. When the townsfolk saw his army encamped before it, they bolted the gates and manned the walls, then went to the King of the city, who was called Al-Dámigh, the Brainer, for that he used to brain the champions in the open field of fight, and told him what was come upon them. So he looked forth from the battlements of the palace and seeing a conquering host, all of them Persians; encamped before the city, said to the citizens, "O folk, what do yonder Ajams want?"; and they replied, "We know not." Now Al-Damigh had among his

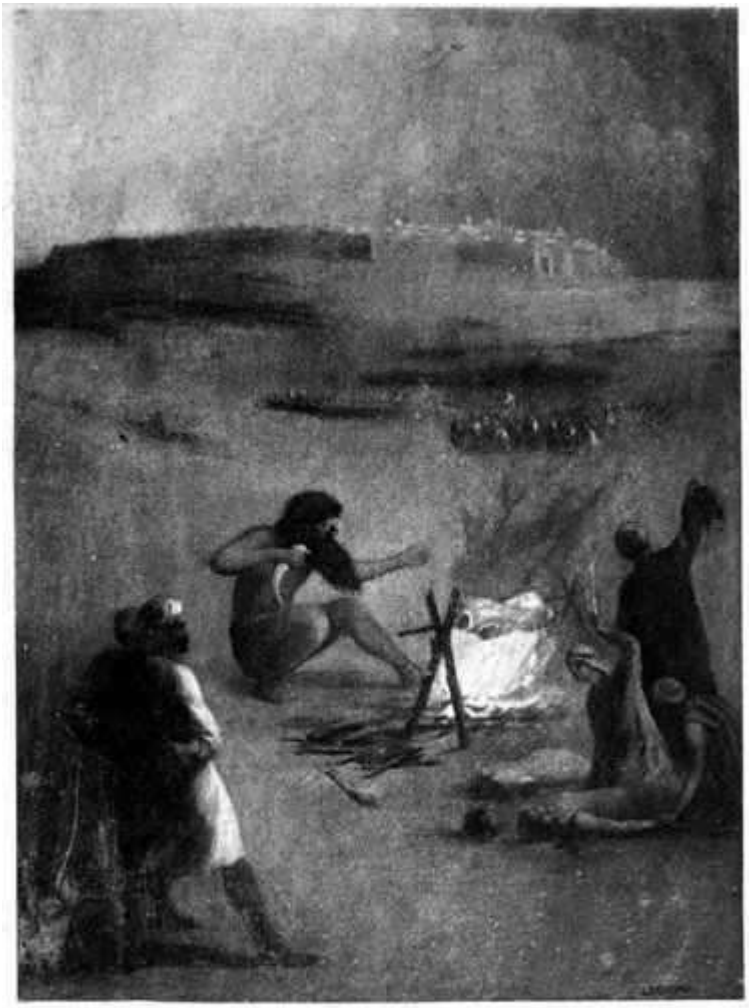
officers a man called Saba' al-Kifár, the Desert-lion, keen of wit and penetrating as he were a flame of fire; so he called him and said to him, "Go to this stranger host and find out who they be and what they want and return quickly." Accordingly, he sped like the wind to the Persian tents, where a company of Arabs rose up and met him saying, "Who art thou and what dost thou require?" He replied, "I am a messenger and an envoy from the lord of the city to your chief." So they took him and carried him through the lines of tents, pavilions and standards, till they came to Gharib's Shahmiyánah and told him of the mission. He bade them bring him in and they did so, whereupon he kissed ground before Gharib and wished him honour and length of days. Quoth [292] Gharib, "What is thine errand?" and quoth Saba' al-Kifar, "I am an envoy from the lord of the city of Al-Jazirah, Al-Damigh, brother of King Kundamir, lord of the city of Cufa and the land of Irak." When Gharib heard his father's name, the tears railed from his eyes in rills and he looked at the messenger and said, "What is thy name?"; and he replied, "My name is Saba' al-Kifar." Said Gharib, "Return to thy lord and tell him that the commander of this host is called Gharib, son of Kundamir, King of Cufa, whom his son Ajib slew, and he is come to take blood-revenge for his sire on Ajib the perfidious hound." So Saba' al-Kifar returned to the city and in great joy kissed the ground, when Al-Damigh said, "What is going on there, O Saba' al-Kifar?" He replied, "O my master, the leader of yon host is thy nephew, thy brother's son," and told him all. The King deemed himself in a dream and asked the messenger, "O Saba' al-Kifar, is this thou tellest me true?" and the Desert-lion answered, "As thy head liveth, it is sooth!" Then Al-Damigh bade his chief officers take horse forthright and all rode out to the camp, whence Gharib came forth and met him and they embraced and saluted each other; after which Gharib carried him to his tents and they sat down on beds of estate. Al-Damigh rejoiced in Gharib, his brother's son, and presently turning to him, said, "I also have yearned to take blood-revenge for thy father, but could not avail against the dog thy brother; for that his troops are many and my troops are few." Replied Gharib, "O uncle, here am I come to avenge my sire and blot out our shame and rid the realm of Ajib." Said Al-Damigh, "O son of my brother, thou hast two blood-wreaks to take, that of thy father and that of thy mother." Asked Gharib, "And what aileth my mother?" and Al-Damigh answered, "Thy brother Ajib hath slain her."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib heard these words of his uncle Al-Damigh, "Verily thy brother Ajib hath slain her!", he asked what was the cause thereof and was told of all that had happened, especially how Mardas had married his daughter to Ajib who was about to go [293] into her. Thereupon Gharib's reason fled from his head and he swooned away and was nigh upon death. No sooner did he come to himself than he cried out to the troops, saying, "To horse!" But Al-

Damigh said to him, “O son of my brother, wait till I make ready mine affairs and mount among my men and fare with thee at thy stirrup.” Replied Gharib, “I have no patience to wait; do thou equip thy troops and join me at Cufa.” Thereupon Gharib mounted with his troops and rode, till he came to the town of Babel,[363] whose folk took fright at him. Now there was in this town a King called Jamak, under whose hand were twenty thousand horsemen, and there gathered themselves together to him from the villages other fifty thousand horse, who pitched their tents facing the city. Then Gharib wrote a letter and sent it to King Jamak by a messenger, who came up to the city-gate and cried out, saying, “I am an envoy;” whereupon the Warder of the Gate went in and told Jamak, who said, “Bring him to me.” So he led in the messenger, who kissing the ground before the King, gave him the letter, and Jamak opened it and read its contents as follows: “Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Three Worlds, Lord of all things, who giveth to all creatures their daily bread and who over all things is Omnipotent! These from Gharib, son of King Kundamir, lord of Irak and Cufa, to Jamak. Immediately this letter reacheth thee, let not thy reply be other than to break thine idols and confess the unity of the All-knowing King, Creator of light and darkness, Creator of all things, the All-powerful; and except thou do as I bid thee, I will make this day the blackest of thy days. Peace be on those who follow in the way of Salvation, fearing the issues of fornication, and obey the hest of the Most High King, Lord of this world and the next, Him who saith to a thing:—Be; and it becometh!” Now when Jamak read this letter, his eyes paled and his colour failed and he cried out to the messenger, “Go to thy lord and say to him:—To-morrow, at daybreak there shall be fight and conflict and it shall appear who is the conquering hero.” So he returned and told Gharib, who bade his men make ready for battle, whilst Jamak commanded his tents to 294 be pitched in face of Gharib’s camp; and his troops poured forth like the surging sea and passed the night with intention of slaughter. As soon as dawned the day, the two hosts mounted and drew up in battle-array and beat their drums amain and drave their steeds of swiftest strain; and they filled the whole earthly plain; and the champions to come out were fain. Now the first who sallied forth a-championing to the field was the Ghul of the Mountain, bearing on shoulder a terrible tree, and he cried out between the two hosts, saying, “I am Sa’adan the Ghul! Who is for fighting, who is for jousting? Let no sluggard come forth to me nor weakling.” And he called out to his sons, saying, “Woe to you! Bring me fuel and fire, for I am an-hungered.” So they cried upon their slaves who brought firewood and kindled a fire in the heart of the plain. Then there came out to him a man of the Kafirs, an Amalekite of the unbelieving Amalekites, bearing on his shoulder a mace like the mast of a ship, and drove at Sa’adan the Ghul, saying, “Woe to thee, O Sa’adan!” When the giant heard this, he waxed furious beyond measure and raising his tree-club, aimed at the Infidel a blow, that hummed through the air. The Amalekite met the stroke with his mace, but the tree beat down his guard and descending with its own weight, together with the weight of the mace upon his head, beat in his brain-

pan, and he fell like a long-stemmed palm-tree. Thereupon Sa'adan cried to his slaves, saying, "Take this fatted calf and roast him quickly." So they hastened to skin the Infidel and roasted him and brought him to the Ghul, who ate his flesh and crunched his bones.[364] Now when the Kafirs saw how Sa'adan did with their fellow, their hair and pile stood on end; their skins quaked, their colour changed, their hearts died within them and they said to one another, "Whoso goeth out against this Ghul, he eateth him and cracketh his bones and causeth him to lack the zephyr-wind of the world." Wherefore they held their hands, quailing for fear of the Ghul and his sons 295 and turned to fly, making for the town; but Gharib cried out to his troops, saying, "Up and after the runaways!" So the Persians and the Arabs drave after the King of Babel and his host and caused sword to smite them, till they slew of them twenty thousand or more. Then the fugitives crowded together in the city-gate and they killed of them much people; and they could not avail to shut the gate. So the Arabs and the Persians entered with them, fighting, and Sa'adan, snatching a mace from one of the slain, wielded it in the enemy's face and gained the city race-course. Thence he fought his way through the foe and broke into the King's palace, where he met with Jamak and so smote him with the mace, that he toppled senseless to the ground. Then he fell upon those who were in the palace and pounded them into pieces, till all that were left cried out, "Quarter! Quarter!" and Sa'adan said to them, "Pinion your King."——And Shahrazad saw the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.





Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

Shahrazad continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sa'adan having broken into the palace of King Jamak and pounded to pieces those therein, the survivors cried out, "Quarter! Quarter!"; and Sa'adan said to them, "Pinion your King!" So they bound Jamak and took him up, and Sa'adan drove them before him like sheep and brought them to Gharib's presence, after the most part of the citizens had perished by the enemy's swords. When the King of Babel came to himself, he found himself bound and heard Sa'adan say, "I will sup to-night off this King Jamak:" whereupon he turned to Gharib and cried to him, "I throw myself on thy mercy." Replied Gharib, "Become a Moslem, and thou shalt be safe from the Ghul and from the vengeance of the Living One who ceaseth not." So Jamak professed Al-Islam with heart and tongue and Gharib bade loose his bonds. Then he expounded The Faith to his people and they all became True Believers; after which Jamak returned to the city and despatched thence provaunt and henchmen to Gharib; and wine to the camp before Babel where they passed the night. On the morrow, Gharib gave the signal for the march and they fared on till they came to Mayyáfárikín,[1] which they found empty, for its people had heard what had befallen Babel and had fled to Cufa-city and told Ajib. When he heard the news, his Doom-day appeared to him and he assembled his braves and informing them of the enemy's approach ordered them make ready to do battle with his brother's host; after which he numbered them and found them thirty thousand horse and ten thousand foot.[2] So, needing more, he levied other fifty thousand men, cavalry and infantry, and taking horse amid a mighty host, rode forwards, till he came upon his brother's army encamped before Mosul and pitched his tents in face of their lines. Then Gharib wrote a writ and said to his officers, "Which of you will carry this letter to Ajib?" Whereupon Sahim sprang to his feet and cried, "O King of the Age, I will bear thy missive and bring thee back an answer." So Gharib gave him the epistle and 2 he repaired to the pavilion of Ajib who, when informed of his coming, said, "Admit him!" and when he stood in the presence asked him, "Whence comest thou?" Answered Sahim, "From the King of the Arabs and the Persians, son-in-law of Chosroë, King of the world, who sendeth thee a writ; so do thou return him a reply." Quoth Ajib, "Give me the letter;" accordingly Sahim gave it to him and he tore it open and found therein:—"In the name of Allah the Compassionating, the Compassionate! Peace on Abraham the Friend await! But afterwards. As soon as this letter shall come to thy hand, do thou confess the Unity of the Bountiful King, Causer of causes and Mover of the clouds;[3] and leave worshipping idols. An thou do this thing, thou art my brother and ruler over us and I will pardon thee the deaths of my father and mother, nor will I reproach thee with what thou hast done. But an thou obey not my bidding, behold, I will hasten to thee and cut off thy head and lay waste thy dominions. Verily, I give thee good counsel, and the Peace be on those who pace the path of salvation and obey the Most High

King!” When Ajib read these words and knew the threat they contained, his eyes sank into the crown of his head and he gnashed his teeth and flew into a furious rage. Then he tore the letter in pieces and threw it away, which vexed Sahim and he cried out upon Ajib, saying, “Allah wither thy hand for the deed thou hast done!” With this Ajib cried out to his men, saying, “Seize yonder hound and hew him in pieces with your hangers.”[4] So they ran at Sahim; but he 3bared blade and fell upon them and slew of them more than fifty braves; after which he cut his way out, though bathed in blood, and won back to Gharib, who said, “What is this case, O Sahim?” And he told him what had passed, whereat he grew livid for rage and crying “Allaho Akbar—God is most great!”—bade the battle-drums beat. So the fighting-men donned their hauberks and coats of strait-woven mail and baldrick’d themselves with their swords; the footmen drew out in battle-array, whilst the horsemen mounted their prancing horses and dancing camels and levelled their long lances, and the champions rushed into the field. Ajib and his men also took horse and host charged down upon host.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib and his merry men took horse, Ajib and his troops also mounted and host charged down upon host. Then ruled the Kazi of Battle, in whose ordinance is no wrong, for a seal is on his lips and he speaketh not; and the blood railed in rills and purfled earth with curious embroidery; heads grew gray and hotter waxed battle and fiercer. Feet slipped and stood firm the valiant and pushed forwards, whilst turned the faint-heart and fled, nor did they leave fighting till the day darkened and the night starkened. Then clashed the cymbals of retreat and the two hosts drew apart each from other, and returned to their tents, where they nighted. Next morning, as soon as it was day, the cymbals beat to battle and derring-do, and the warriors donned their harness of fight and baldrick’d[5] their blades the brightest bright and with the brown lance bedight mounted doughty steed every knight and cried out, saying, “This day no flight!” And the two hosts drew out in battle array, like the surging sea. The first to open the chapter[6] of 4war was Sahim, who drave his destrier between the two lines and played with swords and spears and turned over all the Capitula of combat till men of choicest wits were confounded. Then he cried out, saying, “Who is for fighting? Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard come out or weakling!” Whereupon there rushed at him a horseman of the Kafirs, as he were a flame of fire; but Sahim let him not stand long before him ere he overthrew him with a thrust. Then a second came forth and he slew him also, and a third and he tare him in twain, and a fourth and he did him to death; nor did they cease sallying out to him and he left not slaying them, till it was noon, by which time he had laid low two hundred braves. Then Ajib cried to his men, “Charge once more,” and sturdy host on sturdy host down bore and great was the clash of arms and battle-roar. The shining swords out rang; the blood in streams ran and footman

rushed upon footman; Death showed in van and horse-hoof was shodden with skull of man; nor did they cease from sore smiting till waned the day and the night came on in black array, when they drew apart and, returning to their tents, passed the night there. As soon as morning morrowed the two hosts mounted and sought the field of fight; and the Moslems looked for Gharib to back steed and ride under the standards as was his wont, but he came not. So Sahim sent to his brother's pavilion a slave who, finding him not, asked the tent-pitchers,[7] but they answered, "We know naught of him." Whereat he was greatly concerned and went forth and told the troops, who refrained from battle, saying, "An Gharib be absent, his foe will destroy us." Now there was for Gharib's absence a cause strange but true which we will set out in order due. And it was thus. When Ajib returned to his camp on the preceding night, he called one of his guardsmen by name Sayyár and said to him, "O Sayyar, I have not treasured thee save for a day like this; and now I bid thee enter among Gharib's host and, pushing into the marquee of their lord, bring him hither to me and prove how wily thy cunning be." And Sayyar said, "I hear and I obey." So he repaired to the enemy's camp and stealing into Gharib's pavilion, under the darkness of the night, when all the men had gone to their places of rest, stood up as though he were a slave to serve Gharib, who presently, being athirst, called to him for water. So he brought him a pitcher of water, drugged with Bhang, and Gharib could not fulfil his need ere he fell down with head distancing heels, whereupon Sayyar wrapped him in his cloak and carrying him to Ajib's tent, threw him down at his feet. Quoth Ajib, "O Sayyar, what is this?" Quoth he, "This be thy brother Gharib;" whereat Ajib rejoiced and said, "The blessings of the Idols light upon thee! Loose him and wake him." So they made him sniff up vinegar and he came to himself and opened his eyes; then, finding himself bound and in a tent other than his own, exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Thereupon Ajib cried out at him, saying, "Dost thou draw on me, O dog, and seek to slay me and take on me thy blood-wreak of thy father and thy mother? I will send thee this very day to them and rid the world of thee." Replied Gharib, "Kafir hound! soon shalt thou see against whom the wheels of fate shall revolve and who shall be overthrown by the wrath of the Almighty King, Who wotteth what is in hearts and Who shall leave thee in Gehenna tormented and confounded! Have ruth on thyself and say with me:—There is no god but *the* God and Abraham is the Friend of God!" When Ajib heard Gharib's words, he snarked and snorted and railed at his god, the stone, and called for the sworder and the leather-rug of blood; but his Wazir, who was at heart a Moslem though outwardly a Miscreant, rose and kissing ground before him, said, "Patience, O King, deal not hastily, but wait till we know the conquered from the conqueror. If we prove the victors, we shall have power to kill him and, if we be beaten, his being alive in our hands will be a strength to us." And the Emirs said, "The Minister speaketh sooth!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ajib purposed to slay Gharib, the Wazir rose and said, "Deal not hastily, for we have always power to kill him!" So Ajib bade lay his brother Gharib in irons and chain him up in his own tent and set a thousand stout warriors to guard him. Meanwhile Gharib's host, when they awoke that morning and found not their [6]King, were as sheep sans a shepherd; but Sa'adan the Ghul cried out at them, saying, "O folk, don your war-gear and trust to your Lord to defend you!" So Arabs and Ajams mounted horse, after clothing themselves in hauberks of iron and shirting themselves in straight-knit mail, and sallied forth to the field, the Chiefs and the colours moving in van. Then dashed out the Ghul of the Mountain, with a club on his shoulder, two hundred pounds in weight, and wheeled and careered, saying, "Ho, worshippers of idols, come ye out and renown it this day, for 'tis a day of onslaught! Whoso knoweth me hath enough of my mischief and whoso knoweth me not, I will make myself known to him. I am Sa'adan, servant of King Gharib. Who is for jousting? Who is for fighting? Let no faint-heart come forth to me to-day or weakling." And there rushed upon him a Champion of the Infidels, as he were a flame of fire, and drove at him, but Sa'adan charged home at him and dealt him with his club a blow which broke his ribs and cast him lifeless to the earth. Then he called out to his sons and slaves, saying, "Light the bonfire, and whoso falleth of the Kafirs do ye dress him and roast him well in the flame, then bring him to me that I may break my fast on him!" So they kindled a fire midmost the plain and laid thereon the slain, till he was cooked, when they brought him to Sa'adan, who gnawed his flesh and crunched his bones. When the Miscreants saw the Mountain-Ghul do this deed they were affrighted with sore affright, but Ajib cried out to his men, saying, "Out on you! Fall upon the Ogre and hew him in hunks with your scymitars!" So twenty thousand men ran at Sa'adan, whilst the footmen circled round him and rained upon him darts and shafts so that he was wounded in four-and-twenty places, and his blood ran down upon the earth, and he was alone. Then the host of the Moslems drave at the heathenry, calling for help upon the Lord of the three Worlds, and they ceased not from fight and fray till the day came to an end, when they drew apart. But the Infidels had captured Sa'adan, as he were a drunken man for loss of blood; and they bound him fast and set him by Gharib who, seeing the Ghul a prisoner, said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! O Sa'adan, what case is this?" "O my lord," replied Sa'adan, "it is Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) who ordaineth joy and annoy and there is no help but this and that betide." And Gharib rejoined, "Thou speakest sooth, O [7]Sa'adan!" But Ajib passed the night in joy and he said to his men, "Mount ye on the morrow and fall upon the Moslems so shall not one of them be left alive." And they replied, "Hearkening and obedience!" This is how it fared with them; but as regards the Moslems, they passed the night, dejected and weeping for their King and Sa'adan; but

Sahim said to them, "O folk, be not concerned, for the aidance of Almighty Allah is nigh." Then he waited till midnight, when he assumed the garb of a tent-pitcher; and, repairing to Ajib's camp, made his way between the tents and pavilions till he came to the King's marquee, where he saw him seated on his throne surrounded by his Princes. So he entered and going up to the candles which burnt in the tent, snuffed them and sprinkled levigated henbane on the wicks; after which he withdrew and waited without the marquee, till the smoke of the burning henbane reached Ajib and his Princes and they fell to the ground like dead men. Then he left them and went to the prison tent, where he found Gharib and Sa'adan, guarded by a thousand braves, who were overcome with sleep. So he cried out at the guards, saying, "Woe to you! Sleep not; but watch your prisoners and light the cressets." Presently he filled a cresset with firewood, on which he strewed henbane, and lighting it, went round about the tent with it, till the smoke entered the nostrils of the guards, and they all fell asleep drowned by the drug; when he entered the tent and finding Gharib and Sa'adan also insensible he aroused them by making them smell and sniff at a sponge full of vinegar he had with him. Thereupon he loosed their bonds and collars, and when they saw him, they blessed him and rejoiced in him. After this they went forth and took all the arms of the guards and Sahim said to them, "Go to your own camp;" while he re-entered Ajib's pavilion and, wrapping him in his cloak, lifted him up and made for the Moslem encampment. And the Lord, the Compassionate, protected him, so that he reached Gharib's tent in safety and unrolled the cloak before him. Gharib looked at its contents and seeing his brother Ajib bound, cried out, "Allaho Akbar—God is Most Great! Aidance! Victory!" And he blessed Sahim and bade him arouse Ajib. So he made him smell the vinegar mixed with incense, and he opened his eyes and, finding himself bound and shackled, hung down his head earthwards.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

8

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after Sahim had aroused Ajib, whom he had made insensible with henbane and had brought to his brother Gharib, the captive opened his eyes and, feeling himself bound and shackled, hung down his head earthwards. Thereupon cried Sahim, "O Accursed, lift thy head!" So he raised his eyes and found himself amongst Arabs and Ajams and saw his brother seated on the throne of his estate and the place of his power, wherefore he was silent and spake not. Then Gharib cried out and said, "Strip me this hound!" So they stripped him and came down upon him with whips, till they weakened his body and subdued his pride, after which Gharib set over him a guard of an hundred knights. And when this fraternal correction had been administered they heard shouts of, "There is no God but *the* God!" and "God is Most Great!" from the camp of the Kafirs. Now the cause of this was that, ten days after his nephew King Al-Damigh, Gharib's uncle, had set

out from Al-Jazirah, with twenty thousand horse, and on nearing the field of battle, had despatched one of his scouts to get news. The man was absent a whole day, at the end of which time he returned and told Al-Damigh all that had happened to Gharib with his brother. So he waited till the night, when he fell upon the Infidels, crying out, "Allaho Akbar!" and put them to the edge of the biting scymitar. When Gharib heard the Takbir,[8] he said to Sahim, "Go find out the cause of these shouts and war-cries." So Sahim repaired to the field of battle and questioned the slaves and camp followers, who told him that King Al-Damigh had come up with twenty thousand men and had fallen upon the idolaters by night, saying, "By the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will not forsake my brother's son, but will play a brave man's part and beat back the host of Miscreants and please the Omnipotent King!" So Sahim returned and told his uncle's derring-do to Gharib, who cried out to his men, saying. "Don your arms and mount your steeds and let us succour my father's brother!" So they took horse and fell upon the Infidels and put them to the edge of the sharp sword. By the morning they had killed nigh fifty thousand of the Kafirs and made other thirty thousand prisoners, and the rest of Ajib's army dispersed over the length and breadth of earth. Then the Moslems returned in victory and triumph, and Gharib rode out to meet his uncle, whom he saluted and thanked for his help. Quoth Al-Damigh, "I wonder if that dog Ajib fell in this day's affair." Quoth Gharib, "O uncle, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear: know that he is with me in chains." When Al-Damigh heard this he rejoiced with exceeding joy and the two kings dismounted and entered the pavilion, but found no Ajib there; whereupon Gharib exclaimed, "O glory of Abraham, the Friend (with whom be peace!)," adding, "Alas, what an ill end is this to a glorious day!" and he cried out to the tent-pitchers, saying, "Woe to you! Where is my enemy who oweth me so much?" Quoth they, "When thou mountedst and we went with thee, thou didst not bid us guard him;" and Gharib exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" But Al-Damigh said to him, "Hasten not nor be concerned, for where can he go, and we in pursuit of him?" Now the manner of Ajib's escape was in this wise. His page Sayyar had been ambushed in the camp and when he saw Gharib mount and ride forth, leaving none to guard his enemy Ajib, he could hardly credit his eyes. So he waited awhile and presently crept to the tent and taking Ajib, who was senseless for the pain of the bastinado, on his back, made off with him into the open country and fared on at the top of his speed from early night to the next day, till he came to a spring of water, under an apple tree. There he set down Ajib from his back and washed his face, whereupon he opened his eyes and seeing Sayyar, said to him, "O Sayyar, carry me to Cufa that I may recover there and levy horsemen and soldiers wherewith to overthrow my foe: and know, O Sayyar, that I am anhungered." So Sayyar sprang up and going out to the desert caught an ostrich-poult and brought it to his lord. Then he gathered fuel and deftly using the fire-sticks kindled a fire, by which he roasted the bird which he had hallal'd[9] and fed Ajib with its flesh and gave him to drink of the water of the

spring, till his strength returned to him, after which he went to one of the Badawi tribal encampments, and stealing thence a steed mounted Ajib upon it and journeyed on with him for many days till they [10] drew near the city of Cufa. The Viceroy of the capital came out to meet and salute the King, whom he found weak with the beating his brother had inflicted upon him; and Ajib entered the city and called his physicians. When they answered his summons, he bade them heal him in less than ten days' time: they said, "We hear and we obey," and they tended him till he became whole of the sickness that was upon him and of the punishment. Then he commanded his Wazirs to write letters to all his Nabobs and vassals, and he indited one-and-twenty writs and despatched them to the governors, who assembled their troops and set out for Cufa by forced marches.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ajib sent orders to assemble the troops, who marched forthright to Cufa. Meanwhile, Gharib, being troubled for Ajib's escape, despatched in quest of him a thousand braves, who dispersed on all sides and sought him a day and a night, but found no trace of him; so they returned and told Gharib, who called for his brother Sahim, but found him not; whereat he was sore concerned, fearing for him from the shifts of Fortune. And lo! Sahim entered and kissed ground before Gharib, who rose, when he saw him, and asked, "Where hast thou been, O Sahim?" He answered, "O King, I have been to Cufa and there I find that the dog Ajib hath made his way to his capital and is healed of his hurts: eke, he hath written letters to his vassals and sent them to his Nabobs who have brought him troops." When Gharib heard this, he gave the command to march; so they struck tents and fared for Cufa. When they came in sight of the city, they found it compassed about with a host like the surging main, having neither beginning nor end. So Gharib with his troops encamped in face of the Kafirs and set up his standards, and darkness fell down upon the two hosts, whereupon they lighted camp-fires and kept watch till daybreak. Then King Gharib rose and making the Wuzu-ablution, prayed a two-bow prayer according to the rite of our father Abraham the Friend (on whom be the Peace!); after which he commanded the battle-drums to sound the point of war. Accordingly, the kettle-drums beat to combat and the standards fluttered [11] whilst the fighting men armour donned and their horses mounted and themselves displayed and to plain fared. Now the first to open the gate of war was King Al-Damigh, who urged his charger between the two opposing armies and displayed himself and played with the swords and the spears, till both hosts were confounded and at him marvelled, after which he cried out, saying, "Who is for jousting? Let no sluggard come out to me or weakling; for I am Al-Damigh, the King, brother of Kundamir the King." Then there rushed forth a horseman of the Kafirs, as he were a flame of fire, and drave at Al-Damigh, without word said; but the King received him with a lance-thrust in the

breast so dour that the point issued from between his shoulders and Allah hurried his soul to the fire, the abiding-place dire. Then came forth a second he slew, and a third he slew likewise, and they ceased not to come out to him and he to slay them, till he had made an end of six-and-seventy fighting men. Hereupon the Miscreants and men of might hung back and would not encounter him; but Ajib cried out to his men and said, "Fie on you, O folk! if ye all go forth to him, one by one, he will not leave any of you, sitting or standing. Charge on him all at once and cleanse of them our earthly wone and strew their heads for your horses' hoofs like a plain of stone!" So they waved the awe-striking flag and host was heaped upon host; blood rained in streams upon earth and railed and the Judge of battle ruled, in whose ordinance is no unright. The fearless stood firm on feet in the stead of fight, whilst the faint-heart gave back and took to flight thinking the day would never come to an end nor the curtains of gloom would be drawn by the hand of Night; and they ceased not to battle with swords and to smite till light darkened and murk starkened. Then the kettle-drums of the Infidels beat the retreat, but Gharib, refusing to stay his arms, drave at the Paynimry, and the Believers in Unity, the Moslems, followed him. How many heads and hands they shore, how many necks and sinews they tore, how many knees and spines they mashed and how many grown men and youths they to death bashed! With the first gleam of morning grey the Infidels broke and fled away, in disorder and disarray; and the Moslems followed them till middle-day and took over twenty thousand of them, whom they brought to their tents in bonds to stay. Then Gharib sat down before the gate of Cufa and commanded a herald to proclaim pardon and protection for every wight who should leave 12 the worship to idols dight and profess the unity of His All-might the Creator of mankind and of light and night. So was made proclamation as he bade in the streets of Cufa and all that were therein embraced the True Faith, great and small; then they issued forth in a body and renewed their Islam before King Gharib, who rejoiced in them with exceeding joy and his breast broadened and he threw off all annoy. Presently he enquired of Mardas and his daughter Mahdiyah, and, being told that he had taken up his abode behind the Red Mountain, he called Sahim and said to him, "Find out for me what is become of thy father." Sahim mounted steed without stay or delay and set his berry-brown spear in rest and fared on in quest till he reached the Red Mountain, where he sought for his father, yet found no trace of him nor of his tribe; however, he saw in their stead an elder of the Arabs, a very old man, broken with excess of years, and asked him of the folk and whither they were gone. Replied he, "O my son, when Mardas heard of Gharib's descent upon Cufa he feared with great fear and, taking his daughter and his folk, set out with his handmaids and negroes into the wild and wold, and I wot not whither he went." So Sahim, hearing the Shaykh's words, returned to Gharib and told him thereof, whereat he was greatly concerned. Then he sat down on his father's throne and, opening his treasuries, distributed largesse to each and every of his braves. And he took up his abode in Cufa and sent out spies to get news of Ajib. He

also summoned the Grandees of the realm, who came and did him homage; as also did the citizens and he bestowed on them sumptuous robes of honour and commended the Ryots to their care.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Gharib, after giving robes of honour to the citizens of Cufa and commending the Ryots to their care, went out on a day of the days to hunt, with an hundred horse, and fared on till he came to a Wady, abounding in trees and fruits and rich in rills and birds. It was a pasturing-place for roes and gazelles, to the spirit a delight whose scents reposed from the languor of fight. They encamped in the valley, for the day was clear and bright, and 13 there passed the night. On the morrow, Gharib made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed the two-bow dawn-prayer, offering up praise and thanks to Almighty Allah; when, lo and behold! there arose a clamour and confusion in the meadows, and he bade Sahim go see what was to do. So Sahim mounted forthright and rode till he espied goods being plundered and horses haltered and women carried off and children crying out. Whereupon he questioned one of the shepherds, saying, "What be all this?"; and they replied, "This is the Harim of Mardas, Chief of the Banu Kahtan, and his good and that of his clan; for yesterday Jamrkan slew Mardas and made prize of his women and children and household stuff and all the belonging of his tribe. It is his wont to go a-raiding and to cut off highways and waylay wayfarers and he is a furious tyrant; neither Arabs nor Kings can prevail against him and he is the scourge and curse of the country." Now when Sahim heard these news of his sire's slaughter and the looting of his Harim and property, he returned to Gharib and told him the case, wherefore fire was added to his fire and his spirit chafed to wipe out his shame and his blood-wit to claim: so he rode with his men after the robbers till he overtook them and fell upon them, crying out and saying, "Almighty Allah upon the rebel, the traitor, the infidel!" and he slew in a single charge one-and-twenty fighting-men. Then he halted in mid-field, with no coward's heart, and cried out, "Where is Jamrkan? Let him come out to me, that I may make him quaff the cup of disgrace and rid of him earth's face!" Hardly had he made an end of speaking, when forth rushed Jamrkan, as he were a calamity of calamities or a piece of a mountain, cased in steel. He was a mighty huge[10] Amalekite; and he drave at Gharib without speech or salute, like the fierce tyrant he was. And he was armed with a mace of China steel, so heavy, so potent, that had he smitten a hill he had smashed it. Now when he charged, Gharib met him like a hungry lion, and the brigand aimed a blow at his head with his mace; but he evaded it and it smote the earth and sank therein half a cubit deep. Then Gharib took his battle flail and smiting Jamrkan on the wrist, crushed his fingers and the mace dropped from his grasp; whereupon Gharib bent down from his seat in selle and snatching it up, swiftlier than the blinding leven, smote him therewith full on the flat of the

ribs, 14 and he fell to the earth like a long-stemmed palm-tree. So Sahim took him and pinioning him, haled him off with a rope, and Gharib's horsemen fell on those of Jamrkan and slew fifty of them: the rest fled; nor did they cease flying till they reached their tribal camp and raised their voices in clamour; whereupon all who were in the Castle came out to meet them and asked the news. They told the tribe what had passed; and, when they heard that their chief was a prisoner, they set out for the valley vying one with other in their haste to deliver him. Now when King Gharib had captured Jamrkan and had seen his braves take flight, he dismounted and called for Jamrkan, who humbled himself before him, saying, "I am under thy protection, O champion of the Age!" Replied Gharib, "O dog of the Arabs, dost thou cut the road for the servants of Almighty Allah, and fearest thou not the Lord of the Worlds?" "O my master," asked Jamrkan, "and who is the Lord of the Worlds?" "O dog," answered Gharib, "and what calamity dost thou worship?" He said, "O my lord, I worship a god made of dates[11] kneaded with butter and honey, and at times I eat him and make me another." When Gharib heard this, he laughed till he fell backwards and said, "O miserable, there is none worship-worth save Almighty Allah, who created thee and created all things and provideth all creatures with daily bread, from whom nothing is hid and He over all things is Omnipotent." Quoth Jamrkan, "And where is this great god, that I may worship him?" Quoth Gharib, "O fellow, know that this god's name is Allah—*the* God—and it is He who fashioned the heavens and the earth and garred the trees to grow and the waters to flow. He created wild beasts and birds and Paradise and Hell-fire and veileth Himself from all eyes seeing and of none being seen. He, and He only, is the Dweller on high. Extolled be His perfection! There is no god but He!" When Jamrkan heard these words, the ears of his heart were opened; his skin shuddered with horripilation and he said, "O my lord, what shall I say that I may become of you and that this mighty Lord may accept of me?" Replied Gharib, "Say:—There is no god but *the* God and Abraham the Friend is the Apostle of God!" So he pronounced the profession of the Faith and was written of 15 the people of felicity. Then quoth Gharib, "Say me, hast thou tasted the sweetness of Al-Islam?"; and quoth the other, "Yes;" whereupon Gharib cried, "Loose his bonds!" So they unbound him and he kissed ground before Gharib and his feet. Now whilst this was going on, behold, they espied a great cloud of dust that towered till it walled the wold.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Jamrkan islamised and kissed the ground between the hands of Gharib; and, as they were thus, behold, a great cloud of dust towered till it walled the wold and Gharib said to Sahim, "Go and see for us what it be." So he went forth, like a bird in full flight, and presently returned, saying, "O King of the Age, this dust is of the Banu Amir, the comrades of

Jamrkan." Whereupon quoth Gharib to the new Moslem, "Ride out to thy people and offer to them Al-Islam: an they profess, they shall be saved; but, an they refuse, we will put them to the sword." So Jamrkan mounted and driving steed towards his tribesmen, cried out to them; and they knew him and dismounting, came up to him on foot and said, "We rejoice in thy safety, O our lord!" Said he, "O folk, whoso obeyeth me shall be saved; but whoso gainsayeth me, I will cut him in twain with this scymitar." And they made answer, saying, "Command us what thou wilt, for we will not oppose thy commandment." Quoth he, "Then say with me:—There is no god but *the* God and Abraham is the Friend of God!" They asked, "O our lord, whence haddest thou these words?" And he told them what had befallen him with Gharib, adding, "O folk, know ye not that I am your chief in battle-plain and where men of cut and thrust are fain; and yet a man single-handed me to prisoner hath ta'en and made me the cup of shame and disgrace to drain?" When they heard his speech, they spoke the word of Unity and Jamrkan led them to Gharib, at whose hands they renewed their profession of Al-Islam and wished him glory and victory, after they had kissed the earth before him. Gharib rejoiced in them and said to them, "O folk, return to your people and expound Al-Islam to them;" but all replied, "O our lord, we will never leave thee, whilst we live; but we will go and fetch our families and return to thee." And Gharib 16 said, "Go, and join me at the city of Cufa." So Jamrkan and his comrades returned to their tribal camp and offered Al-Islam to their women and children, who all to a soul embraced the True Faith, after which they dismantled their abodes and struck their tents and set out for Cufa driving before them their steeds, camels and sheep. During this time Gharib returned to Cufa, where the horsemen met him in state. He entered his palace and sat down on his sire's throne with his champions ranged on either hand. Then the spies came forwards, and informed him that his brother Ajib had made his escape and had taken refuge with Jaland[12] bin Karkar, lord of the city of Oman and land of Al-Yaman; whereupon Gharib cried aloud to his host, "O men, make you ready to march in three days." Then he expounded Al-Islam to the thirty thousand men he had captured in the first affair and exhorted them to profess and take service with him. Twenty thousand embraced the Faith, but the rest refused and he slew them. Then came forward Jamrkan and his tribe and kissed the ground before Gharib, who bestowed on him a splendid robe of honour and made him captain of his vanguard, saying, "O Jamrkan, mount with the Chiefs of thy kith and kin and twenty thousand horse and fare on before us to the land of Jaland bin Karkar." "Hearkening and obedience," answered Jamrkan and, leaving the women and children of the tribe in Cufa, he set forward. Then Gharib passed in review the Harim of Mardas and his eye lit upon Mahdiyah, who was among the women, wherewith he fell down fainting. They sprinkled rose-water on his face, till he came to himself, when he embraced Mahdiyah and carried her into a sitting-chamber, where he sat with her; and they twain lay together that night without fornication. Next morning he went out and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, robed his uncle

Al-Damigh with a robe of honour; and appointed him his viceroy over all Al-Irak, commending Mahdiyah to his care, till he should return from his expedition against Ajib; and, when the order was accepted, he set out for the land of Al-Yaman and the City of Oman with twenty thousand horse and ten thousand foot. Now, when Ajib and his defeated army drew in sight of Oman, King Jaland saw the dust of their approach and 17 sent to find out its meaning scouts who returned and said, "Verily this is the dust of one hight Ajib, lord of Al-Irak." And Jaland wondered at his coming to his country and, when assured of the tidings, he said to his officers, "Fare ye forth and meet him." So they went out and met him and pitched tents for him at the city-gate; and Ajib entered in to Jaland, weeping-eyed and heavy-hearted. Now Jaland's wife was the daughter of Ajib's paternal uncle and he had children by her; so, when he saw his kinsman in this plight, he asked for the truth of what ailed him and Ajib told him all that had befallen him, first and last, from his brother and said, "O King, Gharib biddeth the folk worship the Lord of the Heavens and forbiddeth them from the service of simulacres and other of the gods." When Jaland heard these words he raged and revolted and said, "By the virtue of the Sun, Lord of Life and Light, I will not leave one of thy brother's folk in existence! But where didst thou quit them and how many men are they?" Answered Ajib, "I left them in Cufa and they be fifty thousand horse." Whereupon Jaland called his Wazir Jawámard,[13] saying, "Take thee seventy thousand horse and fare to Cufa and bring me the Moslems alive, that I may torture them with all manner of tortures." So Jawamard departed with his host and fared through the first day and the second till the seventh day, when he came to a Wady abounding in trees and rills and fruits. Here he called a halt——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Jaland sent Jawamard with his army to Cufa, they came upon a Wady abounding in trees and rills where a halt was called and they rested till the middle of the night, when the Wazir gave the signal for departure and mounting, rode on before them till hard upon dawn, at which time he descended into a well-wooded valley, whose flowers were fragrant and whose birds warbled on boughs, as they swayed gracefully to and fro, and Satan blew into his sides and puffed him up with pride and he improvised these couplets and cried:—

18 I plunge with my braves in the seething sea; ✿ Seize the foe in my strength and my valiancy;

And the doughtiest knights wot me well to be ✿ Friend to friend and fierce foe to mine enemy.

I will load Gharib with the captive's chains ✿ Right soon, and return in all joy and glee;

For I've donned my mail and my weapons wield ✿ And on all sides charge at the chivalry.[14]

Hardly had Jawamard made an end of his verses when there came out upon him from among the trees a horseman of terrible mien covered and clad in steely sheen, who cried out to him, saying, "Stand, O riff-raff of the Arabs! Doff thy dress and ground

thine arms-gear and dismount thy destrier and be off with thy life!" When Jawamard heard this, the light in his eyes became darkest night and he drew his sabre and drove at Jamrkan, for he it was, saying, "O thief of the Arabs, wilt thou cut the road for me, who am captain of the host of Jaland bin Karkar and am come to bring Gharib and his men in bond?" When Jamrkan heard these words, he said, "How cooling is this to my heart and liver!" And he made at Jawamard versifying in these couplets:—

I'm the noted knight in the field of fight, ✿ Whose sabre and spear every foe affright!
Jamrkan am I, to my foes a fear, ✿ With a lance-lunge known unto every knight:
Gharib is my lord, nay my pontiff, my prince, ✿ Where the two hosts dash very lion of might:
An Imam of the Faith, pious, striking awe ✿ On the plain where his foes like the fawn take flight;
Whose voice bids folk to the faith of the Friend, ✿ False, doubling idols and gods despite!

Now Jamrkan had fared on with his tribesmen ten days' journey from Cufa-city and called a halt on the eleventh day till midnight, when he ordered a march and rode on devancing them till he descended into the valley aforesaid and heard Jawamard reciting his verses. So he drave at him as the driving of a ravening lion, and smiting him with his sword, clove him in twain and waited till his captains came up, when he told them what had passed and said to them, "Take each of you five thousand men and disperse 19round about the Wady, whilst I and the Banu Amir fall upon the enemy's van, shouting, Allaho Akbar—God is Most Great! When ye hear my slogan, do ye charge them, crying like me upon the Lord, and smite them with the sword." "We hear and we obey," answered they and turning back to their braves did his bidding and spread themselves about the sides of the valley in the twilight forerunning the dawn. Presently, lo and behold! up came the army of Al-Yaman, like a flock of sheep, filling plain and steep, and Jamrkan and the Banu Amir fell upon them, shouting, "Allaho Akbar!" till all heard it, Moslems and Miscreants. Whereupon the True Believers ambushed in the valley answered from every side and the hills and mountains responsive cried and all things replied, green and dried, saying, "God is Most Great! Aidance and Victory to us from on High! Shame to the Miscreants who His name deny!" And the Kafirs were confounded and smote one another with sabres keen whilst the True Believers and pious fell upon them like flames of fiery sheen and naught was seen but heads flying and blood jetting and faint-hearts hieing. By the time they could see one another's faces, two-thirds of the Infidels had perished and Allah hastened their souls to the fire and abiding-place dire. The rest fled and to the deserts sped whilst the Moslems pursued them to slay and take captives till middle-day, when they returned in triumph with seven thousand prisoners; and but six-and-twenty thousand of the Infidels escaped and the most of them wounded. Then the Moslems collected the horses and arms, the loads and tents of the enemy and despatched them to Cufa with an escort of a thousand horse;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Jamrkan in his battle with Jawamard slew him and slew his men; and, after taking many prisoners and much money and many horses and loads, sent them with an escort of a thousand riders, to Cufa city. Then he and the army of Al-Islam dismounted and expounded The saving Faith to the prisoners, who made profession with heart and tongue; whereupon they released them from bonds and embraced them and rejoiced in them. Then Jamrkan made his troops, who 20 had swelled to a mighty many, rest a day and a night and marched with the dawn, intending to attack Jaland bin Karkar in the city of Oman; whilst the thousand horse fared back to Cufa with the loot. When they reached the city, they went in to King Gharib and told him what had passed, whereat he rejoiced and gave them joy and, turning to the Ghul of the Mountain, said, "Take horse with twenty thousand and follow Jamrkan." So Sa'adan and his sons mounted and set out, amid twenty thousand horse for Oman. Meanwhile, the fugitives of the defeated Kafirs reached Oman and went in to Jaland, weeping and crying, "Woe!" and "Ruin!" whereat he was confounded and said to them, "What calamity hath befallen you?" So they told him what had happened and he said, "Woe to you! How many men were they?" They replied, "O King, there were twenty standards, under each a thousand men." When Jaland heard these words he said, "May the sun pour no blessing on you! Fie upon you! What, shall twenty thousand overcome you, and you seventy thousand horse and Jawamard able to withstand three thousand in field of fight?" Then, in the excess of his rage and mortification, he bared his blade and cried out to those who were present, saying, "Fall on them!" So the courtiers drew their swords upon the fugitives and annihilated them to the last man and cast them to the dogs. Then Jaland cried aloud to his son, saying, "Take an hundred thousand horse and go to Al-Irak and lay it waste altogether." Now this son's name was Kúraján and there was no doughtier knight in all the force; for he could charge single-handed three thousand riders. So he and his host made haste to equip themselves and marched in battle-array, rank following rank, with the Prince at their head, glorying in himself and improvising these couplets:—

I'm Al-Kurajan, and my name is known ✿ To beat all who in wold or in city wone!
How many a soldier my sword at will ✿ Struck down like a cow on the ground bestrown?
How many a soldier I've forced to fly ✿ And have rolled their heads as a ball is thrown?
Now I'll drive and harry the land Irak[15] ✿ And like rain I'll shower the blood of fone;
And lay hands on Gharib and his men, whose doom ✿ To the wise a warning shall soon be shown!

21 The host fared on twelve days' journey and, while they were still marching, behold, a great dust cloud arose before them and walled the horizon, and the whole region. So Kurajan sent out scouts, saying, "Go forth and bring me tidings of what meaneth this dust." They went till they passed under the enemy's standards and presently returning

said, “O King, verily this is the dust of the Moslems.” Whereat he was glad and said, “Did ye count them?” And they answered, “We counted the colours and they numbered twenty.” Quoth he, “By my faith, I will not send one man-at-arms against them, but will go forth to them alone by myself and strew their heads under the horses’ hooves!” Now this was the army of Jamrkan who, espying the host of the Kafirs and seeing them as a surging sea, called a halt; so his troops pitched the tents and set up the standards, calling upon the name of the All-wise One, the Creator of light and gloom, Lord of all creatures, Who seeth while Him none see, the High to infinity, extolled and exalted be He! There is no God but He! The Miscreants also halted and pitched their tents, and Kurajan said to them, “Keep on your arms, and in armour sleep, for during the last watch of the night we will mount and trample yonder handful under feet!” Now one of Jamrkan’s spies was standing nigh and heard what Kurajan had contrived; so he returned to the host and told his chief who said to them, “Arm yourselves and as soon as it is night, bring me all the mules and camels and hang all the bells and clinkets and rattles ye have about their necks.” Now they had with them more than twenty thousand camels and mules. So they waited till the Infidels fell asleep, when Jamrkan commanded them to mount, and they arose to ride and on the Lord of the Worlds they relied. Then said Jamrkan, “Drive the camels and mules to the Miscreants’ camp and push them with your spears for goads!” They did as he bade and the beasts rushed upon the enemy’s tents, whilst the bells and clinkets and rattles jangled[16] and the Moslems followed at their heels, shouting, “God is Most Great!” till all the hills and mountains resounded with the name of the Highmost Deity, to whom belong glory and majesty! The cattle hearing this terrible din, took fright and rushed upon 22 the tents and trampled the folk, as they lay asleep.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Jamrkan fell upon them with his men and steeds and camels, and the camp lay sleeping, the idolaters started up in confusion and, snatching up their arms, fell upon one another with smiting, till the most part was slaughtered. And when the day broke, they looked and found no Moslem slain, but saw them all on horseback, armed and armoured; wherefore they knew that this was a sleight which had been played upon them, and Kurajan cried out to the remnant of his folk, “O sons of whores, what we had a mind to do with them, that have they done with us and their craft hath gotten the better of our cunning.” And they were about to charge when, lo and behold! a cloud of dust rose high and walled the horizon-sky, when the wind smote it, so that it spired aloft and spread pavilion-wise in the lift and there it hung; and presently appeared beneath it the glint of helmet and gleam of hauberk and splendid warriors, baldrick’d with their tempered swords and holding in rest their supple spears. When the Kafirs saw this, they held back from the battle and each army sent out, to know the meaning of

this dust, scouts, who returned with the news that it was an army of Moslems. Now this was the host of the Mountain-Ghul whom Gharib had despatched to Jamrkan's aid, and Sa'adan himself rode in their van. So the two hosts of the True Believers joined company and rushing upon the Paynimry like a flame of fire, plied them with keen sword and Rudaynian spear and quivering lance, what while day was darkened and eyes for the much dust starkened. The valiant stood fast and the faint-hearted coward fled and to the wilds and the wolds swift sped, whilst the blood over earth was like torrents shed; nor did they cease from fight till the day took flight and in gloom came the night. Then the Moslems drew apart from the Miscreants and returned to their tents, where they ate and slept, till the darkness fled away and gave place to smiling day; when they prayed the dawn-prayer and mounted to battle. Now Kurajan had said to his men as they drew off from fight (for indeed two-thirds of their number had perished by sword and spear), "O folk, to-morrow, 23 I will champion it in the stead of war where cut and thrust jar, and where braves push and wheel I will take the field." So, as soon as light was seen and morn appeared with its shine and sheen, took horse the hosts twain and shouted their slogans amain and bared the brand and hent lance in hand and in ranks took stand. The first to open the door of war was Kurajan, who cried out, saying, "Let no coward come out to me this day nor craven!" Whereupon Jamrkan and Sa'adan stood by the colours, but there ran at him a captain of the Banu Amir and the two drave each at other awhile, like two rams butting. Presently Kurajan seized the Moslem by the jerkin under his hauberk and, dragging him from his saddle, dashed him to the ground where he left him; upon which the Kafirs laid hands on him and bound him and bore him off to their tents; whilst Kurajan wheeled about and careered and offered battle, till another captain came out, whom also he took prisoner; nor did he leave to do thus till he had made prize of seven captains before mid-day. Then Jamrkan cried out with so mighty a cry, that the whole field made reply and heard it the armies twain, and ran at Kurajan with a heart in rageful pain, improvising these couplets:—

Jamrkan am I! and a man of might, ✿ Whom the warriors fear with a sore affright:
I waste the forts and I leave the walls ✿ To wail and weep for the wights I smite:
Then, O Kurajan, tread the rightful road ✿ And quit the paths of thy foul unright:
Own the One True God, who dispread the skies ✿ And made founts to flow and the hills pegged tight:
An the slave embrace the True Faith, he'll 'scape ✿ Hell-pains and in Heaven be deckt and dight!

When Kurajan heard these words, he snarked and snorted and foully abused the sun and the moon and drave at Jamrkan, versifying with these couplets:—

I'm Kurajan, of this age the knight; ✿ And my shade to the lions of Shara'[17] is blight:
I storm the forts and snare kings of beasts ✿ And warriors fear me in field of fight;
Then, Harkye Jamrkan, if thou doubt my word, ✿ Come forth to the combat and try my might!

24When Jamrkan heard these verses, he charged him with a stout heart and they smote each at other with swords till the two hosts lamented for them, and they lunged with lance and great was the clamour between them: nor did they leave fighting till the time of mid-afternoon prayer was passed and the day began to wane. Then Jamrkan drave at Kurajan and smiting him on the breast with his mace,[18] cast him to the ground, as he were the trunk of a palm-tree; and the Moslems pinioned him and dragged him off with ropes like a camel. Now when the Miscreants saw their Prince captive, a hot fever-fit of ignorance seized on them and they bore down upon the True Believers thinking to rescue him; but the Moslem champions met them and left most of them prostrate on the earth, whilst the rest turned and sought safety in flight, seeking surer site, while the clanking sabres their backsides smite. The Moslems ceased not pursuing them till they had scattered them over mount and wold, when they returned from them to the spoil; whereof was great store of horses and tents and so forth:—good look to it for a spoil! Then Jamrkan went in to Kurajan and expounded to him Al-Islam, threatening him with death unless he embraced the Faith. But he refused; so they cut off his head and stuck it on a spear, after which they fared on towards Oman[19] city. But as regards the Kafirs, the survivors returned to Jaland and made known to him the slaying of his son and the slaughter of his host, hearing which he cast his crown to the ground and buffeting his face, till the blood ran from his nostrils, fell fainting to the floor. They sprinkled rose-water on his head, till he came to himself and cried to his Wazir, “Write letters to all my Governors and Nabobs, and bid them leave not a smiter with the sword nor a lunger with the lance nor a bender of the bow, but bring them all to me in one body.” So he wrote letters and despatched them by runners to 25the Governors, who levied their power and joined the King with a prevailing host, whose number was one hundred and eighty-thousand men. Then they made ready tents and camels and noble steeds and were about to march when, behold, up came Jamrkan and Sa’adan the Ghul, with seventy thousand horse, as they were lions fierce-faced, all steel-encased. When Jaland saw the Moslems trooping on he rejoiced and said, “By the virtue of the Sun, and her resplendent light, I will not leave alive one of my foes; no, not one to carry the news, and I will lay waste the land of Al-Irak, that I may take my wreak for my son, the havoc-making champion bold; nor shall my fire be quenched or cooled!” Then he turned to Ajib and said to him, “O dog of Al-Irak, ’twas thou broughtest this calamity on us! But by the virtue of that which I worship, except I avenge me of mine enemy I will do thee die after foulest fashion!” When Ajib heard these words he was troubled with sore trouble and blamed himself; but he waited till nightfall, when the Moslems had pitched their tents for rest. Now he had been degraded and expelled the royal camp together with those who were left to him of his suite: so he said to them, “O my kinsmen, know that Jaland and I are dismayed with exceeding dismay at the coming of the Moslems, and I know that he will not avail to protect me from my brother nor

from any other; so it is my counsel that we make our escape, whilst all eyes sleep, and flee to King Ya'arub bin Kahtán,[120] for that he hath more of men and is stronger of reign." They, hearing his advice exclaimed "Right is thy rede," whereupon he bade them kindle fires at their tent-doors and march under cover of the night. They did his bidding and set out, so by daybreak they had already fared far away. As soon as it was morning Jaland mounted with two hundred and sixty thousand fighting-men, clad cap-à-pie in hauberks and cuirasses and strait-knit mail-coats, the kettle-drums beat a point of war and all drew out for cut and thrust and fight and fray. Then Jamrkan and Sa'adan rode out with forty-thousand stalwart fighting-men, under each standard a thousand cavaliers, doughty champions, foremost in champaign. The two hosts drew out in battles and bared their blades and levelled their limber lances, for the drinking of the cup of death. The 26 first to open the gate of strife was Sa'adan, as he were a mountain of syenite or a Marid of the Jinn. Then dashed out to him a champion of the Infidels, and the Ghul slew him and casting him to the earth, cried out to his sons and slaves, saying, "Light the fire and roast me this dead one." They did as he bade and brought him the roast and he ate it and crunched the bones, whilst the Kafirs stood looking on from afar; and they cried out, "Oh for aid from the light-giving Sun!" and were affrighted at the thought of being slain by Sa'adan. Then Jaland shouted to his men, saying, "Slay me yonder loathsome beast!" Whereupon another captain of his host drove at the Ghul; but he slew him, and he ceased not to slay horseman after horseman, till he had made an end of thirty men. With this the blamed Kafirs held back and feared to face him, crying, "Who shall cope with Jinns and Ghuls?" But Jaland raised his voice saying, "Let an hundred horse charge him and bring him to me, bound or slain." So an hundred horse set upon Sa'adan with swords and spears, and he met them with a heart firmer than flint, proclaiming the unity of the Requiting King, whom no one thing diverteth from other thing. Then he cried aloud, "Allaho Akbar!" and, smiting them with his sword, made their heads fly and in one onset he slew of them four-and-seventy whereupon the rest took to flight. So Jaland shouted aloud to ten of his captains, each commanding a thousand men, and said to them, "Shoot his horse with arrows till it fall under him, and then lay hands on him." Therewith ten thousand horse drove at Sa'adan who met them with a stout heart; and Jamrkan, seeing this, bore down upon the Miscreants with his Moslems, crying out, "God is Most Great!" Before they could reach the Ghul, the enemy had slain his steed and taken him prisoner; but they ceased not to charge the Infidels, till the day grew dark for dust and eyes were blinded, and the sharp sword clanged while firm stood the valiant cavalier and destruction overtook the faint-heart in his fear; till the Moslems were amongst the Paynims like a white patch on a black bull.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that battle raged between the Moslems and the Paynims till the True [27]Believers were like a white patch on a black bull. Nor did they stint from the mellay till the darkness fell down, when they drew apart, after there had been slain of the Infidels men without compt. Then Jamrkan and his men returned to their tents; but they were in great grief for Sa'adan, so that neither meat nor sleep was sweet to them, and they counted their host and found that less than a thousand had been slain. But Jamrkan said, "O folk, to-morrow I will go forth into the battle-plain and place where cut and thrust obtain, and slay their champions and make prize of their families after taking them captives and I will ransom Sa'adan therewith, by the leave of the Requiting King, whom no one thing diverteth from other thing!" Wherefore their hearts were heartened and they joyed as they separated to their tents. Meanwhile Jaland entered his pavilion and sitting down on his sofa of estate, with his folk about him, called for Sa'adan and forthright on his coming, said to him, "O dog run wood and least of the Arab brood and carrier of firewood, who was it slew my son Kurajan, the brave of the age, slayer of heroes and caster down of warriors?" Quoth the Ghul, "Jamrkan slew him, captain of the armies of King Gharib, Prince of cavaliers, and I roasted and ate him, for I was anhungered." When Jaland heard these words, his eyes sank into his head for rage and he bade his swordbearer smite Sa'adan's neck. So he came forward in that intent, whereupon Sa'adan stretched himself mightily and bursting his bonds, snatched the sword from the headsman and hewed off his head. Then he made at Jaland who threw himself down from the throne and fled; whilst Sa'adan fell on the bystanders and killed twenty of the King's chief officers, and all the rest took to flight. Therewith loud rose the crying in the camp of the Infidels and the Ghul sallied forth of the pavilion and falling upon the troops smote them with the sword, right and left, till they opened and left a lane for him to pass; nor did he cease to press forward, cutting at them on either side, till he won free of the Miscreants' tents and made for the Moslem camp. Now these had heard the uproar among their enemies and said, "Haply some calamity hath befallen them." But whilst they were in perplexity, behold, Sa'adan stood amongst them and they rejoiced at his coming with exceeding joy; more especially Jamrkan, who saluted him with the salam as did other True Believers and gave him joy of his escape. Such was the case with the Moslems; but as regards the Miscreants, when, after the Ghul's departure, they and their King [28]returned to their tents, Jaland said to them, "O folk, by the virtue of the Sun's light-giving ray and by the darkness of the Night and the light of the Day and the Stars that stray, I thought not this day to have escaped death in mellay; for, had I fallen into yonder fellow's hands, he had eaten me, as I were a kernel of wheat or a barley-corn or any other grain." They replied, "O King, never saw we any do the like of this Ghul." And he said, "O folk, to-morrow do ye all don arms and mount steed and trample them under your horses' hooves." Meanwhile the Moslems had ended their rejoicings at Sa'adan's return and Jamrkan said to them,

"To-morrow, I will show you my derring-do and what behoveth the like of me, for by the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will slay them with the foulest of slaughters and smite them with the bite of the sword, till all who have understanding confounded at them shall stand. But I mean to attack both right and left wings; so, when ye see me drive at the King under the standards, do ye charge behind me with a resolute charge, and Allah's it is to decree what thing shall be!" Accordingly the two sides lay upon their arms till the day broke through night and the sun appeared to sight. Then they mounted swiftlier than the twinkling of the eyelid; the raven of the wold croaked and the two hosts, looking each at other with the eye of fascination, formed in line-array and prepared for fight and fray. The first to open the chapter of war was Jamrkan who wheeled and careered and offered fight in field; and Jaland and his men were about to charge when, behold, a cloud of dust up-rolled till it walled the wold and overlaid the day. Then the four winds smote it and away it floated torn to rags, and there appeared beneath it cavaliers, with helms black and garb white and many a princely knight and lances that bite and swords that smite and footmen who lion-like knew no affright. Seeing this both armies left fighting and sent out scouts to reconnoitre and report who thus had come in main and might. So they went and within the dust-cloud disappeared from sight, and returned after awhile with the news aright that the approaching host was one of Moslems, under the command of King Gharib. When the True Believers heard from the scouts of the coming of their King, they rejoiced and driving out to meet him, dismounted and kissed the earth between his hands——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

29

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Moslems saw the presence of their King Gharib, they joyed with exceeding joy; and, kissing the earth between his hands, saluted him and gat around him whilst he welcomed them and rejoiced in their safety. Then they escorted him to their camp and pitched pavilions for him and set up standards; and Gharib sat down on his couch of estate, with his Grandees about him; and they related to him all that had befallen, especially to Sa'adan. Meanwhile the Kafirs sought for Ajib and finding him not among them nor in their tents, told Jaland of his flight, whereat his Doomsday rose and he bit his fingers, saying, "By the Sun's light-giving round, he is a perfidious hound and hath fled with his rascal rout to desert-ground. But naught save force of hard fighting will serve us to repel these foes; so fortify your resolves and hearten your hearts and beware of the Moslems." And Gharib also said to the True Believers, "Strengthen your courage and fortify your hearts and seek aid of your Lord, beseeching him to vouchsafe you the victory over your enemies." They replied, "O King, soon thou shalt see what we will do in battle-plain where men cut and thrust amain." So the two hosts slept till the day arose with its sheen and shone and the rising sun rained light upon

hill and down, when Gharib prayed the two-bow prayer, after the rite of Abraham the Friend (on whom be the Peace!) and wrote a letter, which he despatched by his brother Sahim to the King of the Kafirs. When Sahim reached the enemies' camp, the guards asked him what he wanted, and he answered them, "I want your ruler."[21] Quoth they, "Wait till we consult him anent thee;" and he waited, whilst they went in to their Sovran and told him of the coming of a messenger, and he cried, "Hither with him to me!" So they brought Sahim before Jaland, who said to him, "Who hath sent thee?" Quoth he, "King Gharib sends me, whom Allah hath made ruler over Arab and Ajam; receive his letter and return its reply." Jaland took the writ and opening it, read as follows:—"In the name of 30 Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate ✿ the One, the All-knowing, the supremely Great ✿ the Immemorial, the Lord of Noah and Sálih and Húd and Abraham and of all things He made! ✿ The Peace be on him who followeth in the way of righteousness and who feareth the issues of frowardness ✿ who obeyeth the Almighty King and followeth the Faith saving and preferreth the next world to any present thing! ✿ But afterwards: O Jaland, none is worthy of worship save Allah alone, the Victorious, the One, Creator of night and day and the sphere revolving alway ✿ Who sendeth the holy Prophets and garreth the streams to flow and the trees to grow, who vaulted the heavens and spread out the earth like a carpet below ✿ Who feedeth the birds in their nests and the wild beasts in the deserts ✿ for He is Allah the All-powerful, the Forgiving, the Long-suffering, the Protector, whom eye comprehendeth on no wise and who maketh night on day arise ✿ He who sent down the Apostles and their Holy Writ. Know, O Jaland, that there is no faith but the Faith of Abraham the Friend; so cleave to the Creed of Salvation and be saved from the biting glaive and the Fire which followeth the grave ✿ But, an thou refuse Al-Islam look for ruin to haste and thy reign to be waste and thy traces untraced ✿ And, lastly, send me the dog Ajib hight that I may take from him my father's and mother's blood-wit." When Jaland had read this letter, he said to Sahim, "Tell thy lord that Ajib hath fled, he and his folk, and I know not whither he is gone; but, as for Jaland, he will not forswear his faith, and to-morrow, there shall be battle between us and the Sun shall give us the victory." So Sahim returned to his brother with this reply, and when the morning morrowed, the Moslems donned their arms and armour and bestrode their stout steeds, calling aloud on the name of the All-conquering King, Creator of bodies and souls, and magnifying Him with "Allaho Akbar." Then the kettle-drums of battle beat until earth trembled, and sought the field all the lordly warriors and doughty champions. The first to open the gate of battle was Jamrkan, who drave his charger into mid-plain and played with sword and javelin, till the understanding was amazed; after which he cried out, saying, "Ho! who is for tilting? Ho! who is for fighting? Let no sluggard come out to me to-day nor weakling! I am the slayer of Kurajan bin Jaland; who will come forth

to avenge him?" When Jaland heard the name of his son, he cried out to his men, "O whore-sons, bring me yonder horseman who slew my son, that 31I may eat his flesh and drink his blood." So an hundred fighting men charged at Jamrkan, but he slew the most part of them and put their chief to flight; which feat when Jaland saw, he cried out to his folk, "At him all at once and assault him with one assault." Accordingly they waved the awe-striking banners and host was heaped on host; Gharib rushed on with his men and Jamrkan did the same and the two sides met like two seas together clashing. The Yamáni sword and spear wrought havoc and breasts and bellies were rent, whilst both armies saw the Angel of Death face to face and the dust of the battle rose to the skirts of the sky. Ears went deaf and tongues went dumb and doom from every side came on whilst valiant stood fast and faint-heart fled: and they ceased not from fight and fray till ended the day, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart and returned, each to its tents.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Gharib ended the battle and the two hosts drew apart and each had returned to his own tents, he sat down on the throne of his realm and the place of his reign, whilst his chief officers ranged themselves about him, and he said, "I am sore concerned for the flight of the cur Ajib and I know not whither he has gone. Except I overtake him and take my wreak of him, I shall die of despite." Whereupon Sahim came forward and kissing the earth before him, said, "O King, I will go to the army of the Kafirs and find out what is come of the perfidious dog Ajib." Quoth Gharib, "Go, and learn the truth anent the dog." So Sahim disguised himself in the habit of the Infidels and became as he were of them; then, making for the enemy's camp, he found them all asleep, drunken with war and battle, and none were on wake save only the guards. He passed on and presently came to the King's pavilion where he found King Jaland asleep unattended; so he crept up and made him smell and sniff up levigated Bhang and he became as one dead. Then Sahim went out and took a male mule, and wrapping the King in the coverlet of his bed, laid him on its back; after which he threw a mat over him and led the beast to the Moslem camp. Now when he came to Gharib's pavilion and would have 32entered, the guards knew him not and prevented him, saying, "Who art thou?" He laughed and uncovered his face, and they knew him and admitted him. When Gharib saw him he said, "What bearest thou there, O Sahim?"; and he replied, "O King, this is Jaland bin Karkar." Then he uncovered him, and Gharib knew him and said, "Arouse him, O Sahim," So he made him smell vinegar[22] and frankincense; and he cast the Bhang from his nostrils and, opening his eyes, found himself among the Moslems; whereupon quoth he, "What is this foul dream?" and closing his eyelids again, would have slept; but Sahim dealt him a kick, saying, "Open thine eyes, O accursed!" So he opened them and asked, "Where am I?"; and Sahim answered,

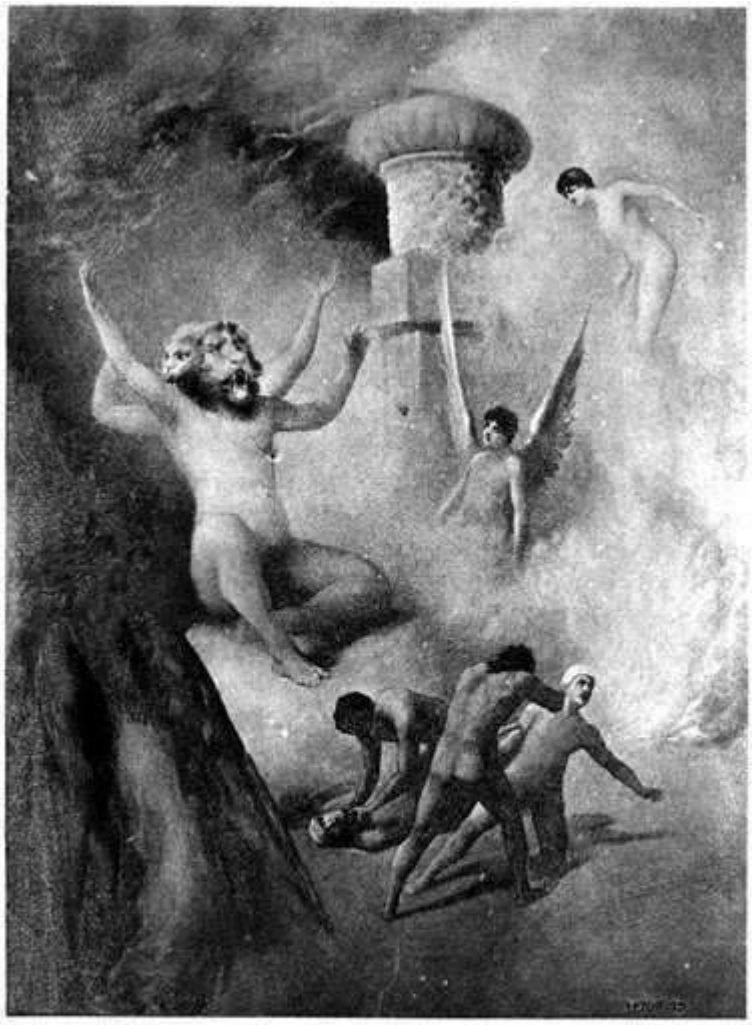
"Thou art in the presence of King Gharib bin Kundamir, King of Irak." When Jaland heard this, he said, "O King, I am under thy protection! Know that I am not at fault, but that who led us forth to fight thee was thy brother, and the same cast enmity between us and then fled." Quoth Gharib, "Knowest thou whither he is gone?"; and quoth Jaland, "No, by the light-giving sun, I know not whither." Then Gharib bade lay him in bonds and set guards over him, whilst each captain returned to his own tent, and Jamrkan while wending said to his men, "O sons of my uncle, I purpose this night to do a deed wherewith I may whiten my face with King Gharib." Quoth they, "Do as thou wilt, we hearken to thy commandment and obey it." Quoth he, "Arm yourselves and, muffling your steps while I go with you, let us fare softly and disperse about the Infidels' camp, so that the very ants shall not be ware of you; and, when you hear me cry Allaho Akbar, do ye the like and cry out, saying, God is Most Great! and hold back and make for the city gate; and we seek aid from the Most High." So the folk armed themselves cap-à-pie and waited till the noon of night, when they dispersed about the enemy's camp and tarried awhile when, lo and behold! Jamrkan smote shield with sword and shouted, "Allaho Akbar!" Thereupon they all cried out the like, till rang again valley and mountain, hills, sands and ruins. The Miscreants awoke in dismay and fell one upon other, and the sword went round amongst them; 33 the Moslems drew back and made for the city gates, where they slew the warders and entering, made themselves masters of the town, with all that was therein of treasure and women. Thus it befel with Jamrkan; but as regards King Gharib, hearing the noise and clamour of "God is Most Great," he mounted with his troops to the last man and sent on in advance Sahim who, when he came near the field of fight, saw that Jamrkan had fallen upon the Kafirs with the Banu Amir by night and made them drink the cup of death. So he returned and told all to his brother, who called down blessings on Jamrkan. And the Infidels ceased not to smite one another with the biting sword and expending their strength till the day rose and lighted up the land, when Gharib cried out to his men, "Charge, O ye noble, and do a deed to please the All-knowing King!" So the True Believers fell upon the idolaters and plied upon every false hypocritical breast the keen sword and the quivering spear. They sought to take refuge in the city; but Jamrkan came forth upon them with his kinsmen, who hemmed them in between two mountain-ranges, and slew an innumerable host of them, and the rest fled into the wastes and wolds.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Moslem host charged upon the Miscreants they hewed them in pieces with the biting scymitar and the rest fled to the wastes and wolds; nor did the Moslems cease pursuing them with the sword, till they had scattered them abroad in the plains and stony places. Then they returned to Oman city, and King Gharib entered the palace of the King and,

sitting down on the throne of his kingship, with his Grandees and Officers ranged right and left, sent for Jaland. They brought him in haste and Gharib expounded to him Al-Islam; but he rejected it; wherefore Gharib bade crucify him on the gate of the city, and they shot at him with shafts till he was like unto a porcupine. Then Gharib honourably robed Jamrkan and said to him, "Thou shalt be lord of this city and ruler thereof with power to loose and to bind therein, for it was thou didst open it with thy sword and thy folk." And Jamrkan kissed the King's feet, thanked him and wished him abiding victory and glory and every blessing. Moreover Gharib 34 opened Jaland's treasuries and saw what was therein of coin, whereof he gave largesse to his captains and standard-bearers and fighting-men, yea, even to the girls and children; and thus he lavished his gifts ten days long. After this, one night he dreamt a terrible dream and awoke, troubled and trembling. So he aroused his brother Sahim and said to him, "I saw in my vision that we were in a wide valley, when there pounced down on us two ravening birds of prey, never in my life saw I greater than they; their legs were like lances, and as they swooped we were in sore fear of them." Replied Sahim, "O King, this be some great enemy; so stand on thy guard against him." Gharib slept not the rest of the night and, when the day broke, he called for his courser and mounted. Quoth Sahim, "Whither goest thou, my brother?" and quoth Gharib, "I awoke heavy at heart; so I mean to ride abroad ten days and broaden my breast." Said Sahim, "Take with thee a thousand braves;" but Gharib replied, "I will not go forth but with thee and only thee." So the two brothers mounted and, seeking the dales and leasows, fared on from Wady to Wady and from meadow to meadow, till they came to a valley abounding in streams and sweet-smelling flowers and trees laden with all manner eatable fruits, two of each kind. Birds warbled on the branches their various strains; the mocking-bird trilled out her sweet notes fain and the turtle filled with her voice the plain. There sang the nightingale, whose chant arouses the sleeper, and the merle with his note like the voice of man and the cushat and the ring-dove, whilst the parrot with its eloquent tongue answered the twain. The valley pleased them and they ate of its fruits and drank of its waters, after which they sat under the shadow of its trees till drowsiness overcame them and they slept,—glory be to Him who sleepeth not! As they lay asleep, lo! two fierce Marids swooped down on them and, taking each one on his shoulders, towered with them high in air, till they were above the clouds. So Gharib and Sahim awoke and found themselves betwixt heaven and earth; whereupon they looked at those who bore them and saw that they were two Marids, the head of the one being as that of a dog and the head of the other as that of an ape[23] with hair like horses' tails and claws like lions' claws, and both were big as great palm-trees. When they espied this case, they exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in 35 Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Now the cause of this was that a certain King of the Kings of the Jinn, hight Mura'ash, had a son called Sá'ik, who loved a damsel of the Jinn, named Najmah;[24] and the twain used to

foregather in that Wady under the semblance of two birds. Gharib and Sahim saw them thus and deeming them birds, shot at them with shafts but wounding only Sa'ik whose blood flowed. Najmah mourned over him; then, fearing lest the like calamity befal herself, snatched up her lover and flew with him to his father's palace, where she cast him down at the gate. The warders bore him in and laid him before his sire who, seeing the pile sticking in his rib exclaimed, "Alas, my son! Who hath done with thee this thing, that I may lay waste his abiding-place and hurry on his destruction, though he were the greatest of the Kings of the Jann?" Thereupon Sa'ik opened his eyes and said, "O my father, none slew me save a mortal in the Valley of Springs." Hardly had he made an end of these words, when his soul departed; whereupon his father buffeted his face, till the blood streamed from his mouth, and cried out to two Marids, saying, "Hie ye to the Valley of Springs and bring me all who are therein." So they betook themselves to the Wady in question, where they found Gharib and Sahim asleep, and, snatching them up, carried them to King Mura'ash.[25]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.





Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the two Marids, after snatching up Gharib and Sahim in their sleep, carried them to Mura'ash, king of the Jann, whom they saw seated on the throne of his kingship, as he were a huge mountain, with four heads on his body,[26] the first that of a lion, the second that of an elephant, the third that of a panther, and the fourth that 36 of a lynx. The Marids set them down before Mura'ash and said to him, "O King, these twain be they we found in the Valley of Springs." Thereupon he looked at them with wrathful eyes and snarked and snorted and shot sparks from his nostrils, so that all who stood by feared him. Then said he, "O dogs of mankind, ye have slain my son and lighted fire in my liver." Quoth Gharib, "Who is thy son, and who hath seen him?" Quoth Mura'ash,

"Were ye not in the Valley of Springs and did ye not see my son there, in the guise of a bird, and did ye not shoot at him with wooden bolts that he died?" Replied Gharib, "I know not who slew him; and, by the virtue of the Great God, the One, the Immemorial who knoweth things all, and of Abraham the Friend, we saw no bird, neither slew we bird or beast!" Now when Mura'ash heard Gharib swear by Allah and His greatness and by Abraham the Friend, he knew him for a Moslem (he himself being a worshipper of Fire, not of the All-powerful Sire), so he cried out to his folk, "Bring me my Goddess.[27]" Accordingly they brought a brazier of gold and, setting it before him, kindled therein fire and cast on drugs, whereupon there arose therefrom green and blue and yellow flames and the King and all who were present prostrated themselves before the brazier, whilst Gharib and Sahim ceased not to attest the Unity of Allah Almighty, to cry out "God is Most Great" and to bear witness to His Omnipotence. Presently, Mura'ash raised his head and, seeing the two Princes standing in lieu of falling down to worship, said to them, "O dogs, why do ye not prostrate yourselves?" Replied Gharib, "Out on you, O ye accursed! Prostration befitteth not man save to the Worshipful King, who bringeth forth all creatures into beingness from nothingness and maketh water to well from the barren rock-well, Him who inclineth heart of sire unto new-born scion and who may not be described as sitting or standing; the God of Noah and Salih and Hud and Abraham the Friend, Who created Heaven and Hell and trees and fruit as well,[28] for He is Allah, the One, the All-powerful." When Mura'ash heard this, his eyes sank into his head[29] and he cried out to his guards, saying, "Pinion me these two dogs and sacrifice them to my Goddess." So they bound them and were about to cast them into the fire when, behold, 37 one of the crenelles of the palace-parapet fell down upon the brazier and brake it and put out the fire, which became ashes flying in air. Then quoth Gharib, "God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and He forsaketh those who deny Him, Fire worshipping and not the Almighty King!" Presently quoth Mura'ash, "Thou art a sorcerer and hast bewitched my Goddess, so that this thing hath befallen her." Gharib replied, "O madman, an the fire had soul or sense it would have warded off from self all that hurteth it." When Mura'ash heard these words, he roared and bellowed and reviled the Fire, saying, "By my faith, I will not kill you save by the fire!" Then he bade cast them into gaol; and, calling an hundred Marids, made them bring much fuel and set fire thereto. So they brought great plenty of wood and made a huge blaze, which flamed up mightily till the morning, when Mura'ash mounted an elephant, bearing on its back a throne of gold dubbed with jewels, and the tribes of the Jinn gathered about him in their various kinds. Presently they brought in Gharib and Sahim who, seeing the flaming of the fire, sought help of the One, the All-conquering Creator of night and day, Him of All-might, whom no sight comprehendeth, but who comprehendeth all sights, for He is the Subtle, the All-knowing. And they ceased not humbly beseeching Him till, behold, a cloud arose from West to East and, pouring down showers of rain, like the swollen sea, quenched the fire. When the King saw

this, he was affrighted, he and his troops, and entered the palace, where he turned to the Wazirs and Grandees and said to them, "How say ye of these two men?" They replied, "O King, had they not been in the right, this thing had not befallen the fire; wherefore we say that they be true men which speak sooth." Rejoined Mura'ash, "Verily the Truth hath been displayed to me, ay, and the manifest way, and I am certified that the worship of the fire is false; for, were it goddess, it had warded off from itself the rain which quenched it and the stone which broke its brasier and beat it into ashes. Wherefore I believe in Him Who created the fire and the light and the shade and the heat. And ye, what say ye?" They answered, "O King, we also hear and follow and obey." So the King called for Gharib and embraced him and kissed him between the eyes and then summoned Sahim; whereupon the bystanders all crowded to kiss their hands and heads.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

38

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Mura'ash and his men found salvation in the Saving Faith, Al-Islam, he called for Gharib and Sahim and kissed them between the eyes and so did all the Grandees who crowded to buss their hands and heads. Then Mura'ash sat down on the throne of his kingship and, seating Gharib on his right and Sahim on his left hand, said to them, "O mortals, what shall we say, that we may become Moslems?" Replied Gharib, "Say:—There is no god but *the* God, and Abraham is the Friend of God!" So the King and his folk professed Al-Islam with heart and tongue, and Gharib abode with them awhile, teaching them the ritual of prayer. But presently he called to mind his people and sighed, whereupon quoth Mura'ash, "Verily, trouble is gone and joy and gladness are come." Quoth Gharib, "O King, I have many foes and I fear for my folk from them." Then he related to him his history with his brother Ajib from first to last, and the King of the Jinns said, "O King of men, I will send one who shall bring thee news of thy people, for I will not let thee go till I have had my fill of thy face." Then he called two doughty Marids, by name Kaylaján and Kúraján, and after they had done him homage, he bade them repair to Al-Yaman and bring him news of Gharib's army. They replied, "To hear is to obey," and departed. Thus far concerning the brothers; but as regards the Moslems, they arose in the morning and led by their captains rode to King Gharib's palace, to do their service to him; but the eunuchs told them that the King had mounted with his brother and had ridden forth at peep o' day. So they made for the valleys and mountains and followed the track of the Princes, till they came to the Valley of Springs, where they found their arms cast down and their two gallant steeds grazing and said, "The King is missing from this place, by the glory of Abraham the Friend!" Then they mounted and sought in the valley and the mountains three days, but found no trace of them; whereupon they began the mourning ceremonies and,

sending for couriers, said to them, “Do ye disperse yourselves about the cities and sconces and castles, and seek ye news of our King.” “Hearkening and obedience!” cried the couriers, who dispersed hither and thither each over one of the Seven Climes and sought everywhere for Gharib, but found no trace of him. Now when the 39 tidings came to Ajib by his spies that his brother was lost and there was no news of the missing, he rejoiced and going in to King Ya’arub bin Kahtan, sought of him aid which he granted and gave him two hundred thousand Amalekites, wherewith he set out for Al-Yaman and sat down before the city of Oman. Jamrkan and Sa’adan sallied forth and offered him battle, and there were slain of the Moslems much folk, so the True Believers retired into the city and shut the gates and manned the walls. At this moment came up the two Marids Kaylajan and Kurajan and, seeing the Moslem beleaguered waited till nightfall, when they fell upon the miscreants and plied them with sharp swords of the swords of the Jinn, each twelve cubits long, if a man smote therewith a rock, verily he would cleave it in sunder. They charged the Idolators, shouting, “Allaho Akbar! God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and forsaketh those who deny the Faith of Abraham the Friend!” and whilst they raged amongst the foes, fire issued from their mouths and nostrils, and they made great slaughter amongst them. Thereupon the Infidels ran out of their tents offering battle but, seeing these strange things, were confounded and their hair stood on end and their reason fled. So they snatched up their arms and fell one upon other, whilst the Marids shore off their heads, as a reaper eareth grain, crying, “God is Most Great! We are the lads of King Gharib, the friend of Mura’ash, King of the Jinn!” The sword ceased not to go round amongst them till the night was half spent, when the Misbelievers, imagining that the mountains were all Ifrits, loaded their tents and treasure and baggage upon camels and made off; and the first to fly was Ajib.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Misbelievers made off and the first to fly was Ajib. Thereupon the Moslems gathered together, marvelling at this that had betided the Infidels and fearing the tribesmen of the Jinn. But the Marids ceased not from pursuit, till they had driven them far away into the hills and wolds; and but fifty thousand Rebels[30] of two hundred thousand escaped with their lives and made for their 40 own land, wounded and sore discomfited. Then the two Jinns returned and said to them, “O host of the Moslems, your lord King Gharib and his brother Sahim salute you; they are the guests of Mura’ash, King of the Jann, and will be with you anon.” When Gharib’s men heard that he was safe and well, they joyed with exceeding joy and said to the Marids, “Allah gladden you twain with good news, O noble spirits!” So Kurajan and Kaylajan returned to Mura’ash and Gharib; and acquainted them with that which had happened, whereat Gharib finding the two sitting together felt heart at ease and said, “Allah abundantly requite you!” Then quoth

King Mura'ash, "O my brother, I am minded to show thee our country and the city of Japhet[31] son of Noah (on whom be peace!)" Quoth Gharib, "O King, do what seemeth good to thee." So he called for three noble steeds and mounting, he and Gharib and Sahim, set out with a thousand Marids, as they were a piece of a mountain cloven lengthwise. They fared on, solacing themselves with the sight of valleys and mountains, till they came to Jabarsá,[32] the city of Japhet son of Noah (on whom be peace!) where the townsfolk all, great and small, came forth to meet King Mura'ash and brought them into the city in great state. Then Mura'ash went up to the palace of Japhet son of Noah and sat down on the throne of his kingship, which was of alabaster, ten stages high and latticed with wands of gold wherefrom hung all manner coloured silks. The people of the city stood before him and he said to them, "O seed of Yafis bin Nuh, what did your fathers and grandfathers worship?" They replied, "We found them worshipping Fire and followed their example, as thou well knowest." "O folk," rejoined Mura'ash, "we have been shown that the fire is but one of the creatures of Almighty Allah, Creator of all things; and when we knew this, we submitted ourselves to God, the One, the All-powerful, Maker 41 of night and day and the sphere revolving alway, Whom comprehendeth no sight, but Who comprehendeth all sights, for He is the Subtle, the All-wise. So seek ye Salvation and ye shall be saved from the wrath of the Almighty One and from the fiery doom in the world to come." And they embraced Al-Islam with heart and tongue. Then Mura'ash took Gharib by the hand and showed him the palace and its ordinance and all the marvels it contained, till they came to the armoury, wherein were the arms of Japhet son of Noah. Here Gharib saw a sword hanging to a pin of gold and asked, "O King, whose is that?" Mura'ash answered, "'Tis the sword of Yafis bin Nuh, wherewith he was wont to do battle against men and Jinn. The sage Jardúm forged it and graved on its back names of might.[33] It is named Al-Máhik—the Annihilator—for that it never descendeth upon a man, but it annihilateth him, nor upon a Jinni, but it crusheth him; and if one smote therewith a mountain 'twould overthrow it." When Gharib heard tell of the virtues of the sword, he said, "I desire to look on this blade;" and Mura'ash said, "Do as thou wilt." So Gharib put out his hand, and, hending the sword, drew it from its sheath; whereupon it flashed and Death crept on its edge and glittered; and it was twelve spans long and three broad. Now Gharib wished to become owner of it, and King Mura'ash said, "An thou canst smite with it, take it." "'Tis well," Gharib replied, and took it up, and it was in his hand as a staff; wherefore all who were present, men and Jinn, marvelled and said, "Well done, O Prince of Knights!" Then said Mura'ash, "Lay thy hand on this hoard for which the Kings of the earth sigh in vain, and mount, that I may show thee the city." Then they took horse and rode forth the palace, with men and Jinns attending them on foot,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib and King Mura'ash rode forth the palace of Japhet, with 42 men and Jinns attending them on foot, they passed through the streets and thoroughfares of the town, by palaces and deserted mansions and gilded doorways, till they issued from the gates and entered gardens full of trees fruit-bearing and waters welling and birds speaking and celebrating the praises of Him to whom belong Majesty and Eternity; nor did they cease to solace themselves in the land till nightfall, when they returned to the palace of Japhet son of Noah and they brought them the table of food. So they ate and Gharib turned to the King of the Jann and said to him, "O King, I would fain return to my folk and my force; for I know not their plight after me." Replied Mura'ash, "By Allah, O my brother, I will not part with thee for a full month, till I have had my fill of thy sight." Now Gharib could not say nay, so he abode with him in the city of Japhet, eating and drinking and making merry, till the month ended, when Mura'ash gave him great store of gems and precious ores, emeralds and balass-rubies, diamonds and other jewels, ingots of gold and silver and likewise ambergris and musk and brocaded silks and else of rarities and things of price. Moreover he clad him and Sahim in silken robes of honour gold-inwoven and set on Gharib's head a crown jewelled with pearls and diamonds of inestimable value. All these treasures he made up into even loads for him and, calling five hundred Marids, said to them, "Get ye ready to travel on the morrow, that we may bring King Gharib and Sahim back to their own country." And they answered, "We hear and we obey." So they passed the night in the city, purposing to depart on the morrow, but, next morning, as they were about to set forth behold, they espied a great host advancing upon the city, with horses neighing and kettle-drums beating and trumpets braying and riders filling the earth for they numbered threescore and ten thousand Marids, flying and diving, under a King called Barkán. Now this Barkan was lord of the City of Carnelian and the Castle of Gold and under his rule were five hill-strongholds, in each five hundred thousand Marids; and he and his tribe worshipped the Fire, not the Omnipotent Sire. He was a cousin of Mura'ash, the son of his father's brother, and the cause of his coming was that there had been among the subjects of King Mura'ash a misbelieving Marid, who professed Al-Islam hypocritically, and he stole away from his people and made for the Valley of Carnelian, where he went in to King Barkan and, kissing the earth before him, wished him abiding glory and 43 prosperity. Then he told him of Mura'ash being converted to Al-Islam, and Barkan said, "How came he to tear himself away from his faith[34]?" So the rebel told him what had passed and, when Barkan heard it, he snorted and snarked and railed at Sun and Moon and sparkling Fire, saying, "By the virtue of my faith, I will surely slay mine uncle's son and his people and this mortal, nor will I leave one of them alive!" Then he cried out to the legions of the Jinn and choosing of them seventy thousand Marids, set out and fared on till he came to Jabarsá[35] the city of Japhet and encamped before its gates. When

Mura'ash saw this, he despatched a Marid, saying, "Go to this host and learn all that it wanteth and return hither in haste." So the messenger rushed away to Barkan's camp, where the Marids flocked to meet him and said to him, "Who art thou?" Replied he, "An envoy from King Mura'ash;" whereupon they carried him in to Barkan, before whom he prostrated himself, saying, "O my lord, my master hath sent me to thee, to learn tidings of thee." Quoth Barkan, "Return to thy lord and say to him:—This is thy cousin Barkan, who is come to salute thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Marid-envoy of Mura'ash was borne before Barkan and said to him, "O my lord, my master hath sent me to thee to learn tidings of thee," Barkan replied, "Return to thy lord and say to him:—This is thy cousin Barkan who is come to salute thee!" So the messenger went back and told Mura'ash, who said to Gharib, "Sit thou on thy throne whilst I go and salute my cousin and return to thee." Then he mounted and rode to the camp of his uncle's son. Now this was a trick[36] of Barkan, to bring Mura'ash out and seize upon him, and he said to his Marids, whom he had stationed about him, "When ye see me embrace him,[37] lay hold of 44 him and pinion him." And they replied, "To hear is to obey." So, when King Mura'ash came up and entered Barkan's pavilion, the owner rose to him and threw his arms round his neck; whereat the Jann fell upon Mura'ash and pinioned him and chained him. Mura'ash looked at Barkan and said, "What manner of thing is this?" Quoth Barkan, "O dog of the Jann, wilt thou leave the faith of thy fathers and grandfathers and enter a faith thou knowest not?" Rejoined Mura'ash, "O son of my uncle, indeed I have found the faith of Abraham the Friend to be the True Faith and all other than it vain." Asked Barkan, "And who told thee of this?"; and Mura'ash answered, "Gharib, King of Irak, whom I hold in the highest honour." "By the right of the Fire and the Light and the Shade and the Heat," cried Barkan, "I will assuredly slay both thee and him!" And he cast him into gaol. Now when Mura'ash's henchman saw what had befallen his lord, he fled back to the city and told the King's legionaries who cried out and mounted. Quoth Gharib, "What is the matter?" And they told him all that had passed, whereupon he cried out to Sahim, "Saddle me one of the chargers that King Mura'ash gave me." Said Sahim, "O my brother, wilt thou do battle with the Jinn?" Gharib replied, "Yes, I will fight them with the sword of Japhet son of Noah, seeking help of the Lord of Abraham the Friend (on whom be the Peace!); for He is the Lord of all things and sole Creator!" So Sahim saddled him a sorrel horse of the horses of the Jinn, as he were a castle strong among castles, and he armed and mounting, rode out with the legions of the Jinn, hauberk'd cap-à-pie. Then Barkan and his host mounted also and the two hosts drew out in lines facing each other. The first to open the gate of war was Gharib, who drave his steed into the mid-field and bared the enchanted blade, whence issued a glittering

light that dazzled the eyes of all the Jinn and struck terror to their hearts. Then he played[38] with the sword till their wits were wildered, and cried out, saying, “Allaho Akbar! I am Gharib, King of Irak. There is no Faith save the Faith of Abraham the Friend!” Now when Barkan heard Gharib’s words, he said, “This is he who seduced my cousin from his religion; so, by the virtue of my faith, I will not sit down on my throne till I have decapitated this Gharib and suppressed his 45 breath of life and forced my cousin and his people back to their belief: and whoso baulketh me, him will I destroy.” Then he mounted an elephant paper-white as he were a tower plastered with gypsum, and goaded him with a spike of steel which ran deep into his flesh, whereupon the elephant trumpeted and made for the battle-plain where cut and thrust obtain; and, when he drew near Gharib, he cried out to him, saying, “O dog of mankind, what made thee come into our land, to debauch my cousin and his folk and pervert them from one faith to other faith. Know that this day is the last of thy worldly days.” Gharib replied, “Avaunt,[39] O vilest of the Jann!” Therewith Barkan drew a javelin and making it quiver[40] in his hand, cast it at Gharib; but it missed him. So he hurled a second javelin at him; but Gharib caught it in mid-air and after poising it launched it at the elephant. It smote him on the flank and came out on the other side, whereupon the beast fell to the earth dead and Barkan was thrown to the ground, like a great palm-tree. Before he could stir, Gharib smote him with the flat of Japhet’s blade on the nape of the neck, and he fell upon the earth in a fainting-fit; whereupon the Marids swooped down on him and surrounding him pinioned his elbows. When Barkan’s people saw their king a prisoner, they drove at the others, seeking to rescue him, but Gharib and the Islamised Jinn fell upon them and gloriously done for Gharib! indeed that day he pleased the Lord who answereth prayer and slaked his vengeance with the talisman-sword! Whomsoever he smote, he clove him in sunder and before his soul could depart he became a heap of ashes in the fire; whilst the two hosts of the Jinn shot each other with flamy meteors till the battle-field was wrapped in smoke. And Gharib tourneyed right and left among the Kafirs who gave way before him, till he came to King Barkan’s pavilion, with Kaylajan and Kurajan on his either hand, and cried out to them, “Loose your lord!” So they unbound Mura’ash and broke his fetters and——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

46

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Gharib cried out to Kaylajan and Kurajan, saying, “Loose your lord!”, they unbound Mura’ash and broke his fetters, and he said to them, “Bring me my arms and my winged horse.” Now he had two flying steeds, one of which he had given to Gharib and the other he had kept for himself; and this he mounted after he had donned his battle-harness. Then he and Gharib fell upon the enemy, flying through the air on their winged

horses, and the true believing Jinn followed them, shouting "Allaho Akbar—God is Most Great!"—till plains and hills, valleys and mountains re-worded the cry. The Infidels fled before them and they returned, after having slain more than thirty thousand Marids and Satans, to the city of Japhet, where the two Kings sat down on their couches of estate and sought Barkan, but found him not; for after capturing him they were diverted from him by stress of battle, where an Ifrit of his servants made his way to him and loosing him, carried him to his folk, of whom he found part slain and the rest in full flight. So he flew up with the King high in air and sat him down in the City of Carnelian and Castle of Gold, where Barkan seated himself on the throne of his kingship. Presently, those of his people who had survived the affair came in to him and gave him joy of his safety; and he said, "O folk, where is safety? My army is slain and they took me prisoner and have rent in pieces mine honour among the tribes of the Jann." Quoth they, "O King, 'tis ever thus that kings still afflict and are afflicted." Quoth he, "There is no help but I take my wreak and wipe out my shame, else shall I be for ever disgraced among the tribes of the Jann." Then he wrote letters to the Governors of his fortresses, who came to him right loyally and, when he reviewed them, he found three hundred and twenty thousand fierce Marids and Satans; who said to him, "What is thy need?" And he replied, "Get ye ready to set out in three days' time;" whereto they rejoined "Harkening and obedience!" On this wise it befel King Barkan; but as regards Mura'ash, when he discovered his prisoner's escape, it was grievous to him and he said, "Had we set an hundred Marids to guard him, he had not fled; but whither shall he go from us?" Then said he to Gharib, "Know, 47 O my brother, that Barkan is perfidious and will never rest from wreaking blood-revenge on us, but will assuredly assemble his legions and return to attack us; wherefore I am minded to forestall him and follow the trail of his defeat, whilst he is yet weakened thereby." Replied Gharib, "This is the right rede, and will best serve our need;" and Mura'ash said, "Oh my brother, let the Marids bear thee back to thine own country and leave me to fight the battles of the Faith against the Infidels, that I may be lightened of my sin-load." But Gharib rejoined, "By the virtue of the Clement, the Bountiful, the Veiler, I will not go hence till I do to death all the misbelieving Jinn; and Allah hasten their souls to the fire and dwelling-place dire; and none shall be saved but those who worship Allah the One, the Victorious! But do thou send Sahim back to the city of Oman, so haply he may be healed of his ailment." For Sahim was sick. So Mura'ash cried to the Marids, saying, "Take ye up Sahim and these treasures and bear them to Oman city." And after replying, "We hear and we obey," they took them and made for the land of men. Then Mura'ash wrote letters to all his Governors and Captains of fortresses and they came to him with an hundred and sixty thousand warriors. So they made them ready and departed for the City of Carnelian and the Castle of Gold, covering in one day a year's journey and halted in a valley, where they encamped and passed the night. Next morning as they were about to set forth, behold, the vanguard of Barkan's army appeared, whereupon the Jinn cried out and

the two hosts met and fell each upon other in that valley. Then the engagement was dight and there befel a sore fight as though an earthquake shook the site and fair plight waxed foul plight. Earnest came and jest took flight, and parley ceased 'twixt wight and wight,[41] whilst long lives were cut short in a trice and the Unbelievers fell into disgrace and despite; for Gharib charged them, proclaiming the Unity of the Worshipful, the All-might and shore through necks and left heads rolling in the dust; nor did night betide before nigh seventy thousand of the Miscreants were slain, and of the Moslemised over ten thousand Marids had fallen. Then the kettle-drums beat the retreat, and the two hosts drew apart,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

48

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the two hosts drew apart, Gharib and Mura'ash returned to their tents, after wiping their weapons, and supper being set before them, they ate and gave each other joy of their safety, and the loss of their Marids being so small. As for Barkan, he returned to his tent, grieving for the slaughter of his champions, and said to his officers, "O folk, an we tarry here and do battle with them on this wise in three days' time we shall be cut off to the last wight." Quoth they, "And how shall we do, O King?" Quoth Barkan, "We will fall upon them under cover of night whilst they are deep in sleep, and not one of them shall be left to tell the tale. So take your arms and when I give the word of command, attack and fall on your enemies as one." Now there was amongst them a Marid named Jandal whose heart inclined to Al-Islam; so, when he heard the Kafirs' plot, he stole away from them and going in to King Mura'ash and King Gharib, told the twain what Barkan had devised; whereupon Mura'ash turned to Gharib and said to him, "O my brother, what shall we do?" Gharib replied, "To-night we will fall upon the Miscreants and chase them into the wilds and the wolds if it be the will of the Omnipotent King." Then he summoned the Captains of the Jann and said to them, "Arm yourselves, you and yours; and, as soon as 'tis dark, steal out of your tents on foot, hundreds after hundreds, and lie in ambush among the mountains; and when ye see the enemy engaged among the tents, do ye fall upon them from all quarters. Hearten your hearts and rely on your Lord, and ye shall certainly conquer; and behold, I am with you!" So, as soon as it was dark night, the Infidels attacked the camp, invoking aid of the fire and light; but when they came among the tents, the Moslems fell upon them, calling for help on the Lord of the Worlds and saying, "O Most Merciful of Mercifuls, O Creator of all createds!" till they left them like mown grass, cut down and dead. Nor did morning dawn before the most part of the unbelievers were species without souls and the rest made for the wastes and marshes, whilst Gharib and Mura'ash returned triumphant and victorious; and, making prize of the enemy's baggage, they rested till the morrow, when they set out for the City of

Carnelian and Castle of Gold. As for Barkan, when the battle had turned against him and most 49 of his lieges were slain, he fled through the dark with the remnant of his power to his capital where he entered his palace and assembling his legionaries said to them, "O folk, whoso hath aught of price, let him take it and follow me to the Mountain Káf, to the Blue King, lord of the Pied Palace; for he it is who shall avenge us." So they took their women and children and goods and made for the Caucasus-mountain. Presently Mura'ash and Gharib arrived at the City of Carnelian and Castle of Gold to find the gates open and none left to give them news; whereupon they entered and Mura'ash led Gharib that he might show him the city, whose walls were builded of emeralds and its gates of red carnelian, with studs of silver, and the terrace-roofs of its houses and mansions reposed upon beams of lign-aloes and sandal-wood. So they took their pleasure in its streets and alleys, till they came to the Palace of Gold and entering passed through seven vestibules, when they drew near to a building, whose walls were of royal balass-rubies and its pavement of emerald and jacinth. The two Kings were astounded at the goodliness of the place and fared on from vestibule to vestibule, till they had passed through the seventh and happened upon the inner court of the palace wherein they saw four daïses, each different from the others, and in the midst a jetting fount of red gold, compassed about with golden lions,[42] from whose mouths issued water. These were things to daze man's wit. The estrade at the upper end was hung and carpeted with brocaded silks of various colours and thereon stood two thrones of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels. So Mura'ash and Gharib sat down on Barkan's thrones and held high state in the Palace of Gold.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Mura'ash and Gharib took seat on Barkan's thrones and held high state. Then said Gharib to Mura'ash, "What thinkest thou to do?" And Mura'ash replied, "O King of mankind, I have despatched an hundred horse to learn where Barkan is, that we 50 may pursue him." Then they abode three days in the palace, till the scouting Marids returned with the news that Barkan had fled to the Mountain Kaf and craved protection of the Blue King who granted it; whereupon quoth Mura'ash to Gharib, "What sayest thou, O my brother?" and quoth Gharib, "Except we attack them they will attack us." So they bade the host make ready for departure and after three days, they were about to set out with their troops, when the Marids, who had carried Sahim and the presents back to Oman, returned and kissed ground before Gharib. He questioned them of his people and they replied, "After the last affair, thy brother Ajib, leaving Ya'arub bin Kahtan, fled to the King of Hind and, submitting his case, sought his protection. The King granted his prayer and writing letters to all his governors, levied an army as it were the surging sea, having neither beginning nor end, wherewith he purposeth to invade Al-Irak and lay it waste." When Gharib heard this, he said, "Perish the Misbelievers! Verily, Allah

Almighty shall give the victory to Al-Islam and I will soon show them hew and foin." Said Mura'ash, "O King of humans, by the virtue of the Mighty Name, I must needs go with thee to thy kingdom and destroy thy foes and bring thee to thy wish." Gharib thanked him and they rested on this resolve till the morrow, when they set out, intending for Mount Caucasus and marched many days till they reached the City of Alabaster and the Pied Palace. Now this city was fashioned of alabaster and precious stones by Bárik bin Fáki', father of the Jinn, and he also founded the Pied Palace, which was so named because edified with one brick of gold alternating with one of silver, nor was there builded aught like it in all the world. When they came within half a day's journey of the city, they halted to take their rest, and Mura'ash sent out to reconnoitre a scout who returned and said, "O King, within the City of Alabaster are legions of the Jinn, for number as the leaves of the trees or as the drops of rain." So Mura'ash said to Gharib, "How shall we do, O King of Mankind?" He replied, "O King, divide your men into four bodies and encompass with them the camp of the Infidels; then, in the middle of the night, let them cry out, saying;—God is Most Great! and withdraw and watch what happeneth among the tribes of the Jinn." So Mura'ash did as Gharib counselled and the troops waited till midnight, when they encircled the foe and shouted, "Allaho Akbar! Ho for the Faith of Abraham the Friend, on whom be the Peace!" The 51 Misbelievers at this cry awoke in affright and snatching up their arms, fell one upon other till the morning, when most part of them were dead bodies and but few remained. Then Gharib cried out to the True Believers, saying, "Up and at the remnant of the Kafirs! Behold I am with you, and Allah is your helper!" So the Moslems drave at the enemy and Gharib bared his magical blade Al-Mahik and fell upon the foe, lopping off noses and making heads wax hoary and whole ranks turn tail. At last he came up with Barkan and smote him and bereft him of life and he fell down, drenched in his blood. On like wise he did with the Blue King, and by undurn-hour not one of the Kafirs was left alive to tell the tale. Then Gharib and Mura'ash entered the Pied Palace and found its walls builded of alternate courses of gold and silver, with door-sills of crystal and keystones of greenest emerald. In its midst was a fountain adorned with bells and pendants and figures of birds and beasts spouting forth water, and thereby a daïs[43] furnished with gold-brocaded silk, bordered or embroidered with jewels: and they found the treasures of the palace past count or description. Then they entered the women's court, where they came upon a magnificent serraglio and Gharib saw, among the Blue King's woman-folk a girl clad in a dress worth a thousand dinars, never had he beheld a goodlier. About her were an hundred slave-girls, upholding her train with golden hooks, and she was in their midst as the moon among stars. When he saw her, his reason was confounded and he said to one of the waiting-women, "Who may be yonder maid?" Quoth they, "This is the Blue King's daughter, Star o' Morn."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib asked the slave-women saying, "Who may be yonder 52 maid," they replied, "This is Star o' Morn, daughter to the Blue King." Then Gharib turned to Mura'ash and said to him, "O King of the Jinn, I have a mind to take yonder damsel to wife." Replied Mura'ash, "The palace and all that therein is, live stock and dead, are the prize of thy right hand; for, hadst thou not devised a stratagem to destroy the Blue King and Barkan, they had cut us off to the last one: wherefore the treasure is thy treasure and the folk thy thralls." Gharib thanked him for his fair speech and going up to the girl, gazed steadfastly upon her and loved her with exceeding love, forgetting Fakhr Taj the Princess and even Mahdiyah. Now her mother was the Chinese King's daughter whom the Blue King had carried off from her palace and perforce deflowered, and she conceived by him and bare this girl, whom he named Star o' Morn, by reason of her beauty and loveliness; for she was the very Princess of the Fair. Her mother died when she was a babe of forty days, and the nurses and eunuchs reared her, till she reached the age of seventeen; but she hated her sire and rejoiced in his slaughter. So Gharib put his palm to hers[44] and went in unto her that night and found her a virgin. Then he bade pull down the Pied Palace and divided the spoil with the true-believing Jinn, and there fell to his share one-and-twenty thousand bricks of gold and silver and money and treasure beyond speech and count. Then Mura'ash took Gharib and showed him the Mountain Kaf and all its marvels; after which they returned to Barkan's fortress and dismantled it and shared the spoil thereof. Then they repaired to Mura'ash's capital, where they tarried five days, when Gharib sought to revisit his native country and Mura'ash said, "O King of mankind, I will ride at thy stirrup and bring thee to thine own land." Replied Gharib, "No, by the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will not suffer thee to weary thyself thus, nor will I take any of the Jinn save Kaylajan and Kurajan." Quoth the King, "Take with thee ten thousand horsemen of the Jinn, to serve thee;" but quoth Gharib, "I will take only as I said to thee." So Mura'ash bade a thousand Marids carry him to his native land, with his share of the spoil; and he commanded Kaylajan and Kurajan to follow him and obey him; and they answered, "Hearkening and obedience." Then said Gharib to the Marids, "Do ye carry the treasure and Star o' Morn;" for 53 he himself thought to ride his flying steed. But Mura'ash said to him, "This horse, O my brother, will live only in our region, and, if it come upon man's earth, 'twill die: but I have in my stables a sea-horse, whose fellow is not found in Al-Irak, no, nor in all the world is its like." So he caused bring forth the horse, and when Gharib saw it, it interposed between him and his wits.[45] Then they bound it and Kaylajan bore it on his shoulders and Kurajan took what he could carry. And Mura'ash embraced Gharib and wept for parting from him, saying, "O my brother, if aught befal thee wherein thou art powerless, send for me and I will come to thine aid with an army able to lay waste the whole earth and what

is thereon." Gharib thanked him for his kindness and zeal for the True Faith and took leave of him; whereupon the Marids set out with Gharib and his goods; and, after traversing fifty years' journey in two days and a night, alighted near the city of Oman and halted to take rest. Then Gharib sent out Kaylajan, to learn news of his people, and he returned and said, "O King, the city is beleaguered by a host of Infidels, as they were the surging sea, and thy people are fighting them. The drums beat to battle and Jamrkan goeth forth as champion in the field." When Gharib heard this, he cried aloud, "God is Most Great!" and said to Kaylajan, "Saddle me the steed and bring me my arms and spear; for to-day the valiant shall be known from the coward in the place of war and battle-stead." So Kaylajan brought him all he sought and Gharib armed and belting in baldrick Al-Mahik, mounted the sea-horse and made toward the hosts. Quoth Kaylajan and Kurajan to him, "Set thy heart at rest and let us go to the Kafirs and scatter them abroad in the wastes and wilds till, by the help of Allah, the All-powerful, we leave not a soul alive, no, not a blower of the fire." But Gharib said, "By the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will not let you fight them without me and behold, I mount!" Now the cause of the coming of that great host was right marvellous.[46]——— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib had bidden Kaylajan go and learn news of his people, the Jinn fared forth and presently returning said, "Verily around thy city is a mighty host!" Now the cause of its coming was that Ajib, having fled the field after Ya'arub's army had been put to the rout, said to his people, "O folk, if we return to Ya'arub bin Kahtan, he will say to us:—But for you, my son and my people had not been slain; and he will put us to death, even to the last man. Wherefore, methinks we were better go to Tarkanán, King of Hind, and beseech him to avenge us." Replied they, "Come, let us go thither; and the blessing of the Fire be upon thee!" So they fared days and nights till they reached King Tarkanan's capital city and, after asking and obtaining permission to present himself, Ajib went in to him and kissed ground before him. Then he wished him what men use to wish to monarchy and said to him, "O King, protect me, so may protect thee the sparkling Fire and the Night with its thick darkness!" Tarkanan looked at Ajib and asked, "Who art thou and what dost thou want?"; to which the other answered, "I am Ajib King of Al-Irak; my brother hath wronged me and gotten the mastery of the land and the subjects have submitted themselves to him. Moreover, he hath embraced the faith of Al-Islam and he ceaseth not to chase me from country to country; and behold, I am come to seek protection of thee and thy power." When Tarkanan heard Ajib's words, he rose and sat down and cried, "By the virtue of the Fire, I will assuredly avenge thee and will let none serve other than my goddess the Fire!" And he called aloud to his son, saying, "O my son, make ready to go to Al-Irak and lay it waste and bind all who

serve aught but the Fire and torment them and make example of them; yet slay them not, but bring them to me, that I may ply them with various tortures and make them taste the bitterness of humiliation and leave them a warning to whoso will be warned in this our while." Then he chose out to accompany him eighty thousand fighting men on horseback and the like number on giraffes,[47] besides ten thousand elephants, 55 bearing on their backs seats[48] of sandal-wood, latticed with golden rods, plated and studded with gold and silver and shielded with pavises of gold and emerald; moreover he sent good store of war-chariots, in each eight men fighting with all kinds of weapons. Now the Prince's name was Ra'ad Sháh,[49] and he was the champion of his time, for prowess having no peer. So he and his army equipped them in ten day's time, then set out, as they were a bank of clouds, and fared on two months' journey, till they came upon Oman city and encompassed it, to the joy of Ajib, who thought himself assured of victory. Jamrkan and Sa'adan and all their fighting-men sallied forth into the field of fight whilst the kettle-drums beat to battle and the horses neighed. At this moment up came King Gharib, who, as we have said, had been warned by Kaylajan; and he urged on his destrier and entered among the Infidels waiting to see who should come forth and open the chapter of war. Then out rushed Sa'adan the Ghul and offered combat, whereupon there issued forth to him one of the champions of Hind; but Sa'adan scarce let him take stand in front ere he smote him with his mace and crushed his bones and stretched him on the ground; and so did he with a second and a third, till he had slain thirty fighting men. Then there dashed out at him an Indian cavalier, by name Battásh al-Akrán,[50] uncle to King Tarkanan and of his day the doughtiest man, reckoned worth five thousand horse in battle-plain and cried out to Sa'adan, saying, "O thief of the Arabs, hath thy daring reached that degree that thou shouldst slay the Kings of Hind and their champions and capture their horsemen? But this day is the last of thy worldly days." When Sa'adan heard these words, his eyes waxed blood-red and he drave at Battash and aimed a stroke at him with his club; but he evaded it and the force of the blow bore Sa'adan to the ground; 56 and before he could recover himself, the Indians pinioned him and haled him off to their tents. Now when Jamrkan saw his comrade a prisoner, he cried out, saying, "Ho for the Faith of Abraham the Friend!" and clapping heel to his horse, ran at Battash. They wheeled about awhile, till Battash charged Jamrkan and catching him by his jerkin[51] tare him from his saddle and cast him to the ground; whereupon the Indians bound him and dragged him away to their tents. And Battash ceased not to overcome all who came out to him, Captain after Captain till he had made prisoners of four-and-twenty Chiefs of the Moslems, whereat the True Believers were sore dismayed. When Gharib saw what had befallen his braves, he drew from beneath his knee[52] a mace of gold weighing six-score pounds which had belonged to Barkan King of the Jann——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib beheld what had befallen his braves he drew forth a golden mace which had belonged to Barkan King of the Jann and clapped heel to his sea-horse, which bore him like the wind-gust into mid-field. Then he let drive at Battash, crying out, "God is Most Great! He giveth aid and victory and He abaseth whoso reject the Faith of Abraham the Friend!" and smote him with the mace, whereupon he fell to the ground and Gharib, turning to the Moslems, saw his brother Sahim and said to him, "Pinion me this hound." When Sahim heard his brother's words, he ran to Battash and bound him hard and fast and bore him off, whilst the Moslem braves wondered who this knight could be and the Indians said one to other, "Who is this horseman which came out from among them and hath taken our Chief prisoner?" Meanwhile Gharib continued to offer battle and there issued forth to him a captain of the Hindís whom he felled to earth with his mace, and Kaylajan and Kurajan pinioned him and delivered him over to Sahim; nor did Gharib leave to do thus, till he had taken 57 prisoner two-and-fifty of the doughtiest Captains of the army of Hind. Then the day came to an end and the kettle-drums beat the retreat; whereupon Gharib left the field and rode towards the Moslem camp. The first to meet him was Sahim, who kissed his feet in the stirrups and said, "May thy hand never wither, O champion of the age! Tell us who thou art among the braves." So Gharib raised his vizor of mail and Sahim knew him and cried out, saying, "This is your King and your lord Gharib, who is come back from the land of the Jann!" When the Moslems heard Gharib's name, they threw themselves off their horses' backs, and, crowding about him, kissed his feet in the stirrups and saluted him, rejoicing in his safe return. Then they carried him into the city of Oman, where he entered his palace and sat down on the throne of his kingship, whilst his officers stood around him in the utmost joy. Food was set on and they ate, after which Gharib related to them all that had betided him with the Jinn in Mount Kaf, and they marvelled thereat with exceeding marvel and praised Allah for his safety. Then he dismissed them to their sleeping-places; so they withdrew to their several lodgings, and when none abode with him but Kaylajan and Kurajan, who never left him, he said to them, "Can ye carry me to Cufa that I may take my pleasure in my Harim, and bring me back before the end of the night?" They replied, "O our lord, this thou askest is easy." Now the distance between Cufa and Oman is sixty days' journey for a diligent horseman, and Kaylajan said to Kurajan, "I will carry him going and thou coming back." So he took up Gharib and flew off with him, in company with Kurajan; nor was an hour past before they set him down at the gate of his palace, in Cufa. He went in to his uncle Al-Damigh, who rose to him and saluted him; after which quoth Gharib, "How is it with my wives Fakhr Taj[53] and Mahdiyah?" Al-Damigh answered, "They are both well and in good case." Then the eunuch went in and acquainted the women of the Harim with Gharib's coming, whereat they rejoiced and raised the trill

of joy and gave him the reward for good news. Presently in came King Gharib, and they rose and saluting him, conversed with him, till Al-Damigh entered, 58 when Gharib related to them all that had befallen him in the land of the Jinn, whereat they all marvelled. Then he lay with Fakhr Taj till near daybreak, when he took leave of his wives and his uncle and mounted Kurajan's back, nor was the darkness dispelled before the two Marids set him down in the city of Oman. Then he and his men armed and he bade open the gates when, behold, up came a horseman from the host of the Indians, with Jamrkan and Sa'adan and the rest of the captive captains whom he had delivered, and committed them to Gharib. The Moslems, rejoicing in their safety, donned their mails and took horse, while the kettle drums beat a point of war; and the Miscreants also drew up in line.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Moslem host mounted and rode to the plain of cut and thrust, the first to open the door of war was King Gharib who, drawing his sword Al-Mahik, drove his charger between the two ranks and cried out, saying, "Whoso knoweth me hath enough of my mischief and whoso unknoweth me, to him I will make myself known. I am Gharib, King of Al-Irak and Al-Yaman, brother of Ajib." When Ra'ad Shah, son of the King of Hind, heard this, he shouted to his captains, "Bring me Ajib." So they brought him and Ra'ad Shah said to him, "Thou wottest that this quarrel is thy quarrel and thou art the cause of all this slaughter. Now yonder standeth thy brother Gharib middle-most the fight-field and stead where sword and spear we shall wield; go thou to him and bring him to me a prisoner, that I may set him on a camel arsy-versy, and make a show of him and carry him to the land of Hind." Answered Ajib, "O King, send out to him other than I, for I am in ill-health this morning." But Ra'ad Shah snarked and snorted and cried, "By the virtue of the sparkling Fire and the light and the shade and the heat, unless thou fare forth to thy brother and bring him to me in haste, I will cut off thy head and make an end of thee." So Ajib took heart and urging his horse up to his brother in mid-field, said to him, "O dog of the Arabs and vilest of all who hammer down tent-pegs, wilt thou contend with Kings? Take what to thee cometh and receive the glad tidings of thy 59 death." When Gharib heard this, he said to him, "Who art thou among the Kings?" And Ajib answered, saying, "I am thy brother, and this day is the last of thy worldly days." Now when Gharib was assured that he was indeed his brother Ajib, he cried out and said, "Ho, to avenge my father and mother!" Then giving his sword to Kaylajan,[54] he drave at Ajib and smote him with his mace a smashing blow and a swashing, that went nigh to beat in his ribs, and seizing him by the mail-gorget tore him from the saddle and cast him to the ground; whereupon the two Marids pounced upon him and binding him fast, dragged him off dejected and

abject; whilst Gharib rejoiced in the capture of his enemy and repeated these couplets of the poet:—

I have won my wish and my need have scored ✿ Unto Thee be the praise and the thanks, O our Lord!

I grew up dejected and abject; poor, ✿ But Allah vouchsafed me all boons implored:

I have conquered countries and mastered men ✿ But for Thee were I naught, O thou Lord adored!

When Ra'ad Shah saw how evilly Ajib fared with his brother, he called for his charger and donning his harness and habergeon, mounted and dashed out a-field. As soon as he drew near King Gharib, he cried out at him, saying, "O basest of Arabs and bearer of scrubs,[55] who art thou, that thou shouldest capture Kings and braves? Down from thy horse and put elbows behind back and kiss my feet and set my warriors free and go with me in bond of chains to my reign that I may pardon thee and make thee a Shaykh in our own land, so mayst thou eat there a bittock of bread." When Gharib heard these words he laughed till he fell backwards and answered, saying, "O mad hound and mangy wolf, soon shalt thou see against whom the shifts of Fortune will turn!" Then he cried out to Sahim, saying, "Bring me the prisoners;" so he brought them, and Gharib smote off their heads; whereupon Ra'ad Shah drave at him, with the driving of a lordly 60 champion and the onslaught of a fierce slaughterer and they falsed and feinted and fought till nightfall, when the kettle-drums beat the retreat.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the kettle-drums beat the retreat, the two Kings parted and returned, each to his own place where his people gave him joy of his safety. And the Moslems said to Gharib, "'Tis not thy wont, O King, to prolong a fight;" and he replied, "O folk, I have done battle with many royalties[56] and champions; but never saw I a harder hitter than this one. Had I chosen to draw Al-Mahik upon him, I had mashed his bones and made an end of his days: but I delayed with him, thinking to take him prisoner and give him part enjoyment in Al-Islam." Thus far concerning Gharib; but as regards Ra'ad Shah, he returned to his marquee and sat upon his throne, when his Chiefs came in to him and asked him of his adversary, and he answered, "By the truth of the sparkling Fire, never in my life saw I the like of yonder brave! But to-morrow I will take him prisoner and lead him away dejected and abject." Then they slept till daybreak, when the battle-drums beat to fight and the swords in baldric were dight; and war-cries were cried amain and all mounted their horses of generous strain and drew out into the field, filling every wide place and hill and plain. The first to open the door of war was the rider outrageous and the lion rageous, King Gharib, who drave his steed between the two hosts and wheeled and careered over the field, crying, "Who is for fray, who is for fight? Let no sluggard come out to me this day nor dullard!" Before he had made an end of speaking, out rushed 61 Ra'ad Shah, riding on an elephant, as he were a vast tower, in

a seat girthed with silken bands; and between the elephant's ears sat the driver, bearing in hand a hook, wherewith he goaded the beast and directed him right and left. When the elephant drew near Gharib's horse, and the steed saw a creature it had never before set eyes on, it took fright;[57] wherefore Gharib dismounted and gave the horse to Kaylajan. Then he drew Al-Mahik and advanced to meet Ra'ad Shah afoot, walking on till he faced the elephant. Now it was Ra'ad Shah's wont, when he found himself overmatched by any brave, to mount an elephant, taking with him an implement called the lasso,[58] which was in the shape of a net, wide at base and narrow at top with a running cord of silk passed through rings along its edges. With this he would attack horsemen and casting the meshes over them, draw the running noose and drag the rider off his horse and make him prisoner; and thus had he conquered many cavaliers. So, as Gharib came up to him, he raised his hand and, bespreading the net over him, pulled him on to the back of the elephant and cried out to the beast to return to the Indian camp. But Kaylajan and Kurajan had not left Gharib and, when they beheld what had befallen their lord, they laid hold of the elephant, whilst Gharib strove with the net, till he rent it in sunder. Upon this the two Marids seized Ra'ad Shah and bound him with a cord of palm-fibre. Then the two armies drove each at other and met with a shock like two seas crashing or two mountains together dashing, whilst the dust rose to the confines of the sky and blinded was every eye. The battle waxed fierce and fell, the blood ran in rills, nor did they cease to wage war with lunge of lance and sway of sword in lustiest way, till the day darkened and the night starkened, when the drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew asunder.[59] Now the 62 Moslems were evilly entreated that day by reason of the riders on elephants and giraffes,[60] and many of them were killed and most of the rest were wounded. This was grievous to Gharib, who commanded the hurt to be medicined and turning to his Chief Officers, asked them what they counselled. Answered they, "O King, 'tis only the elephants and giraffes that irk us; were we but quit of them, we should overcome the enemy." Quoth Kaylajan and Kurajan, "We twain will unsheath our swords and fall on them and slay the most part of them." But there came forward a man of Oman, who had been privy counsellor to Jaland, and said, "O King, I will be surety for the host, an thou wilt but hearken to me and follow my counsel." Gharib turned to his Captains and said to them, "Whatsoever this wise man shall say to you that do."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib said to his Captains, "Whatsoever this wise man shall say to you, that do"; they replied, "Hearing and obeying!" So the Omani chose out ten captains and asked them, "How many braves have ye under your hands?"; and they answered, "Ten thousand fighting-men." Then he carried them into the armoury and armed five thousand of them with harquebuses and other five thousand with cross-bows and taught them to shoot with

these new weapons.[61] Now as soon as it was day, the Indians came out to the field, armed cap-à-pie, with the elephants, giraffes and champions in their van; whereupon Gharib and his men mounted and both hosts drew out and the big drums beat to battle. Then 63 the man of Oman cried out to the archers and harquebusiers to shoot, and they plied the elephants and giraffes with shafts and leaden bullets, which entered the beasts' flanks, whereat they roared out and turning upon their own ranks, trod them down with their hoofs. Presently the Moslems charged the Misbelievers and outflanked them right and left, whilst the elephants and giraffes trampled them and drove them into the hills and wolds, whither the Moslems followed hard upon them with the keen-edged sword and but few of the giraffes and elephants escaped. Then King Gharib and his folk returned, rejoicing in their victory; and on the morrow they divided the loot and rested five days; after which King Gharib sat down on the throne of his kingship and sending for his brother Ajib, said to him, "O dog, why hast thou assembled the Kings against us? But He who hath power over all things hath given us the victory over thee. So embrace the Saving Faith and thou shalt be saved, and I will forbear to avenge my father and mother on thee therefor, and I will make thee King again as thou wast, placing myself under thy hand." But Ajib said, "I will not leave my faith." So Gharib bade lay him in irons and appointed an hundred stalwart slaves to guard him; after which he turned to Ra'ad Shah and said to him, "How sayst thou of the faith of Al-Islam?" Replied he, "O my lord, I will enter thy faith; for, were it not a true Faith and a goodly, thou hadst not conquered us. Put forth thy hand and I will testify that there is no god but *the* God and that Abraham the Friend is the Apostle of God." At this Gharib rejoiced and said to him, "Is thy heart indeed stablished in the sweetness of this Belief?" And he answered, saying, "Yes, O my lord!" Then quoth Gharib, "O, Ra'ad Shah, wilt thou go to thy country and thy kingdom?"; and quoth he, "O, my lord, my father will put me to death, for that I have left his faith." Gharib rejoined, "I will go with thee and make thee king of the country and constrain the folk to obey thee, by the help of Allah the Bountiful, the Beneficent." And Ra'ad Shah kissed his hands and feet. Then Gharib rewarded the counsellor who had caused the rout of the foe and gave him great wealth; after which he turned to Kaylajan and Kurajan, and said to them, "Harkye, Chiefs of the Jinn, 'tis my will that ye carry me, together with Ra'ad Shah and Jamrkan and Sa'adan to the land of Hind." "We hear and we obey," answered they. So Kurajan took up Jamrkan and Sa'adan, whilst Kaylajan took Gharib and Ra'ad Shah and made for the land of Hind.——And 64 Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the two Marids had taken up Gharib and Jamrkan, Sa'adan the Ghul and Ra'ad Shah, they flew on with them from sundown till the last of the night, when they set them down on the terrace of

King Tarkanan's palace at Cashmere. Now news was brought to Tarkanan by the remnants of his host of what had befallen his son, whereat he slept not neither took delight in aught, and he was troubled with sore trouble. As he sat in his Harim, pondering his case, behold, Gharib and his company descended the stairways of the palace and came in to him; and when he saw his son and those who were with him, he was confused and fear took him of the Marids. Then Ra'ad Shah turned to him and said, "How long wilt thou persist in thy frowardness, O traitor and worshipper of the Fire? Woe to thee! Leave worshipping the Fire and serve the Magnanimous Sire, Creator of day and night, whom attaineth no sight." When Tarkanan heard his son's speech, he cast at him an iron club he had by him; but it missed him and fell upon a buttress of the palace and smote out three stones. Then cried the King, "O dog, thou hast destroyed mine army and hast forsaken thy faith and comest now to make me do likewise!" With this Gharib went up to him and dealt him a cuff on the neck which knocked him down; whereupon the Marids bound him fast and all the Harim-women fled. Then Gharib sat down on the throne of kingship and said to Ra'ad Shah, "Do thou justice upon thy father." So Ra'ad Shah turned to him and said, "O perverse old man, become one of the saved and thou shalt be saved from the fire and the wrath of the All-powerful." But Tarkanan cried, "I will not die save in my own faith." Whereupon Gharib drew Al-Mahik and smote him therewith, and he fell to the earth in two pieces, and Allah hurried his soul to the fire and abiding-place dire.[62] Then Gharib bade hang his body over the palace gate and they hung one-half on the right 65 hand and the other on the left and waited till day, when Gharib caused Ra'ad Shah don the royal habit and sit down on his father's throne, with himself on his dexter hand and Jamrkan and Sa'adan and the Marids standing right and left; and he said to Kaylajan and Kurajan, "Whoso entereth of the Princes and Officers, seize him and bind him, and let not a single Captain escape you." And they answered, "Hearkening and obedience!" Presently, the Officers made for the palace, to do their service to the King, and the first to appear was the Chief Captain who, seeing King Tarkanan's dead body cut in half and hanging on either side of the gate, was seized with terror and amazement. Then Kaylajan laid hold of him by the collar and threw him and pinioned him; after which he dragged him into the palace and before sunrise they had bound three hundred and fifty Captains and set them before Gharib, who said to them, "O folk, have you seen your King hanging at the palace-gate?" Asked they, "Who hath done this deed?"; and he answered, "I did it, by the help of Allah Almighty; and whoso opposeth me, I will do with him likewise." Then quoth they, "What is thy will with us?"; and quoth he, "I am Gharib, King of Al-Irak, he who slew your warriors; and now Ra'ad Shah hath embraced the Faith of Salvation and is become a mighty King and ruler over you. So do ye become True Believers and all shall be well with you; but, if ye refuse, you shall repent it." So they pronounced the profession of the Faith and were enrolled among the people of felicity. Then said Gharib, "Are your hearts indeed stablished in the sweetness of the Belief?"; and they

replied, “Yes”; whereupon he bade release them and clad them in robes of honour, saying, “Go to your people and expound Al-Islam to them. Whoso accepteth the Faith, spare him; but if he refuse slay him.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Gharib said to the troops of Ra’ad Shah, “Go to your people and offer Al-Islam to them. Whoso accepteth the Faith spare him; but if he refuse, slay him.” So they went out and, assembling the men under their command, explained what had taken place and expounded Al-Islam to them, and they all professed, except 66 a few, whom they put to death; after which they returned and told Gharib, who blessed Allah and glorified Him, saying, “Praised be the Almighty who hath made this thing easy to us without strife!” Then he abode in Cashmere of India forty days, till he had ordered the affairs of the country and cast down the shrines and temples of the Fire and built in their stead mosques and cathedrals, whilst Ra’ad Shah made ready for him rarities and treasures beyond count and despatched them to Al-Irak in ships. Then Gharib mounted on Kaylajan’s back and Jamrkan and Sa’adan on that of Kurajan, after they had taken leave of Ra’ad Shah; and journeyed through the night till break of day, when they reached Oman city where their troops met them and saluted them and rejoiced in them. Then they set out for Cufa where Gharib called for his brother Ajib and commanded to hang him. So Sahim brought hooks of iron and driving them into the tendons of Ajib’s heels, hung him over the gate; and Gharib bade them shoot him; so they riddled him with arrows, till he was like unto a porcupine. Then Gharib entered his palace and sitting down on the throne of his kingship, passed the day in ordering the affairs of the state. At nightfall he went in to his Harim, where Star o’ Morn came to meet him and embraced him and gave him joy, she and her women, of his safety. He spent that day and lay that night with her and on the morrow, after he had made the Ghusl-ablution and prayed the dawn-prayer, he sat down on his throne and commanded preparation to be made for his marriage with Mahdiyah. Accordingly they slaughtered three thousand head of sheep and two thousand oxen and a thousand he-goats and five hundred camels and the like number of horses, beside four thousand fowls and great store of geese; never was such wedding in Al-Islam to that day. Then he went in to Mahdiyah and took her maidenhead and abode with her ten days; after which he committed the kingdom to his uncle Al-Damigh, charging him to rule the lieges justly, and journeyed with his women and warriors, till he came to the ships laden with the treasures and rarities which Ra’ad Shah had sent him, and divided the monies among his men who from poor became rich. Then they fared on till they reached the city of Babel, where he bestowed on Sahim Al-Layl a robe of honour and appointed him Sultan of the city.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Gharib, after robing his brother Sahim and appointing him Sultan, abode with him ten days, after which he set out again and journeyed nor stinted travel till he reached the castle of Sa'adan the Ghul, where they rested five days. Then quoth Gharib to Kaylajan and Kurajan, "Pass over to Isbánír al-Madáin, to the palace of the Chosroe, and find what is come of Fakhr Taj and bring me one of the King's kinsmen, who shall acquaint me with what hath passed." Quoth they, "We hear and we obey," and set out forthright for Isbanir. As they flew between heaven and earth, behold, they caught sight of a mighty army, as it were the surging sea, and Kaylajan said to Kurajan, "Let us descend and determine what be this host." So they alighted and walking among the troops, found them Persians and questioned the soldiers whose men they were and whither they were bound; whereto they made answer, "We are *en route* for Al-Irak, to slay Gharib and all who company him." When the Marids heard these words, they repaired to the pavilion of the Persian general, whose name was Rustam, and waited till the soldiers slept, when they took up Rustam, bed and all, and made for the castle where Gharib lay. They arrived there by midnight and going to the door of the King's pavilion, cried, "Permission!" which when he heard, he sat up and said, "Come in." So they entered and set down the couch with Rustam asleep thereon. Gharib asked, "Who be this?" and they answered, "This be a Persian Prince, whom we met coming with a great host, thinking to slay thee and thine, and we have brought him to thee, that he may tell thee what thou hast a mind to know." "Fetch me an hundred braves!" cried Gharib, and they fetched them; whereupon he bade them, "Draw your swords and stand at the head of this Persian carle!" Then they awoke him and he opened his eyes; and, finding an arch of steel over his head, shut them again, crying, "What be this foul dream?" But Kaylajan pricked him with his sword-point and he sat up and said, "Where am I?" Quoth Sahim, "Thou art in the presence of King Gharib, son-in-law of the King of the Persians. What is thy name and whither goest thou?" When Rustam heard Gharib's name, he bethought himself and said in his mind, "Am I asleep or awake?" Whereupon Sahim dealt him a buffet, saying, "Why 68 dost thou not answer?" And he raised his head and asked, "Who brought me from my tent out of the midst of my men?" Gharib answered, "These two Marids brought thee." So he looked at Kaylajan and Kurajan and skited in his bag-trousers. Then the Marids fell upon him, baring their tusks and brandishing their blades, and said to him, "Wilt thou not rise and kiss ground before King Gharib?" And he trembled at them and was assured that he was not asleep; so he stood up and kissed the ground between the hands of Gharib, saying, "The blessing of the Fire be on thee, and long life be thy life, O King!" Gharib cried, "O dog of the Persians, fire is not worshipful, for that it is harmful and profiteth not save in cooking food." Asked Rustam, "Who then is

worshipful?"; and Gharib answered, "Alone worship-worth is God, who formed thee and fashioned thee and created the heavens and the earth." Quoth the Ajami, "What shall I say that I may become of the party of this Lord and enter thy Faith?"; and quoth Gharib, "Say:—There is no god but *the* God, and Abraham is the Friend of God." So Rustam pronounced the profession of the Faith and was enrolled among the people of felicity. Then said he to Gharib, "Know, O my lord, that thy father-in-law, King Sabúr, seeketh to slay thee; and indeed he hath sent me with an hundred thousand men, charging me to spare none of you." Gharib rejoined, "Is this my reward for having delivered his daughter from death and dishonour? Allah will requite him his ill intent. But what is thy name?" The Persian answered, "My name is Rustam, general of Sabur;" and Gharib, "Thou shalt have the like rank in my army," adding, "But tell me, O Rustam, how is it with the Princess Fakhr Taj?" "May thy head live, O King of the age!" "What was the cause of her death?" Rustam replied, "O my lord, no sooner hadst thou left us than one of the Princess's women went in to King Sabur and said to him:—O my master, didst thou give Gharib leave to lie with the Princess my mistress? whereto he answered:—No, by the virtue of the fire! and drawing his sword, went in to his daughter and said to her:—O foul baggage, why didst thou suffer yonder Badawi to sleep with thee, without dower or even wedding? She replied:—O my papa, 'twas thou gavest him leave to sleep with me. Then he asked:—Did the fellow have thee? but she was silent and hung down her head. Hereupon he cried out to the midwives and slave-girls, saying:—Pinion me this harlot's elbows behind her and look at her privy parts. So they did as he bade them and 69 after inspecting her slit said to him:—O King, she hath lost her maidenhead. Whereupon he ran at her and would have slain her, but her mother rose up and threw herself between them crying:—O King, slay her not, lest thou be for ever dishonoured; but shut her in a cell till she die. So he cast her into prison till nightfall, when he called two of his courtiers and said to them:—Carry her afar off and throw her into the river Jayhun and tell none. They did his commandment, and indeed her memory is forgotten and her time is past."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib asked news of Fakhr Taj, Rustam informed him that she had been drowned in the river by her sire's command. And when Gharib heard this, the world waxed wan before his eyes and he cried, "By the virtue of Abraham the Friend, I will assuredly go to yonder dog and overwhelm him and lay waste his realm!" Then he sent letters to Jamrkan and to the governors of Mosul and Mayyáfárikín; and, turning to Rustam, said to him, "How many men hadst thou in thine army?" He replied, "An hundred thousand Persian horse;" and Gharib rejoined, "Take ten thousand horse and go to thy people and occupy them with war; I will follow on thy trail." So Rustam mounted and taking ten

thousand Arab horse made for his tribe, saying in himself, “I will do a deed shall whiten my face with King Gharib.” So he fared on seven days, till there remained but half a day’s journey between him and the Persian camp; when, dividing his host into four divisions he said to his men, “Surround the Persians on all sides and fall upon them with the sword.” They rode on from eventide till midnight, when they had compassed the camp of the Ajamis, who were asleep in security, and fell upon them, shouting, “God is Most Great!” Whereupon the Persians started up from sleep and their feet slipped and the sabre went round amongst them; for the All-knowing King was wroth with them, and Rustam wrought amongst them as fire in dry fuel; till, by the end of the night, the whole of the Persian host was slain or wounded or fled, and the Moslems made prize of their tents and baggage, horses, camels and treasure-chests. Then they alighted and rested in the tents of the Ajamis 70 till King Gharib came up and, seeing what Rustam had done and how he had gained by stratagem a great and complete victory, he invested him with a robe of honour and said to him, “O Rustam, it was thou didst put the Persians to the rout; wherefore all the spoil is thine.” So he kissed Gharib’s hand and thanked him, and they rested till the end of the day, when they set out for King Sabur’s capital. Meanwhile, the fugitives of the defeated force reached Isbanir and went in to Sabur, crying out and saying, “Alas!” and “Well-away!” and “Woe worth the day!” Quoth he, “What hath befallen you and who with his mischief hath smitten you?” So they told him all that had passed and said, “Naught befel us except that thy general Rustam fell upon us in the darkness of the night because he had turned Moslem; nor did Gharib come near us.” When the King heard this, he cast his crown to the ground and said, “There is no worth left us!” Then he turned to his son Ward Shah[63] and said to him, “O my son, there is none for this affair save thou.” Answered Ward Shah, “By thy life, O my father, I will assuredly bring Gharib and his chiefs of the people in chains and slay all who are with him.” Then he numbered his army and found it two hundred and twenty thousand men. So they slept, intending to set forth on the morrow; but, next morning, as they were about to march, behold, a cloud of dust arose and spread till it walled the world and baffled the sight of the farthest-seeing wight. Now Sabur had mounted to farewell his son, and when he saw this mighty great dust, he let call a runner and said to him, “Go find me out the cause of this dust-cloud.” The scout went and returned, saying, “O my lord, Gharib and his braves are upon you;” whereupon they unloaded their bât-beasts and drew out in line of battle. When Gharib came up and saw the Persians ranged in row, he cried out to his men, saying, “Charge with the blessing of Allah!” So they waved the flags, and the Arabs and the Ajamis drave one at other and folk were heaped upon folk. Blood ran like water and all souls saw death face to face; the brave advanced and pressed forward to assail and the coward hung back and turned tail and they ceased not from fight and fray till ended day, when the kettle-drums beat the retreat and the two hosts drew apart. Then Sabur commanded to pitch his camp hard

over the city-gate, and 71 Gharib set up his pavilions in front of theirs; and every one went to his tent.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the two hosts drew apart, every one went to his tent until the morning. As soon as it was day, the two hosts mounted their strong steeds and levelled their lances and wore their harness of war; then they raised their slogan-cries and drew out in battle-array, whilst came forth all the lordly knights and the lions of fights. Now the first to open the gate of battle was Rustam, who urged his charger into mid-field and cried out, "God is most Great! I am Rustam champion-in-chief of the Arabs and Ajams. Who is for tilting, who is for fighting? Let no sluggard come out to me this day or weakling!" Then there rushed forth to him a champion of the Persians; the two charged each other and there befel between them a sore fight, till Rustam sprang upon his adversary and smote him with a mace he had with him, seventy pounds in weight, and beat his head down upon his breast, and he fell to the earth, dead and in his blood drowned. This was no light matter to Sabur and he commanded his men to charge; so they drave at the Moslems, invoking the aid of the light-giving Sun, whilst the True Believers called for help upon the Magnanimous King. But the Ajams, the Miscreants, outnumbered the Arabs, the Moslems, and made them drain the cup of death; which when Gharib saw he drew his sword Al-Mahik and crying out his war-cry, fell upon the Persians, with Kaylajan and Kurajan at either stirrup; nor did he leave playing upon them with blade till he hewed his way to the standard-bearer and smote him on the head with the flat of his sword, whereupon he fell down in a fainting-fit and the two Marids bore him off to their camp. When the Persians saw the standard fall, they turned and fled and for the city-gates made; but the Moslems followed them with the blade and they crowded together to enter the city, so that they could not shut the gates and there died of them much people. Then Rustam and Sa'adan, Jamrkan and Sahim, Al-Damigh, Kaylajan and Kurajan and all the braves Mohammedan and the champions of Faith Unitarian fell upon the misbelieving Persians in the gates, and the blood of 72 the Kafirs ran in the streets like a torrent till they threw down their arms and harness and called out for quarter; whereupon the Moslems stayed their swords from the slaughter and drove them to their tents, as one driveth a flock of sheep. Meanwhile Gharib returned to his pavilion, where he doffed his gear and washed himself of the blood of the Infidels; after which he donned his royal robes and sat down on his chair of estate. Then he called for the King of the Persians and said to him, "O dog of the Ajams, what moved thee to deal thus with thy daughter? How seest thou me unworthy to be her baron?" And Sabur answered, saying, "O King, punish me not because of that deed which I did; for I repent me and confronted thee not in fight but in my fear of thee."[64] When Gharib heard these words he bade throw him flat and beat him. So they bastinadoed

him, till he could no longer groan, and cast him among the prisoners. Then Gharib expounded Al-Islam to the Persians and one hundred and twenty thousand of them embraced The Faith, and the rest he put to the sword. Moreover all the citizens professed Al-Islam and Gharib mounted and entered in great state the city Isbanir al-Madain. Then he went into the King's palace and sitting down on Sabur's throne, gave robes and largesse and distributed the booty and treasure among the Arabs and Persians, wherefore they loved him and wished him victory and honour and endurance of days. But Fakhr Taj's mother remembered her daughter and raised the voice of mourning for her, and the palace was filled with wails and cries. Gharib heard this and entering the Harim, asked the women what ailed them, whereupon the Princess's mother came forward and said, "O my lord, thy presence put me in mind of my daughter and how she would have joyed in thy coming, had she been alive and well." Gharib wept for her and sitting down on his throne, called for Sabur, and they brought him stumbling in his shackles. Quoth Gharib to him, "O dog of the Persians, what didst thou do with thy daughter?" "I gave her to such an one and such an one," quoth the King, "saying:—Drown her in the river Jayhún." So Gharib sent for the two men and asked them, "Is what he saith true?" Answered they, "Yes; but, O King, we did not drown her, nay we took pity on her and left her on the banks of the Jayhun, saying:—Save thyself and return not to the city, lest the 73 King slay thee and slay us with thee. This is all we know of her."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the two men ended the tale of Fakhr Taj with these words, "And we left her upon the bank of the river Jayhun!" Now, when Gharib heard this he bade bring the astrologers and said to them, "Strike me a board of geomancy and find out what is come of Fakhr Taj, and whether she is still in the bonds of life or dead." They did so and said, "O King of the age, it is manifest to us that the Princess is alive and hath borne a male child; but she is with a tribe of the Jinn, and will be parted from thee twenty years; count, therefore, how many years thou hast been absent in travel." So he reckoned up the years of his absence and found them eight years and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"[65] Then he sent for all Sabur's Governors of towns and strongholds and they came and did him homage. Now one day after this, as he sat in his palace, behold, a cloud of dust appeared in the distance and spread till it walled the whole land and darkened the horizon. So he summoned the two Marids and bade them reconnoitre, and they went forth under the dust cloud and snatching up a horseman of the advancing host, returned and set him down before Gharib, saying, "Ask this fellow, for he is of the army." Quoth Gharib, "Whose power is this?" and the man answered, "O King, 'tis the army of Khirad Shah,[66] King of Shiras, who is come forth to fight thee." Now the cause of Khirad Shah's coming was

this. When Gharib defeated Sabur's army, as hath been related, and took him prisoner, the King's son fled, with a handful of his father's force and ceased not flying till he reached the city of Shiras, where he went into King Khirad Shah and kissed ground before him, whilst the tears ran down his cheeks. When the King saw him in this case, he said to him, "Lift thy head, O youth, and tell me 74 what maketh thee weep." He replied, "O King, a King of the Arabs, by name Gharib, hath fallen on us and captured the King my sire and slain the Persians making them drain the cup of death." And he told him all that had passed from first to last. Quoth Khirad Shah, "Is my wife[67] well?" and quoth the Prince, "Gharib hath taken her." Cried the King "As my head liveth, I will not leave a Badawi or a Moslem on the face of the earth!" So he wrote letters to his Viceroys, who levied their troops and joined him with an army which when reviewed numbered eighty-five thousand men. Then he opened his armouries and distributed arms and armour to the troops, after which he set out with them and journeyed till he came to Isbanir, and all encamped before the city-gate. Hereupon Kaylajan and Kurajan came in to Gharib and kissing his knee, said to him, "O our Lord, heal our hearts and give us this host to our share." And he said, "Up and at them!" So the two Marids flew aloft high in the lift and lighting down in the pavilion of the King of Shiras, found him seated on his chair of estate, with the Prince of Persia, Ward Shah son of Sabur, sitting on his right hand, and about him his Captains, with whom he was taking counsel for the slaughter of the Moslems. Kaylajan came forward and caught up the Prince and Kurajan snatched up the King and the twain flew back with them to Gharib, who caused beat them till they fainted. Then the Marids returned to the Shirazian camp and, drawing their swords, which no mortal man had strength to wield, fell upon the Misbelievers and Allah hurried their souls to the Fire and abiding-place dire, whilst they saw no one and nothing save two swords flashing and reaping men, as a husbandman reaps corn. So they left their tents and mounting their horses bare-backed, fled; and the Marids pursued them two days and slew of them much people; after which they returned and kissed Gharib's hand. He thanked them for the deed they had done and said to them, "The spoil of the Infidels is yours alone: none shall share with you therein." So they called down blessings on him and going forth, gathered the booty together and abode in their own homes. On this wise it fared with them; but as regards Gharib and his lieges,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

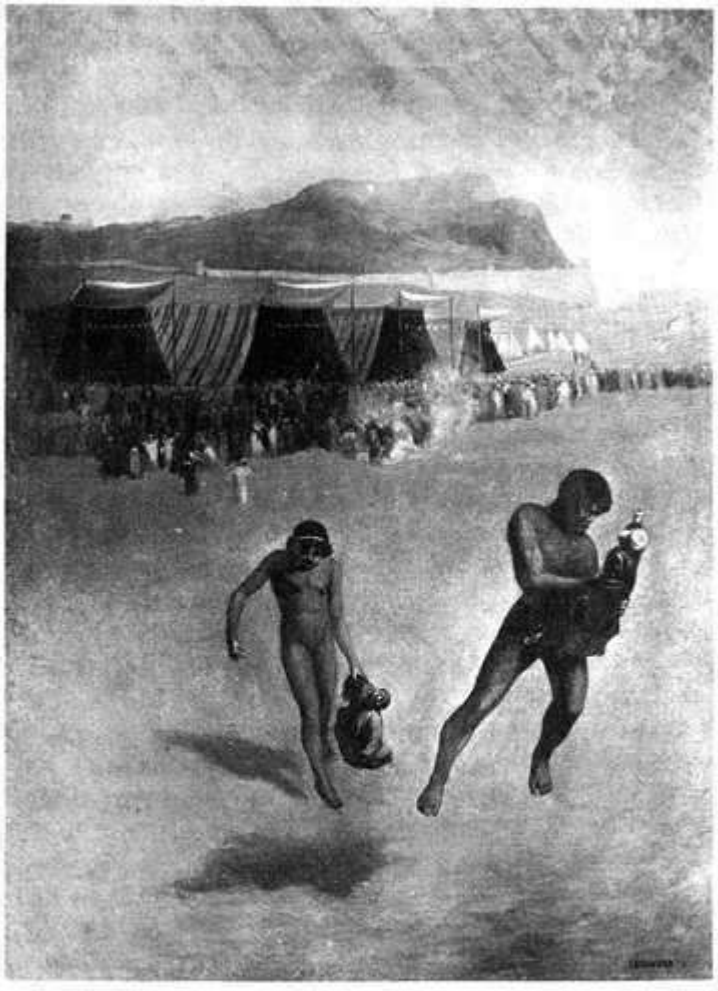
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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after Gharib had put to flight the host of Khirad Shah, he bade Kaylajan and Kurajan take the spoil to their own possession nor share it with any; so they gathered the booty and abode in their own homes. Meanwhile the remains of the beaten force ceased not flying till they reached the city of Shiras and there lifted up the voice of weeping and began the

ceremonial lamentations for those of them that had been slain. Now King Khirad Shah had a brother Sírán the Sorcerer hight, than whom there was no greater wizard in his day, and he lived apart from his brother in a certain stronghold, called the Fortalice of Fruits,[68] in a place abounding in trees and streams and birds and blooms, half a day's journey from Shiras. So the fugitives betook them thither and went in to Siran the Sorcerer, weeping and wailing aloud. Quoth he, "O folk, what garreth you weep?" and they told him all that had happened, especially how the two Marids had carried off his brother Khirad Shah; whereupon the light of his eyes became night and he said, "By the virtue of my faith, I will certainly slay Gharib and all his men and leave not one alive to tell the tale!" Then he pronounced certain magical words and summoned the Red King, who appeared and Siran said to him, "Fare for Isbanir and fall on Gharib, as he sitteth upon his throne." Replied he, "Hearkening and obedience!" and, gathering his troops, repaired to Isbanir and assailed Gharib, who seeing him, drew his sword Al-Mahik and he and Kaylajan and Kurajan fell upon the army of the Red King and slew of them five hundred and thirty and wounded the King himself with a grievous wound; whereupon he and his people fled and stayed not in their flight, till they reached the Fortalice of Fruits and went into Siran, crying out and exclaiming, "Woe!" and "Ruin!" And the Red King said to Siran, "O sage, Gharib hath with him the enchanted sword of Japhet son of Noah, and whomsoever he smiteth therewith he severeth him in sunder, and with him also are two Marids from Mount Caucasus, given to him by King Mura'ash. He it is who slew the blue King and Barkan Lord of the Carnelian City, and did to death much people of the 76 Jinn." When the Enchanter heard this, he said to the Red King, "Go," and he went his ways; whereupon he resumed his conjurations, and calling up a Marid, by name Zu'ázi'a gave him a drachm of levigated Bhang and said to him, "Go thou at Isbanir, and enter King Gharib's palace and assume the form of a sparrow. Wait till he fall and there be none with him; then put the Bhang up his nostrils and bring him to me." "To hear is to obey," replied the Marid and flew to Isbanir, where, changing himself into a sparrow, he perched on the window of the palace and waited till all Gharib's attendants retired to their rooms and the King himself slept. Then he flew down and going up to Gharib, blew the powdered Bhang into his nostrils, till he lost his senses, whereupon he wrapped him in the bed-coverlet and flew off with him, like the storm-wind, to the Fortalice of Fruits; where he arrived at midnight and laid his prize before Siran. The Sorcerer thanked him and would have put Gharib to death, as he lay senseless under Bhang; but a man of his people withheld him saying, "O Sage, an thou slay him, his friend King Mura'ash will fall on us with all his Ifrits and lay waste our realm." "How then shall we do with him?" asked Siran, and the other answered, "Cast him into the Jayhun while he is still in Bhang and he shall be drowned and none will know who threw him in." And Siran bade the Marid take Gharib and cast him into Jayhun river.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-second Night,



She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Marid took Gharib and carried him to the Jayhun purposing to cast him therein, but it was grievous to him to drown him, wherefore he made a raft of wood and binding it with cords, pushed it out (and Gharib thereon) into the current, which carried it away. Thus fared it with Gharib; but as regards his people, when they awoke in the morning and went in to do their service to their King, they found him not and seeing his rosary on the throne, awaited him awhile, but he came not. So they sought out the head Chamberlain and said to him, "Go into the Harim and look for the King: for it is not his habit to tarry till this time." Accordingly, the Chamberlain entered the Serraglio and enquired 77 for

the King, but the women said, “Since yesterday we have not seen him.” Thereupon he returned and told the Officers, who were confounded and said, “Let us see if he have gone to take his pleasure in the gardens.” Then they went out and questioned the gardeners if they had seen the King, and they answered, “No;” whereat they were sore concerned and searched all the garths till the end of the day, when they returned in tears. Moreover, the two Marids sought for him all round the city, but came back after three days, without having happened on any tidings of him. So the people donned black and made their complaint to the Lord of all worshipping men who doth as he is fain. Meanwhile, the current bore the raft along for five days till it brought it to the salt sea, where the waves disported with Gharib and his stomach, being troubled, threw up the Bhang. Then he opened his eyes and finding himself in the midst of the main, a plaything of the billows, said, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Would to Heaven I wot who hath done this deed by me!” Presently as he lay, perplexed concerning his case, lo! he caught sight of a ship sailing by and signalled with his sleeve to the sailors, who came to him and took him up, saying, “Who art thou and whence comest thou?” He replied, “Do ye feed me and give me to drink, till I recover myself, and after I will tell you who I am.” So they brought him water and victual, and he ate and drank and Allah restored to him his reason. Then he asked them, “O folk, what countrymen are ye and what is your Faith?;” and they answered, “We are from Karaj[69] and we worship an idol called Minkásh.” Cried Gharib, “Perdition to you and your idol! O dogs, none is worthy of worship save Allah who created all things, who saith to a thing Be! and it becometh.” When they heard this, they rose up and fell upon him in great wrath and would have seized him. Now he was without weapons, but whomsoever he struck, he smote down and deprived of life, till he had felled forty men, after which they overcame him by force of numbers and bound him fast, saying, “We will not slay him save in our own land, that we may first show him to our King.” Then they sailed on till they came to the city of Karaj.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the ship’s crew seized Gharib and bound him fast they said, “We will not slay him save in our own land.” Then they sailed on till they came to the city of Karaj, the builder whereof was an Amalekite, fierce and furious; and he had set up at each gate of the city a magical figure of copper which, whenever a stranger entered, blew a blast on a trumpet, that all in the city heard it and fell upon the stranger and slew him, except they embraced their creed. When Gharib entered the city, the figure stationed at the gate blew such a horrible blast that the King was affrighted and going into his idol, found fire and smoke issuing from its mouth, nose and eyes. Now a Satan had entered the belly of

the idol and speaking as with its tongue, said, “O King, there is come to thy city one hight Gharib, King of Al-Irak, who biddeth the folk quit their belief and worship his Lord; wherefore, when they bring him before thee, look thou spare him not.” So the King went out and sat down on his throne; and presently, the sailors brought in Gharib and set him before the presence, saying, “O King, we found this youth shipwrecked in the midst of the sea, and he is a Kafir and believeth not in our gods.” Then they told him all that had passed and the King said, “Carry him to the house of the Great Idol and cut his throat before him, so haply our god may look lovingly upon us.” But the Wazir said, “O King, it befitteth not to slaughter him thus, for he would die in a moment: better we imprison him and build a pyre of fuel and burn him with fire.” Thereupon the King commanded to cast Gharib into gaol and caused wood to be brought, and they made a mighty pyre and set fire to it, and it burnt till the morning. Then the King and the people of the city came forth and the Ruler sent to fetch Gharib; but his lieges found him not; so they returned and told their King who said, “And how made he his escape?” Quoth they, “We found the chains and shackles cast down and the doors fast locked.” Whereat the King marvelled and asked, “Hath this fellow to Heaven up flown or into the earth gone down?;” and they answered, “We know not.” Then said the King, “I will go and question my God, and he will inform me whither he is gone.” So he rose and went in, to prostrate himself to his idol, but found it not and began to rub his eyes and say, [79] “Am I in sleep or on wake?” Then he turned to his Wazir and said to him, “Where is my God and where is my prisoner? By my faith, O dog of Wazirs, haddest thou not counselled me to burn him, I had slaughtered him; for it is he who hath stolen my god and fled; and there is no help but I take blood-wreak of him!” Then he drew his sword and struck off the Wazir’s head. Now there was for Gharib’s escape with the idol a strange cause and it was on this wise. When they had shut him up in a cell adjoining the doomed shrine under which stood the idol, he rose to pray, calling upon the name of Almighty Allah and seeking deliverance of Him, to whom be honour and glory! The Marid who had charge of the idol and spoke in its name, heard him and fear got hold upon his heart and he said, “O shame upon me! Who is this seeth me while I see him not?” So he went in to Gharib and throwing himself at his feet, said to him, “O my Lord, what must I say that I may become of thy company and enter thy religion?” Replied Gharib, “Say:—There is no god but *the* God and Abraham is the Friend of God.” So the Marid pronounced the profession of Faith and was enrolled among the people of felicity. Now his name was Zalzál, son of Al-Muzalzil,[70] one of the Chiefs of the Kings of the Jinn. Then he unbound Gharib and taking him and the idol, made for the higher air.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Marid took up Gharib and the idol and made for the higher air. Such was his case; but as regards the King, when

his soldiers saw what had befallen and the slaughter of the Wazir they renounced the worship of the idol and drawing their swords, slew the King; after which they fell on one another, and the sword went round amongst them three days, till there abode alive but two men, one of whom prevailed over the other and killed him. Then the boys attacked the survivor and slew him and fell to fighting amongst themselves, till they were all killed; and the women and girls fled to the hamlets and forted villages; wherefore the city became desert and none dwelt therein but the owl. 80 Meanwhile, the Marid Zalzal flew with Gharib towards his own country, the Island of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal and the Land of the Enchanted Calf, so called because its King Al-Muzalzil, had a pied calf, which he had clad in housings brocaded with red gold, and worshipped as a god. One day the King and his people went in to the calf and found him trembling; so the King said, "O my God, what hath troubled thee?" whereupon the Satan in the calf's belly cried out and said, "O Muzalzil, verily thy son hath deserted to the Faith of Abraham the Friend, at the hands of Gharib Lord of Al-Irak;" and went on to tell him all that had passed from first to last. When the King heard the words of his calf he was confounded and going forth, sat down upon his throne. Then he summoned his Grandees who came in a body, and he told them what he had heard from the idol, whereat they marvelled and said, "What shall we do, O King?" Quoth he, "When my son cometh and ye see him embrace him, do ye lay hold of him." And they said, "Hearkening and obedience!" After two days came Zalzal and Gharib, with the King's idol of Karaj, but no sooner had they entered the palace-gate than the Jinn seized on them and carried them before Al-Muzalzil, who looked at his son with eyes of ire and said to him, "O dog of the Jann, hast thou left thy Faith and that of thy fathers and grandfathers?" Quoth Zalzal, "I have embraced the True Faith, and on like wise do thou (Woe be to thee!) seek salvation and thou shalt be saved from the wrath of the King Almighty in sway, Creator of Night and Day." Therewith his father waxed wroth and said, "O son of adultery, dost confront me with these words?" Then he bade clap him in prison and turning to Gharib, said to him, "O wretch of a mortal, how hast thou abused my son's wit and seduced him from his Faith?" Quoth Gharib, "Indeed, I have brought him out of wrongousness into the way of righteousness, out of Hell into Heaven and out of unfaith to the True Faith." Whereupon the King cried out to a Marid called Sayyár, saying, "Take this dog and cast him into the Wady of Fire, that he may perish." Now this valley was in the "Waste Quarter[71]" and was thus named from the excess of its heat and the flaming of its fire, which was so fierce that none who went down therein could 81 live an hour, but was destroyed; and it was compassed about by mountains high and slippery wherein was no opening. So Sayyar took up Gharib and flew with him towards the Valley of Fire, till he came within an hour's journey thereof, when being weary, he alighted in a valley full of trees and streams and fruits, and setting down from his back Gharib chained as he was, fell asleep for fatigue. When Gharib heard him snore,

he strove with his bonds till he burst them; then, taking up a heavy stone, he cast it down on the Marid's head and crushed his bones, so that he died on the spot. Then he fared on into the valley.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Gharib after killing the Marid fared on into the valley and found himself in a great island in mid-ocean, full of all fruits that lips and tongue could desire. So he abode alone on the island, drinking of its waters and eating of its fruits and of fish that he caught, and days and years passed over him, till he had sojourned there in his solitude seven years. One day, as he sat, behold, there came down on him from the air two Marids, each carrying a man; and seeing him they said, "Who art thou, O fellow, and of which of the tribes art thou?" Now they took him for a Jinni, because his hair was grown long; and he replied, saying, "I am not of the Jann," whereupon they questioned him, and he told them all that had befallen him. They grieved for him and one of the Ifrits said, "Abide thou here till we bear these two lambs to our King, that he may break his fast on the one and sup on the other, and after we will come back and carry thee to thine own country." He thanked them and said, "Where be the lambs?" Quoth they, "These two mortals are the lambs." And Gharib said, "I take refuge with Allah the God of Abraham the Friend, the Lord of all creatures, who hath power over everything!" Then the Marids flew away and Gharib abode awaiting them two days, when one of them returned, bringing with him a suit of clothes wherewith he clad him. Then he took him up and flew with him sky-high out of sight of earth, till Gharib heard the angels glorifying God in heaven, and a flaming shaft issued 82 from amongst them and made for the Marid, who fled from it towards the earth. The meteor pursued him, till he came within a spear's cast of the ground, when Gharib leaped from his shoulders and the fiery shaft overtook the Marid, who became a heap of ashes. As for Gharib, he fell into the sea and sank two fathoms deep, after which he rose to the surface and swam for two days and two nights, till his strength failed him and he made certain of death. But, on the third day as he was despairing he caught sight of an island steep and mountainous; so he swam for it and landing, walked on inland, where he rested a day and a night, feeding on the growth of the ground. Then he climbed to the mountain top, and, descending the opposite slope, fared on two days till he came in sight of a walled and bulwarked city, abounding in trees and rills. He walked up to it; but, when he reached the gate, the warders seized on him, and carried him to their Queen, whose name was Ján Sháh.[72] Now she was five hundred years old, and every man who entered the city, they brought to her and she made him sleep with her, and when he had done his work, she slew him and so had she slain many men. When she saw Gharib, he pleased her mightily; so she asked him, "What be thy name and Faith and whence comest thou?" and he answered, "My name is Gharib King of Irak, and I

am a Moslem." Said she, "Leave this Creed and enter mine and I will marry thee and make thee King." But he looked at her with eyes of ire and cried, "Perish thou and thy faith!" Cried she, "Dost thou blaspheme my idol, which is of red carnelian, set with pearls and gems?" And she called out to her men, saying, "Imprison him in the house of the idol; haply it will soften his heart." So they shut him up in the domed shrine and locking the doors upon him, went their way.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when they took Gharib, they jailed him in the idol's domed shrine; and locking the doors upon him, went their way. As soon as they were gone, Gharib gazed at the idol, which was of red carnelian, 83 with collars of pearls and precious stones about its neck, and presently he went close to it and lifting it up, dashed it on the ground and brake it in bits; after which he lay down and slept till daybreak. When morning morrowed, the Queen took seat on her throne and said, "O men, bring me the prisoner." So they opened the temple doors and entering, found the idol broken in pieces, whereupon they buffeted their faces till the blood ran from the corners of their eyes. Then they made at Gharib to seize him; but he smote one of them with his fist and slew him, and so did he with another and yet another, till he had slain five-and-twenty of them and the rest fled and went in to Queen Jan Shah, shrieking loudly. Quoth she, "What is the matter?" and quoth they, "The prisoner hath broken thine idol and slain thy men," and told her all that had passed. When she heard this, she cast her crown to the ground and said, "There is no worth left in idols!" Then she mounted amid a thousand fighting-men and rode to the temple, where she found Gharib had gotten him a sword and come forth and was slaying men and overthrowing warriors. When she saw his prowess, her heart was drowned in the love of him and she said to herself, "I have no need of the idol and care for naught save this Gharib, that he may lie in my bosom the rest of my life." Then she cried to her men, "Hold aloof from him and leave him to himself!"; then, going up to him she muttered certain magical words, whereupon his arm became benumbed, his forearm relaxed and the sword dropped from his hand. So they seized him and pinioned him, as he stood confounded, stupefied. Then the Queen returned to her palace, and seating herself on her seat of estate, bade her people withdraw and leave Gharib with her. When they were alone, she said to him, "O dog of the Arabs, wilt thou shiver my idol and slay my people?" He replied, "O accursed woman, had he been a god he had defended himself?" Quoth she, "Stroke me and I will forgive thee all thou hast done." But he replied, saying, "I will do nought of this." And she said, "By the virtue of my faith, I will torture thee with grievous torture!" So she took water and conjuring over it, sprinkled it upon him and he became an ape. And she used to feed and water and keep him in a closet, appointing one to care for him; and in this plight he abode two years. Then she called him to her one day and said to him,

"Wilt thou hearken to me?" And he signed to her with his head, "Yes." So she rejoiced and freed him from the enchantment. 84 Then she brought him food and he ate and toyed with her and kissed her, so that she trusted in him. When it was night she lay down and said to him, "Come, do thy business." He replied, "'Tis well;" and, mounting on her breast, seized her by the neck and brake it, nor did he arise from her till life had left her. Then, seeing an open cabinet, he went in and found there a sword of damascened[73] steel and a targe of Chinese iron; so he armed himself cap-à-pie and waited till the day. As soon as it was morning, he went forth and stood at the gate of the palace. When the Emirs came and would have gone in to do their service to the Queen, they found Gharib standing at the gate, clad in complete war-gear; and he said to them, "O folk, leave the service of idols and worship the All-wise King, Creator of Night and Day, the Lord of men, the Quickener of dry bones, for He made all things and hath dominion over all." When the Kafirs heard this, they ran at him, but he fell on them like a rending lion and charged through them again and again, slaying of them much people;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,



She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Kafirs fell upon Gharib, he slew of them much people; but, when the night came, they overcame him by dint of numbers and would have taken him by strenuous effort, when behold, there descended upon the Infidels a thousand Marids, under the command of Zalzal, who plied them with the keen sabre and made them drink the cup of destruction, whilst Allah hurried their souls to Hell-fire, till but few were left of the people of Jan Shah to tell the tale and the rest cried out, "Quarter! Quarter!" and believed in the Requiting King, whom no one thing diverteth from other thing, the Destroyer of the Jabábirah[74] and Exterminator of the Akásirah, Lord of this world and of the next. Then 85 Zalzal saluted Gharib and gave him joy of his safety; and Gharib said to him, "How knowest thou of my case?" and he replied, "O my lord, my father kept me in

prison two years, after sending thee to the Valley of Fire; then he released me, and I abode with him another year, till I was restored to favour with him, when I slew him and his troops submitted to me. I ruled them for a year's space till, one night, I lay down to sleep, having thee in thought, and saw thee in a dream, fighting against the people of Jan Shah; wherefore I took these thousand Marids and came to thee." And Gharib marvelled at this happy conjuncture. Then he seized upon Jan Shah's treasures and those of the slain and appointed a ruler over the city; after which the Marids took up Gharib and the monies and he lay the same night in the Castle of Crystal. He abode Zalzal's guest six months, when he desired to depart; so Zalzal gave him rich presents and despatched three thousand Marids, who brought the spoils of Karaj-city and added them to those of Jan Shah. Then Zalzal loaded forty thousand Marids with the treasure and himself taking up Gharib, flew with his host towards the city of Isbanir al-Madain where they arrived at midnight. But as Gharib glanced around he saw the walls invested on all sides by a conquering army,[75] as it were the surging sea, so he said to Zalzal, "O my brother, what is the cause of this siege and whence came this army?" Then he alighted on the terrace-roof of his palace and cried out, saying, "Ho, Star o' Morn! Ho, Mahdiyah!" Whereupon the twain started up from sleep in amazement and said, "Who calleth us at this hour?" Quoth he, "'Tis I, your lord, Gharib, the Marvellous One of the deeds wondrous." When the Princesses heard their lord's voice, they rejoiced and so did the women and the eunuchs. Then Gharib went down to them and they threw themselves upon him and lullilooed with cries of joy, so that all the palace rang again and the Captains of the army awoke and said, "What is to do?" So they made for the palace and asked the eunuchs, "Hath one of the King's women given birth to a child?"; and they answered, "No; but rejoice ye, for King Gharib hath returned to you." So they rejoiced, and Gharib, after salams to the women came forth amongst his comrades, who threw themselves upon him and kissed his hands 86 and feet, returning thanks to Almighty Allah and praising Him. Then he sat down on his throne, with his officers sitting about him, and questioned them of the beleaguering army. They replied, "O King, these troops sat down before the city three days ago and there are amongst them Jinns as well as men; but we know not what they want, for we have had with them neither battle nor speech." And presently they added, "The name of the commander of the besieging army is Murad Shah and he hath with him an hundred thousand horse and three thousand foot, besides two hundred tribesmen of the Jinn." Now the manner of his coming was wondrous.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the cause of this army coming upon Isbanir city was wondrous. When the two men, whom Sabur had charged to drown his daughter Fakhr Taj, let her go, bidding her flee for her life, she went forth distracted, unknowing whither to turn and saying, "Where is thine eye, O Gharib, that

thou mayst see my case and the misery I am in?"; and wandered on from country to country, and valley to valley, till she came to a Wady abounding in trees and streams, in whose midst stood a strong-based castle and a lofty-builded as it were one of the pavilions of Paradise. So she betook herself thither and entering the fortalice, found it hung and carpeted with stuffs of silk and great plenty of gold and silver vessels; and therein were an hundred beautiful damsels. When the maidens saw Fakhr Taj, they came up to her and saluted her, deeming her of the virgins of the Jinn, and asked her of her case. Quoth she, "I am daughter to the Persians' King;" and told them all that had befallen her; which when they heard, they wept over her and condoled with her and comforted her, saying, "Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for here shalt thou have meat and drink and raiment, and we all are thy handmaids." She called down blessings on them and they brought her food, of which she ate till she was satisfied. Then quoth she to them, "Who is the owner of this palace and lord over you girls?" and quoth they, "King Salsál, son of Dál, is our master; he passeth a night here once in every month and 87 fareth in the morning to rule over the tribes of the Jann." So Fakhr Taj took up her abode with them and after five days she gave birth to a male child, as he were the moon. They cut his navel cord and kohl'd his eyes then they named him Murad Shah, and he grew up in his mother's lap. After a while came King Salsal, riding on a paper-white elephant, as he were a tower plastered with lime and attended by the troops of the Jinn. He entered the palace, where the hundred damsels met him and kissed ground before him, and amongst them Fakhr Taj. When the King saw her, he looked at her and said to the others, "Who is yonder damsel?"; and they replied, "She is the daughter of Sabur, King of the Persians and Turks and Daylamites." Quoth he, "Who brought her hither?" So they repeated to him her story; whereat he was moved to pity for her and said to her, "Grieve not, but take patience till thy son be grown a man, when I will go to the land of the Ajams and strike off thy father's head from between his shoulders and seat thy son on the throne in his stead." So she rose and kissed his hands and blessed him. Then she abode in the castle and her son grew up and was reared with the children of the King. They used to ride forth together a-hunting and birding and he became skilled in the chase of wild beasts and ravening lions and ate of their flesh, till his heart became harder than the rock. When he reached the age of fifteen, his spirit waxed big in him and he said to Fakhr Taj, "O my mamma, who is my papa?" She replied, "O my son, Gharib, King of Irak, is thy father and I am the King's daughter, of the Persians," and she told him her story. Quoth he, "Did my grandfather indeed give orders to slay thee and my father Gharib?"; and quoth she, "Yes." Whereupon he, "By the claim thou hast on me for rearing me, I will assuredly go to thy father's city and cut off his head and bring it into thy presence!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Murad Shah son of Fakhr Taj thus bespake his mother, she rejoiced in his speech. Now he used to go a-riding with two hundred Marids till he grew to man's estate, when he and they 88 fell to making raids and cutting off the roads and they pushed their razzias ever farther till one day he attacked the city of Shiraz and took it. Then he proceeded to the palace and cut off the King's head, as he sat on his throne, and slew many of his troops, whereupon the rest cried "Quarter! Quarter!" and kissed his stirrups. Finding that they numbered ten thousand horse, he led them to Balkh, where he slew the King of the city and put his men to the rout and made himself master of the riches of the place. Thence he passed to Núrayn,[76] at the head of an army of thirty thousand horse, and the Lord of Nurayn came out to him, with treasure and tribute, and did him homage. Then he went on to Samarcand of the Persians and took the city, and after that to Akhlát[77] and took that town also; nor was there any city he came to but he captured it. Thus Murad Shah became the head of a mighty host, and all the booty he made and spoils in the sundry cities he divided among his soldiery, who loved him for his valour and munificence. At last he came to Isbanir al-Madain and sat down before it, saying, "Let us wait till the rest of my army come up, when I will seize on my grandfather and solace my mother's heart by smiting his neck in her presence." So he sent for her, and by reason of this, there was no battle for three days, when Gharib and Zalzal arrived with the forty thousand Marids, laden with treasure and presents. They asked concerning the besiegers, but none could enlighten them beyond saying that the host had been there encamped for three days without a fight taking place. Presently came Fakhr Taj, and her son Murad Shah embraced her saying, "Sit in thy tent till I bring thy father to thee." And she sought succour for him of the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earths. Next morning, as soon as it was day, Murad Shah mounted and rode forth, with the two hundred Marids on his right hand and the Kings of men on his left, whilst the kettle-drums beat to battle. When Gharib heard this, he also took to horse and, calling his people to the combat, rode out, with the Jinn on his dexter hand and the men on his sinistral. Then came forth Murad Shah, armed cap-à-pie and drave his charger right and left, crying, "O folk, let none come forth to me but your King. If he conquer me, he shall be lord of both armies, 89 and if I conquer him, I will slay him, as I have slain others." When Gharib heard his speech, he said, "Avaunt, O dog of the Arabs!" And they charged at each other and lunged with lances, till they broke, then hewed at each other with swords, till the blades were notched; nor did they cease to advance and retire and wheel and career, till the day was half spent and their horses fell down under them, when they dismounted and gripped each other. Then Murad Shah seizing Gharib lifted him up and strove to dash him to the ground; but Gharib caught him by the ears and pulled him with his might, till it seemed to the youth as if the heavens were falling on the earth[78] and he cried out, with his heart in his mouth, saying, "I yield myself to thy

mercy, O Knight of the Age!" So Gharib bound him,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Gharib caught Murad Shah by the ears and well nigh tore them off he cried, "I yield myself to thy mercy, O Knight of the Age!" So Gharib bound him, and the Marids his comrades would have charged and rescued him, but Gharib fell on them with a thousand Marids and was about to smite them down, when they cried out, "Quarter! Quarter!" and threw away their arms. Then Gharib returned to his Shahmiyánah which was of green silk, embroidered with red gold and set with pearls and gems; and, seating himself on his throne, called for Murad Shah. So they brought him, shuffling in his manacles and shackles. When the prisoner saw him, he hung down his head for shame; and Gharib said to him, "O dog of the Arabs, who art thou that thou shouldst ride forth and measure thyself against kings?" Replied Murad Shah, "O my lord, reproach me not, for indeed I have excuse." Quoth Gharib, "What manner of excuse hast thou?"; And quoth he, "Know, O my lord, that I came out to avenge my mother and my father on Sabur, King of the Persians; for he would have slain them; but my mother escaped and I know not whether 90 he killed my father or not." When Gharib heard these words, he replied, "By Allah, thou art indeed excusable! But who were thy father and mother and what are their names?" Murad Shah said, "My sire was Gharib, King of Al-Irak, and my mother Fakhr Taj, daughter of King Sabur of Persia." When Gharib heard this, he gave a great cry and fell down fainting. They sprinkled rose-water on him, till he came to himself, when he said to Murad Shah, "Art thou indeed Gharib's son by Fakhr Taj?"; and he replied, "Yes." Cried Gharib, "Thou art a champion, the son of a champion. Loose my child!" And Sahim and Kaylajan went up to Murad Shah and set him free. Then Gharib embraced his son and, seating him beside himself, said to him, "Where is thy mother?" "She is with me in my tent," answered Murad Shah; and Gharib said, "Bring her to me." So Murad Shah mounted and repaired to his camp, where his comrades met him, rejoicing in his safety, and asked him of his case; but he answered, "This is no time for questions." Then he went in to his mother and told her what had passed; whereat she was gladdened with exceeding gladness: so he carried her to Gharib, and they two embraced and rejoiced in each other. Then Fakhr Taj and Murad Shah islamised and expounded The Faith to their troops, who all made profession with heart and tongue. After this, Gharib sent for Sabur and his son Ward Shah, and upbraided them for their evil dealing and expounded Al-Islam to them; but they refused to profess; wherefore he crucified them on the gate of the city and the people decorated the town and held high festival. Then Gharib crowned Murad Shah with the crown of the Chosroes and made him King of the Persians and Turks and Medes; moreover, he made his uncle Al-Damigh, King over Al-Irak, and all the peoples and lands submitted themselves to Gharib. Then he abode in his

kingship, doing justice among his lieges, wherefore all the people loved him, and he and his wives and comrades ceased not from all solace of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Societies, and extolled be the perfection of Him whose glory endureth for ever and aye and whose boons embrace all His creatures! This is every thing that hath come down to us of the history of Gharib and Ajib.——And Abdullah bin Ma'amar al-Kaysi hath thus related the tale of

[27- Different tales]

OTBAH[79] AND RAYYA.

I went one year on the pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah, and when I had accomplished my pilgrimage, I turned back for visitation of the tomb of the Prophet, whom Allah bless and keep! One night, as I sat in the garden,[80] between the tomb and the pulpit, I heard a low moaning in a soft voice; so I listened to it and it said:—

Have the doves that moan in the lotus-tree ✿ Woke grief in thy heart and bred misery?
Or doth memory of maiden in beauty deckt ✿ Cause this doubt in thee, this despondency?
O night, thou art longsome for love-sick sprite ✿ Complaining of Love and its ecstacy:
Thou makest him wakeful, who burns with fire ✿ Of a love, like the live coal's ardency.
The moon is witness my heart is held ✿ By a moonlight brow of the brightest blee:
I reckt not to see me by Love ensnared ✿ Till ensnared before I could reck or see.

Then the voice ceased and not knowing whence it came to me I abode perplexed; but lo! it again took up its lament and recited:—

Came Rayya's phantom to grieve thy sight ✿ In the thickest gloom of the black-haired Night!
And hath love of slumber deprived those eyes ✿ And the phantom-vision vexed thy sprite?
I cried to the Night, whose glooms were like ✿ Seas that surge and billow with might, with might:
"O Night, thou art longsome to lover who ✿ Hath no aid nor help save the morning-light!"
She replied, "Complain not that I am long: ✿ 'Tis love is the cause of thy longsome plight!"

92 Now, at the first of the couplets, I sprang up and made for the quarter whence the sound came, nor had the voice ended repeating them, ere I was with the speaker and saw a youth of the utmost beauty, the hair of whose side face had not sprouted and in whose cheeks tears had worn twin trenches.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah ibn Ma'amar al-Kaysi thus continued:—So I sprang up and made for the quarter whence the sound came, nor had the voice ended repeating the verses, ere I was with the speaker and saw a youth on whose side face the hair had not sprouted and in whose cheeks tears had worn twin trenches. Quoth I to him, "Fair befal thee for a youth!"; and quoth he, "And thee also! Who art thou?" I replied, "Abdullah bin Ma'amar al-Kaysi;" and he

said, “Dost thou want aught?” I rejoined, “I was sitting in the garden and naught hath troubled me this night but thy voice. With my life would I ransom thee! What aileth thee?” He said, “Sit thee down.” So I sat down and he continued, “I am Otbah bin al-Hubáb bin al-Mundhir bin al-Jamúh the Ansárí.[81] I went out in the morning to the Mosque Al-Ahzáb[82] and occupied myself there awhile with prayer-bows and prostrations, after which I withdrew apart, to worship privily. But lo! up came women, as they were moons, walking with a swaying gait, and surrounding a damsel of passing loveliness, perfect in beauty and grace, who stopped before me and said:—O Otbah, what sayst thou of union with one who seeketh union with thee? Then she left me and went away; and since that time I have had no tidings of her nor come upon any trace of her; and behold, I am distracted and do naught but remove from place to place.” Then he cried out and fell to the 93 ground fainting. When he came to himself, it was as if the damask of his cheeks were dyed with safflower,[83] and he recited these couplets:—

I see you with my heart from far countrie ✿ Would Heaven you also me from far could see

My heart and eyes for you are sorrowing; ✿ My soul with you abides and you with me.

I take no joy in life when you’re unseen ✿ Or Heaven or Garden of Eternity.

Said I, “O Otbah, O son of my uncle, repent to thy Lord and crave pardon for thy sin; for before thee is the terror of standing up to Judgment.” He replied, “Far be it from me so to do. I shall never leave to love till the two mimosa-gatherers return.”[84] I abode with him till daybreak, when I said to him, “Come let us go to the Mosque Al-Ahzab.” So we went thither and sat there, till we had prayed the midday prayers, when lo! up came the women; but the damsel was not among them. Quoth they to him, “O Otbah, what thinkest thou of her who seeketh union with thee?” He said, “And what of her?”; and they replied, “Her father hath taken her and departed to Al-Samawah.”[85] I asked them the name of the damsel and they said, “She is called Rayyá, daughter of Al-Ghitríf al-Sulami.”[86] Whereupon Otbah raised his head and recited these verses:—

My friends, Rayyá hath mounted soon as morning shone, ✿ And to Samáwah’s wilds her caravan is gone.

My friends, I’ve wept till I can weep no more, Oh, say, ✿ Hath any one a tear that I can take on loan.

94 Then said I to him, “O Otbah, I have brought with me great wealth, wherewith I desire to succour generous men; and by Allah, I will lavish it before thee,[87] so thou mayst attain thy desire and more than thy desire! Come with me to the assembly of the Ansaris.” So we rose and went, till we entered their assembly, when I salam’d to them and they returned my greeting civilly. Then quoth I, “O assembly, what say ye of Otbah and his father?”: and they replied, “They are of the princes of the Arabs.” I continued, “Know that he is smitten with the calamity of love and I desire your furtherance to Al-Samawah.” And they said, “To hear is to obey.” So they mounted with us, the whole party, and we rode till we drew near the place of the Banu Sulaym. Now when Ghitrif heard of our being near, he hastened forth to meet us, saying,

"Long life to you, O nobles!"; whereto we replied, "And to thee also! Behold we are thy guests." Quoth he, "Ye have lighted down at a most hospitable abode and ample;" and alighting he cried out, "Ho, all ye slaves, come down!" So they came down and spread skin-rugs and cushions and slaughtered sheep and cattle; but we said, "We will not taste of thy food, till thou have accomplished our need." He asked, "And what is your need?"; and we answered, "We demand thy noble daughter in marriage for Otbah bin Hubab bin Mundhir the illustrious and well-born." "O my brethren," said he, "she whom you demand is owner of herself, and I will go in to her and tell her." So he rose in wrath[88] and went in to Rayya, who said to him, "O my papa, why do I see thee show anger?" And he replied, saying, "Certain of the Ansaris have come upon me to demand thy hand of me in marriage." Quoth she, "They are noble chiefs; the Prophet, on whom be the choicest blessings and peace, intercedeth for them with Allah. For whom among them do they ask me?" Quoth he, "For a youth known as Otbah bin al-Hubab;" and she said, "I have heard of Otbah that he performeth what he promiseth and findeth what he seeketh." Ghitrif cried, "I swear that I will never marry thee to him; no, never, for there hath been reported to me somewhat of thy converse with him." Said she, "What was that? 95 But in any case, I swear that the Ansaris shall not be uncivilly rejected; wherefore do thou offer them a fair excuse." "How so?" "Make the dowry heavy to them and they will desist." "Thou sayst well," said he, and going out in haste, told the Ansaris, "The damsel of the tribe[89] consenteth; but she requireth a dowry worthy herself. Who engageth for this?" "I," answered I. Then said he, "I require for her a thousand bracelets of red gold and five thousand dirhams of the coinage of Hajar[90] and a hundred pieces of woollen cloth and striped stuffs[91] of Al-Yaman and five bladders of ambergris." Said I, "Thou shalt have that much; dost thou consent?"; and he said, "I do consent." So I despatched to Al-Medinah the Illumined[92] a party of the Ansaris, who brought all for which I had become surety; whereupon they slaughtered sheep and cattle and the folk assembled to eat of the food. We abode thus forty days when Ghitrif said to us, "Take your bride." So we sat her in a dromedary-litter and her father equipped her with thirty camel-loads of things of price; after which we farewelled him and journeyed till we came within a day's journey of Al-Medinah the Illumined, when there fell upon us horsemen, with intent to plunder, and methinks they were of the Banu Sulaym. Otbah drove at them and slew of them much people, but fell back, wounded by a lance-thrust, and presently dropped to the earth. Then there came to us succour of the country people, who drove away the highwaymen; but Otbah's days were ended. So we said, "Alas for Otbah, oh!;" and the 96 damsel hearing it cast herself down from the camel and throwing herself upon him, cried out grievously and repeated these couplets:—

Patient I seemed, yet Patience shown by me ✿ Was but self-guiling till thy sight I see:

Had my soul done as due my life had gone, ✿ Had fled before mankind forestalling thee:

Then, after me and thee none shall to friend ✿ Be just, nor any soul with soul agree.

Then she sobbed a single sob and gave up the ghost. We dug one grave for them and laid them in the earth, and I returned to the dwellings of my people, where I abode seven years. Then I betook me again to Al-Hijaz and entering Al-Medinah the Illumined for pious visitation said in my mind, "By Allah, I will go again to Otbah's tomb!" So I repaired thither, and, behold, over the grave was a tall tree, on which hung fillets of red and green and yellow stuffs.[93] So I asked the people of the place, "How be this tree called?"; and they answered, "The tree of the Bride and the Bridegroom." I abode by the tomb a day and a night, then went my way; and this is all I know of Otbah. Almighty Allah have mercy upon him! And they also tell this tale of

HIND DAUGHTER OF AL-NU'MAN AND AL-HAJJAJ.[94]

It is related that Hind daughter of Al-Nu'man was the fairest woman of her day, and her beauty and loveliness were reported to Al-Hajjaj, who sought her in marriage and lavished much treasure on her. So he took her to wife, engaging to give her a dowry of two hundred thousand dirhams in case of divorce, and when he went into her, he abode with her a long time. One day after this, 97 he went in to her and found her looking at her face in the mirror and saying:—

Hind is an Arab filly purest bred, ✿ Which hath been covered by a mongrel mule;

An colt of horse she throw by Allah! well; ✿ If mule, it but results from mulish rule.[95]

When Al-Hajjaj heard this, he turned back and went his way, unseen of Hind; and, being minded to put her away, he sent Abdullah bin Táhir to her, to divorce her. So Abdullah went in to her and said to her, "Al-Hajjaj Abu Mohammed saith to thee: Here be the two hundred thousand dirhams of thy contingent dowry he oweth thee; and he hath deputed me to divorce thee." Replied she, "O Ibn Tahir, I gladly agree to this; for know that I never for one day took pleasure in him; so, if we separate, by Allah, I shall never regret him, and these two hundred thousand dirhams I give to thee as a reward for the glad tidings thou bringest me of my release from yonder dog of the Thakafites."[96] After this, the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin 98 Marwán, heard of her beauty and loveliness, her stature and symmetry, her sweet speech and the amorous grace of her glances and sent to her, to ask her in marriage;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Prince of True Believers, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, hearing of the lady's beauty and loveliness, sent to ask her in marriage; and she wrote him in reply a letter, in which, after the

glorification of Allah and benediction of His Prophet, she said, “But afterwards. Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that the dog hath lapped in the vase.” When the Caliph read her answer, he laughed and wrote to her, citing his saying (whom may Allah bless and keep!) “If a dog lap in the vessel of one of you, let him wash seven times, once thereof with earth,” and adding, “Wash the affront from the place of use.”[97] With this she could not gainsay him; so she replied to him, saying (after praise and blessing), “O Commander of the Faithful I will not consent save on one condition, and if thou ask me what it is, I reply that Al-Hajjaj lead my camel to the town where thou tarriest barefoot and clad as he is.”[98] When the Caliph read her letter, he laughed long and loudly and sent to Al-Hajjaj, bidding him do as she wished. He dared not disobey the order, so he submitted to the Caliph’s commandment and sent to Hind, telling her to make ready for the journey. So she made ready and mounted her litter, when Al-Hajjaj with his suite came up to Hind’s door and as she mounted and her damsels and eunuchs rode around her, he dismounted and took the halter of her camel and led it along, barefooted, whilst she and her damsels and tirewomen laughed and jeered at him and made mock of him. Then she said to her tirewoman, “Draw back the curtain of the litter;” and she drew back the curtain, till Hind was face to face with Al-Hajjaj, whereupon she laughed at him and he improvised this couplet:—

Though now thou jeer, O Hind, how many a night ✿ I’ve left thee wakeful sighing for the light.

99 And she answered him with these two:—

We reck not, an our life escape from bane, ✿ For waste of wealth and gear that went in vain:

Money may be regained and rank re-won ✿ When one is cured of malady and pain.

And she ceased not to laugh at him and make sport of him, till they drew near the city of the Caliph, when she threw down a dinar with her own hand and said to Al-Hajjaj, “O camel-driver, I have dropped a dirham; look for it and give it to me.” So he looked and seeing naught but the dinar, said, “This is a dinar.” She replied, “Nay, ’tis a dirham.” But he said, “This is a dinar.” Then quoth she, “Praised be Allah who hath given us in exchange for a paltry dirham a dinar! Give it us.” And Al-Hajjaj was abashed at this. Then he carried her to the palace of the Commander of the Faithful, and she went in to him and became his favourite.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that men also tell a tale anent

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94. Al-Mas’údí (chapt. xcv.), mentions a Hind bint Asmá and tells a facetious story of her and the “enemy of Allah,” the poet Jarír.

95. Here the old Shiah hatred of the energetic conqueror of Oman crops out again. Hind’s song is that of Maysum concerning her husband Mu’áwiyah which Mrs. Godfrey Clark (’Ilâm-en-Nâs, p. 108) thus translates:—

A hut that the winds make tremble
Is dearer to me than a noble palace;
And a dish of crumbs on the floor of my home
Is dearer to me than a varied feast;
And the soughing of the breeze through every crevice
Is dearer to me than the beating of drums.

Compare with Dr. Carlyle's No. X.:—

The russet suit of camel's hair
With spirits light and eye serene
Is dearer to my bosom far
Than all the trappings of a queen, etc. etc.

And with mine (Pilgrimage iii. 262):—

O take these purple robes away,
Give back my cloak of camel's hair
And bear me from this towering pile
To where the black tents flap i' the air, etc. etc.

96. Al-Hajjaj's tribal name was Al-Thakifi or descendant of Thakíf. According to Al-Mas'udi, he was son of Faríghah (the tall Beauty) by Yúsuf bin Ukayl the Thakafite and vint au monde tout difforme avec l'anus obstrué. As he refused the breast, Satan, in human form, advised suckling him with the blood of two black kids, a black buck-goat and a black snake; which had the desired effect.

97. Trébutien, iii. 465, translates these sayings into Italian.

98. Making him a "Kawwád" = leader, *i.e.* pimp; a true piece of feminine spite. But the Caliph prized Al-Hajjaj too highly to treat him as in the text.

KHUZAYMAH BIN BISHR AND IKRIMAH AL-FAYYAZ.[99]

There lived once, in the days of the Caliph Sulayman bin Abd al-Malik[100] a man of the Banu Asad, by name Khuzaymah bin Bishr, who was famed for bounty and abundant wealth and excellence and righteous dealing with his brethren. He continued thus till times grew strait with him and he became in need of 100 the aid of those Moslem brethren on whom he had lavished favour and kindness. So they succoured him a while and then grew weary of him, which when he saw, he went in to his wife who was the daughter of his father's brother, and said to her, "O my cousin, I find a change in my brethren; wherefore I am resolved to keep my house till death come to me." So he shut his door and abode in his home, living on that which he had by him, till it was spent and he knew not what to do. Now Ikrimah al-Raba'í, surnamed Al-Fayyáz, governor of Mesopotamia,[101] had known him, and one day, as he sat in his audience-chamber, mention was made of Khuzaymah, whereupon quoth Ikrimah, "How is it with him?" And quoth they, "He is in a plight past telling, and hath shut his door and keepeth the house." Ikrimah rejoined, "This cometh but of his excessive generosity: but how is it that Khuzaymah bin Bishr findeth nor comforter nor

requiter?" And they replied, "He hath found naught of this." So when it was night, Ikrimah took four thousand dinars and laid them in one purse; then, bidding saddle his beast, he mounted and rode privily to Khuzaymah's house, attended only by one of his pages, carrying the money. When he came to the door, he alighted and taking the purse from the page made him withdraw afar off; after which he went up to the door and knocked. Khuzaymah came out to him, and he gave him the purse, saying, "Better thy case herewith." He took it and finding it heavy put it from his hand and laying hold of the bridle of Ikrimah's horse, asked, "Who art thou? My soul be thy ransom!" Answered Ikrimah, "O man I come not to thee at a time like this desiring that thou shouldst know me." Khuzaymah rejoined, "I will not let thee go till thou make thyself known to me," whereupon Ikrimah said "I am hight Jábir Atharát al-Kirám."[102] Quoth Khuzaymah, "Tell me more." But Ikrimah cried, "No," and fared forth, whilst Khuzaymah went in to his cousin and said to her, "Rejoice for Allah hath sent us speedy relief and wealth; if these be but dirhams, yet are they many. Arise and light the lamp." She said, "I have not wherewithal to light it." So he spent the night handling the coins and felt by their roughness that they were dinars, but could not credit it. Meanwhile Ikrimah returned to his own house and found that his 101 wife had missed him and asked for him, and when they told her of his riding forth, she misdoubted of him, and said to him, "Verily the Wali of Al-Jazirah rideth not abroad after such an hour of the night, unattended and secretly, save to a wife or a mistress." He answered, "Allah knoweth that I went not forth to either of these." "Tell me then wherefore thou wentest forth?" "I went not forth at this hour save that none should know it." "I must needs be told." "Wilt thou keep the matter secret, if I tell thee?" "Yes!" So he told her the state of the case, adding, "Wilt thou have me swear to thee?" Answered she, "No, no, my heart is set at ease and trusteth in that which thou hast told me." As for Khuzaymah, soon as it was day he made his peace with his creditors and set his affairs in order; after which he got him ready and set out for the Court of Sulayman bin Abd al-Malik, who was then sojourning in Palestine.[103] When he came to the royal gate, he sought admission of the chamberlain, who went in and told the Caliph of his presence. Now he was renowned for his beneficence and Sulayman knew of him; so he bade admit him. When he entered, he saluted the Caliph after the usual fashion of saluting[104] and the King asked, "O Khuzaymah, what hath kept thee so long from us?" Answered he, "Evil case," and quoth the Caliph, "What hindered thee from having recourse to us?" Quoth he, "My infirmity, O Commander of the Faithful!" "And why," said Sulayman, "comest thou to us now?" Khuzaymah replied, "Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that I was sitting one night late in my house, when a man knocked at the door and did thus and thus;" and he went on to tell him of all that had passed between Ikrimah and himself from first to last. Sulayman asked, "Knowest thou the man?" and Khuzaymah answered, "No, O Commander of the Faithful, he was reserved[105] and would say naught save:—I am hight Jabir Atharat al-Kiram." When Sulayman heard this, his heart burned within him for anxiety to

discover the man, and he said, “If we knew him, truly we would requite him for his generosity.” Then he bound for Khuzaymah a banner[106] and made him Governor of Mesopotamia, in the stead of Ikrimah al-Fayyaz; and he set out for Al-Jazirah. When he drew near the city, Ikrimah and the people of the place 102 came forth to meet him and they saluted each other and went on into the town, where Khuzaymah took up his lodging in the Government-house and bade take security for Ikrimah and that he should be called to account.[107] So an account was taken against him and he was found to be in default for much money; whereupon Khuzaymah required of him payment, but he said, “I have no means of paying aught.” Quoth Khuzaymah, “It must be paid;” and quoth Ikrimah, “I have it not; do what thou hast to do.” So Khuzaymah ordered him to gaol.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Khuzaymah, having ordered the imprisonment of Ikrimah al-Fayyaz, sent to him again to demand payment of the debt; but he replied, “I am not of those who preserve their wealth at the expense of their honour; do what thou wilt.” Then Khuzaymah bade load him with irons and kept him in prison a month or more, till confinement began to tell upon him and he became wasted. After this, tidings of his plight travelled to the daughter of his uncle who was troubled with sore concern thereat and, sending for a freedwoman of hers, a woman of abundant judgment, and experience, said to her, “Go forthwith to the Emir Khuzaymah’s gate and say:—I have a counsel for the Emir. If they ask what it is, add:—I will not tell it save to himself; and when thou enterest to him, beg to see him in private and when private ask him:—What be this deed thou hast done? Hath Jabir Atharat al-Kiram deserved of thee no better reward than to be cast into strait prison and hard bond of irons?” The woman did as she was bid, and when Khuzaymah heard her words, he cried out at the top of his voice, saying, “Alas, the baseness of it! Was it indeed he?” And she answered, “Yes.” Then he bade saddle his beast forthwith and, summoning the honourable men of the city, repaired with them to the prison and opening the door, went in with them to Ikrimah, whom they found sitting in evil case, worn out and wasted with blows and 103 misery. When he looked at Khuzaymah, he was abashed and hung his head; but the other bent down to him and kissed his face; whereupon he raised his head and asked, “What maketh thee do this?” Answered Khuzaymah, “The generosity of thy dealing and the vileness of my requital.” And Ikrimah said, “Allah pardon us and thee!” Then Khuzaymah commanded the jailor to strike off Ikrimah’s fetters and clap them on his own feet; but Ikrimah said, “What is this thou wilt do?” Quoth the other, “I have a mind to suffer what thou hast suffered.” Quoth Ikrimah, “I conjure thee by Allah, do not so!” Then they went out together and returned to Khuzaymah’s house, where Ikrimah would have farewelled him and wended his way; but he forbade him and Ikrimah said, “What is thy will of me?”

Replied Khuzaymah, “I wish to change thy case, for my shame before the daughter of thine uncle is yet greater than my shame before thee.” So he bade clear the bath and entering with Ikrimah, served him there in person and when they went forth he bestowed on him a splendid robe of honour and mounted him and gave him much money. Then he carried him to his house and asked his leave to make his excuses to his wife and obtained her pardon. After this he besought him to accompany him to the Caliph, who was then abiding at Ramlah[108] and he agreed. So they journeyed thither, and when they reached the royal quarters the chamberlain went in and acquainted the Caliph Sulayman bin Abd al-Malik with Khuzaymah’s arrival, whereat he was troubled and said, “What! is the Governor of Mesopotamia come without our command? This can be only on some grave occasion.” Then he bade admit him and said, before saluting him, “What is behind thee, O Khuzaymah?” Replied he, “Good, O Commander of the Faithful.” Asked Sulayman, “What bringeth thee?”; and he answered, saying, “I have discovered Jabir Atharat al-Kiram and thought to gladden thee with him, knowing thine excessive desire to know him and thy longing to see him.” “Who is he?” quoth the Caliph and quoth Khuzaymah, “He is Ikrimah al-Fayyaz.” So Sulayman called for Ikrimah, who approached and saluted him as Caliph; and the King welcomed him and making him draw near his sitting-place, said to him, “O Ikrimah, thy good deed to him hath brought thee naught but evil,” adding, “Now write down in a note thy needs each and every, and that which thou desirest.” 104 He did so and the Caliph commanded to do all that he required and that forthwith. Moreover he gave him ten thousand dinars more than he asked for and twenty chests of clothes over and above that he sought, and calling for a spear, bound him a banner and made him Governor over Armenia and Azarbiján[109] and Mesopotamia, saying, “Khuzaymah’s case is in thy hands, an thou wilt, continue him in his office, and if thou wilt, degrade him.” And Ikrimah said, “Nay, but I restore him to his office, O Commander of the Faithful.” Then they went out from him and ceased not to be Governors under Sulayman bin Abd al-Malik all the days of his Caliphate. And they also tell a tale of

YUNUS THE SCRIBE AND THE CALIPH WALID BIN SAHL.

There lived in the reign of the Caliph Hishám,[110] son of Abd al-Malik, a man called Yúnus the Scribe well-known to the general, and he set out one day on a journey to Damascus, having with him a slave-girl of surpassing beauty and loveliness, whom he had taught all that was needful to her and whose price was an hundred thousand dirhams. When they drew near to Damascus, the caravan halted by the side of a lake and Yunus went down to a quiet place with his damsel and took out some victual he

had with him and a leather bottle of wine. As he sat at meat, behold, came up a young man of goodly favour and dignified presence, mounted on a sorrel horse and followed by two eunuchs, and said to him, “Wilt thou accept me to guest?” “Yes,” replied Yunus. So the stranger alighted and said, “Give me to drink of thy wine.” Yunus gave him to drink and he said, “If it please thee, sing us a song.” So Yunus sang this couplet extempore:—

She joineth charms were never seen conjoined in mortal dress: ✿ And for her love she makes me love my tears and wakefulness.

105 At which the stranger rejoiced with exceeding joy and Yunus gave him to drink again and again, till the wine got the better of him and he said, “Bid thy slave-girl sing.” So she improvised this couplet:—

A houri, by whose charms my heart is moved to sore distress: ✿ Nor wand of tree nor sun nor moon her rivals I confess!

The stranger was overjoyed with this and they sat drinking till nightfall, when they prayed the evening-prayer and the youth said to Yunus, “What bringeth thee to our city?” He replied, “Quest of wherewithal to pay my debts and better my case.” Quoth the other, “Wilt thou sell me this slave-girl for thirty thousand dirhams?” Whereto quoth Yunus, “I must have more than that.” He asked, “Will forty thousand content thee?”; but Yunus answered, “That would only settle my debts, and I should remain empty-handed.” Rejoined the stranger, “We will take her of thee at fifty thousand dirhams[111] and give thee a suit of clothes to boot and the expenses of thy journey and make thee a sharer in my condition as long as thou livest.” Cried Yunus, “I sell her to thee on these terms.” Then said the young man, “Wilt thou trust me to bring thee the money to-morrow and let me take her with me, or shall she abide with thee till I pay thee down her price?” Whereto wine and shame and awe of the stranger led Yunus to reply, “I will trust thee; take her and Allah bless thee in her!” Whereupon the visitor bade one of his pages sit her before him on his beast, and mounting his own horse, farewelled of Yunus and rode away out of sight. Hardly had he left him, when the seller bethought himself and knew that he had erred in selling her and said to himself, “What have I done? I have delivered my slave-girl to a man with whom I am unacquainted, neither know I who he is; and grant that I were acquainted with him, how am I to get at him?” So he abode in thought till the morning, when he prayed the dawn-prayers and his companions entered Damascus, whilst he sat, perplexed and wotting not what to do, till the sun scorched him and it irked him to abide there. He thought to enter the city, but said in his mind, “If I enter Damascus, I cannot be sure but that the messenger will come and find me not, in which case I shall have sinned against myself a 106 second sin.” Accordingly he sat down in the shade of a wall that was there, and towards the wane of day, up came one of the eunuchs whom he had seen with the young man, whereat great joy possessed Yunus and he said in himself, “I know not that aught hath ever given me more delight than the sight of this

castrato." When the eunuch reached him, he said to him, "O my lord, we have kept thee long waiting"; but Yunus disclosed nothing to him of the torments of anxiety he had suffered. Then quoth the castrato, "Knowest thou the man who bought the girl of thee?"; and quoth Yunus, "No," to which the other rejoined, "'Twas Walid bin Sahl,[112] the Heir Apparent." And Yunus was silent. Then said the eunuch, "Ride," and made him mount a horse he had with him and they rode till they came to a mansion, where they dismounted and entered. Here Yunus found the damsel, who sprang up at his sight and saluted him. He asked her how she had fared with him who had bought her and she answered, "He lodged me in this apartment and ordered me all I needed." Then he sat with her awhile, till suddenly one of the servants of the house-owner came in and bade him rise and follow him. So he followed the man into the presence of his master and found him yesternight's guest, whom he saw seated on his couch and who said to him, "Who art thou?" "I am Yunus the Scribe." "Welcome to thee, O Yunus! by Allah, I have long wished to look on thee; for I have heard of thy report. How didst thou pass the night?" "Well, may Almighty Allah advance thee." "Peradventure thou repentedest thee of that thou didst yesterday and saidst to thyself: I have delivered my slave-girl to a man with whom I am not acquainted, neither know I his name nor whence he cometh?" "Allah forbid, O Emir, that I should repent over her! Had I made gift of her to the Prince, she were the least of the gifts that are given unto him,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

107

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Yunus the Scribe said to Walid, "Allah forbid I should repent over her! Had I made gift of her to the Prince, she were the least of gifts that are given to him, nor indeed is she worthy of his rank," Walid rejoined, "By Allah, but I repented me of having carried her away from thee and said to myself:—This man is a stranger and knoweth me not, and I have taken him by surprise and acted inconsiderately by him, in my haste to take the damsel! Dost thou recall what passed between us?" Quoth Yunus, "Yes!" and quoth Walid, "Dost thou sell this damsel to me for fifty thousand dirhams?" And Yunus said, "I do." Then the Prince called to one of his servants to bring him fifty thousand dirhams and a thousand and five hundred dinars to boot, and gave them all to Yunus, saying, "Take the slave's price: the thousand dinars are for thy fair opinion of us and the five hundred are for thy viaticum and for what present thou shalt buy for thy people. Art thou content?" "I am content," answered Yunus and kissed his hands, saying, "By Allah, thou hast filled my eyes and my hands and my heart!" Quoth Walid, "By Allah, I have as yet had no privacy of her nor have I taken my fill of her singing. Bring her to me!" So she came and he bade her sit, then said to her, "Sing." And she sang these verses:—

O thou who dost comprise all Beauty's boons! ✿ O sweet of nature, fain of coquetry!
In Turks and Arabs many beauties dwell; ✿ But, O my fawn, in none thy charms I see.
Turn to thy lover, O my fair, and keep ✿ Thy word, though but in visioned phantasy:
Shame and disgrace are lawful for thy sake ✿ And wakeful nights full fill with joy and glee:
I'm not the first for thee who fared distraught; ✿ Slain by thy love how many a many be!
I am content with thee for worldly share ✿ Dearer than life and good art thou to me!

When he heard this, he was delighted exceedingly and praised Yunus for his excellent teaching of her and her fair education. Then he bade his servants bring him a roadster with saddle and housings for his riding, and a mule to carry his gear, and said to him, 108"O Yunus, when it shall reach thee that command hath come to me, do thou join me; and, by Allah, I will fill thy hands with good and advance thee to honour and make thee rich as long as thou livest!" So Yunus said, "I took his goods and went my ways; and when Walid succeeded to the Caliphate, I repaired to him; and by Allah, he kept his promise and entreated me with high honour and munificence. Then I abode with him in all content of case and rise of rank and mine affairs prospered and my wealth increased and goods and farms became mine, such as sufficed me and will suffice my heirs after me; nor did I cease to abide with Walid, till he was slain, the mercy of Almighty Allah be on him!" And men tell a tale concerning

HARUN AL-RASHID AND THE ARAB GIRL.

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid was walking one day with Ja'afar the Barmecide, when he espied a company of girls drawing water and went up to them, having a mind to drink. As he drew near, one of them turned to her fellows and improvised these lines:—

Thy phantom bid thou fleet, and fly ✿ Far from the couch whereon I lie;
So I may rest and quench the fire, ✿ Bonfire in bones aye flaming high;
My love-sick form Love's restless palm ✿ Rolls o'er the rug whereon I sigh:
How 'tis with me thou wottest well ✿ How long, then, union wilt deny?

The Caliph marvelled at her elegance and eloquence.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph, hearing the girl's verses, marvelled at her elegance and eloquence, and said to her, "O daughter of nobles, are these thine own or a quotation?" Replied she, "They are my very own,"

and he rejoined, “An thou say sooth keep the sense and change the rhyme.” So she said:—

Bid thou thy phantom distance keep ✿ And quit this couch the while I sleep;
So I may rest and quench the flames ✿ Through all my body rageful creep,
In love-sick one, whom passion’s palms ✿ Roll o’er the bed where grief I weep.
How ’tis with me thou wottest well; ✿ All but thy union hold I cheap!

109 Quoth the Caliph, “This also is stolen”; and quoth she, “Nay, ’tis my very own.” He said, “If it be indeed thine own, change the rhyme again and keep the sense.” So she recited the following:—

Unto thy phantom deal behest ✿ To shun my couch the while I rest,
So I repose and quench the fire ✿ That burns what lieth in my breast,
My weary form Love’s restless palm ✿ Rolls o’er with boon of sleep unblest.
How ’tis with me thou wottest well ✿ When union’s bought ’tis haply best!

Quoth Al-Rashid, “This too is stolen”; and quoth she, “Not so, ’tis mine.” He said, “If thy words be true change the rhyme once more.” And she recited:—

Drive off the ghost that ever shows ✿ Beside my couch when I’d repose,
So I may rest and quench the fire ✿ Beneath my ribs e’er flames and glows,
In love-sick one, whom passion’s palms ✿ Roll o’er the couch where weeping flows,
How ’tis with me thou wottest well ✿ Will union come as union goes?

Then said the Caliph, “Of what part of this camp art thou?”; and she replied, “Of its middle in dwelling and of its highest in tent-poles.”[113] Wherefore he knew that she was the daughter of the tribal chief. “And thou,” quoth she, “of what art thou among the guardians of the horses?”; and quoth he, “Of the highest in tree and of the ripest in fruit.” “Allah protect thee, O Commander of the Faithful!” said she, and kissing ground called down blessings on him. Then she went away with the maidens of the Arabs, and the Caliph said to Ja’afar, “There is no help for it but I take her to wife.” So Ja’afar repaired to her father and said to him, “The Commander of the Faithful hath a mind to thy daughter.” He replied, “With love and goodwill, she is a gift as a handmaid to His Highness our Lord the Commander of the Faithful.” So he equipped her and carried her to the Caliph, who took her to wife and went in to her, and she became of the dearest of his women to him. Furthermore, he bestowed on her 110 father largesse such as succoured him among Arabs, till he was transported to the mercy of Almighty Allah. The Caliph, hearing of his death, went in to her greatly troubled; and, when she saw him looking afflicted, she entered her chamber and doffing all that was upon her of rich raiment, donned mourning apparel and raised lament for her father. It was said to her, “What is the reason of this?”; and she replied, “My father is dead.” So they repaired to the Caliph and told him and he rose and going in to her, asked her who had informed her of her father’s death; and she answered “It was thy face, O Commander of the Faithful!” Said he, “How so?”; and

she said, “Since I have been with thee, I never saw thee on such wise till this time, and there was none for whom I feared save my father, by reason of his great age; but may thy head live, O Commander of the Faithful!” The Caliph’s eyes filled with tears and he condoled with her; but she ceased not to mourn for her father, till she followed him—Allah have mercy on the twain! And a tale is also told of

AL-ASMA’I AND THE THREE GIRLS OF BASSORAH.

The Commander of the Faithful Harun Al-Rashid was exceeding restless one night and rising from his bed, paced from chamber to chamber, but could not compose himself to sleep. As soon as it was day, he said, “Fetch me Al-Asma’i!”[114] So the eunuch went out and told the doorkeepers; these sent for the poet and when he came, informed the Caliph who bade admit him and said to him, “O Asma’i, I wish thee to tell me the best thou hast heard of stories of women and their verses.” Answered Al-Asma’i, “Hearkening and obedience! I have heard great store of women’s verses; but none pleased me save three sets of couplets I once heard from three girls.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

111

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Al-Asma’i said to the Prince of True Believers, “Verily I have heard much, but nothing pleased me save three sets of couplets improvised by as many girls.” Quoth the Caliph, “Tell me of them,” and quoth he, “Know then, O Commander of the Faithful, that I once abode in Bassorah, and one day, as I was walking, the heat was sore upon me and I sought for a siesta-place but found none. However by looking right and left I came upon a porch swept and sprinkled, at the upper end whereof was a wooden bench under an open lattice-window, whence exhaled a scent of musk. I entered the porch and sitting down on the bench, would have stretcht me at full length when I heard from within a girl’s sweet voice talking and saying:—O my sisters, we are here seated to spend our day in friendly converse; so come, let us each put down an hundred dinars and recite a line of verse; and whoso extemporiseth the goodliest and sweetest line, the three hundred dinars shall be hers.” “With love and gladness,” said the others; and the eldest recited the first couplet which is this:—

Would he come to my bed during sleep ’twere delight ✿ But a visit on wake were delightsomer sight!

Quoth the second:—

Naught came to salute me in sleep save his shade ✿ But “welcome, fair welcome,” I cried to the spright!

Then said the youngest:—

My soul and my folk I engage for the youth ✿ Musk-scented I see in my bed every night!

Quoth I, “An she be fair as her verse hath grace, the thing is complete in every case.” Then I came down from my bench[115] and was about to go away, when behold, the door opened and out came a slave-girl, who said to me, “Sit, O Shaykh!” So I climbed 112 up and sat down again when she gave me a scroll, wherein was written, in characters of the utmost beauty, with straight Alifs,[116] big-bellied Hás and rounded Waws, the following:—We would have the Shaykh (Allah lengthen his days!) to know that we are three maidens, sisters, sitting in friendly converse, who have laid down each an hundred dinars, conditioning that whoso recite the goodliest and sweetest couplet shall have the whole three hundred dinars; and we appoint thee umpire between us: so decide as thou seest best, and the Peace be on thee! Quoth I to the girl, Here to me inkcase and paper. So she went in and, returning after a little, brought me a silvered inkcase and gilded pens[117] with which I wrote these couplets:—

They talked of three beauties whose converse was quite ✿ Like the talk of a man with experience dight:
Three maidens who borrowed the bloom of the dawn ✿ Making hearts of their lovers in sorriest plight.
They were hidden from eyes of the prier and spy ✿ Who slept and their modesty mote not affright;
So they opened whatever lay hid in their hearts ✿ And in frolicsome fun began verse to indite.
Quoth one fair coquette with her amorous grace ✿ Whose teeth for the sweet of her speech flashèd bright:—
Would he come to my bed during sleep ’twere delight ✿ But a visit on wake were delightsomer sight!
When she ended, her verse by her smiling was gilt: ✿ Then the second ’gan singing as nightingale might:—
Naught came to salute me in sleep save his shade ✿ But welcome, fair welcome, I cried to the spright!
But the third I preferred for she said in reply, ✿ With expression most apposite, exquisite:—
My soul and my folk I engage for the youth ✿ Musk-scented I see in my bed every night!
So when I considered their words to decide, ✿ And not make me the mock of the cynical wight;
I pronounced for the youngest, declaring her verse ✿ Of all verses be that which is nearest the right.

Then I gave the scroll to the slave-girl, who went upstairs with it, and behold, I heard a noise of dancing and clapping of hands and Doomsday astir. Quoth I to myself, “’Tis no time for me 113 to stay here.” So I came down from the platform and was about to go away, when the damsel cried out to me, “Sit down, O Asma’i!” Asked I, “Who gave thee to know that I was Al-Asma’i?” and she answered, “O Shaykh, an thy name be unknown to us, thy poetry is not!” So I sat down again and suddenly the door opened and out came the first damsel, with a dish of fruits and another of sweetmeats. I ate of both and praised their fashion and would have ganged my gait; but she cried out, “Sit down, O Asma’i!” Wherewith I raised my eyes to her and saw a rosy palm in a saffron sleeve, meseemed it was the full moon rising splendid in the cloudy East. Then she threw me a purse containing three hundred dinars and said to me, “This is mine and I give it to thee by way of douceur in requital of thy judgment.”

Quoth the Caliph, “Why didst thou decide for the youngest?” and quoth Al-Asma’i, “O Commander of the Faithful, whose life Allah prolong! the eldest said:—I should delight in him, if he visited my couch in sleep. Now this is restricted and dependent upon a condition which may befal or may not befal; whilst, for the second, an image of dreams came to her in sleep, and she saluted it; but the youngest’s couplet said that she actually lay with her lover and smelt his breath sweeter than musk and she engaged her soul and her folk for him, which she had not done, were he not dearer to her than her sprite.” Said the Caliph, “Thou didst well, O Asma’i,” and gave him other three hundred ducats in payment of his story. And I have heard a tale concerning

IBRAHIM OF MOSUL AND THE DEVIL.[118]

Quoth Abu Ishak Ibrahim al-Mausili:—I asked Al-Rashid once to give me a day’s leave that I might be private with the people of my household and my brethren, and he gave me leave for Saturday the Sabbath. So I went home and betook myself to making ready meat 114 and drink and other necessaries and bade the doorkeepers shut the doors and let none come in to me. However, presently, as I sat in my sitting-chamber, with my women who were looking after my wants, behold, there appeared an old man of comely and reverend aspect,[119] clad in white clothes and a shirt of fine stuff with a doctor’s turband on his head and a silver-handled staff in his hand, and the house and porch were full of the perfumes wherewith he was scented. I was greatly vexed at his coming in to me and thought to turn away the doorkeepers; but he saluted me after the goodliest fashion and I returned his greeting and bade him be seated. So he sat down and began entertaining me with stories of the Arabs and their verses, till my anger left me and methought my servants had sought to pleasure me by admitting a man of such good breeding and fine culture. Then I asked him, “Art thou for meat?”; and he answered, “I have no need of it.” “And for drink?” quoth I, and quoth he, “That is as thou wilt.” So I drank off a pint of wine and poured him out the like. Then said he, “O Abu Ishak, wilt thou sing us somewhat, so we may hear of thine art that wherein thou excellest high and low?” His words angered me; but I swallowed my anger and taking the lute played and sang. “Well done, O Abu Ishak!”[120] said he; whereat my wrath redoubled and I said to myself, “Is it not enough that he should intrude upon me, without my leave, and importune me thus, but he must call me by name, as though he knew not the right way to address me?” Quoth he, “An thou wilt sing something more we will requite thee.” I dissembled my annoyance and took the lute and sang again, taking pains with what I sang and rising thereto altogether, in consideration of his saying, “We will requite thee.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Shaykh said to Abu Ishak, "If thou wilt sing something more we will requite thee," I dissembled my annoyance (continued 115 Ibrahim) and, taking the lute, sang again with great attention to my singing and rising altogether thereto, in consideration of his saying, "We will requite thee." He was delighted, and cried, "Well done, O my lord!"; presently adding, "Dost thou give me leave to sing?" "As thou wilt," answered I, deeming him weak of wit, in that he should think to sing in my presence, after that which he had heard from me. So he took the lute and swept the strings, and by Allah, I fancied they spoke in Arabic tongue, with a sweet and liquid and murmurous voice; then he began and sang these couplets:—

I bear a hurt heart, who will sell me for this ✿ A heart whole and free from all canker and smart?
Nay, none will consent or to barter or buy ✿ Such loss, ne'er from sorrow and sickness to part:
I groan wi' the groaning of wine-wounded men ✿ And pine for the pining ne'er freeth my heart.

And by Allah, meseemed the doors and the walls and all that was in the house answered and sang with him, for the beauty of his voice, so that I fancied my very limbs and clothes replied to him, and I abode amazed and unable to speak or move, for the trouble of my heart. Then he sang these couplets:—

Culvers of Liwa![121] to your nests return; ✿ Your mournful voices thrill this heart of mine.
Then back a-copse they flew, and well-nigh took ✿ My life and made me tell my secret pine.
With cooing call they one who's gone, as though ✿ Their breasts were maddened with the rage of wine:
Ne'er did mine eyes their like for culvers see ✿ Who weep yet tear-drops never dye their eyne.

And also these couplets:—

O Zephyr of Najd, when from Najd thou blow, ✿ Thy breathings heap only new woe on woe!
The turtle bespake me in bloom of morn ✿ From the cassia-twig and the willow-bough
She moaned with the moaning of love-sick youth ✿ And exposed love-secret I ne'er would show:
They say lover wearies of love when near ✿ And is cured of love an afar he go:
116 I tried either cure which ne'er cured my love; ✿ But that nearness is better than farness I know:[122]
Yet,—the nearness of love shall no 'vantage prove ✿ An whoso thou lovest deny thee of love.

Then said he, "O Ibrahim, sing this song after me, and preserving the mode thereof in thy singing, teach it to thy slave-girls." Quoth I, "Repeat it to me." But he answered, "There needs no repetition; thou hast it by heart nor is there more to learn." Then he suddenly vanished from my sight. At this I was amazed and running to my sword drew it and made for the door of the Harim, but found it closed and said to the women, "What have ye heard?" Quoth they, "We have heard the sweetest of singing and the goodliest." Then I went forth amazed, to the house-door and, finding it locked, questioned the doorkeepers of the old man. They replied, "What old man? By Allah, no one hath gone in to thee this day!" So I returned pondering the matter,

when, behold, there arose from one of the corners of the house, a Vox et præterea nihil, saying, "O Abu Ishak, no harm shall befal thee. 'Tis I, Abú Murrah,[123] who have been thy cup-companion this day, so fear nothing!" Then I mounted and rode to the palace, where I told Al-Rashid what had passed, and he said, "Repeat to me the airs thou heardest from him." So I took the lute and played and sang them to him; for, behold, they were rooted in my heart. The Caliph was charmed with them and drank thereto, albeit he was no confirmed wine-bibber, saying, "Would he would some day pleasure us with his company, as he hath pleasured thee!"[124] Then he ordered me a present and I took it and went away. And men relate this story anent

THE LOVERS OF THE BANU UZRAH.[125]

Quoth Masrur the Eunuch:—The Caliph Harun Al-Rashid was very wakeful one night and said to me, "See which of the poets is at the door to-night." So I went out and finding Jamíl bin Ma'amar al-Uzrí[126] in the antechamber, said to him, "Answer the Commander of the Faithful." Quoth he, "I hear and I obey," and going in with me, saluted the Caliph, who returned his greeting and bade him sit down. Then he said to him, "O Jamil, hast thou any of thy wonderful new stories to tell us?" He replied, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful: wouldst thou fainer hear that which I have seen with mine eyes or that which I have only heard?" Quoth the Caliph, "Tell me something thou hast actually beheld." Quoth Jamil, "'Tis well, O Prince of True Believers; incline thy heart to me and lend me thine ears." The Caliph took a bolster of red brocade, purfled with gold and stuffed with ostrich-feathers and, laying it under his thighs, propped up both elbows thereon; then he said to Jamil, "Now[127] for thy tale, O Jamil!" Thereupon he begun:—Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that I was once desperately enamoured of a certain girl and used to pay her frequent visits.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saving her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph had propped his elbows upon the brocaded cushion, he said, "Out with thy tale, O Jamil!" and the poet begun:—Know, O Commander of the Faithful, I was desperately in love with a girl and used often to visit her, because she was my desire and delight 118 of all the things of this world. After a while, her people removed with her, by reason of scarcity of pasture, and I abode some time without seeing her, till I grew restless for desire and longed for her sight and the flesh[128] urged me to journey to her. One night, I could hold out no longer; so I rose and saddling my she-camel, bound on my turban and donned my oldest dress.[129] Then I baldricked myself with my sword and slinging my spear behind me, mounted and rode forth in quest of her. I fared on fast till, one night, it was pitch dark and exceeding black, yet I persisted in the hard task of

climbing down Wadys and up hills, hearing on all sides the roaring of lions and howling of wolves and the cries of the wild beasts. My reason was troubled thereat and my heart sank within me; but for all that my tongue ceased not to call on the name of Almighty Allah. As I went along thus, sleep overtook me and the camel carried me aside out of my road, till, presently, something[130] smote me on the head, and I woke, startled and alarmed, and found myself in a pasturage full of trees and streams and birds on the branches, warbling their various speech and notes. As the trees were tangled I alighted and, taking my camel's halter in hand, fared on softly with her, till I got clear of the thick growth and came out into the open country, where I adjusted her saddle and mounted again, knowing not where to go nor whither the Fates should lead me; but, presently, peering afar into the desert, I espied a fire in its middle depth. So I smote my camel and made for the fire. When I drew near, I saw a tent pitched, and fronted by a spear stuck in the ground, with a pennon flying[131] and horses tethered and camels feeding, and said in myself, "Doubtless there hangeth some grave matter by this tent, for I see none other than it in the desert." So I went up thereto and said, "Peace be with you, O people of the tent, and the mercy of Allah and His blessing!" Whereupon there came forth to me a young man as youths are when nineteen years old, who was like the full moon shining in the East, with valour written between his eyes, and answered, saying, "And with thee 119 be the Peace, and Allah's mercy and His blessing! O brother of the Arabs, methinks thou hast lost thy way?" Replied I, "Even so, direct me right, Allah have mercy on thee!" He rejoined, "O brother of the Arabs, of a truth this our land is infested with lions and the night is exceeding dark and dreary, beyond measure cold and gloomy, and I fear lest the wild beasts rend thee in pieces; wherefore do thou alight and abide with me this night in ease and comfort, and to-morrow I will put thee in the right way." Accordingly, I dismounted and hobbled my she-camel with the end of her halter;[132] then I put off my heavy upper clothes and sat down. Presently the young man took a sheep and slaughtered it and kindled a brisk fire; after which he went into the tent and bringing out finely powdered salt and spices, fell to cutting off pieces of mutton and roasting them over the fire and feeding me therewith, weeping at one while and sighing at another. Then he groaned heavily and wept sore and improvised these couplets:—

There remains to him naught save a flitting breath ✿ And an eye whose babe ever wandereth.

There remains not a joint in his limbs, but what ✿ Disease firm fixt ever tortureth.

His tears are flowing, his vitals burning; ✿ Yet for all his tongue still he silenceth.

All foemen in pity beweep his woes; ✿ Ah for freke whom the foeman pitieth!

By this I knew, O Commander of the Faithful, that the youth was a distracted lover (for none knoweth passion save he who hath tasted the passion-savour), and quoth I to myself, "Shall I ask him?" But I consulted my judgment and said, "How shall I assail him with questioning, and I in his abode?" So I restrained myself and ate my sufficiency of the meat. When we had made an end of eating, the young man arose

and entering the tent, brought out a handsome basin and ewer and a silken napkin, whose ends were purfled with red gold and a sprinkling-bottle full of rose-water mingled with musk. I marvelled at his dainty delicate ways and said in my mind, "Never wot I of delicacy in the desert." Then we washed our hands and talked a while, after 120 which he went into the tent and making a partition between himself and me with a piece of red brocade, said to me, "Enter, O Chief of the Arabs, and take thy rest; for thou hast suffered more of toil and travel than sufficeth this night and in this thy journey." So I entered and finding a bed of green brocade, doffed my dress and passed a night such as I had never passed in my life.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Jamil spoke, saying:—Never in my life passed I a night like that. I pondered the young man's case, till the world was dark and all eyes slept, when I was aroused by the sound of a low voice, never heard I a softer or sweeter. I raised the curtain which hung between us and saw a damsel (never beheld I a fairer of face), by the young man's side and they were both weeping and complaining, one to other of the pangs of passion and desire and of the excess of their longing for union.[133] Quoth I, "By Allah, I wonder who may be this second one! When I entered this tent, there was none therein save this young man." And after reflection I added, "Doubtless this damsel is of the daughters of the Jinn and is enamoured of this youth; so they have secluded themselves with each other in this solitary place." Then I considered her closely and behold, she was a mortal and an Arab girl, whose face, when she unveiled, shamed the shining sun, and the tent was lit up by the light of her countenance. When I was assured that she was his beloved, I bethought me of lover-jealousy; so I let drop the curtain and covering my face, fell asleep. As soon as it was dawn I arose and donning my clothes, made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed such prayers as are obligatory and which I had deferred. Then I said, "O brother of the Arabs, wilt thou direct me into the right road and thus add to thy favours?" He replied, "At thy leisure, O chief of the Arabs, the term of the guest-rite is 121 three days,[134] and I am not one to let thee go before that time." So I abode with him three days, and on the fourth day as we sat talking, I asked him of his name and lineage. Quoth he "As for my lineage, I am of the Banú Odhrah; my name is such an one, son of such an one and my father's brother is called such an one." And behold, O Commander of the Faithful, he was the son of my paternal uncle and of the noblest house of the Banu Uzrah. Said I, "O my cousin, what moved thee to act on this wise, secluding thyself in the waste and leaving thy fair estate and that of thy father and thy slaves and handmaids?" When he heard my words, his eyes filled with tears and he replied, "Know, O my cousin, that I fell madly in love of the daughter of my father's brother, fascinated by her, distracted for her, passion-possessed as by a Jinn, wholly unable to let her out of my sight. So I sought her in marriage of her sire,

but he refused and married her to a man of the Banu Odhrah, who went in to her and carried her to his abiding-place this last year. When she was thus far removed from me and I was prevented from looking on her, the fiery pangs of passion and excess of love-longing and desire drove me to forsake my clan[135] and friends and fortune and take up my abode in this desert, where I have grown used to my solitude." I asked, "Where are their dwellings?" and he answered, "They are hard by, on the crest of yonder hill; and every night, at the dead time, when all eyes sleep, she stealeth secretly out of the camp, unseen of any one, and I satisfy my desire of her converse and she of mine.[136] So I abide thus, solacing myself with her a part of the night, till Allah work out that which is to be wrought; either I shall compass my desire, in spite[137] of the envious, or Allah will 122 determine for me and He is the best of determinators." Now when the youth told me his case, O Commander of the Faithful, I was concerned for him and perplexed by reason of my jealousy for his honour; so I said to him, "O son of my uncle, wilt thou that I point out to thee a plan and suggest to thee a project, whereby (please Allah) thou shalt find perfect welfare and the way of right and successful issue whereby the Almighty shall do away from thee that thou dreadest?" He replied, "Say on, O my cousin"; and quoth I, "When it is night and the girl cometh, set her on my she-camel which is swift of pace, and mount thou thy steed, whilst I bestride one of these dromedaries. So will we fare on all night and when the morrow morns, we shall have traversed wolds and wastes, and thou wilt have attained thy desire and won the beloved of thy heart. The Almighty's earth is wide, and by Allah, I will back thee with heart and wealth and sword."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Jamil advised the elopement and night journey, promising his aid as long as he lived, the youth accepted and said, "O cousin, wait till I take counsel with her, for she is quick-witted and prudent and hath insight into affairs." So (continued Jamil) when the night darkened and the hour of her coming arrived, and he awaiting her at the appointed tide, she delayed beyond her usual time, and I saw him go forth the door of the tent and opening his mouth, inhale the wafts of breeze that blew from her quarter, as if to snuff her perfume, and he repeated these two couplets:—

Breeze of East who bringest me gentle air ✿ From the place of sojourn where dwells my fair:

O Breeze, of the lover thou bearest sign, ✿ Canst not of her coming some signal bear?

Then he entered the tent and sat weeping awhile; after which he said to me, "O my cousin, some mischance must have betided the daughter of mine uncle, or some accident must have hindered her from coming to me this night," presently adding, "But abide where thou art, till I bring thee the news." And he took sword 123 and shield and was absent a while of the night, after which he returned, carrying

something in hand and called aloud to me. So I hastened to him and he said, "O my cousin, knowest thou what hath happened?" I replied, "No, by Allah!" Quoth he, "Verily, I am distraught concerning my cousin this night; for, as she was coming to me, a lion met her in the way and devoured her, and there remaineth of her but what thou seest." So saying, he threw down what he had in his hand, and behold, it was the damsel's turband and what was left of her bones. Then he wept sore and casting down his bow,[138] took a bag and went forth again saying, "Stir not hence till I return to thee, if it please Almighty Allah." He was absent a while and presently returned, bearing in his hand a lion's head, which he threw on the ground and called for water. So I brought him water, with which he washed the lion's mouth and fell to kissing it and weeping; and he mourned for her exceedingly and recited these couplets:—

Ho thou lion who broughtest thyself to woe, ✿ Thou art slain and worse sorrows my bosom rend!

Thou hast reft me of fairest companionship, ✿ Made her home Earth's womb till the world shall end.

To Time, who hath wrought me such grief, I say, ✿ "Allah grant in her stead never show a friend!"

Then said he to me, "O cousin, I conjure thee by Allah and the claims of kindred and consanguinity[139] between us, keep thou my charge. Thou wilt presently see me dead before thee; whereupon do thou wash me and shroud me and these that remain of my cousin's bones in this robe and bury us both in one grave and write thereon these two couplets:"—

On Earth surface we lived in rare ease and joy ✿ By fellowship joined in one house and home.

But Fate with her changes departed us, ✿ And the shroud conjoins us in Earth's cold womb.

124 Then he wept with sore weeping and, entering the tent, was absent awhile, after which he came forth, groaning and crying out. Then he gave one sob and departed this world. When I saw that he was indeed dead, it was grievous to me and so sore was my sorrow for him that I had well-nigh followed him for excess of mourning over him. Then I laid him out and did as he had enjoined me, shrouding his cousin's remains with him in one robe and laying the twain in one grave. I abode by their tomb three days, after which I departed and continued to pay frequent pious visits[140] to the place for two years. This then is their story, O Commander of the Faithful! Al-Rashid was pleased with Jamil's story and rewarded him with a robe of honour and a handsome present. And men also tell a tale concerning

THE BADAWI AND HIS WIFE.[141]

Caliph Mu'áwiyah was sitting one day in his palace[142] at Damascus, in a room whose windows were open on all four sides, that the breeze might enter from every quarter. Now it was a day of excessive heat, with no breeze from the hills stirring, and the middle of the day, when the heat was at its height, and the Caliph saw a man coming along, scorched by the heat of the ground and limping, as he fared on barefoot.

Mu'awiyah considered him awhile and said to his courtiers, "Hath Allah (may He be extolled and exalted!) created any miserabler than he who need must hie abroad at such an hour and in such sultry tide as this?" Quoth one of them, "Haply he seeketh the Commander of the Faithful;" and quoth the 125 Caliph, "By Allah, if he seek me, I will assuredly give to him, and if he be wronged, I will certainly succour him. Ho, boy! Stand at the door, and if yonder wild Arab seek to come in to me, forbid him not therefrom." So the page went out and presently the Arab came up to him and he said, "What dost thou want?" Answered the other, "I want the Commander of the Faithful," and the page said, "Enter." So he entered and saluted the Caliph,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the page allowed him to enter, the Badawi saluted the Caliph, who said to him, "Who art thou?" Replied the Arab, "I am a man of the Banú Tamím."[143] "And what bringeth thee here at this season?" asked Mu'awiyah; and the Arab answered, "I come to thee, complaining and thy protection imploring." "Against whom?" "Against Marwan bin al-Hakam,[144] thy deputy," replied he, and began reciting:—

Mu'áwiyah,[145] thou gen'rous lord, and best of men that be; ✿ And oh, thou lord of learning, grace and fair humanity,

Thee-wards I come because my way of life is strait to me: ✿ O help! and let me not despair thine equity to see.

Deign thou redress the wrong that dealt the tyrant whim of him ✿ Who better had my life destroyed than made such wrong to dree.

126 He robbed me of my wife Su'ád and proved him worst of foes, ✿ Stealing mine honour 'mid my folk with foul iniquity;

And went about to take my life before th' appointed day ✿ Hath dawned which Allah made my lot by destiny's decree.

Now when Mu'awiyah heard him recite these verses, with the fire flashing from his mouth, he said to him, "Welcome and fair welcome, O brother of the Arabs! Tell me thy tale and acquaint me with thy case." Replied the Arab, "O Commander of the Faithful, I had a wife whom I loved passing dear with love none came near; and she was the coolth of mine eyes and the joy of my heart; and I had a herd of camels, whose produce enabled me to maintain my condition; but there came upon us a bad year which killed off hoof and horn and left me naught. When what was in my hand failed me and wealth fell from me and I lapsed into evil case, I at once became abject and a burden to those who erewhile wished to visit me; and when her father knew it, he took her from me and abjured me and drove me forth without ruth. So I repaired to thy deputy, Marwan bin al-Hakam, and asked his aid. He summoned her sire and questioned him of my case, when he denied any knowledge of me." Quoth I, "Allah assain the Emir! An it please him to send for the woman and question her of her father's saying, the truth will appear." So he sent for her and brought her; but no

sooner had he set eyes on her than he fell in love with her; so, becoming my rival, he denied me succour and was wroth with me, and sent me to prison, where I became as I had fallen from heaven and the wind had cast me down in a far land. Then said Marwan to her father, "Wilt thou give her to me to wife, on a present settlement of a thousand dinars and a contingent dowry of ten thousand dirhams,[146] and I will engage to free her from yonder wild Arab!" Her father was seduced by the bribe and agreed to the bargain; whereupon Marwan sent for me and looking at me like an angry lion, said to me, "O Arab, divorce Su'ad." I replied, "I will not put her away; but he set on me a company of his servants, who tortured me with all manner of tortures, till I found no help for it but to divorce her. I did so and he sent me back to prison, where I abode till the days of her 127purification were accomplished, when he married her and let me go. So now I come hither in thee hoping and thy succour imploring and myself on thy protection throwing." And he spoke these couplets:—

Within my heart is fire ✿ Whichever flameth higher;

Within my frame are pains ✿ For skill of leach too dire.

Live coals in vitals burn ✿ And sparks from coal up spire:

Tears flood mine eyes and down ✿ Coursing my cheek ne'er tire:

Only God's aid and thine ✿ I crave for my desire!

Then he was convulsed,[147] and his teeth chattered and he fell down in a fit, squirming like a scotched snake. When Mu'awiyah heard his story and his verse, he said, "Marwan bin al-Hakam hath transgressed against the laws of the Faith and hath violated the Harim of True Believers!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph Mu'awiyah heard the wild Arab's words, he said, "The son of al-Hakam hath indeed transgressed against the laws of the Faith and hath violated the Harim of True Believers," presently adding, "O Arab, thou comest to me with a story, the like whereof I never heard!" Then he called for inkcase and paper and wrote to Marwan as follows:—Verily it hath reached me that thou transgresseth the laws of the Faith with regard to thy lieges. Now it behoveth the Wali who governeth the folk to keep his eyes from their lusts and stay his flesh from its delights. And after he wrote many words, which (quoth he who told me the tale) I omit, for brevity's sake, and amongst them these couplets:—

Thou wast invested (woe to thee!)[148] with rule for thee unfit; ✿ Crave thou of Allah pardon for thy foul adultery.

Th' unhappy youth to us is come complaining 'mid his groans ✿ And asks redress for parting-grief and saddened me through thee.

128 An oath have I to Allah sworn shall never be forsworn; ✿ Nay, for I'll do what Faith and Creed command me to decree.

An thou dare cross me in whate'er to thee I now indite ✿ I of thy flesh assuredly will make the vulture free.

Divorce Su'ad, equip her well, and in the hottest haste ✿ With Al-Kumayt and Zíbán's son, hight Nasr, send to me.

Then he folded the letter and, sealing it with his seal, delivered it to Al-Kumayt[1491] and Nasr bin Zíbán (whom he was wont to employ on weighty matters, because of their trustiness) who took the missive and carried it to Al-Medinah, where they went in to Marwan and saluting him delivered to him the writ and told him how the case stood. He read the letter and fell a-weeping; but he went in to Su'ad (as 'twas not in his power to refuse obedience to the Caliph) and, acquainting her with the case, divorced her in the presence of Al-Kumayt and Nasr; after which he equipped her and delivered her to them, together with a letter to the Caliph wherein he versified as follows:—

Hurry not, Prince of Faithful Men! with best of grace thy vow ✿ I will accomplish as 'twas vowed and with the gladdest gree.

I sinned not adulterous sin when loved her I, then how ✿ Canst charge me with advowtrous deed or any villainy?

Soon comes to thee that splendid sun which hath no living peer ✿ On earth, nor aught in mortal men or Jinns her like shalt see.

This he sealed with his own signet and gave to the messengers who returned with Su'ad to Damascus and delivered to Mu'awiyah the letter, and when he had read it he cried, "Verily, he hath obeyed handsomely, but he exceedeth in his praise of the woman." Then he called for her and saw beauty such as he had never seen, for comeliness and loveliness, stature and symmetrical grace; moreover, he talked with her and found her fluent of speech and choice in words. Quoth he, "Bring me the Arab." So they fetched the man, who came, sore disordered for shifts and changes of fortune, and Mu'awiyah said to him, "O Arab, an thou wilt freely give her up to me, I will bestow upon thee in her stead three slave girls, high-bosomed maids like moons, with each a thousand dinars; and I will assign thee on the Treasury such an annual sum as shall content thee and enrich thee." When the 129 Arab heard this, he groaned one groan and swooned away, so that Mu'awiyah thought he was dead; and, as soon as he revived, the Caliph said to him, "What aileth thee?" The Arab answered, "With heavy heart and in sore need have I appealed to thee from the injustice of Marwan bin al-Hakam; but to whom shall I appeal from thine injustice?" And he versified in these couplets:—

Make me not (Allah save the Caliph!) one of the betrayed ✿ Who from the fiery sands to fire must sue for help and aid:

Deign thou restore Su'ád to this afflicted heart distraught, ✿ Which every morn and eve by sorest sorrow is waylaid:

Loose thou my bonds and grudge me not and give her back to me; ✿ And if thou do so ne'er thou shalt for lack of thanks upbraid!

Then said he, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, wert thou to give me all the riches contained in the Caliphate, yet would I not take them without Su'ad." And he recited this couplet:—

I love Su'ád and unto all but hers my love is dead, ✿ Each morn I feel her love to me is drink and daily bread.

Quoth the Caliph, "Thou confessest to having divorced her and Marwan owned the like; so now we will give her free choice. An she choose other than thee, we will marry her to him, and if she choose thee, we will restore her to thee." Replied the Arab, "Do so." So Mu'awiyah said to her, "What sayest thou, O Su'ad? Which dost thou choose; the Commander of the Faithful, with his honour and glory and dominion and palaces and treasures and all else thou seest at his command, or Marwan bin al-Hakam with his violence and tyranny, or this Arab, with his hunger and poverty?" So she improvised these couplets:—

This one, whom hunger plagues, and rags enfold, ✿ Dearer than tribe and kith and kin I hold;

Than crownèd head, or deputy Marwán, ✿ Or all who boast of silver coins and gold.

Then said she, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I will not forsake him for the shifts of Fortune or the perfidies of Fate, there being between us old companionship we may not forget, and love beyond stay and let; and indeed 'tis but just that I bear with him in his adversity, even as I shared with him in prosperity." 130 The Caliph marvelled at her wit and love and constancy and, ordering her ten thousand dirhams, delivered her to the Arab, who took his wife and went away.[150] And they likewise tell a tale of

THE LOVERS OF BASSORAH.

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid was sleepless one night; so he sent for Al-Asma'i and Husayn al-Khalí'a[151] and said to them, "Tell me a story you twain and do thou begin, O Husayn." He said, "'Tis well, O Commander of the Faithful;" and thus began:— Some years ago, I dropped down stream to Bassorah, to present to Mohammed bin Sulayman al-Rabí'í[152] a Kasidah or elegy I had composed in his praise; and he accepted it and bade me abide with him. One day, I went out to Al-Mirbad,[153] by way of Al-Muháliyah;[154] and, being oppressed by the excessive heat, went up to a great door, to ask for drink, when I was suddenly aware of a damsel, as she were a branch swaying, with eyes languishing, eyebrows arched and finely pencilled and smooth cheeks rounded, clad in a shift the colour of a pomegranate-flower, and a mantilla of Sana'á[155] work; but the perfect whiteness of her body overcame the redness of her shift, through which glittered two breasts like twin granadoes and a waist, as it were a roll of fine Coptic linen, with creases like scrolls of pure white paper stuffed with musk.[156] Moreover, O Prince of True Believers, round her neck was slung an amulet of red gold that fell down between her breasts, and on 131 the plain of her forehead were brow-locks like jet.[157] Her eyebrows joined and her eyes were like lakes; she had an aquiline nose and thereunder shell-like lips showing teeth like pearls. Pleasantness prevailed in every part of her; but she seemed dejected, disturbed, distracted and in

the vestibule came and went, walking upon the hearts of her lovers, whilst her legs[158] made mute the voices of their ankle-rings; and indeed she was as saith the poet:—

Each portion of her charms we see ✿ Seems of the whole a simile.

I was overawed by her, O Commander of the Faithful, and drew near her to greet her, and behold, the house and vestibule and highways breathed fragrant with musk. So I saluted her and she returned my salam with a voice dejected and heart depressed and with the ardour of passion consumed. Then said I to her, "O my lady, I am an old man and a stranger and sore troubled by thirst. Wilt thou order me a draught of water, and win reward in heaven?" She cried, "Away, O Shaykh, from me! I am distracted from all thought of meat and drink."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel said, "O Shaykh, I am distracted from all thought of meat and drink." Quoth I (continued Husayn), "By what ailment, O my lady?" and quoth she, "I love one who dealeth not justly by me and I desire one who of me will none. Wherefore I am afflicted with the wakefulness of those who wake star-gazing." I asked, "O my lady, is there on the wide expanse of earth one to whom thou hast a mind and who to thee hath no mind?" Answered she, "Yes; and this for the perfection of beauty and loveliness and goodliness wherewith he is endowed." "And why standeth thou in this porch?" enquired I. "This is his road," replied she, "and the hour of his passing by." I said, "O my lady, have ye ever foregathered and had such commerce and converse as 132 might cause this passion?" At this she heaved a deep sigh; the tears rained down her cheeks, as they were dew falling upon roses, and she versified with these couplets:—

We were like willow-boughs in garden shining ✿ And scented joys in happiest life combining;

Whenas one bough from other self would rend ✿ And oh! thou seest this for that repining!

Quoth I, "O maid, and what betideth thee of thy love for this man?"; and quot. she, "I see the sun upon the walls of his folk and I think the sun is he; or haply I catch sight of him unexpectedly and am confounded and the blood and the life fly my body and I abide in unreasoning plight a week or e'en a se'nnight." Said I, "Excuse me, for I also have suffered that which is upon thee of love-longing and distraction of soul and wasting of frame and loss of strength; and I see in thee pallor of complexion and emaciation, such as testify of the fever-fits of desire. But how shouldst thou be unsmitten of passion and thou a sojourner in the land of Bassorah?" Said she, "By Allah, before I fell in love of this youth, I was perfect in beauty and loveliness and amorous grace which ravished all the Princes of Bassorah, till he fell in love with me." I asked, "O maid, and who parted you?"; and she answered, "The vicissitudes of fortune," but the manner of our separation was strange; and 'twas on this wise. One

New Year's day I had invited the damsels of Bassorah and amongst them a girl belonging to Sírán, who had bought her out of Oman for fourscore thousand dirhams. She loved me and loved me to madness and when she entered she threw herself upon me and well-nigh tore me in pieces with bites and pinches.[159] Then we withdrew apart, to drink wine at our ease, till our meat was ready[160] and our 133 delight was complete, and she toyed with me and I with her, and now I was upon her and now she was upon me. Presently, the fumes of the wine moved her to strike her hand on the inkle of my petticoat-trousers, whereby it became loosed, unknown of either of us, and my trousers fell down in our play. At this moment he came in unobserved and, seeing me thus, was wroth at the sight and made off, as the Arab filly hearing the tinkle of her bridle.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the maiden said to Husayn al-Khali'a, "When my lover saw me playing, as I described to thee, with Siran's girl, he went forth in anger. And 'tis now, O Shaykh, three years ago, and since then I have never ceased to excuse myself to him and coax him and crave his indulgence, but he will neither cast a look at me from the corner of his eye, nor write me a word nor speak to me by messenger nor hear from me aught." Quoth I, "Harkye maid, is he an Arab or an Ajam?"; and quoth she, "Out on thee! He is of the Princes of Bassorah." "Is he old or young?" asked I; and she looked at me laughingly and answered, "Thou art certainly a simpleton! He is like the moon on the night of its full, smooth-cheeked and beardless, nor is there any defect in him except his aversion to me." Then I put the question, "What is his name?" and she replied, "What wilt thou do with him?" I rejoined, "I will do my best to come at him, that I may bring about reunion between you." Said she, "I will tell thee on condition that thou carry him a note;" and I said, "I have no objection to that." Then quoth she, "His name is Zamrah bin al-Mughayrah, hight Abú al-Sakhá,[161] and his palace is in the Mirbad." Therewith she called to those within for inkcase and paper and tucking up[162] her sleeves, showed two wrists like broad rings of silver. She then wrote after the Basmalah as follows, "My lord, the omission of blessings[163] at the head of this my letter shows mine insufficiency, and know that had 134 my prayer been answered, thou hadst never left me; for how often have I prayed that thou shouldest not leave me, and yet thou didst leave me! Were it not that distress with me exceedeth the bounds of restraint, that which thy servant hath forced herself to do in writing this writ were an aidance to her, despite her despair of thee, because of her knowledge of thee that thou wilt fail to answer. Do thou fulfil her desire, my lord, of a sight of thee from the porch, as thou passest in the street, wherewith thou wilt quicken the dead soul in her. Or, far better for her still than this, do thou write her a letter with thine own hand (Allah endow it with all excellence!), and appoint it in requital of the intimacy that was between us in the nights of time

past, whereof thou must preserve the memory. My lord, was I not to thee a lover sick with passion? An thou answer my prayer, I will give to thee thanks and to Allah praise; and so—The Peace!"[164] Then she gave me the letter and I went away. Next morning I repaired to the door of the Viceroy Mohammed bin Sulayman, where I found an assembly of the notables of Bassorah, and amongst them a youth who adorned the gathering and surpassed in beauty and brightness all who were there; and indeed the Emir Mohammed set him above himself. I asked who he was and behold, it was Zamrah himself: so I said in my mind, "Verily, there hath befallen yonder unhappy one that which hath befallen her[165]!" Then I betook myself to the Mirbad and stood waiting at the door of his house, till he came riding up in state, when I accosted him and invoking more than usual blessings on him, handed him the missive. When he read it and understood it he said to me, "O Shaykh, we have taken other in her stead. Say me, wilt thou see the substitute?" I answered, "Yes." Whereupon he called out a woman's name, and there came forth a damsel who shamed the two greater lights; swelling-breasted, walking the gait of one who hasteneth without fear, to whom he gave the note, saying, "Do thou answer it." When she read it, she turned pale at the contents and said to me, "O old man, crave pardon of Allah for this that thou hast brought." So I went out, O Commander of the Faithful, dragging my feet and returning to her asked leave to enter. When she saw me, she asked, "What is behind thee?"; and I answered, "Evil 135 and despair." Quoth she, "Have thou no concern of him. Where are Allah and His power?"[166] Then she ordered me five hundred dinars and I took them and went away. Some days after I passed by the place and saw there horsemen and footmen. So I went in and lo! these were the companions of Zamrah, who were begging her to return to him; but she said, "No, by Allah, I will not look him in the face!" And she prostrated herself in gratitude to Allah and exultation over Zamrah's defeat. Then I drew near her, and she pulled out to me a letter, wherein was written, after the Bismillah, "My lady, but for my forbearance towards thee (whose life Allah lengthen!) I would relate somewhat of what betided from thee and set out my excuse, in that thou trans-gressedst against me, whenas thou wast manifestly a sinner against thyself and myself in breach of vows and lack of constancy and preference of another over us; for, by Allah, on whom we call for help against that which was of thy free-will, thou didst transgress against the love of me; and so—The Peace!" Then she showed me the presents and rarities he had sent her, which were of the value of thirty thousand dinars. I saw her again after this, and Zamrah had married her. Quoth Al-Rashid, "Had not Zamrah been beforehand with us, I should certainly have had to do with her myself."[167] And men tell the tale of

ISHAK OF MOSUL AND HIS MISTRESS AND THE DEVIL.[168]

Quoth Ishak bin Ibrahim al-Mausili:—I was in my house one night in the winter-time, when the clouds had dispread themselves and the rains poured down in torrents, as from the mouths of water-skins, and the folk forbore to come and go about the ways for that which was therein of rain and slough. Now I was straitened in breast because none of my brethren came to me nor could I go to them, by reason of the mud and mire; so I said to my servant, "Bring me wherewithal I may divert myself." Accordingly he brought me meat and drink, but I had no heart to eat, without someone to keep me company, and I ceased not to look out of window and watch the ways till nightfall, when I bethought myself of a damsel belonging to one of the sons of Al-Mahdi,[169] whom I loved and who was skilled in singing and playing upon instruments of music, and said to myself, "Were she here with us to-night, my joy would be complete and my night would be abridged of the melancholy and restlessness which are upon me." At this moment one knocked at the door, saying, "Shall a beloved enter in who standeth at the door?" Quoth I to myself, "Meseems the plant of my desire hath fruited." So I went to the door and found my mistress, with a long green skirt[170] wrapped about her and a kerchief of brocade on her head, to fend her from the rain. She was covered with mud to her knees and all that was upon her was drenched with water from gargoyles[171] and house-sprouts; in short, she was in 137 sorry plight. So I said to her, "O my mistress, what bringeth thee hither through all this mud?" Replied she, "Thy messenger came and set forth to me that which was with thee of love and longing, so that I could not choose but yield and hasten to thee." I marvelled at this——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel came and knocked at Ishak's door, he went forth to her and cried, "O my lady, what bringeth thee hither through all this mud?"; and she replied, "Thy messenger came and set forth to me that which was with thee of love and longing, so that I could not choose but yield and hasten to thee." I marvelled at this, but did not like to tell her that I had sent no messenger; wherefore I said, "Praised be Allah for that He hath brought us together, after all I have suffered by the mortification of patience! Verily, hadst thou delayed an hour longer, I must have run to thee, because of my much love for thee and longing for thy presence." Then I called to my boy for water, that I might better her plight, and he brought a kettle full of hot water such as she wanted. I bade pour it over her feet, whilst I set to work to wash them myself; after which I called for one of my richest dresses and clad her therein after she had doffed the muddy clothes. Then, as soon as we were comfortably seated, I would have called for food, but she refused and I said to her, "Art thou for wine?"; and she replied, "Yes." So I fetched cups and she asked me, "Who shall sing?" "I, O my princess!" "I care not for that;" "One of my damsels?" "I have no mind to that either!" "Then sing thyself." "Not I!" "Who then

shall sing for thee?" I enquired, and she rejoined, "Go out and seek some one to sing for me." So I went out, in obedience to her, though I despaired of finding any one in such weather and fared on till I came to the main street, where I suddenly saw a blind man striking the earth with his staff and saying, "May Allah not requite with weal those with whom I was! When I sang, they listened not, and when I was silent, they made light of me." So I said to him, "Art thou a singer?" and he replied, "Yes." Quoth I, "Wilt thou finish thy night with us and cheer us with thy company?"; and quoth he, "If it be thy will, take my hand." 138 So I took his hand and, leading him to my house, said to the damsel, "O my mistress, I have brought a blind singer, with whom we may take our pleasure and he will not see us." She said, "Bring him to me." So I brought him in and invited him to eat. He ate but a very little and washed his hands, after which I brought him wine and he drank three cupsful. Then he said to me, "Who art thou?"; and I replied, "I am Ishak bin Ibrahim al-Mausili." Quoth he, "I have heard of thee and now I rejoice in thy company;" and I, "O my lord, I am glad in thy gladness." He said, "O Ishak, sing to me." So I took the lute, by way of jest, and cried, "I hear and I obey." When I had made an end of my song, he said to me, "O Ishak, thou comest nigh to be a singer!" His words belittled me in mine own eyes and I threw the lute from my hand; whereupon he said, "Hast thou not with thee some one who is skilled in singing?" Quoth I, "I have a damsel with me;" and quoth he, "Bid her sing." I asked him, "Wilt thou sing, when thou hast had enough of her singing?"; and he answered "Yes." So she sang and he said, "Nay, thou hast shown no art." Whereupon she flung the lute from her hand in wrath and cried, "We have done our best: if thou have aught, favour us with it by way of an alms." Quoth he, "Bring me a lute hand hath not touched." So I bade the servant bring him a new lute and he tuned it and preluding in a mode I knew not began to sing, improvising these couplets:—

Clove through the shades and came to me in night so dark and sore ✿ The lover weeting of herself 'twas trysting-tide once more:

Naught startled us but her salám and first of words she said ✿ "May a belovèd enter in who standeth at the door!"

When the girl heard this, she looked at me askance and said, "What secret was between us could not thy breast hold for one hour, but thou must discover it to this man?" However, I swore to her that I had not told him and excused myself to her and fell to kissing her hands and tickling her breasts and biting her cheeks, till she laughed and, turning to the blind man, said to him, "Sing, O my lord!" So he took the lute and sang these two couplets:—

Ah, often have I sought the fair; how often lief and fain ✿ My palming felt the finger ends that bear the varied stain!

And tickled pouting breasts that stand firm as pomegranates twain ✿ And bit the apple of her cheek kissed o'er and o'er again.

139 So I said to her, "O my princess, who can have told him what we were about?" Replied she, "True," and we moved away from him. Presently quoth he, "I must make

water;" and quoth I, "O boy, take the candle and go before him." Then he went out and tarried a long while. So we went in search of him, but could not find him; and behold, the doors were locked and the keys in the closet, and we knew not whether to heaven he had flown or into earth had sunk. Wherefore I knew that he was Iblís and that he had done me pimp's duty, and I returned, recalling to myself the words of Abu Nowas in these couplets:—

I marvel in Iblis such pride to see ✿ Beside his low intent and villeiny: He sinned to Adam who to bow refused, ✿ Yet pimps for all of Adam's progeny.

And they tell a tale concerning

THE LOVERS OF AL-MEDINAH.

Quoth Ibrahim the father of Ishak,[172] I was ever a devoted friend to the Barmecide family. And it so happened to me one day, as I sat at home quite alone, a knock was heard at the door; so my servant went out and returned, saying, "A comely youth is at the door, asking admission." I bade admit him and there came in to me a young man, on whom were signs of sickness, and he said, "I have long wished to meet thee, for I have need of thine aid." "What is it thou requirest?" asked I. Whereupon he pulled out three hundred dinars and laying them before me, said, "I beseech thee to accept these and compose me an air to two couplets I have made." Said I, "Repeat them to me;"—

—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the youth came in to Ibrahim and placed the gold in his hands, 140 saying, "Prithee accept it and compose me an air to two couplets." He replied, "Recite them to me," whereupon he recited:—

By Allah, glance of mine! thou hast opprest ✿ My heart, so quench the fire that burns my breast.

Blames me the world because in him[173] I live ✿ Yet cannot see him till in shroud I rest.

Accordingly, quoth Ibrahim, I set the verses to an air plaintive as a dirge and sang it to him; whereupon he swooned away and I thought that he was dead. However, after a while, he came to himself, and said to me, "Repeat the air." But I conjured him by Allah to excuse me, saying, "I fear lest thou die." "Would Heaven it were so!" replied he and ceased not humbly to importune me, till I had pity on him and repeated it; whereupon he cried out with a grievous cry and fell into a fit worse than before and I doubted not but that he was dead; but I sprinkled rose-water on him till he revived and sat up. I praised Allah for his recovery and laying the ducats before him, said, "Take thy money and depart from me." Quoth he, "I have no need of the money and thou shalt have the like of it, if thou wilt repeat the air." My breast broadened at the mention of the money and I said, "I will repeat it, but on three conditions: the first,

that thou tarry with me and eat of my victual, till thou regain strength; the second, that thou drink wine enough to hearten thy heart; and the third, that thou tell me thy tale." He agreed to this and ate and drank; after which he said:—"I am of the citizens of Al-Medinah and I went forth one day a-pleasuring with my friends; and, following the road to Al-Akík,[174] saw a company of girls and amongst them a damsel as she were a branch pearled with dew, with eyes whose sidelong glances were never withdrawn till they had stolen away his soul who looked on them. The maidens rested in the shade till the end of the day, when they went away, 141 leaving in my heart wounds slow to heal. I returned next morning to scent out news of her, but found none who could tell me of her; so I sought her in the streets and markets, but could come on no trace of her; wherefore I fell ill of grief and told my case to one of my kinsmen, who said to me, No harm shall befal thee: the days of spring are not yet past and the skies show sign of rain,[175] whereupon she will go forth, and I will go out with thee, and do thou thy will. His words comforted my heart and I waited till Al-Akik ran with water, when I went forth with my friends and kinsmen and sat in the very same place where I first saw her." We had not been seated long before up came the women, like horses running for a wager; and I whispered to a girl of my kindred, "Say to yonder damsel—Quoth this man to thee, He did well who spoke this couplet:—

She shot my heart with shaft, then turned on heel ✿ And flying dealt fresh wound and scarring wheal."

So she went to her and repeated my words, to which she replied saying, "Tell him that he said well who answered in this couplet:—

The like of whatso feelest thou we feel; ✿ Patience! perchance swift cure our hearts shall heal."

I refrained from further speech for fear of scandal and rose to go away. She rose at my rising, and I followed and she looked back at me, till she saw I had noted her abode. Then she began to come to me and I to go to her, so that we foregathered and met often, till the case was noised abroad and grew notorious and her sire came to know of it. However, I ceased not to meet her most assiduously and complained of my condition to my father, who assembled our kindred and repaired to ask her in marriage for me, of her sire, who cried, "Had this been proposed to me before he gave her a bad name by his assignations, I would have consented; but now the thing is notorious and I am loath to verify the saying of the 142 folk." Then (continued Ibrahim) I repeated the air to him and he went away, after having acquainted me with his abode, and we became friends. Now I was devoted to the Barmecides; so next time Ja'afar bin Yahya sat to give audience, I attended, as was my wont, and sang to him the young man's verses. They pleased him and he drank some cups of wine and said, "Fie upon thee! whose song is this?" So I told him the young man's tale and he bade me ride over to him and give him assurances of the winning of his wish. Accordingly I fetched him to Ja'afar who asked him to repeat his story. He did so and Ja'afar said, "Thou art now under my protection: trust me to marry thee to her." So his heart was comforted and he abode with us. When the morning morrowed Ja'afar

mounted and went in to Al-Rashid, to whom he related the story. The Caliph was pleased with it and sending for the young man and myself, commanded me to repeat the air and drank thereto. Then he wrote to the Governor of Al-Hijaz, bidding him despatch the girl's father and his household in honourable fashion to his presence and spare no expense for their outfit. So, in a little while, they came and the Caliph, sending for the man, commanded him to marry his daughter to her lover; after which he gave him an hundred thousand dinars, and the father went back to his folk. As for the young man, he abode one of Ja'afar's cup-companions till there happened what happened;[176] whereupon he returned with his household to Al-Medinah; may Almighty Allah have mercy upon their souls one and all! And they also tell, O auspicious King, a tale of

AL-MALIK AL-NASIR AND HIS WAZIR.

There was given to Abú Ámir bin Marwán,[177] a boy of the Christians, than whom never fell eyes on a handsomer. Al-Nasir the conquering Soldan saw him and said to Abu Amir, who was his Wazir, "Whence cometh this boy?" Replied he, "From Allah;" whereupon the other, "Wilt thou terrify us with stars 143 and make us prisoner with moons?" Abu Amir excused himself to him and preparing a present, sent it to him with the boy, to whom he said, "Be thou part of the gift: were it not of necessity, my soul had not consented to give thee away." And he wrote with him these two couplets:—

My lord, this full moon takes in Heaven of thee new birth; ✿ Nor can deny we Heaven excelleth humble earth:
Thee with my soul I please and—oh! the pleasant case! ✿ No man e'er saw I who to give his soul prefer'th.

The thing pleased Al-Nasir and he requited him with much treasure and the Minister became high in favour with him. After this, there was presented to the Wazir a slave-girl, one of the loveliest women in the world, and he feared lest this should come to the King's ears and he desire her, and the like should happen as with the boy. So he made up a present still costlier than the first and sent it with her to the King,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Abu Amir, when presented with the beautiful slave-girl, feared lest it come to the Conquering King's ears and that the like should happen as with the boy, so he made up a present still costlier than the first and sent it with her to his master, accompanying it with these couplets:—

My lord, this be the Sun, the Moon thou hadst before; ✿ So the two greater lights now in thy Heaven unite:
Conjunction promising to me prosperity, ✿ And Kausar-draught to thee and Eden's long delight.

Earth shows no charms, by Allah, ranking as their third, ✿ Nor King who secondeth our Conquering King in might.

Wherefore his credit redoubled with Al-Nasir; but, after a while, one of his enemies maligned him to the King, alleging that there still lurked in him a hot lust for the boy and that he ceased not to desire him, whenever the cool northern breezes moved him, and to gnash his teeth for having given him away. Cried the King, "Wag not thou thy tongue at him, or I will shear off thy head." However, he wrote Abu Amir a letter, as from the boy, to the 144 following effect: "O my lord, thou knowest that thou wast all and one to me and that I never ceased from delight with thee. Albeit I am with the Sultan, yet would I choose rather solitude with thee, but that I fear the King's majesty: wherefore devise thou to demand me of him." This letter he sent to Abu Amir by a little foot-page, whom he enjoined to say, "This is from such an one: the King never speaketh to him." When the Wazir read the letter and heard the cheating message, he noted the poison-draught[178] and wrote on the back of the note these couplets:—

Shall man experience-lectured ever care ✿ Fool-like to thrust his head in lion's lair?

I'm none of those whose wits to love succumb ✿ Nor witless of the snares my foes prepare:

Wert thou my sprite, I'd give thee loyally; ✿ Shall sprite, from body sundered, backwards fare?

When Al-Nasir knew of this answer, he marvelled at the Wazir's quickness of wit and would never again lend ear to aught of insinuations against him. Then said he to him, "How didst thou escape falling into the net?" And he replied, "Because my reason is unentangled in the toils of passion." And they also tell a tale of

28- THE ROGUERIES OF DALILAH THE CRAFTY AND HER DAUGHTER ZAYNAB THE CONEY-CATCHER.[179]

There lived in the time of Harun al-Rashid a man named Ahmad al-Danaf and another Hasan Shúmán[180] hight, the twain past masters in fraud and feints, who had done rare things in their day; wherefore the Caliph invested them with caftans of honour and made them Captains of the watch for Baghdad (Ahmad of the 145 right hand and Hasan of the left hand); and appointed to each of them a stipend of a thousand dinars a month and forty stalwart men to be at their bidding. Moreover to Calamity Ahmad was committed the watch of the district outside the walls. So Ahmad and Hasan went forth in company of the Emir Khalid, the Wali or Chief of Police, attended each by his forty followers on horseback, and preceded by the Crier, crying aloud and saying, "By command of the Caliph! None is captain of the watch of the right hand but Ahmad al-Danaf and none is captain of the watch of the left hand but Hasan Shuman, and both are to be obeyed when they bid and are to be held in all honour and worship." Now there was in the city an old woman called Dalílah the Wily, who had a daughter by name Zaynab the Coney-catcher. They heard the proclamation made and Zaynab said to Dalilah, "See, O my mother, this fellow, Ahmad al-Danaf! He came hither from Cairo, a fugitive, and played the double-dealer in Baghdad, till he got into the Caliph's company and is now become captain of the right hand, whilst that mangy chap Hasan Shuman is captain of the left hand, and each hath a table spread morning and evening and a monthly wage of a thousand dinars; whereas we abide unemployed and neglected in this house, without estate and without honour, and have none to ask of us." Now Dalilah's husband had been town-captain of Baghdad with a monthly wage of one thousand dinars; but he died leaving two daughters, one married and with a son by name Ahmad al-Lakít[181] or Ahmad the Abortion; and the other called Zaynab, a spinster. And this Dalilah was a past mistress in all manner of craft and trickery and double dealing; she could wile the very dragon out of his den and Iblis himself might have learnt deceit of her. Her father[182] had also been governor of the

carrier-pigeons to the Caliph with a solde of one thousand dinars a month. He used to rear the birds to carry letters and messages, wherefore in time of need each was dearer to the Caliph than one of his own sons. So Zaynab said to her mother, “Up and play off some feint and fraud that may haply make us notorious”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Six Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Zaynab thus addressed her dam, “Up and play off some feint and fraud which may haply make us notorious in Baghdad, so perchance we shall win our father’s stipend for ourselves.” Replied the old trot, “As thy head liveth, O my daughter, I will play off higher-class rogueries in Baghdad than ever played Calamity Ahmad or Hasan the Pestilent.” So saying, she rose and threw over her face the Lisám-veil and donned clothes such as the poorer Sufis wear, petticoat-trousers falling over her heels, and a gown of white wool with a broad girdle. She also took a pitcher[183] and filled it with water to the neck; after which she set three dinars in the mouth and stopped it up with a plug of palm-fibre. Then she threw round her shoulder, baldrick-wise, a rosary as big as a load of firewood, and taking in her hand a flag, made of parti-coloured rags, red and yellow and green, went out, crying, “Allah! Allah!” with tongue celebrating the praises of the Lord, whilst her heart galloped in the Devil’s race-course, seeking how she might play some sharping trick upon town. She walked from street to street, till she came to an alley swept and watered and marble-paved, where she saw a vaulted gateway, with a threshold of alabaster, and a Moorish porter standing at the door, which was of sandal-wood plated with brass and furnished with a ring of silver for knocker. Now this house belonged to the Chief of the Caliph’s Serjeant-ushers, a man of great wealth in fields, houses and allowances, called the Emir Hasan Sharr al-Tarík, or Evil of the Way, and therefor called because his blow forewent his word. He was married to a fair damsel, Khátún[184] hight, whom he loved and who had made him swear, on the night of his going in unto her, that he would take none other to wife over her nor lie abroad for a single night. And so things went on till one day, he went to the Diyan and saw that each Emir had with him a son or two. Then he entered the Hammam-bath and looking at his face in the 147mirror, noted that the white hairs in his beard overlay its black, and he said in himself, “Will not He who took thy sire bless thee with a son?” So he went in to his wife, in angry mood, and she said to him, “Good evening to thee”; but he replied, “Get thee out of my sight: from the day I saw thee I have seen naught of good.” “How so?” quoth she. Quoth he, “On the night of my going in unto thee, thou madest me swear to take no other wife over thee, and this very day I have seen each Emir with a son and some with two. So I minded me of death[185]; and also that to me hath been vouchsafed neither son nor daughter and that whoso leaveth no male hath no memory. This, then, is the reason of my anger, for thou art barren; and knowing

thee is like planing a rock." Cried she, "Allah's name upon thee. Indeed, I have worn out the mortars with beating wool and pounding drugs,[186] and I am not to blame; the barrenness is with thee, for that thou art a snub-nosed mule and thy sperm is weak and watery and impregnateth not neither getteth children." Said he, "When I return from my journey, I will take another wife;" and she, "My luck is with Allah!" Then he went out from her and both repented of the sharp words spoken each to other. Now as the Emir's wife looked forth of her lattice, as she were a Bride of the Hoards[187] for the jewellery upon her, behold, there stood Dalilah espying her and seeing her clad in costly clothes and ornaments, said to herself, "'Twould be a rare trick, O Dalilah, to entice yonder young lady from her husband's house and strip her of all her jewels and clothes and make off with the whole lot." So she took up her stand under the windows of the Emir's house, and fell to calling aloud upon Allah's name and saying, "Be present, O ye Walis, ye friends of the Lord!" Whereupon every woman in the street looked from her lattice and, seeing a matron clad, after Sufi fashion, in clothes of white wool, as she were a pavilion of light, said, "Allah bring us a blessing by the aidance of this pious old person, from whose face issueth light!" And Khatun, the wife of the Emir Hasan, burst into tears and said to 148 her handmaid, "Get thee down, O Makbúlah, and kiss the hand of Shaykh Abú Alí, the porter, and say to him:—Let yonder Religious enter to my lady, so haply she may get a blessing of her." So she went down to the porter and kissing his hand, said to him, "My mistress telleth thee:—Let yonder pious old woman come in to me, so may I get a blessing of her; and belike her benediction may extend to us likewise."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundredth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the handmaid went down and said to the porter, "Suffer yonder Religious enter to my lady so haply she may get a blessing of her, and we too may be blessed, one and all," the gate-keeper went up to Dalilah and kissed her hand, but she forbade him, saying, "Away from me, lest my ablution be made null and void.[188] Thou, also, art of the attracted God-wards and kindly looked upon by Allah's Saints and under His especial guardianship. May He deliver thee from this servitude, O Abu Ali!" Now the Emir owed three months' wage to the porter who was straitened thereby, but knew not how to recover his due from his lord; so he said to the old woman, "O my mother, give me to drink from thy pitcher, so I may win a blessing through thee." She took the ewer from her shoulder and whirled it about in air, so that the plug flew out of its mouth and the three dinars fell to the ground. The porter saw them and picked them up, saying in his mind, "Glory to God! This old woman is one of the Saints that have hoards at their command! It hath been revealed to her of me that I am in want of money for daily expenses; so she hath conjured me these three dinars out of the air." Then said he to her, "Take, O my aunt, these three dinars which fell from thy pitcher;" and she

replied, “Away with them from me! I am of the folk who occupy not themselves with the things of the world, no never! Take them and use them for thine own benefit, in lieu of those the Emir oweth thee.” Quoth he, “Thanks to Allah 149 for succour! This is of the chapter of revelation!” Thereupon the maid accosted her and kissing her hand, carried her up to her mistress. She found the lady as she were a treasure, whose guardian talisman had been loosed; and Khatun bade her welcome and kissed her hand. Quoth she, “O my daughter, I come not to thee save for thy weal and by Allah’s will.” Then Khatun set food before her; but she said, “O my daughter, I eat naught except of the food of Paradise and I keep continual fast breaking it but five days in the year. But, O my child, I see thee chagrined and desire that thou tell me the cause of thy concern.” “O my mother,” replied Khatun, “I made my husband swear, on my wedding-night, that he would wive none but me, and he saw others with children and longed for them and said to me:—Thou art a barren thing! I answered:—Thou art a mule which begetteth not; so he left me in anger, saying, When I come back from my journey, I will take another wife, for he hath villages and lands and large allowances, and if he begat children by another, they will possess the money and take the estates from me.” Said Dalilah, “O my daughter, knowest thou not of my master, the Shaykh Abú al-Hamlát,[1891] whom if any debtor visit, Allah quitteth him his debt, and if a barren woman, she conceiveth?” Khatun replied, “O my mother, since the day of my wedding I have not gone forth the house, no, not even to pay visits of condolence or congratulation.” The old woman rejoined, “O my child, I will carry thee to him and do thou cast thy burden on him and make a vow to him: haply when thy husband shall return from his journey and lie with thee thou shalt conceive by him and bear a girl or a boy: but, be it female or male, it shall be a dervish of the Shaykh Abu al-Hamlat.” Thereupon Khatun rose and arrayed herself in her richest raiment, and donning all her jewellery said, “Keep thou an eye on the house,” to her maid, who replied, “I hear and obey, O my lady.” Then she went down and the porter Abu Ali met her and asked her, “Whither away, O my lady?” “I go to visit the Shaykh Abu al-Hamlat;” answered she; and he, “Be a year’s fast incumbent on me! Verily yon Religious is of Allah’s saints and full of holiness, O my lady, and she hath hidden treasure at her command, for she gave me three dinars of red gold and divined my case, without my asking her, and knew that I was in want.” 150 Then the old woman went out with the young lady Khatun, saying to her, “Inshallah, O my daughter, when thou hast visited the Shaykh Abu al-Hamlat, there shall betide thee solace of soul and by leave of Almighty Allah thou shalt conceive, and thy husband the Emir shall love thee by the blessing of the Shaykh and shall never again let thee hear a despiteful word.” Quoth Khatun, “I will go with thee to visit him, O my mother!” But Dalilah said to herself, “Where shall I strip her and take her clothes and jewellery, with the folk coming and going?” Then she said to her, “O my daughter, walk thou behind me, within sight of me, for this thy mother is a woman sorely burdened; everyone who hath a burden casteth it on me and

all who have pious offerings[190] to make give them to me and kiss my hand." So the young lady followed her at a distance, whilst her anklets tinkled and her hair-coins[191] clinked as she went, till they reached the bazar of the merchants. Presently, they came to the shop of a young merchant, by name Sídí Hasan who was very handsome[192] and had no hair on his face. He saw the lady approaching and fell to casting stolen glances at her, which when the old woman saw, she beckoned to her and said, "Sit down in this shop, till I return to thee." Khatun obeyed her and sat down in the shop-front of the young merchant, who cast at her one glance of eyes that cost him a thousand sighs. Then the old woman accosted him and saluted him, saying, "Tell me, is not thy name Sidi Hasan, son of the merchant Mohsin?" He replied, "Yes, who told thee my name?" Quoth she, "Folk of good repute direct me to thee. Know that this young lady is my daughter and her father was a merchant, who died and left her much money. She is come of marriageable age and the wise say:—Offer thy daughter in marriage and not thy son; and all her life she hath not come forth the house till this day. Now a divine warning and a command given in secret bid me wed her to thee; so, if thou art poor, I will give thee capital and will open for thee instead of one shop two shops." Thereupon quoth the young merchant to himself, "I asked Allah for a bride, and 151 He hath given me three things, to wit, coin, clothing, and coynte." Then he continued to the old trot, "O my mother, that whereto thou directest me is well; but this long while my mother saith to me:—I wish to marry thee, but I object replying, I will not marry except on the sight of my own eyes." Said Dalilah, "Rise and follow my steps, and I will show her to thee, naked."[193] So he rose and took a thousand dinars, saying in himself, "Haply we may need to buy somewhat"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and First Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman said to Hasan, son of Mohsin the merchant, "Rise up and follow me, and I will show her naked to thee." So he rose and took with him a thousand dinars, saying in himself, "Haply we may need to buy somewhat or pay the fees for drawing up the marriage contract." The old woman bade him walk behind the young lady at a distance but within shot of sight and said to herself, "Where wilt thou carry the young lady and the merchant that thou mayest strip them both whilst his shop is still shut?" Then she walked on and Khatun after her, followed by the young merchant, till she came to a dyery, kept by a master dyer, by name Hajj Mohammed, a man of ill-repute; like the colocasia[194] seller's knife cutting male and female, and loving to eat both figs and pomegranates.[195] He heard the tinkle of the ankle rings and, raising his head, saw the lady and the young man. Presently the old woman came up to him and, after salaaming to him and sitting down opposite him, asked him, "Art thou not Hajj Mohammed the dyer?" He answered, "Yes, I am he: what dost thou want?" Quoth she, "Verily, folks of fair repute have directed me to thee. Look at yonder handsome

girl, my daughter, and that comely beardless youth, my son; I brought them both up and spent much money on both of them. Now, thou must know that I have a big old ruinous house which I have 152 shored up with wood, and the builder saith to me:—Go and live in some other place, lest belike it fall upon thee; and when this is repaired return hither. So I went forth to seek me a lodging, and people of worth directed me to thee, and I wish to lodge my son and daughter with thee." Quoth the dyer in his mind, "Verily, here is fresh butter upon cake come to thee." But he said to the old woman, "'Tis true I have a house and saloon and upper floor; but I cannot spare any part thereof, for I want it all for guests and for the indigo-growers my clients." She replied, "O my son, 'twill be only for a month or two at the most, till our house be repaired, and we are strange folk. Let the guest-chamber be shared between us and thee, and by thy life, O my son, an thou desire that thy guests be ours, we will welcome them and eat with them and sleep with them." Then he gave her the keys, one big and one small and one crooked, saying to her, "The big key is that of the house, the crooked one that of the saloon and the little one that of the upper floor." So Dalilah took the keys and fared on, followed by the lady who forwent the young merchant, till she came to the lane wherein was the house. She opened the door and entered, introducing the damsel to whom said she, "O my daughter, this (pointing to the saloon) is the lodging of the Shaykh Abu al-Hamlat; but go thou into the upper floor and loose thy outer veil and wait till I come to thee." So she went up and sat down. Presently appeared the young merchant, whom Dalilah carried into the saloon, saying, "Sit down, whilst I fetch my daughter and show her to thee." So he sat down and the old trot went up to Khatun who said to her, "I wish to visit the Shaykh, before the folk come." Replied the beldame, "O my daughter, we fear for thee." Asked Khatun, "Why so?" and Dalilah answered, "Because here is a son of mine, a natural who knoweth not summer from winter, but goeth ever naked. He is the Shaykh's deputy and, if he saw a girl like thee come to visit his chief, he would snatch her earrings and tear her ears and rend her silken robes.[196] So do thou doff thy jewellery and clothes and I will keep them for thee, till thou hast made thy pious visitation." Accordingly the damsel did off her outer dress and jewels and gave them to the old woman, who said, "I will lay them for thee 153 on the Shaykh's curtain, that a blessing may betide thee." Then she went out, leaving the lady in her shift and petticoat-trousers, and hid the clothes and jewels in a place on the staircase; after which she betook herself to the young merchant, whom she found impatiently awaiting the girl, and he cried, "Where is thy daughter, that I may see her?" But she smote palm on breast and he said, "What aileth thee?" Quoth she, "Would there were no such thing as the ill neighbour and the envious! They saw thee enter the house with me and asked me of thee; and I said:—This is a bridegroom I have found for my daughter. So they envied me on thine account and said to my girl, Is thy mother tired of keeping thee, that she marrieth thee to a leper? Thereupon I swore to her that she should not see thee save naked." Quoth he, "I take refuge with

Allah from the envious," and baring his forearm, showed her that it was like silver. Said she, "Have no fear; thou shalt see her naked, even as she shall see thee naked;" and he said, "Let her come and look at me." Then he put off his pelisse and sables and his girdle and dagger and the rest of his raiment, except his shirt and bag-trousers, and would have laid the purse of a thousand dinars with them, but Dalilah cried, "Give them to me, that I may take care of them." So she took them and fetching the girl's clothes and jewellery shouldered the whole and locking the door upon them went her ways.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Second Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman had taken the property of the young merchant and the damsel and wended her ways, having locked the door upon them, she deposited her spoils with a druggist of her acquaintance and returned to the dyer, whom she found sitting, awaiting her. Quoth he, "Inshallah, the house pleaseth thee?"; and quoth she, "There is a blessing in it; and I go now to fetch porters to carry hither our goods and furniture. But my children would have me bring them a *panade* with meat; so do thou take this dinar and buy the dish and go and eat the morning meal with them." Asked the dyer, "Who shall guard the dyery meanwhile and the people's goods that be therein?"; and the old woman answered, "Thy lad!" "So be it," rejoined he, and taking a dish and cover, went 154 out to do her bidding. So far concerning the dyer who will again be mentioned in the tale; but as regards the old woman, she fetched the clothes and jewels she had left with the druggist and going back to the dyery, said to the lad, "Run after thy master, and I will not stir hence till you both return." "To hear is to obey," answered he and went away, while she began to collect all the customers' goods. Presently, there came up an ass-driver, a scavenger, who had been out of work for a week and who was an Hashísh-eater to boot; and she called him, saying, "Hither, O donkey-boy!" So he came to her and she asked, "Knowest thou my son the dyer?"; whereto he answered, "Yes, I know him." Then she said, "The poor fellow is insolvent and loaded with debts, and as often as he is put in prison, I set him free. Now we wish to see him declared bankrupt and I am going to return the goods to their owners; so do thou lend me thine ass to carry the load and receive this dinar to its hire. When I am gone, take the handsaw and empty out the vats and jars and break them, so that if there come an officer from the Kází's court, he may find nothing in the dyery." Quoth he, "I owe the Hajj a kindness and will do something for Allah's love." So she laid the things on the ass and, the Protector protecting her, made for her own house; so that she arrived there in safety and went in to her daughter Zaynab, who said to her, "O my mother, my heart hath been with thee! What hast thou done by way of roguery?" Dalilah replied, "I have played off four tricks on four wights; the wife of the Serjeant-usher, a young merchant, a dyer and an ass-driver, and have brought thee all their spoil on the

donkey-boy's beast." Cried Zaynab, "O my mother, thou wilt never more be able to go about the town, for fear of the Serjeant-usher, whose wife's raiment and jewellery thou hast taken, and the merchant whom thou hast stripped naked, and the dyer whose customers' goods thou hast stolen and the owner of the ass." Rejoined the old woman, "Pooh, my girl! I reck not of them, save the donkey-boy, who knoweth me." Meanwhile the dyer bought the meat-panade and set out for the house, followed by his servant with the food on head. On his way thither, he passed his shop, where he found the donkey-boy breaking the vats and jars and saw that there was neither stuff nor liquor left in them and that the dyery was in ruins. So he said to him, "Hold thy hand, O ass-driver;" and the donkey-boy desisted and cried, "Praised be Allah for thy safety, O master! Verily my heart was with thee." "Why so?" 155"Thou art become bankrupt and they have filed a docket of thine insolvency." "Who told thee this?" "Thy mother told me, and bade me break the jars and empty the vats, that the Kazi's officers might find nothing in the shop, if they should come." "Allah confound the far One!"[197] cried the dyer; "My mother died long ago." And he beat his breast, exclaiming, "Alas, for the loss of my goods and those of the folk!" The donkey-boy also wept and ejaculated, "Alas, for the loss of my ass!"; and he said to the dyer, "Give me back my beast which thy mother stole from me." The dyer laid hold of him by the throat and fell to buffeting him, saying, "Bring me the old woman;" whilst the other buffeted him in return saying, "Give me back my beast." So they beat and cursed each other, till the folk collected around them——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Third Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the dyer caught hold of the donkey-boy and the donkey-boy caught hold of the dyer and they beat and cursed each other till the folk collected round them and one of them asked, "What is the matter, O Master Mohammed?" The ass-driver answered, "I will tell thee the tale," and related to them his story, saying, "I deemed I was doing the dyer a good turn; but, when he saw me he beat his breast and said, My mother is dead. And now, I for one require my ass of him, it being he who hath put this trick on me, that he might make me lose my beast." Then said the folk to the dyer, "O Master Mohammed, dost thou know this matron, that thou didst entrust her with the dyery and all therein?" And he replied, "I know her not; but she took lodgings with me to-day, she and her son and daughter." Quoth one, "In my judgment, the dyer is bound to indemnify the ass-driver." Quoth another, "Why so?" "Because," replied the first, "he trusted not the old woman nor gave her his ass save only because he saw that the dyer had entrusted her with the dyery and its contents." And a third said, "O master, since thou hast lodged her with thee, it behoveth thee to get the man back his ass." Then they made for 156the house, and the tale will come round to them again. Meanwhile, the young merchant remained awaiting the old woman's coming with her daughter, but she came

not nor did her daughter; whilst the young lady in like manner sat expecting her return with leave from her son, the God-attended one, the Shaykh's deputy, to go in to the holy presence. So weary of waiting, she rose to visit the Shaykh by herself and went down into the saloon, where she found the young merchant, who said to her, "Come hither! where is thy mother, who brought me to marry thee?" She replied, "My mother is dead, art thou the old woman's son, the ecstatic, the deputy of the Shaykh Abu al-Hamlat?" Quoth he, "The swindling old trot is no mother of mine; she hath cheated me and taken my clothes and a thousand dinars." Quoth Khatun, "And me also hath she swindled for she brought me to see the Shaykh Abu al-Hamlat and in lieu of so doing she hath stripped me." Thereupon he, "I look to thee to make good my clothes and my thousand dinars;" and she, "I look to thee to make good my clothes and jewellery." And, behold, at this moment in came the dyer and seeing them both stripped of their raiment, said to them, "Tell me where your mother is." So the young lady related all that had befallen her and the young merchant related all that had betided him, and the Master-dyer exclaimed, "Alas, for the loss of my goods and those of the folk!"; and the ass-driver ejaculated, "Alas, for my ass! Give me, O dyer, my ass!" Then said the dyer, "This old woman is a sharper. Come forth, that I may lock the door." Quoth the young merchant, "'Twere a disgrace to thee that we should enter thy house dressed and go forth from it undressed." So the dyer clad him and the damsel and sent her back to her house where we shall find her after the return of her husband. Then he shut the dyery and said to the young merchant, "Come, let us go and search for the old woman and hand her over to the Wali,[1198] the Chief of Police." So they and the ass-man repaired to the house of the master of police and made their complaint to him. Quoth 157 he, "O folk, what want ye?" and when they told him he rejoined, "How many old women are there not in the town! Go ye and seek for her and lay hands on her and bring her to me, and I will torture her for you and make her confess." So they sought for her all round the town; and an account of them will presently be given.[1199] As for old Dalilah the Wily, she said, "I have a mind to play off another trick," to her daughter who answered, "O my mother, I fear for thee;" but the beldam cried, "I am like the bean husks which fall, proof against fire and water." So she rose, and donning a slave-girl's dress of such as serve people of condition, went out to look for some one to defraud. Presently she came to a by-street, spread with carpets and lighted with hanging lamps, and heard a noise of singing-women and drumming of tambourines. Here she saw a handmaid bearing on her shoulder a boy, clad in trousers laced with silver and a little Abá-cloak of velvet, with a pearl embroidered Tarbush-cap on his head, and about his neck a collar of gold set with jewels. Now the house belonged to the Provost of the Merchants of Baghdad, and the boy was his son. He had a virgin daughter, to boot, who was promised in marriage, and it was her betrothal they were celebrating that day. There was with her mother a company of noble dames and singing-women, and whenever she went upstairs or down, the boy clung to her. So she called the slave-girl and said to her, "Take thy

young master and play with him, till the company break up." Seeing this, Dalilah asked the handmaid, "What festivities are these in your mistress's house;" and was answered, "She celebrates her daughter's betrothal this day, and she hath singing-women with her." Quoth the old woman to herself, "O Dalilah, the thing to do is to spirit away this boy from the maid,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old trot said to herself, "O Dalilah, the thing to do is to spirit away this boy from the maid!" she began crying out, "O 158 disgrace! O ill luck!" Then pulling out a brass token, resembling a dinar, she said to the maid, who was a simpleton, "Take this ducat and go in to thy mistress and say to her:—Umm al-Khayr rejoiceth with thee and is beholden to thee for thy favours, and on the day of assembly she and her daughters will visit thee and handsel the tiring-women with the usual gifts." Said the girl, "O my mother, my young master here catcheth hold of his mamma, whenever he seeth her;" and she replied "Give him to me, whilst thou goest in and comest back." So she gave her the child and taking the token, went in; whereupon Dalilah made off with the boy to a by-lane, where she stripped him of his clothes and jewels, saying to herself, "O Dalilah, 'twould indeed be the finest of tricks, even as thou hast cheated the maid and taken the boy from her, so now to carry on the game and pawn him for a thousand dinars." So she repaired to the jewel-bazar, where she saw a Jew goldsmith seated with a cage full of jewellery before him, and said to herself, "'Twould be a rare trick to chouse this Jew fellow and get a thousand gold pieces worth of jewellery from him and leave the boy in pledge for it." Presently the Jew looked at them and seeing the boy with the old woman, knew him for the son of the Provost of the Merchants. Now the Israelite was a man of great wealth, but would envy his neighbour if he sold and himself did not sell; so espying Dalilah, he said to her, "What seekest thou, O my mistress?" She asked, "Art thou Master Azariah[200] the Jew?" having first enquired his name of others; and he answered, "Yes." Quoth she, "This boy's sister, daughter of the Shahbandar of the Merchants, is a promised bride, and to-day they celebrate her betrothal; and she hath need of jewellery. So give me two pair of gold ankle-rings, a brace of gold bracelets, and pearl ear-drops, with a girdle, a poignard and a seal-ring." He brought them out and she took of him a thousand dinars' worth of jewellery, saying, "I will take these ornaments on approval; and whatso pleaseth them, they will keep and I will bring thee the price and leave this boy with thee till then." He said, "Be it as thou wilt!" So she took the jewellery and made off to her own house, where her daughter asked her how the trick had sped. She told her how she had taken and stripped the Shahbandar's boy, and Zaynab said, "Thou wilt never be able to walk abroad again in the town." Meanwhile, the maid went in 159 to her mistress and said to her, "O my lady, Umm al-Khayr saluteth thee and rejoiceth with thee and on assembly-day she will come, she

and her daughters, and give the customary presents." Quoth her mistress, "Where is thy young master?" Quoth the slave-girl, "I left him with her lest he cling to thee, and she gave me this, as largesse for the singing-women." So the lady said to the chief of the singers, "Take thy money;" and she took it and found it a brass counter; whereupon the lady cried to the maid, "Get thee down, O whore, and look to thy young master." Accordingly, she went down and finding neither boy nor old woman, shrieked aloud and fell on her face. Their joy was changed into annoy, and behold, the Provost came in, when his wife told him all that had befallen and he went out in quest of the child, whilst the other merchants also fared forth and each sought his own road. Presently, the Shahbandar, who had looked everywhere, espied his son seated, naked, in the Jew's shop and said to the owner, "This is my son." "'Tis well," answered the Jew. So he took him up, without asking for his clothes, of the excess of his joy at finding him; but the Jew laid hold of him, saying, "Allah succour the Caliph against thee!"[2011] The Provost asked, "What aileth thee, O Jew?"; and he answered, "Verily the old woman took of me a thousand dinars' worth of jewellery for thy daughter, and left this lad in pledge for the price; and I had not trusted her, but that she offered to leave the child whom I knew for thy son." Said the Provost, "My daughter needeth no jewellery, give me the boy's clothes." Thereupon the Jew shrieked out, "Come to my aid, O Moslems!" but at that moment up came the dyer and the ass-man and the young merchant, who were going about, seeking the old woman, and enquired the cause of their jangle. So they told them the case and they said, "This old woman is a cheat, who hath cheated us before you." Then they recounted to them how she had dealt with them, and the Provost said, "Since I have found my son, be his clothes his ransom! If I come upon the old woman, I will require them of her." And he carried the child home to his mother, who rejoiced in his safety. Then the Jew said to the three others, "Whither go ye?"; and they answered, "We go to look for her." Quoth the Jew, "Take me with you," presently adding, "Is there any one of you knoweth her?" The donkey-boy cried, "I know her;" and the Jew said, 160"If we all go forth together, we shall never catch her; for she will flee from us. Let each take a different road, and be our rendezvous at the shop of Hajj Mas'úd, the Moorish barber." They agreed to this and set off, each in a different direction. Presently, Dalilah sallied forth again to play her tricks and the ass-driver met her and knew her. So he caught hold of her and said to her, "Woe to thee! Hast thou been long at this trade?" She asked, "What aileth thee?"; and he answered, "Give me back my ass." Quoth she, "Cover what Allah covereth, O my son! Dost thou seek thine ass and the people's things?" Quoth he, "I want my ass; that's all;" and quoth she, "I saw that thou wast poor: so I deposited thine ass for thee with the Moorish barber. Stand off, whilst I speak him fair, that he may give thee the beast." So she went up to the Maghrabi and kissed his hand and shed tears. He asked her what ailed her and she said, "O my son, look at my boy who standeth yonder. He was ill and exposed himself to the air, which injured his intellect. He used to buy asses and now, if he stand he saith nothing but, My ass! if he sit he

crieth, My ass! and if he walk he crieth, My ass! Now I have been told by a certain physician that his mind is disordered and that nothing will cure him but drawing two of his grinders and cauterising him twice on either temple. So do thou take this dinar and call him to thee, saying:—Thine ass is with me." Said the barber, "May I fast for a year, if I do not give him his ass in his fist!" Now he had with him two journeymen, so he said to one of them, "Go, heat the irons." Then the old woman went her way and the barber called to the donkey-boy,[202] saying, "Thine ass is with me, good fellow! come and take him, and as thou livest, I will give him into thy palm." So he came to him and the barber carried him into a dark room, where he knocked him down and the journeymen bound him hand and foot. Then the Maghrabi arose and pulled out two of his grinders and fired him on either temple; after which he let him go, and he rose and said, "O Moor, why hast thou used me with this usage?" Quoth the barber, "Thy mother told me that thou hadst taken cold whilst ill, and hadst lost thy reason, so that, whether sitting or standing or walking, thou wouldst say nothing but My ass! So here is thine ass in thy fist." Said the other, "Allah requite thee for pulling out my teeth." Then the barber told him all that the old 161 woman had related and he exclaimed, "Allah torment her!"; and the twain left the shop and went out, disputing. When the barber returned, he found his booth empty, for, whilst he was absent, the old woman had taken all that was therein and made off with it to her daughter, whom she acquainted with all that had befallen and all she had done. The barber, seeing his place plundered, caught hold of the donkey-boy and said to him, "Bring me thy mother." But he answered, saying, "She is not my mother; she is a sharper who hath cozened much people and stolen my ass." And lo! at this moment up came the dyer and the Jew and the young merchant, and seeing the Moorish barber holding on to the ass-driver who was fired on both temples, they said to him, "What hath befallen thee, O donkey-boy?" So he told them all that had betided him and the barber did the like; and the others in turn related to the Moor the tricks the old woman had played them. Then he shut up his shop and went with them to the office of the Police-master to whom they said, "We look to thee for our case and our coin."[203] Quoth the Wali, "And how many old women are there not in Baghdad! Say me, doth any of you know her?" Quoth the ass-man, "I do; so give me ten of thine officers." He gave them half a score archers and they all five went out, followed by the sergeants, and patrolled the city, till they met the old woman, when they laid hands on her and carrying her to the house of the Chief of Police, stood waiting under his office windows till he should come forth. Presently, the warders fell asleep, for excess of watching with their chief, and old Dalilah feigned to follow their example, till the ass-man and his fellows slept likewise, when she stole away from them and, going in to the Wali's Harim, kissed the hand of the mistress of the house and asked her, "Where is the Chief of Police?" The lady answered, "He is asleep; what wouldst thou with him?" Quoth Dalilah, "My husband is a merchant of chattels and gave me five Mamelukes to sell, whilst he went on a journey. The Master of Police met me and bought them of me for a thousand

dinars and two hundred for myself, saying:—Bring them to my house. So I have brought them."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman, entering the Harim of the Police-Master, said to his wife, "Verily the Wali bought of me five slaves for one thousand ducats and two hundred for myself, saying:—Bring them to my quarters. So I have brought them." Hearing the old woman's story she believed it and asked her, "Where are the slaves?" Dalilah replied, "O my lady, they are asleep under the palace window"; whereupon the dame looked out and seeing the Moorish barber clad in a Mameluke habit and the young merchant as he were a drunken Mameluke[204] and the Jew and the dyer and the ass-driver as they were shaven Mamelukes, said in herself, "Each of these white slaves is worth more than a thousand dinars." So she opened her chest and gave the old woman the thousand ducats, saying, "Fare thee forth now and come back anon; when my husband waketh, I will get thee the other two hundred dinars from him." Answered the old woman, "O my lady, an hundred of them are thine, under the sherbet-gugglet whereof thou drinkest,[205] and the other hundred do thou keep for me against I come back," presently adding, "Now let me out by the private door." So she let her out, and the Protector protected her and she made her way home to her daughter, to whom she related how she had gotten a thousand gold pieces and sold her five pursuers into slavery, ending with, "O my daughter, the one who troubleth me most is the ass-driver, for he knoweth me." Said Zaynab, "O my mother, abide quiet awhile and let what thou hast done suffice thee, for the crock shall not always escape the shock." When the Chief of Police awoke, his wife said to him, "I give thee joy of the five slaves thou hast bought of the old woman." Asked he, "What slaves?" And she answered, "Why dost thou deny it to me? Allah willing, they shall become like thee people of condition." Quoth he, "As my head liveth, I have bought no slaves! Who saith this?" Quoth she, "The old woman, the brokeress, from 163whom thou boughtest them; and thou didst promise her a thousand dinars for them and two hundred for herself." Cried he, "Didst thou give her the money?" And she replied, "Yes; for I saw the slaves with my own eyes, and on each is a suit of clothes worth a thousand dinars; so I sent out to bid the sergeants have an eye to them." The Wali went out and, seeing the five plaintiffs, said to the officers, "Where are the five slaves we bought for a thousand dinars of the old woman?" Said they, "There are no slaves here; only these five men, who found the old woman, and seized her and brought her hither. We fell asleep, whilst waiting for thee, and she stole away and entered the Harim. Presently out came a maid and asked us:—Are the five with you with whom the old woman came?"; and we answered, "Yes." Cried the Master of Police, "By Allah, this is the biggest of swindles!"; and

the five men said, “We look to thee for our goods.” Quoth the Wali, “The old woman, your mistress, sold you to me for a thousand gold pieces.” Quoth they, “That were not allowed of Allah; we are free-born men and may not be sold, and we appeal from thee to the Caliph.” Rejoined the Master of Police, “None showed her the way to the house save you, and I will sell you to the galleys for two hundred dinars apiece.” Just then, behold, up came the Emir Hasan Sharr al-Tarik who, on his return from his journey had found his wife stripped of her clothes and jewellery and heard from her all that had passed; whereupon quoth he, “The Master of Police shall answer me this” and repairing to him, said, “Dost thou suffer old women to go round about the town and cozen folk of their goods? This is thy duty and I look to thee for my wife’s property.” Then said he to the five men, “What is the case with you?” So they told him their stories and he said, “Ye are wronged men,” and turning to the Master of Police, asked him, “Why dost thou arrest them?” Answered he, “None brought the old wretch to my house save these five, so that she took a thousand dinars of my money and sold them to my women.” Whereupon the five cried, “O Emir Hasan, be thou our advocate in this cause.” Then said the Master of Police to the Emir, “Thy wife’s goods are at my charge and I will be surety for the old woman. But which of you knoweth her?” They cried, “We all know her: send ten apparitors with us, and we will take her.” So he gave them ten men, and the ass-driver said to them, “Follow me, for I should know her with blue 164 eyes.”[206] Then they fared forth and lo! they meet old Dalilah coming out of a by-street: so they at once laid hands on her and brought her to the office of the Wali who asked her, “Where are the people’s goods?” But she answered, saying, “I have neither gotten them nor seen them.” Then he cried to the gaoler, “Take her with thee and clap her in gaol till the morning;” but he replied, “I will not take her nor will I imprison her lest she play a trick on me and I be answerable for her.” So the Master of Police mounted and rode out with Dalilah and the rest to the bank of the Tigris, where he bade the lamp-lighter crucify her by her hair. He drew her up by the pulley and bound her on the cross; after which the Master of Police set ten men to guard her and went home. Presently, the night fell down and sleep overcame the watchmen. Now a certain Badawi had heard one man say to a friend, “Praise be to Allah for thy safe return! Where hast thou been all this time?” Replied the other, “In Baghdad where I broke my fast on honey-fritters.”[207] Quoth the Badawi to himself, “Needs must I go to Baghdad and eat honey-fritters therein”; for in all his life he had never entered Baghdad nor seen fritters of the sort. So he mounted his stallion and rode on towards Baghdad, saying in his mind, “’Tis a fine thing to eat honey-fritters! On the honour of an Arab, I will break my fast with honey-fritters and naught else!”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the wild Arab mounted horse and made for Baghdad saying in his mind, "'Tis a fine thing to eat honey-fritters! On the honour of an Arab I will break my fast with honey-fritters and naught else;" and he rode on till he came to the place where Dalilah was 165crucified and she heard him mutter these words. So he went up to her and said to her, "What art thou?" Quoth she, "I throw myself on thy protection, O Shaykh of the Arabs!" and quoth he, "Allah indeed protect thee! But what is the cause of thy crucifixion?" Said she, "I have an enemy, an oilman, who frieth fritters, and I stopped to buy some of him, when I chanced to spit and my spittle fell on the fritters. So he complained of me to the Governor, who commanded to crucify me, saying:—I adjudge that ye take ten pounds of honey-fritters and feed her therewith upon the cross. If she eat them, let her go, but if not, leave her hanging. And my stomach will not brook sweet things." Cried the Badawi, "By the honour of the Arabs, I departed not the camp but that I might taste of honey-fritters! I will eat them for thee." Quoth she, "None may eat them, except he be hung up in my place." So he fell into the trap and unbound her; whereupon she bound him in her stead, after she had stripped him of his clothes and turband and put them on; then covering herself with his burnous and mounting his horse, she rode to her house, where Zaynab asked her, "What meaneth this plight?"; and she answered, "They crucified me;" and told her all that had befallen her with the Badawi. This is how it fared with her; but as regards the watchmen, the first who woke roused his companions and they saw that the day had broken. So one of them raised his eyes and cried, "Dalilah." Replied the Badawi, "By Allah! I have not eaten all night. Have ye brought the honey-fritters?" All exclaimed, "This is a man and a Badawi," and one of them asked him, "O Badawi, where is Dalilah and who loosed her?" He answered, "'Twas I; she shall not eat the honey-fritters against her will; for her soul abhorreth them." So they knew that the Arab was ignorant of her case, whom she had cozened, and said to one another, "Shall we flee or abide the accomplishment of that which Allah hath written for us?" As they were talking, up came the Chief of Police, with all the folk whom the old woman had cheated, and said to the guards, "Arise, loose Dalilah." Quoth the Badawi, "We have not eaten to-night. Hast thou brought the honey-fritters?" Whereupon the Wali raised his eyes to the cross and seeing the Badawi hung up in the stead of the old woman, said to the watchmen, "What is this?" "Pardon, O our lord!" "Tell me what hath happened." "We were weary with watching with thee on guard and said:—Dalilah is crucified. So we fell asleep, and when we awoke, we found the Badawi hung up in her 166room; and we are at thy mercy." "O folk, Allah's pardon be upon you! She is indeed a clever cheat!" Then they unbound the Badawi, who laid hold of the Master of Police, saying, "Allah succour the Caliph against thee! I look to none but thee for my horse and clothes!" So the Wali questioned him and he told him what had passed between Dalilah and himself. The magistrate marvelled and asked him, "Why didst thou release her?"; and

the Badawi answered, “I knew not that she was a felon.” Then said the others, “O Chief of Police, we look to thee in the matter of our goods; for we delivered the old woman into thy hands and she was in thy guard; and we cite thee before the Divan of the Caliph.” Now the Emir Hasan had gone up to the Divan, when in came the Wali with the Badawi and the five others, saying, “Verily, we are wronged men!” “Who hath wronged you?” asked the Caliph; so each came forward in turn and told his story, after which said the Master of Police, “O Commander of the Faithful, the old woman cheated me also and sold me these five men as slaves for a thousand dinars, albeit they are free-born.” Quoth the Prince of True Believers, “I take upon myself all that you have lost”; adding to the Master of Police, “I charge thee with the old woman.” But he shook his collar, saying, “O Commander of the Faithful, I will not answer for her; for, after I had hung her on the cross, she tricked this Badawi and, when he loosed her, she tied him up in her room and made off with his clothes and horse.” Quoth the Caliph, “Whom but thee shall I charge with her?”; and quoth the Wali, “Charge Ahmad al-Danaf, for he hath a thousand dinars a month and one-and-forty followers, at a monthly wage of an hundred dinars each.” So the Caliph said, “Harkye, Captain Ahmad!” “At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful,” said he; and the Caliph cried, “I charge thee to bring the old woman before us.” Replied Ahmad, “I will answer for her.” Then the Caliph kept the Badawi and the five with him,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventh Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph said to Calamity Ahmad, “I charge thee to bring the old woman before us,” he said, “I will answer for her, O Commander 167 of the Faithful!” Then the Caliph kept the Badawi and the five with him, whilst Ahmad and his men went down to their hall,[208] saying to one another, “How shall we lay hands on her, seeing that there are many old women in the town?” And quoth Ahmad to Hasan Shuman, “What counsellest thou?” Whereupon quoth one of them, by name Ali Kitf al-Jamal,[209] to al-Danaf, “Of what dost thou take counsel with Hasan Shuman? Is the Pestilent one any great shakes?” Said Hasan, “O Ali, why dost thou disparage me? By the Most Great Name, I will not company with thee at this time!”; and he rose and went out in wrath. Then said Ahmad, “O my braves, let every sergeant take ten men, each to his own quarter and search for Dalilah.” All did his bidding, Ali included, and they said, “Ere we disperse let us agree to rendezvous in the quarter Al-Kalkh.” It was noised abroad in the city that Calamity Ahmad had undertaken to lay hands on Dalilah the Wily, and Zaynab said to her, “O my mother, an thou be indeed a trickstress, do thou befool Ahmad al-Danaf and his company.” Answered Dalilah, “I fear none save Hasan Shuman;” and Zaynab said, “By the life of my brow-lock, I will assuredly get thee the clothes of all the one-and-forty.” Then she dressed and veiled herself and going to a certain

druggist, who had a saloon with two doors, salamed to him and gave him an ashrafi and said to him, “Take this gold piece as a douceur for thy saloon and let it to me till the end of the day.” So he gave her the keys and she fetched carpets and so forth on the stolen ass and furnishing the place, set on each raised pavement a tray of meat and wine. Then she went out and stood at the door, with her face unveiled and behold, up came Ali Kitf al-Jamal and his men. She kissed his hand; and he fell in love with her, seeing her to be a handsome girl, and said to her, “What dost thou want?” Quoth she, “Art thou Captain Ahmad al-Danaf?”; and quoth he, “No, but I am of his company and my name is Ali Camel-shoulder.” Asked she, “Whither fare you?”; and he answered, “We go about in quest of a sharkish old woman, who hath stolen folk’s good, and we mean to lay hands on her. But who art thou and what is thy business?” She replied, “My father was a taverner at Mosul and he died and left me much money. So I came hither, for fear of the Dignities, and asked 168 the people who would protect me, to which they replied:—None but Ahmad al-Danaf.” Said the men, “From this day forth, thou art under his protection”; and she replied, “Hearten me by eating a bit and drinking a sup of water.”[210] They consented and entering, ate and drank till they were drunken, when she drugged them with Bhang and stripped them of their clothes and arms; and on like wise she did with the three other companions. Presently, Calamity Ahmad went out to look for Dalilah, but found her not, neither set eyes on any of his followers, and went on till he came to the door where Zaynab was standing. She kissed his hand and he looked on her and fell in love with her. Quoth she, “Art thou Captain Ahmad al-Danaf?”; and quoth he, “Yes: who art thou?” She replied, “I am a stranger from Mosul. My father was a vintner at that place and he died and left me much money wherewith I came to this city, for fear of the powers that be, and opened this tavern. The Master of Police hath imposed a tax on me, but it is my desire to put myself under thy protection and pay thee what the police would take of me, for thou hast the better right to it.” Quoth he, “Do not pay him aught: thou shalt have my protection and welcome.” Then quoth she, “Please to heal my heart and eat of my victual.” So he entered and ate and drank wine, till he could not sit upright, when she drugged him and took his clothes and arms. Then she loaded her purchase on the Badawi’s horse and the donkey-boy’s ass and made off with it, after she had aroused Ali Kitf al-Jamal. Camel-shoulder awoke and found himself naked and saw Ahmad and his men drugged and stripped: so he revived them with the counter-drug and they awoke and found themselves naked. Quoth Calamity Ahmad, “O lads, what is this? We were going to catch her, and lo! this strumpet hath caught us! How Hasan Shuman will rejoice over us! But we will wait till it is dark and then go away.” Meanwhile Pestilence Hasan said to the hall-keeper, “Where are the men?”; and as he asked, up they came naked; and he recited these two couplets[211]:—

169 Men in their purposes are much alike, ✿ But in their issues difference comes to light:

Of men some wise are, others simple souls; ✿ As of the stars some dull, some pearly bright.

Then he looked at them and asked, “Who hath played you this trick and made you naked?”; and they answered, “We went in quest of an old woman, and a pretty girl stripped us.” Quoth Hasan, “She hath done right well.” They asked, “Dost thou know her?”; and he answered, “Yes, I know her and the old trot too.” Quoth they, “What shall we say to the Caliph?”; and quoth he, “O Danaf, do thou shake thy collar before him, and he will say:—Who is answerable for her; and if he ask why thou hast not caught her; say thou:—We know her not; but charge Hasan Shuman with her. And if he give her into my charge, I will lay hands on her.” So they slept that night and on the morrow they went up to the Caliph’s Divan and kissed ground before him. Quoth he, “Where is the old woman, O Captain Ahmad?” But he shook his collar. The Caliph asked him why he did so, and he answered, “I know her not; but do thou charge Hasan Shuman to lay hands on her, for he knoweth her and her daughter also.” Then Hasan interceded for her with the Caliph, saying, “Indeed, she hath not played off these tricks, because she coveted the folk’s stuff, but to show her cleverness and that of her daughter, to the intent that thou shouldst continue her husband’s stipend to her and that of her father to her daughter. So an thou wilt spare her life I will fetch her to thee.” Cried the Caliph, “By the life of my ancestors, if she restore the people’s goods, I will pardon her on thine intercession!” And said the Pestilence, “Give me a pledge, O Prince of True Believers!” Whereupon Al-Rashid gave him the kerchief of pardon. So Hasan repaired to Dalilah’s house and called to her. Her daughter Zaynab answered him and he asked her, “Where is thy mother?” “Upstairs,” she answered; and he said, “Bid her take the people’s goods and come with me to the presence of the Caliph; for I have brought her the kerchief of pardon, and if she will not come with a good grace, let her blame only herself.” So Dalilah came down and tying the kerchief about her neck gave him the people’s goods on the donkey-boy’s ass and the Badawi’s horse. Quoth he, “There remain the clothes of my Chief and his men”; and quoth she, “By the Most Great Name, ’twas not I who stripped them!” Rejoined Hasan, “Thou sayst sooth, it was thy daughter 170 Zaynab’s doing, and this was a good turn she did thee.” Then he carried her to the Divan and laying the people’s goods and stuff before the Caliph, set the old trot in his presence. As soon as he saw her, he bade throw her down on the carpet of blood, whereat she cried, “I cast myself on thy protection, O Shuman!” So he rose and kissing the Caliph’s hands, said, “Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful! Indeed, thou gavest me the kerchief of pardon.” Said the Prince of True Believers, “I pardon her for thy sake: come hither, O old woman; what is thy name?” “My name is Wily Dalilah,” answered she, and the Caliph said, “Thou art indeed crafty and full of guile.” Whence she was dubbed Dalilah the Wily One. Then quoth he, “Why hast thou played all these tricks on the folk and wearied our hearts?” and quoth she, “I did it not of lust for their goods, but because I had heard of the tricks which Ahmad al-Danaf and Hasan Shuman played in Baghdad and said to myself:—I too will do the like. And now I have returned the folk their goods.” But the ass-driver rose and said, “I invoke Allah’s law[2121] between me

and her; for it sufficed her not to take my ass, but she must needs egg on the Moorish barber to tear out my eye-teeth and fire me on both temples."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the donkey-boy rose and cried out, "I invoke Allah's law between me and her; for it sufficed her not to take my ass, but she must needs egg on the barber to tear out my eye-teeth and fire me on both temples;" thereupon the Caliph bade give him an hundred dinars and ordered the dyer the like, saying, "Go; set up thy dyery again." So they called down blessings on his head and went away. The Badawi also took his clothes and horse and departed, saying, "'Tis henceforth unlawful and forbidden me to enter Baghdad and eat honey-fritters." And the others took their goods and went away. Then said the Caliph, "Ask a boon of 171 me, O Dalilah!"; and she said, "Verily, my father was governor of the carrier-pigeons to thee and I know how to rear the birds; and my husband was town-captain of Baghdad. Now I wish to have the reversion of my husband and my daughter wisheth to have that of her father." The Caliph granted both their requests and she said, "I ask of thee that I may be portress of thy Khan." Now he had built a Khan of three stories, for the merchants to lodge in, and had assigned to its service forty slaves and also forty dogs he had brought from the King of the Sulaymániyah,[213] when he deposed him; and there was in the Khan a cook-slave, who cooked for the chattels and fed the hounds for which he let make collars. Said the Caliph, "O Dalilah, I will write thee a patent of guardianship of the Khan, and if aught be lost therefrom, thou shalt be answerable for it." "'Tis well," replied she; "but do thou lodge my daughter in the pavilion over the door of the Khan, for it hath terraced roofs, and carrier-pigeons may not be reared to advantage save in an open space." The Caliph granted her this also and she and her daughter removed to the pavilion in question, where Zaynab hung up the one-and-forty dresses of Calamity Ahmad and his company. Moreover, they delivered to Dalilah the forty pigeons which carried the royal messages, and the Caliph appointed the Wily One mistress over the forty slaves and charged them to obey her. She made the place of her sitting behind the door of the Khan, and every day she used to go up to the Caliph's Divan, lest he should need to send a message by pigeon-post and stay there till eventide whilst the forty slaves stood on guard at the Khan; and when darkness came on they loosed the forty dogs that they might keep watch over the place by night. Such were the doings of Dalilah the Wily One in Baghdad and much like them were

THE ADVENTURES OF MERCURY ALI OF CAIRO.[214]

Now as regards the works of Mercury 'Alí; there lived once at Cairo,[215] in the days of Saláh the Egyptian, who was Chief of the Cairo Police and had forty men under him, a sharper named Ali, for whom the Master of Police used to set snares and think that he had fallen therein; but, when they sought for him, they found that he had fled like zaybak, or quicksilver, wherefore they dubbed him Ali Zaybak or Mercury Ali of Cairo. Now one day, as he sat with his men in his hall, his heart became heavy within him and his breast was straitened. The hall-keeper saw him sitting with frowning face and said to him, "What aileth thee, O my Chief? If thy breast be straitened take a turn in the streets of Cairo, for assuredly walking in her markets will do away with thy irk." So he rose up and went out and threaded the streets awhile, but only increased in cark and care. Presently, he came to a wine-shop and said to himself, "I will go in and drink myself drunken." So he entered and seeing seven rows of people in the shop, said, "Harkye, taverner! I will not sit except by myself." Accordingly, the vintner placed him in a chamber alone and set strong pure wine before him whereof he drank till he lost his senses. Then he sallied forth again and walked till he came to the road called Red, whilst the people left the street clear before him, out of fear of him. Presently, he turned and saw a water-carrier trudging along, with his skin and gugglet, crying out and saying, "O exchange! There is no drink but what raisins make, there is no love-delight but what of the lover we take and none sitteth in the place of honour save the sensible freke[216]!" So he said to him, "Here, give me to drink!" The water-carrier looked at him and gave him the gugglet which he took and gazing into it, shook it up and lastly poured it out on the ground. 173 Asked the water-carrier, "Why dost thou not drink?"; and he answered, saying, "Give me to drink." So the man filled the cup a second time and he took it and shook it and emptied it on the ground; and thus he did a third time. Quoth the water-carrier, "An thou wilt not drink, I will be off." And Ali said, "Give me to drink." So he filled the cup a fourth time and gave it to him; and he drank and gave the man a dinar. The water-carrier looked at him with disdain and said, belittling him, "Good luck to thee! Good luck to thee, my lad! Little folk are one thing and great folk another!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the water-carrier receiving the dinar, looked at the giver with disdain and said, "Good luck to thee! Good luck to thee! Little folk are one thing and great folk another." Now when Mercury Ali heard this, he caught hold of the man's gaberdine and drawing on him a poignard of price, such an one as that whereof the poet speaketh in these two couplets:—

Watered steel-blade, the world perfection calls, ✿ Drunk with the viper poison foes appals,
Cuts lively, burns the blood whene'er it falls; ✿ And picks up gems from pave of marble halls;[217]

cried to him, "O Shaykh, speak reasonably to me! Thy water-skin is worth if dear three dirhams, and the gugglets I emptied on the ground held a pint or so of water."

Replied the water-carrier "'Tis well," and Ali rejoined, "I gave thee a golden ducat: why, then dost thou belittle me? Say me, hast thou ever seen any more valiant than I or more generous than I?" Answered the water-carrier; "I have indeed, seen one more valiant than thou and eke more generous than thou; for, never, since women bare [174]children, was there on earth's face a brave man who was not generous." Quoth Ali, "and who is he thou deemest braver and more generous than I?" Quoth the other, "Thou must know that I have had a strange adventure. My father was a Shaykh of the Water-carriers who give drink in Cairo and, when he died, he left me five male camels, a he-mule, a shop and a house; but the poor man is never satisfied; or, if he be satisfied he dieth. So I said to myself:—I will go up to Al-Hijaz; and, taking a string of camels, bought goods on tick, till I had run in debt for five hundred ducats, all of which I lost in the pilgrimage. Then I said in my mind:—If I return to Cairo the folk will clap me in jail for their goods. So I fared with the pilgrims-caravan of Damascus to Aleppo and thence I went on to Baghdad, where I sought out the Shaykh of the Water-carriers of the city and finding his house I went in and repeated the opening chapter of the Koran to him. He questioned me of my case and I told him all that had betided me, whereupon he assigned me a shop and gave me a water-skin and gear. So I sallied forth a-morn trusting in Allah to provide, and went round about the city. I offered the gugglet to one, that he might drink; but he cried, I have eaten naught whereon to drink; for a niggard invited me this day and set two gugglets before me; so I said to him:—O son of the sordid, hast thou given me aught to eat that thou offerest me drink after it? Wherefore wend thy ways, O water-carrier, till I have eaten somewhat: then come and give me to drink." Thereupon I accosted another and he said:—Allah provide thee! And so I went on till noon, without taking hansel, and I said to myself, Would Heaven I had never come to Baghdad! Presently, I saw the folk running as fast as they could; so I followed them and behold, a long file of men riding two and two and clad in steel, with double neck-rings and felt bonnets and burnouses and swords and bucklers. I asked one of the folk whose suite this was, and he answered, That of Captain Ahmad al-Danaf. Quoth I, And what is he? and quoth the other, He is town-captain of Baghdad and her Divan, and to him is committed the care of the suburbs. He getteth a thousand dinars a month from the Caliph and Hasan Shuman hath the like. Moreover, each of his men draweth an hundred dinars a month; and they are now returning to their barrack from the Divan. And lo! Calamity Ahmad saw me and cried out, Come give me drink. So I filled the cup and gave it him, and he shook it and emptied it [175]out, like unto thee; and thus he did a second time. Then I filled the cup a third time and he took a draught as thou diddest; after which he asked me, O water-carrier, whence comest thou? And I answered, From Cairo, and he, Allah keep Cairo and her citizens! What may bring thee thither? So I told him my story and gave him to understand that I was a debtor fleeing from debt and distress. He cried, Thou art welcome to Baghdad; then he gave me five dinars and said to his men, For

the love of Allah be generous to him. So each of them gave me a dinar and Ahmad said to me, O Shaykh, what while thou abidest in Baghdad thou shalt have of us the like every time thou givest us to drink. Accordingly, I paid them frequent visits and good ceased not to come to me from the folk till, one day, reckoning up the profit I had made of them, I found it a thousand dinars and said to myself, The best thing thou canst do is to return to Egypt. So I went to Ahmad's house and kissed his hand, and he said, What seekest thou? Quoth I, I have a mind to depart; and I repeated these two couplets:—

Sojourn of stranger, in whatever land, ✿ Is like the castle based upon the wind:

The breaths of breezes level all he raised. ✿ And so on homeward-way's the stranger's mind.

I added, The caravan is about to start for Cairo and I wish to return to my people. So he gave me a she-mule and an hundred dinars and said to me, I desire to send somewhat by thee, O Shaykh! Dost thou know the people of Cairo? Yes, answered I;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Tenth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ahmad al-Danaf had given the water-carrier a she-mule and an hundred dinars and said to him, "I desire to send a trust by thee. Dost thou know the people of Cairo?" I answered (quoth the water-carrier), "Yes; and he said, Take this letter and carry it to Ali Zaybak of Cairo and say to him, Thy Captain saluteth thee and he is now with the Caliph. So I took the letter and journeyed back to Cairo, where I paid my debts and plied my water-carrying 176 trade; but I have not delivered the letter, because I know not the abode of Mercury Ali." Quoth Ali, "O elder, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear: I am that Ali, the first of the lads of Captain Ahmad: here with the letter!" So he gave him the missive and he opened it and read these two couplets:—

"O adornment of beauties to thee write I ✿ On a paper that flies as the winds go by:

Could I fly, I had flown to their arms in desire, ✿ But a bird with cut wings; how shall ever he fly?"

"But after salutation from Captain Ahmad al-Danaf to the eldest of his sons, Mercury Ali of Cairo. Thou knowest that I tormented Salah al-Din the Cairene and befooled him till I buried him alive and reduced his lads to obey me, and amongst them Ali Kitf al-Jamal; and I am now become town-captain of Baghdad in the Divan of the Caliph who hath made me overseer of the suburbs. An thou be still mindful of our covenant, come to me; haply thou shalt play some trick in Baghdad which may promote thee to the Caliph's service, so he may appoint thee stipends and allowances and assign thee a lodging, which is what thou wouldst see and so peace be on thee." When Ali read this letter, he kissed it and laying it on his head, gave the water-carrier ten dinars; after which he returned to his barracks and told his comrades and said to them, "I commend you one to other." Then he changed all his clothes and, donning a travelling cloak and a tarboosh, took a case, containing a spear of bamboo-cane, four-

and-twenty cubits long, made in several pieces, to fit into one another. Quoth his lieutenant, “Wilt thou go a journey when the treasury is empty?”; and quoth Ali, “When I reach Damascus I will send you what shall suffice you.” Then he set out and fared on, till he overtook a caravan about to start, whereof were the Shahbandar, or Provost of the Merchants, and forty other traders. They had all loaded their beasts, except the Provost, whose loads lay upon the ground, and Ali heard his caravan-leader, who was a Syrian, say to the muleteers, “Bear a hand, one of you!” But they reviled him and abused him. Quoth Ali in himself, “None will suit me so well to travel withal as this leader.” Now Ali was beardless and well-favoured; so he went up to and saluted the leader who welcomed him and said, “What seekest thou?” Replied Ali, “O my uncle, I see 177 thee alone with forty mule-loads of goods; but why hast thou not brought hands to help thee?” Rejoined the other, “O my son, I hired two lads and clothed them and put in each one’s pocket two hundred dinars; and they helped me till we came to the Dervishes’ Convent,[218] when they ran away.” Quoth Ali, “Whither are you bound?” and quoth the Syrian, “to Aleppo,” when Ali said, “I will lend thee a hand.” Accordingly they loaded the beasts and the Provost mounted his she-mule and they set out he rejoicing in Ali; and presently he loved him and made much of him and on this wise they fared on till nightfall, when they dismounted and ate and drank. Then came the time of sleep and Ali lay down on his side and made as if he slept; whereupon the Syrian stretched himself near him and Ali rose from his stead and sat down at the door of the merchant’s pavilion. Presently, the Syrian turned over and would have taken Ali in his arms, but found him not and said to himself, “Haply he hath promised another and he hath taken him; but I have the first right and another night I will keep him.” Now Ali continued sitting at the door of the tent till nigh upon daybreak, when he returned and lay down near the Syrian, who found him by his side, when he awoke, and said to himself, “If I ask him where he hath been, he will leave me and go away.” So he dissembled with him and they went on till they came to a forest, in which was a cave, where dwelt a rending lion. Now whenever a caravan passed, they would draw lots among themselves and him on whom the lot fell they would throw to the beast. So they drew lots and the lot fell not save upon the Provost of the Merchants. And lo! the lion cut off their way awaiting his pray, wherefore the Provost was sore distressed and said to the leader, “Allah disappoint the fortunes[219] of the far one and bring his journey to naught! I charge thee, after my death, give my loads to my children.” Quoth Ali the Clever One, “What meaneth all this?” So they told him the case and he said, “Why do ye run from the tom-cat of the desert? I warrant you I will kill him.” So the Syrian went to the Provost and told him of this and he said, “If he slay him, I will give him 178 a thousand dinars,” and said the other merchants, “We will reward him likewise one and all.” With this Ali put off his mantle and there appeared upon him a suit of steel; then he took a chopper of steel[220] and opening it turned the screw; after which he went forth alone and standing

in the road before the lion, cried out to him. The lion ran at him, but Ali of Cairo smote him between the eyes with his chopper and cut him in sunder, whilst the caravan-leader and the merchants looked on. Then said he to the leader, "Have no fear, O nuncle!" and the Syrian answered, saying, "O my son, I am thy servant for all future time." Then the Provost embraced him and kissed him between the eyes and gave him the thousand dinars, and each of the other merchants gave him twenty dinars. He deposited all the coin with the Provost and they slept that night till the morning, when they set out again, intending for Baghdad, and fared on till they came to the Lion's Clump and the Wady of Dogs, where lay a villain Badawi, a brigand and his tribe, who sallied forth on them. The folk fled from the highwaymen, and the Provost said, "My monies are lost!"; when, lo! up came Ali in a buff coat hung with bells, and bringing out his long lance, fitted the pieces together. Then he seized one of the Arab's horses and mounting it cried out to the Badawi Chief, saying, "Come out to fight me with spears!" Moreover he shook his bells and the Arab's mare took fright at the noise and Ali struck the chief's spear and broke it. Then he smote him on the neck and cut off his head.[221] When the Badawin saw their chief fall, they ran at Ali, but he cried out, saying, "Allaho Akbar—God is Most Great!"—and, falling on them broke them and put them to flight. Then he raised the Chief's head on his spear-point and returned to the merchants, who rewarded him liberally and continued their journey, till they reached Baghdad. Thereupon Ali took his money from the Provost and committed it to the Syrian caravan-leader, saying, "When thou returnest to Cairo, ask for my barracks and give these monies to my deputy." Then he slept that night and on the morrow he entered the city and threading the streets enquired for Calamity 179 Ahmad's quarters; but none would direct him thereto.[222] So he walked on, till he came to the square Al-Nafz, where he saw children at play, and amongst them a lad called Ahmad al-Lakít,[223] and said to himself, "O my Ali, thou shalt not get news of them but from their little ones." Then he turned and seeing a sweetmeat-seller bought Halwá of him and called to the children; but Ahmad al-Lakit drove the rest away and coming up to him, said, "What seekest thou?" Quoth Ali, "I had a son and he died and I saw him in a dream asking for sweetmeats: wherefore I have bought them and wish to give each child a bit." So saying, he gave Ahmad a slice, and he looked at it and seeing a dinar sticking to it, said, "Begone! I am no catamite: seek another than I." Quoth Ali, "O my son, none but a sharp fellow taketh the hire, even as he is a sharp one who giveth it. I have sought all day for Ahmad al-Danaf's barrack, but none would direct me thereto; so this dinar is thine an thou wilt guide me thither." Quoth the lad, "I will run before thee and do thou keep up with me, till I come to the place, when I will catch up a pebble with my foot[224] and kick it against the door; and so shalt thou know it." Accordingly he ran on and Ali after him, till they came to the place, when the boy caught up a pebble between his toes and kicked it against the door so as to make the place known.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ahmad the Abortion had made known the place, Ali laid hold of him and would have taken the dinar from him, but could not; so he said to him, "Go: thou deservest largesse for thou art a sharp fellow, whole of wit and stout of heart. Inshallah, if I become a [180]captain to the Caliph, I will make thee one of my lads." Then the boy made off and Ali Zaybak went up to the door and knocked; whereupon quoth Ahmad al-Danaf, "O doorkeeper, open the door; that is the knock of Quicksilver Ali the Cairene." So he opened the door and Ali entered and saluted with the salam Ahmad who embraced him, and the Forty greeted him. Then Calamity Ahmad gave him a suit of clothes, saying, "When the Caliph made me captain, he clothed my lads and I kept this suit[225] for thee." Then they seated him in the place of honour and setting on meat they ate well and drink they drank hard and made merry till the morning, when Ahmad said to Ali, "Beware thou walk not about the streets of Baghdad, but sit thee still in this barrack." Asked Ali, "Why so? Have I come hither to be shut up? No, I came to look about me and divert myself." Replied Ahmad, "O my son, think not that Baghdad be like Cairo. Baghdad is the seat of the Caliphate; sharpers abound therein and rogueries spring therefrom as worts spring out of earth." So Ali abode in the barrack three days when Ahmad said to him, "I wish to present thee to the Caliph, that he may assign thee an allowance." But he replied, "When the time cometh." So he let him go his own way. One day, as Ali sat in the barrack, his breast became straitened and his soul troubled and he said in himself, "Come, let us up and thread the ways of Baghdad and broaden my bosom." So he went out and walked from street to street, till he came to the middle bazar, where he entered a cook-shop and dined;[226] after which he went out to wash his hands. Presently he saw forty slaves, with felt bonnets and steel cutlasses, come walking, two by two; and last of all came Dalilah the Wily, mounted on a she-mule, with a gilded helmet which bore a ball of polished steel, and clad in a coat of mail, and such like. Now she was returning from the Divan to the Khan of which she was portress; and when she espied Ali, she looked at him fixedly and saw that he resembled Calamity Ahmad in height and breadth. Moreover, he was clad in a striped [181]Abá-cloak and a burnous, with a steel cutlass by his side and similar gear, while valour shone from his eyes, testifying in favour of him and not in disfavour of him. So she returned to the Khan and going in to her daughter, fetched a table of sand, and struck a geomantic figure, whereby she discovered that the stranger's name was Ali of Cairo and that his fortune overcame her fortune and that of her daughter. Asked Zaynab, "O my mother, what hath befallen thee that thou hast recourse to the sand-table?" Answered Dalilah, "O my daughter, I have seen this day a young man who resembleth Calamity Ahmad, and I fear lest he come to hear how thou didst strip Ahmad and his men and enter the Khan and play us a trick, in revenge for what we did with his chief and the forty; for methinks he has taken up his lodging in al-Danaf's barrack." Zaynab rejoined, "What

is this? Methinks thou hast taken his measure." Then she donned her fine clothes and went out into the streets. When the people saw her, they all made love to her and she promised and sware and listened and coquetted and passed from market to market, till she saw Ali the Cairene coming, when she went up to him and rubbed her shoulder against him. Then she turned and said, "Allah give long life to folk of discrimination!" Quoth he, "How goodly is thy form! To whom dost thou belong?"; and quoth she, "To the gallant[227] like thee;" and he said, "Art thou wife or spinster?" "Married," said she. Asked Ali, "Shall it be in my lodging or thine?"[228] and she answered, "I am a merchant's daughter and a merchant's wife and in all my life I have never been out of doors till to-day, and my only reason was that when I made ready food and thought to eat, I had no mind thereto without company. When I saw thee, love of thee entered my heart: so wilt thou deign solace my soul and eat a mouthful with me?" Quoth he, "Whoso is invited, let him accept." Thereupon she went on and he followed her from street to street, but presently he bethought himself and said, "What wilt thou do and thou a stranger? Verily 'tis said:—Whoso doth whoredom in his strangerhood, Allah will send him 182 back disappointed. But I will put her off from thee with fair words." So he said to her, "Take this dinar and appoint me a day other than this;" and she said, "By the Mighty Name, it may not be but thou shalt go home with me as my guest this very day and I will take thee to fast friend." So he followed her till she came to a house with a lofty porch and a wooden bolt on the door and said to him, "Open this lock."[229] Asked he "Where is the key?"; and she answered, "'Tis lost." Quoth he, "Whoso openeth a lock without a key is a knave whom it behoveth the ruler to punish, and I know not how to open doors without keys?[230]" With this she raised her veil and showed him her face, whereat he took one glance of eyes that cost him a thousand sighs. Then she let fall her veil on the lock and repeating over it the names of the mother of Moses, opened it without a key and entered. He followed her and saw swords and steel-weapons hanging up; and she put off her veil and sat down with him. Quoth he to himself, "Accomplish what Allah hath decreed to thee," and bent over her, to take a kiss of her cheek; but she caught the kiss upon her palm, saying, "This beseemeth not but by night." Then she brought a tray of food and wine, and they ate and drank; after which she rose and drawing water from the well, poured it from the ewer over his hands, whilst he washed them. Now whilst they were on this wise, she cried out and beat upon her breast, saying, "My husband had a signet-ring of ruby, which was pledged to him for five hundred dinars, and I put it on; but 'twas too large for me, so I straitened it with wax, and when I let down the bucket,[231] that ring must have dropped into the well. So turn thy face to the door, the while I doff my dress and go down into the well and fetch it." Quoth Ali, "'Twere shame on me that thou shouldst go down there I being present; none shall do it save I." So he put off his clothes and tied the rope about himself and she let him down into the well. Now there was much water therein and she said to him, "The rope is too short; loose thyself and drop down." So he did himself loose from the rope and

dropped into the water, in which he sank fathoms deep without touching bottom; whilst she donned her mantilla and taking his clothes, returned to her mother——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ali of Cairo was in the well, Zaynab donned her mantilla and, taking his clothes, returned to her mother and said, "I have stripped Ali the Egyptian and cast him into the Emir Hasan's well, whence alas for his chance of escaping!"[232] Presently, the Emir Hasan, the master of the house, who had been absent at the Divan, came home and, finding the door open, said to his Syce, "Why didst thou not draw the bolt?" "O my lord," replied the groom, "indeed I locked it with my own hand." The Emir cried, "As my head liveth, some robber hath entered my house!" Then he went in and searched, but found none and said to the groom, "Fill the ewer, that I may make the Wuzu-ablution." So the man lowered the bucket into the well but, when he drew it up, he found it heavy and looking down, saw something therein sitting; whereupon he let it fall into the water and cried out, saying, "O my lord, an Ifrit came up to me out of the well!" Replied the Emir, "Go and fetch four doctors of the law, that they may read the Koran over him, till he go away." So he fetched the doctors and the Emir said to them, "Sit round this well and exorcise me this Ifrit." They did as he bade them; after which the groom and another servant lowered the bucket again and Ali clung to it and hid himself under it patiently till he came near the top, when he sprang out and landed among the doctors, who fell a-cuffing one another and crying out, "Ifrit! Ifrit!" The Emir looked at Ali and seeing him a young man, said to him, "Art thou a thief?" "No," replied Ali; "Then what dost thou in the well?" asked the Emir; and Ali answered, "I was asleep and dreamt a wet dream;[233] so I went down to the Tigris to wash myself and dived, whereupon the current carried me under the earth and I came up in this well." Quoth the other, "Tell the truth."[234] So Ali told him all that had befallen him, and the Emir gave him an old 184gown and let him go. He returned to Calamity Ahmad's lodging and related to him all that had passed. Quoth Ahmad, "Did I not warn thee that Baghdad is full of women who play tricks upon men?" And quoth Ali Kitf al-Jamal, "I conjure thee by the Mighty Name, tell me how it is that thou art the chief of the lads of Cairo and yet hast been stripped by a girl?" This was grievous to Ali and he repented him of not having followed Ahmad's advice. Then the Calamity gave him another suit of clothes and Hasan Shuman said to him, "Dost thou know the young person?" "No," replied Ali; and Hasan rejoined, "'Twas Zaynab, the daughter of Dalilah the Wily, the portress of the Caliph's Khan; and hast thou fallen into her toils, O Ali?" Quoth he, "Yes," and quoth Hasan, "O Ali, 'twas she who took thy Chief's clothes and those of all his men." "This is a disgrace to you all!" "And what thinkest thou to do?" "I purpose to marry her." "Put away that thought far from thee, and

console thy heart of her." "O Hasan, do thou counsel me how I shall do to marry her." "With all my heart: if thou wilt drink from my hand and march under my banner, I will bring thee to thy will of her." "I will well." So Hasan made Ali put off his clothes; and, taking a cauldron heated therein somewhat as it were pitch, wherewith he anointed him and he became like unto a blackamoor slave. Moreover, he smeared his lips and cheeks and pencilled his eyes with red Kohl.[235] Then he clad him in a slave's habit and giving him a tray of kabobs and wine, said to him, "There is a black cook in the Khan who requires from the bazar only meat; and thou art now become his like; so go thou to him civilly and accost him in friendly fashion and speak to him in the blacks' lingo, and salute him, saying, 'Tis long since we met in the beer-ken. He will answer thee, I have been too busy: on my hands be forty slaves, for whom I cook dinner and supper, besides making ready a tray for Dalilah and the like for her daughter Zaynab and the dogs' food. And do thou say to him, Come, let us eat kabobs and lush swipes.[236] Then go with him into the saloon and make him drunken and question him of his service, how many dishes and what dishes he hath to cook, and ask him of 185 the dogs' food and the keys of the kitchen and the larder; and he will tell thee; for a man, when he is drunken, telleth all he would conceal were he sober. When thou hast done this drug him and don his clothes and sticking the two knives in thy girdle, take the vegetable-basket and go to the market and buy meat and greens, with which do thou return to the Khan and enter the kitchen and the larder and cook the food. Dish it up and put Bhang in it, so as to drug the dogs and the slaves and Dalilah and Zaynab and lastly serve up. When all are asleep, hie thee to the upper chamber and bring away every suit of clothes thou wilt find hanging there. And if thou have a mind to marry Zaynab, bring with thee also the forty carrier-pigeons." So Ali went to the Khan and going in to the cook, saluted him and said, "'Tis long since I have met thee in the beer-ken." The slave replied, "I have been busy cooking for the slaves and the dogs." Then he took him and making him drunken, questioned him of his work. Quoth the kitchener, "Every day I cook five dishes for dinner and the like for supper; and yesterday they sought of me a sixth dish,[237] yellow rice,[238] and a seventh, a mess of cooked pomegranate seed." Ali asked, "And what is the order of thy service?" and the slave answered, "First I serve up Zaynab's tray, next Dalilah's; then I feed the slaves and give the dogs their sufficiency of meat, and the least that satisfies them is a pound each." But, as fate would have it, he forgot to ask him of the keys. Then he drugged him and donned his clothes; after which he took the basket and went to the market. There he bought meat and greens.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ali of Cairo, after drugging the cook-slave with Bhang, took the two knives which he stuck in his belt and, carrying the vegetable-basket, 186 went to the market where he bought meat and

greens; and, presently returning to the Khan, he saw Dalilah seated at the gate, watching those who went in and came out, and the forty slaves with her, armed. So he heartened his heart and entered; but Dalilah knew him and said to him, “Back, O captain of thieves! Wilt thou play a trick on me in the Khan?” Thereupon he (dressed as a slave) turned and said to her, “What sayest thou, O portress?” She asked, “What hast thou done with the slave, our cook?; say me if thou hast killed or drugged him?” He answered, “What cook? Is there here another slave-cook than I?” She rejoined, “Thou liest, thou art Mercury Ali the Cairene.” And he said to her, in slaves’ patois, “O portress, are the Cairenes black or white? I will slave for you no longer.” Then said the slaves to him, “What is the matter with thee, O our cousin?” Cried Dalilah, “This is none of your uncle’s children, but Ali Zaybak the Egyptian; and meseems he hath either drugged your cousin or killed him.” But they said, “Indeed this is our cousin Sa’adu’llah the cook;” and she, “Not so, ’tis Mercury Ali, and he hath dyed his skin.” Quoth the sharper, “And who is Ali? I am Sa’adu’llah.” Then she fetched unguent of proof, with which she anointed Ali’s forearm and rubbed it; but the black did not come off; whereupon quoth the slaves, “Let him go and dress us our dinner.” Quoth Dalilah, “If he be indeed your cousin, he knoweth what you sought of him yesternight[239] and how many dishes he cooketh every day.” So they asked him of this and he said, “Every day I cook you five dishes for the morning and the like for the evening meal, lentils and rice and broth and stew[240] and sherbet of roses; and yesternight ye sought of me a sixth dish and a seventh, to wit yellow rice and cooked pomegranate seed.” And the slaves said “Right!” Then quoth Dalilah, “In with him and if he know the kitchen and the larder, he is indeed your cousin; but, if not, kill him.” Now the cook had a cat which he had brought up, and whenever he entered the kitchen it would stand at the door and spring to his back, as soon as he went in. So, when Ali entered, the cat saw him and jumped on his shoulders; but he threw it off and it ran before him to the door of the kitchen 187 and stopped there. He guessed that this was the kitchen door; so he took the keys and seeing one with traces of feathers thereon, knew it for the kitchen key and therewith opened the door. Then he entered and setting down the greens, went out again, led by the cat, which ran before him and stopped at another door. He guessed that this was the larder and seeing one of the keys marked with grease, knew it for the key and opened the door therewith; whereupon quoth the slaves, “O Dalilah, were he a stranger, he had not known the kitchen and the larder, nor had he been able to distinguish the keys thereof from the rest; verily, he is our cousin Sa’adu’llah.” Quoth she, “He learned the places from the cat and distinguished the keys one from the other by the appearance: but this cleverness imposeth not upon *me*.” Then he returned to the kitchen where he cooked the dinner and, carrying Zaynab’s tray up to her room, saw all the stolen clothes hanging up; after which he went down and took Dalilah her tray and gave the slaves and the dogs their rations. The like he did at sundown and drugged Dalilah’s food and that of Zaynab and the slaves. Now the doors of the Khan were opened and shut with

the sun. So Ali went forth and cried out, saying, “O dwellers in the Khan, the watch is set and we have loosed the dogs; whoso stirreth out after this can blame none save himself.” But he had delayed the dogs’ supper and put poison therein; consequently when he set it before them, they ate of it and died while the slaves and Dalilah and Zaynab still slept under Bhang. Then he went up and took all the clothes and the carrier-pigeons and, opening the gate, made off to the barrack of the Forty, where he found Hasan Shuman the Pestilence who said to him, “How hast thou fared?” Thereupon he told him what had passed and he praised him. Then he caused him put off his clothes and boiled a decoction of herbs wherewith he washed him, and his skin became white as it was; after which he donned his own dress and going back to the Khan, clad the cook in the habit he had taken from him and made him smell to the counter-drug; upon which the slave awoke and going forth to the greengrocer’s, bought vegetables and returned to the Khan. Such was the case with Al-Zaybak of Cairo; but as regards Dalilah the Wily, when the day broke, one of the lodgers in the Khan came out of his chamber and, seeing the gate open and the slaves drugged and the dogs dead, he went in to her and found her lying drugged, with a scroll on her neck and at her head a sponge steeped in the counter-drug. He set the sponge to her nostrils and she awoke and 188 asked, “Where am I?” The merchant answered, “When I came down from my chamber I saw the gate of the Khan open and the dogs dead and found the slaves and thee drugged.” So she took up the paper and read therein these words, “None did this deed save Ali the Egyptian.” Then she awoke the slaves and Zaynab by making them smell the counter-Bhang and said to them, “Did I not tell you that this was Ali of Cairo?”; presently adding to the slaves, “But do ye conceal the matter.” Then she said to her daughter, “How often have I warned thee that Ali would not forego his revenge? He hath done this deed in requital of that which thou diddest with him and he had it in his power to do with thee other than this thing; but he refrained therefrom out of courtesy and a desire that there should be love and friendship between us.” So saying, she doffed her man’s gear and donned woman’s attire[241] and, tying the kerchief of peace about her neck, repaired to Ahmad al-Danaf’s barrack. Now when Ali entered with the clothes and the carrier-pigeons, Hasan Shuman gave the hall-keeper the price of forty pigeons and he bought them and cooked them amongst the men. Presently there came a knock at the door and Ahmad said, “That is Dalilah’s knock: rise and open to her, O hall-keeper.” So he admitted her and——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Dalilah was admitted, Hasan asked her, “What bringeth thee hither, O ill-omened old woman? Verily, thou and thy brother Zurayk the fishmonger are of a piece!”; and she answered, “O captain I am in the wrong and this my neck is at thy mercy; but tell me which of you it was

that played me this trick?" Quoth Calamity Ahmad, "'Twas the first of my lads." Rejoined Dalilah, "For the sake of Allah intercede with him to give me back the carrier-pigeons and what not, and thou wilt lay me under great obligation." When Hasan heard this he said, "Allah requite thee, O Ali! Why didst thou cook the pigeons?"; and Ali answered, "I knew not that they were carrier-pigeons." Then said Ahmad, "O hall-keeper bring us the cooked pigeons." So he brought them and Dalilah took a piece and tasting it, said, "This is none of the 189carrier-pigeons' flesh, for I fed them on grains of musk and their meat is become even as musk." Quoth Shuman, "An thou desire to have the carrier-pigeons, comply with Ali's will." Asked she "What is that?" And Hasan answered, "He would have thee marry him to thy daughter Zaynab." She said, "I have not command over her except of affection"; and Hasan said to Ali the Cairene "Give her the pigeons." So he gave them to her, and she took them and rejoiced in them. Then quoth Hasan to her, "There is no help but thou return us a sufficient reply"; and Dalilah rejoined, "If it be indeed his wish to marry her, it availed nothing to play this clever trick upon us: it behoveth him rather to demand her in marriage of her mother's brother and her guardian, Captain Zurayk, him who crieth out, saying:—Ho! a pound of fish for two farthings! and who hangeth up in his shop a purse containing two thousand dinars." When the Forty heard this, they all rose and cried out, saying, "What manner of blather is this, O harlot? Dost thou wish to bereave us of our brother Ali of Cairo?" Then she returned to the Khan and said to her daughter, "Ali the Egyptian seeketh thee in marriage." Whereat Zaynab rejoiced, for she loved him because of his chaste forbearance towards her,[242] and asked her mother what had passed. So she told her, adding, "I made it a condition that he should demand thy hand of thine uncle, so I might make him fall into destruction." Meanwhile Ali turned to his fellows and asked them, "What manner of man is this Zurayk?"; and they answered, "He was chief of the sharpers of Al-Irak land and could all but pierce mountains and lay hold upon the stars. He would steal the Kohl from the eye and, in brief, he had not his match for roguery; but he hath repented his sins and forsworn his old way of life and opened him a fishmonger's shop. And now he hath amassed two thousand dinars by the sale of fish and laid them in a purse with strings of silk, to which he hath tied bells and rings and rattles of brass, hung on a peg within the doorway. Every time he openeth his shop he suspendeth the said purse and crieth out, saying:—Where are ye, O sharpers of Egypt, O prigs of Al-Irak, O tricksters of Ajam-land? Behold, Zurayk the fishmonger hath hung up a purse in front of his shop, and whoso pretendeth to 190craft and cunning, and can take it by sleight, it is his. So the long fingered and greedy-minded come and try to take the purse, but cannot; for, whilst he frieth his fish and tendeth the fire, he layeth at his feet scone-like circles of lead; and whenever a thief thinketh to take him unawares and maketh a snatch at the purse he casteth at him a load of lead and slayeth him or doeth him a damage. So O Ali, wert thou to tackle him, thou wouldst be as one who jostleth a funeral cortège,

unknowing who is dead;[243] for thou art no match for him, and we fear his mischief for thee. Indeed, thou hast no call to marry Zaynab, and he who leaveth a thing alone liveth without it." Cried Ali, "This were shame, O comrades; needs must I take the purse: but bring me a young lady's habit." So they brought him women's clothes and he clad himself therein and stained his hands with Henna, and modestly hung down his veil. Then he took a lamb and killing it, cut out the long intestine[244] which he cleaned and tied up below; moreover he filled 191 it with the blood and bound it between his thighs; after which he donned petticoat-trousers and walking boots. He also made himself a pair of false breasts with birds' crops and filled them with thickened milk and tied round his hips and over his belly a piece of linen, which he stuffed with cotton, girding himself over all with a kerchief of silk well starched. Then he went out, whilst all who saw him exclaimed, "What a fine pair of hind cheeks!" Presently he saw an ass-driver coming, so he gave him a dinar and mounting, rode till he came to Zurayk's shop, where he saw the purse hung up and the gold glittering through it. Now Zurayk was frying fish, and Ali said, "O ass-man, what is that smell?" Replied he, "It's the smell of Zurayk's fish." Quoth Ali, "I am a woman with child and the smell harmeth me; go, fetch me a slice of the fish." So the donkey-boy said to Zurayk, "What aileth thee to fry fish so early and annoy pregnant women with the smell? I have here the wife of the Emir Hasan Sharr al-Tarik, and she is with child; so give her a bit of fish, for the babe stirreth in her womb. O Protector, O my God, avert from us the mischief of this day!" Thereupon Zurayk took a piece of fish and would have fried it, but the fire had gone out and he went in to rekindle it. Meanwhile Ali dismounted and sitting down, pressed upon the lamb's intestine till it burst and the blood ran out from between his legs. Then he cried aloud, saying, "O my back! O my side!" Whereupon the driver turned and seeing the blood running, said, "What aileth thee, O my lady?" Replied Ali, "I have miscarried"; whereupon Zurayk looked out and seeing the blood fled affrighted into the inner shop. Quoth the donkey-driver, "Allah torment 192 thee, O Zurayk! The lady hath miscarried and thou art no match for her husband. Why must thou make a stench so early in the morning? I said to thee:—Bring her a slice, but thou wouldst not." Thereupon, he took his ass and went his way and, as Zurayk still did not appear, Ali put out his hand to the purse; but no sooner had he touched it than the bells and rattles and rings began to jingle and the gold to chink. Quoth Zurayk, who returned at the sound, "Thy perfidy hath come to light, O gallows-bird! Wilt thou put a cheat on me and thou in a woman's habit? Now take what cometh to thee!" And he threw a cake of lead at him, but it went agley and lighted on another; whereupon the people rose against Zurayk and said to him, "Art thou a tradesman, or a swashbuckler? An thou be a tradesman, take down thy purse and spare the folk thy mischief." He replied, "Bismillah, in the name of Allah! On my head be it." As for Ali, he made off to the barrack and told Hasan Shuman what had happened, after which he put off his woman's gear and donning a groom's habit

which was brought to him by his chief took a dish and five dirhams. Then he returned to Zurayk's shop and the fishmonger said to him, "What dost thou want, O my master?"[245] He showed him the dirhams and Zurayk would have given him of the fish in the tray, but he said, "I will have none save hot fish." So he set fish in the earthen pan and finding the fire dead, went in to relight it; whereupon Ali put out his hand to the purse and caught hold of the end of it. The rattles and rings and bells jingled and Zurayk said, "Thy trick hath not deceived me. I knew thee for all thou art disguised as a groom by the grip of thy hand on the dish and the dirhams."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ali of Egypt put out his hand to the purse, the bells and rings jingled and Zurayk said, "Thy trick hath not deceived me; for all thou comest disguised as a groom I knew thee by the grip of thy hand on the dish and the dirhams!" So saying, he threw the 193 lead at him, but he avoided it and it fell into the pan full of hot fish and broke it and overturned it, fat and all, upon the breast and shoulders of the Kazi, who was passing. The oil ran down inside his clothes to his privy parts and he cried out, "O my privities! What a sad pickle you are in! Alas, unhappy I! Who hath played me this trick?" Answered the people, "O our lord, it was some small boy that threw a stone into the pan: but for Allah's ward, it had been worse." Then they turned and seeing the loaf of lead and that it was Zurayk who had thrown it, rose against him and said to him, "O Zurayk, this is not allowed of Allah! Take down the purse or it shall go ill for thee." Answered he, "I will take it down, Inshallah!" Meanwhile Ali returned to the barrack and told his comrades who cried, "Where is the purse?", all that had passed and they said, "Thou hast exhausted two-thirds of his cunning." Then he changed his groom's dress for the garb of a merchant and going out, met a snake-charmer, with a bag of serpents and a wallet containing his kit to whom said he, "O charmer, come and amuse my lads, and thou shalt have largesse." So he accompanied him to the barrack, where he fed him and drugging him with Bhang, doffed his clothes and put them on. Then he took the bags and repairing to Zurayk's shop began to play the reed-pipe. Quoth Zurayk, "Allah provide thee!" But Ali pulled out the serpents and cast them down before him; whereat the fish-seller, who was afraid of snakes, fled from them into the inner shop. Thereupon Ali picked up the reptiles and, thrusting them back into the bag, stretched out his hand and caught hold of the end of the purse. The rings again rang and the bells and rattles jangled, and Zurayk cried, "Wilt thou never cease to play me tricks? Now thou feignest thyself a serpent-charmer!" So saying, he took up a piece of lead, and hurled it at Ali; but it missed him and fell on the head of a groom, who was passing by, following his master, a trooper, and knocked him down. Quoth the soldier, "Who felled him?"; and the folk said, "'Twas a stone fell from the roof." So the soldier passed on and the people, seeing the piece of lead, went up to Zurayk

and cried to him, “Take down the purse!”; and he said, “Inshallah, I will take it down this very night!” Ali ceased not to practice upon Zurayk till he had made seven different attempts but without taking the purse. Then he returned the snake-charmer his clothes and kit and gave him due benevolence; 194 after which he went back to Zurayk’s shop and heard him say, “If I leave the purse here to-night, he will dig through the shop-wall and take it; I will carry it home with me.” So he arose and shut the shop; then he took down the purse and putting it in his bosom set out home, till he came near his house, when he saw a wedding in a neighbour’s lodging and said to himself, “I will hie me home and give my wife the purse and don my fine clothes and return to the marriage.” And Ali followed him. Now Zurayk had married a black girl, one of the freed women of the Wazir Ja’afar and she had borne him a son, whom he named Abdallah, and he had promised her to spend the money in the purse on the occasion of the boy’s circumcision and of his marriage-procession. So he went into his house and, as he entered, his wife saw that his face was overcast and asked him, “What hath caused thy sadness?” Quoth he, “Allah hath afflicted me this day with a rascal who made seven attempts to get the purse, but without avail;” and quoth she, “Give it to me, that I may lay it up against the boy’s festival-day.” (Now Ali, who had followed him lay hidden in a closet whence he could see and hear all.) So he gave her the purse and changed his clothes, saying, “Keep the purse safely, O Umm Abdallah, for I am going to the wedding.” But she said, “Take thy sleep awhile.” So he lay down and fell asleep. Presently, Ali rose and going on tiptoe to the purse, took it and went to the house of the wedding and stood there, looking on at the fun. Now meanwhile, Zurayk dreamt that he saw a bird fly away with the purse and awaking in affright, said to his wife, “Rise; look for the purse.” So she looked and finding it gone, buffeted her face and said, “Alas the blackness of thy fortune, O Umm Abdallah! A sharper hath taken the purse.” Quoth Zurayk, “By Allah it can be none other than rascal Ali who hath plagued me all day! He hath followed me home and seized the purse; and there is no help but that I go and get it back.” Quoth she, “Except thou bring it, I will lock on thee the door and leave thee to pass the night in the street.” So he went up to the house of the wedding, and seeing Ali looking on, said to himself, “This is he who took the purse; but he lodgeth with Ahmad al-Danaf.” So he forewent him to the barrack and, climbing up at the back, dropped down into the saloon, where he found every one asleep. Presently there came a rap at the door and Zurayk asked, “Who is there?” “Ali of Cairo,” answered the 195 knocker; and Zurayk said, “Hast thou brought the purse?” So Ali thought it was Hasan Shuman and replied, “I have brought it;[246] open the door.” Quoth Zurayk, “Impossible that I open to thee till I see the purse; for thy chief and I have laid a wager about it.” Said Ali, “Put out thy hand.” So he put out his hand through the hole in the side-door and Ali laid the purse in it; whereupon Zurayk took it and going forth, as he had come in, returned to the wedding. Ali stood for a long while at the door, but none opened to him; and at last he

gave a thundering knock that awoke all the men and they said, “That is Ali of Cairo’s peculiar rap.” So the hall-keeper opened to him and Hasan Shuman said to him, “Hast thou brought the purse?” Replied Ali, “Enough of jesting, O Shuman: didst thou not swear that thou wouldest not open to me till I showed thee the purse, and did I not give it thee through the hole in the side door? And didst thou not say to me, I am sworn never to open the door till thou show me the purse?” Quoth Hasan, “By Allah, ’twas not I who took it, but Zurayk!” Quoth Ali, “Needs must I get it again,” and repaired to the house of the wedding, where he heard the buffoon[247] say, “Bravo,[248] O Abu Abdallah! Good luck to thee with thy son!” Said Ali, “My luck is in the ascendant,” and going to the fishmonger’s lodging, climbed over the back wall of the house and found his wife asleep. So he drugged her with Bhang and clad himself in her clothes. Then he took the child in his arms and went round, searching, till he found a palm-leaf 196 basket containing buns,[249] which Zurayk of his niggardliness, had kept from the Greater Feast. Presently, the fishmonger returned and knocked at the door, whereupon Ali imitated his wife’s voice and asked, “Who is at the door?” “Abu Abdallah,” answered Zurayk and Ali said, “I swore that I would not open the door to thee, except thou broughtest back the purse.” Quoth the fishmonger, “I have brought it.” Cried Ali, “Here with it into my hand before I open the door;” and Zurayk answered, saying, “Let down the basket and take it therein.” So Sharper Ali let down the basket and the other put the purse therein, whereupon Ali took it and drugged the child. Then he aroused the woman and making off by the back way as he had entered, returned with the child and the purse and the basket of cakes to the barrack and showed them all to the Forty, who praised his dexterity. Thereupon he gave them cakes, which they ate, and made over the boy to Hasan Shuman, saying, “This is Zurayk’s child; hide it by thee.” So he hid it and fetching a lamb, gave it to the hall-keeper who cooked it whole, wrapped in a cloth, and laid it out shrouded as it were a dead body. Meanwhile Zurayk stood awhile, waiting at the door, then gave a knock like thunder and his wife said to him, “Hast thou brought the purse?” He replied, “Didst thou not take it up in the basket thou diddest let down but now?”; and she rejoined, “I let no basket down to thee, nor have I set eyes on the purse.” Quoth he, “By Allah the sharper hath been beforehand with me and hath taken the purse again!” Then he searched the house and found the basket of cakes gone and the child missing and cried out, saying, “Alas, my child!” Whereupon the woman beat her breast and said, “I and thee to the Wazir, for none hath killed my son save this sharper, and all because of thee.” Cried Zurayk, “I will answer for him.” So he tied the kerchief of truce about his neck and going to Ahmad al-Danaf’s lodging, knocked at the door. The hall-keeper admitted him and as he entered Hasan Shuman asked him, “What bringeth thee here?” He answered, “Do ye intercede with Ali the Cairene to restore me my child and I will yield to him the purse of gold.” Quoth Hasan, “Allah requite thee, O Ali! Why 197 didst thou not tell me it was his child?” “What hath befallen

him?" cried Zurayk, and Hasan replied, "We gave him raisins to eat, and he choked and died; and this is he." Quoth Zurayk "Alas, my son! What shall I say to his mother?" Then he rose and opening the shroud, saw it was a lamb barbecued and said, "Thou makest sport of me, O Ali!" Then they gave him the child and Calamity Ahmad said to him, "Thou didst hang up the purse, proclaiming that it should be the property of any sharper who should be able to take it, and Ali hath taken it; so 'tis the very property of our Cairene." Zurayk answered, "I make him a present of it;" but Ali said to him, "Do thou accept it on account of thy niece Zaynab." And Zurayk replied, "I accept it." Then quoth the Forty, "We demand of thee Zaynab in marriage for Ali of Cairo;" but quoth he, "I have no control over her save of kindness." Hasan asked, "Dost thou grant our suit?"; and he answered, "Yes, I will grant her in marriage to him who can avail to her mahr or marriage-settlement." "And what is her dowry?" enquired Hasan; and Zurayk replied, "She hath sworn that none shall mount her breast save the man who bringeth her the robe of Kamar, daughter of Azariah the Jew and the rest of her gear."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

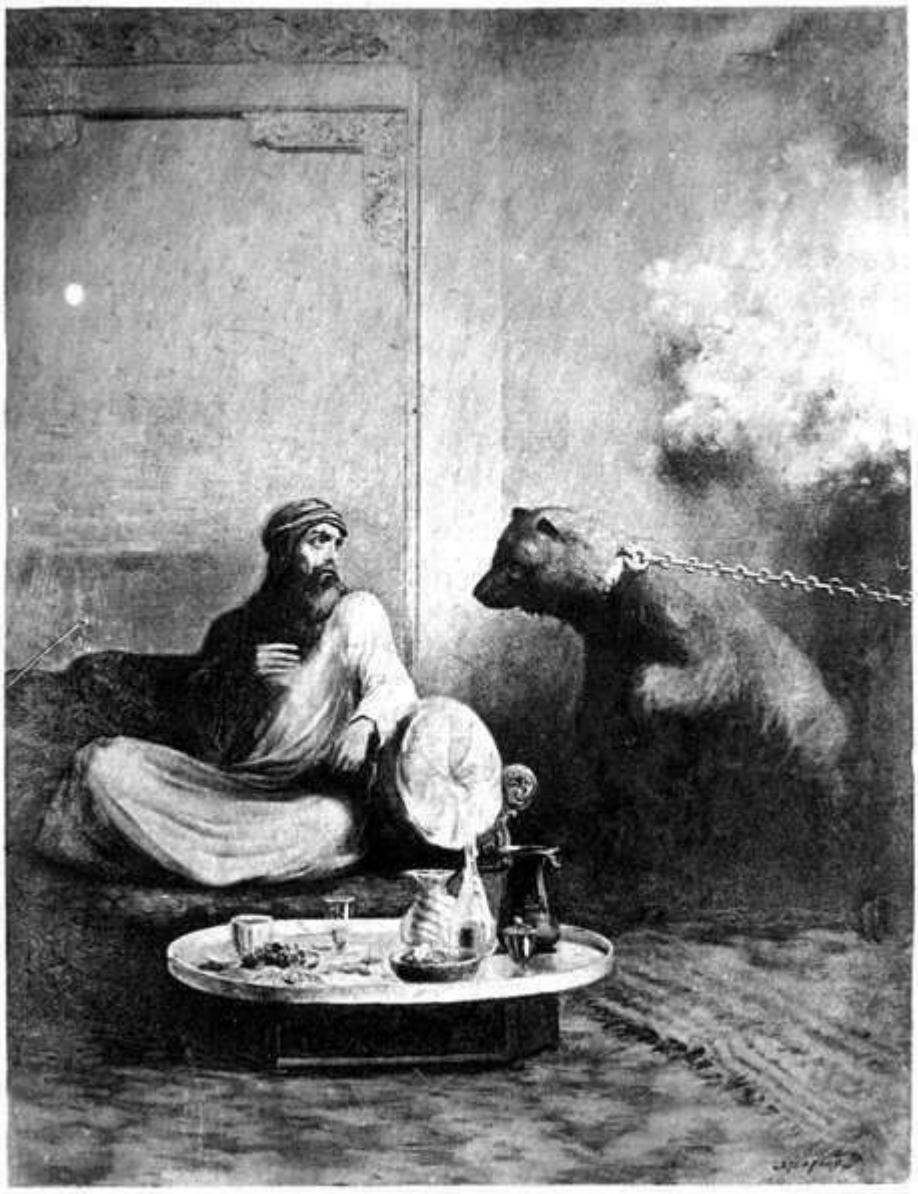
Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zurayk replied to Shuman, "She hath sworn that none shall ride astraddle upon her breast save the man who bringeth her the clothes of Kamar, daughter of Azariah the Jew and her crown and girdle and pantoufle[250] of gold," Ali cried, "If I do not bring her the clothes this very night, I renounce my claim to her." Rejoined Zurayk, "O Ali, thou art a dead man if thou play any of thy pranks on Kamar." "Why so?" asked Ali and the other answered, "Her father, Jew Azariah, is a skilful, wily, perfidious magician who hath the Jinn at his service. He owneth without the city a castle, whose walls are one brick of gold and one of silver and which is visible to the folk only whilst he is 198 therein: when he goeth forth, it disappeareth. He brought his daughter this dress I speak of from an enchanted treasure, and every day he layeth it in a charger of gold and, opening the windows of the palace, crieth out:—Where are the sharpers of Cairo, the prigs of Al-Irak, the master-thieves of Ajam-land? Whoso prevaileth to take this dress, 'tis his. So all the long fingered ones essayed the adventure, but failed to take it, and he turned them by his magic into apes and asses." But Ali said, "I will assuredly take it, and Zaynab shall be displayed therein."[251] So he went to the shop of the Jew and found him a man of stern and forbidding aspect, seated with scales and stone-weights and gold and silver and nests of drawers and so forth before him, and a she-mule tethered hard by. Presently he rose and shutting his shop, laid the gold and silver in two purses, which he placed in a pair of saddle-bags and set on the she-mule's back. Then he mounted and rode till he reached the city-outskirts followed, without his knowledge, by Ali, when he took out some dust from a pocket-purse and, muttering over it, sprinkled it upon the air. No sooner had he done this than sharper

Ali saw a castle which had not its like, and the Jew mounted the steps upon his beast which was a subject Jinni; after which he dismounted and taking the saddle-bags off her back, dismissed the she-mule and she vanished. Then he entered the castle and sat down. Presently, he arose and opening the lattices, took a wand of gold, which he set up in the open window and, hanging thereto a golden charger by chains of the same metal, laid in it the dress, whilst Ali watched him from behind the door, and presently he cried out, saying, "Where are the sharpers of Cairo? Where are the prigs of Al-Irak, the master-thieves of the Ajam-land? Whoso can take this dress by his sleight, 'tis his!" Then he pronounced certain magical words and a tray of food spread itself before him. He ate and conjured a second time, whereupon the tray disappeared; and yet a third time, when a table of wine was placed between his hands and he drank. Quoth Ali, "I know not how I am to take the dress except if he be drunken." Then he stole up behind the Jew whinger in grip; but the other turned and conjured, saying to his hand, "Hold with the sword;" whereupon Ali's right arm was held and abode half-way in the air hending the hanger. He put out his 199 left hand to the weapon, but it also stood fixed in the air, and so with his right foot, leaving him standing on one foot. Then the Jew dispelled the charm from him and Ali became as before. Presently Azariah struck a table of sand and found that the thief's name was Mercury Ali of Cairo; so he turned to him and said, "Come nearer! Who art thou and what dost thou here?" He replied, "I am Ali of Cairo, of the band of Ahmad al-Danaf. I sought the hand of Zaynab, daughter of Dalilah the Wily, and she demanded thy daughter's dress to her dowry; so do thou give it to me and become a Moslem, an thou wouldst save thy life." Rejoined the Jew, "After thy death! Many have gone about to steal the dress, but failed to take it from me; wherefore an thou deign be advised, thou wilt begone and save thyself; for they only seek the dress of thee, that thou mayst fall into destruction; and indeed, had I not seen by geomancy that thy fortune overrideth my fortunes I had smitten thy neck." Ali rejoiced to hear that his luck overcame that of the Jew and said to him, "There is no help for it but I must have the dress and thou must become a True Believer." Asked the Jew, "Is this thy will and last word," and Ali answered, "Yes." So the Jew took a cup and filling it with water, conjured over it and said to Ali, "Come forth from this shape of a man into the form of an ass." Then he sprinkled him with the water and straightway he became a donkey, with hoofs and long ears, and fell to braying after the manner of asinines. The Jew drew round him a circle which became a wall over against him, and drank on till the morning, when he said to Ali, "I will ride thee to-day and give the she-mule a rest." So he locked up the dress, the charger, the rod and the charms in a cupboard[252] and conjured over Ali, who followed him. Then he set the saddle-bags on his back and mounting, fared forth of the Castle, whereupon it disappeared from sight and he rode into Baghdad, till he came to his shop, where he alighted and emptied the bags of gold and silver into the trays before him. As for Ali, he was tied up by the shop-door, where he stood in his asinine form hearing and understanding all that passed, without being able to speak.

And behold, up came a young merchant with whom fortune had played the tyrant and who could find no easier way of earning his livelihood than water-carrying. So he brought 200 his wife's bracelets to the Jew and said to him, "Give me the price of these bracelets, that I may buy me an ass." Asked the Jew, "What wilt thou do with him?"; and the other answered, "O master, I mean to fetch water from the river on his back, and earn my living thereby." Quoth the Jew, "Take this ass of mine." So he sold him the bracelets and received the ass-shaped Ali of Cairo in part payment and carried him home. Quoth Ali to himself, "If the Ass-man clap the pannel on thee and load thee with water-skins and go with thee half a score journeys a day he will ruin thy health and thou wilt die." So, when the water-carrier's wife came to bring him his fodder, he butted her with his head and she fell on her back; whereupon he sprang on her and smiting her brow with his mouth, put out and displayed that which his begetter left him. She cried aloud and the neighbours came to her assistance and beat him and raised him off her breast. When her husband the intended water-carrier came home, she said to him, "Now either divorce me or return the ass to his owner." He asked, "What hath happened?"; and she answered, "This is a devil in the guise of a donkey. He sprang upon me, and had not the neighbours beaten him off my bosom he had done with me a foul thing." So he carried the ass back to the Jew, who said to him, "Wherefore hast thou brought him back?" and he replied, "He did a foul thing with my wife." So the Jew gave him his money again and he went away; and Azariah said to Ali, "Hast thou recourse to knavery, unlucky wretch that thou art, in order that"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventeenth Night,



She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the water-carrier brought back the ass, its Jew owner returned to him the monies and turning to Ali of Cairo said, “Hast thou recourse to knavery, unlucky wretch that thou art, in order that he may return thee to me? But since it pleaseth thee to be an ass, I will make thee a spectacle and a laughing stock to great and small.” Then he mounted him and rode till he came without the city, when he brought out the ashes in powder and conjuring over it sprinkled it upon the air and immediately the Castle appeared. He entered and taking the saddle-bags off the ass’s back set up 201 the rod and hung to it the charger wherein were the clothes proclaiming aloud, “Where be the clever ones of all quarters who may avail to take this dress?” Then he conjured as before and meat was set before him and he ate and then wine when he drank; after which he took a cup of

water and muttering certain words thereover, sprinkled it on the ass Ali, saying, “Quit this form and return to thy former shape.” Ali straightway became a man once more and Azariah said to him, “O Ali, take good advice and be content with my mischief. Thou hast no call to marry Zaynab nor to take my daughter’s dress, for ’tis no easy matter for thee: so leave greed and ’twill be better for thee; else will I turn thee into a bear or an ape or set on thee an Ifrit, who will cast thee behind the Mountain Kaf.” He replied, “I have engaged to take the dress and needs must I have it and thou must Islamize or I will slay thee.” Rejoined the Jew, “O Ali, thou art like a walnut; unless it be broken it cannot be eaten.” Then he took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled Ali with somewhat thereof, saying, “Take thou shape of bear;” whereupon he instantly became a bear and the Jew put a collar about his neck, muzzled him and chained him to a picket of iron. Then he sat down and ate and drank, now and then throwing him a morsel of his orts and emptying the dregs of the cup over him, till the morning, when he rose and laid by the tray and the dress and conjured over the bear, which followed him to the shop. There the Jew sat down and emptied the gold and silver into the trays before Ali, after binding him by the chain; and the bear there abode seeing and comprehending but not able to speak. Presently up came a man and a merchant, who accosted the Jew and said to him, “O Master, wilt thou sell me yonder bear? I have a wife who is my cousin and is sick; and they have prescribed for her to eat bears’ flesh and anoint herself with bears’ grease.” At this the Jew rejoiced and said to himself, “I will sell him to this merchant, so he may slaughter him and we be at peace from him.” And Ali also said in his mind, “By Allah, this fellow meaneth to slaughter me; but deliverance is with the Almighty.” Then said the Jew, “He is a present from me to thee.” So the merchant took him and carried him to the butcher, to whom he said, “Bring thy tools and company me.” The butcher took his knives and followed the merchant to his house, where he bound the beast and fell to sharpening his blade: but, when he went up to him to slaughter him, the bear escaped from his hands and rising into the air, disappeared from 202 sight between heaven and earth; nor did he cease flying till he alighted at the Jew’s castle. Now the reason thereof was on this wise. When the Jew returned home, his daughter questioned him of Ali and he told her what had happened; whereupon she said, “Summon a Jinni and ask him of the youth, whether he be indeed Mercury Ali or another who seeketh to put a cheat on thee.” So Azariah called a Jinni by conjurations and questioned him of Ali; and he replied, “’Tis Ali of Cairo himself. The butcher hath pinioned him and whetted his knife to slaughter him.” Quoth the Jew, “Go, snatch him up and bring him hither, ere the butcher cut his throat.” So the Jinni flew off and, snatching Ali out of the butcher’s hands, bore him to the palace and set him down before the Jew, who took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled him therewith, saying, “Return to thine own shape.” And he straightway became a man again as before. The Jew’s daughter Kamar,[253] seeing him to be a handsome young man, fell in love with him and he fell in love with her; and she said to him, “O unlucky one, why dost thou go about to take

my dress, enforcing my father to deal thus with thee?" Quoth he, "I have engaged to get it for Zaynab the Coney-catcher, that I may wed her therewith." And she said, "Others than thou have played pranks with my father to get my dress, but could not win to it," presently adding, "So put away this thought from thee." But he answered, "Needs must I have it, and thy father must become a Moslem, else I will slay him." Then said the Jew, "See, O my daughter, how this unlucky fellow seeketh his own destruction," adding, "Now I will turn thee into a dog." So he took a cup graven with characters and full of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled some of it upon Ali, saying, "Take thou form of dog." Whereupon he straightway became a dog, and the Jew and his daughter drank together till the morning, when the father laid up the dress and charger and mounted his mule. Then he conjured over the dog, which followed him, as he rode towards the town, and all dogs barked at Ali[254] as he passed, till he came to the shop of a broker, a seller of second-hand goods, who rose and drove away the dogs, and Ali lay down before him. The Jew turned and looked for him, but 203 finding him not, passed onwards. Presently, the broker shut up his shop and went home, followed by the dog, which, when his daughter saw enter the house, she veiled her face and said, "O my papa, dost thou bring a strange man in to me?" He replied, "O my daughter, this is a dog." Quoth she, "Not so, 'tis Ali the Cairene, whom the Jew Azariah hath enchanted;" and she turned to the dog and said to him, "Art not Ali of Cairo?" And he signed to her with his head, "Yes." Then her father asked her, "Why did the Jew enchant him?"; and she answered, "Because of his daughter Kamar's dress; but I can release him." Said the broker, "An thou canst indeed do him this good office, now is the time," and she, "If he will marry me, I will release him." And he signed to her with his head, "Yes." So she took a cup of water, graven with certain signs and conjuring over it, was about to sprinkle Ali therewith, when lo and behold! she heard a great cry and the cup fell from her hand. She turned and found that it was her father's handmaid, who had cried out; and she said to her, "O my mistress, is't thus thou keepest the covenant between me and thee? None taught thee this art save I, and thou didst agree with me that thou wouldst do naught without consulting me and that whoso married thee should marry me also, and that one night should be mine and one night thine." And the broker's daughter said, "'Tis well." When the broker heard the maid's words, he asked his daughter, "Who taught the maid?"; and she answered, "O my papa, enquire of herself." So he put the question and she replied, "Know, O my lord, that, when I was with Azariah the Jew, I used to spy upon him and listen to him, when he performed his gramarye; and when he went forth to his shop in Baghdad, I opened his books and read in them, till I became skilled in the Cabbala-science. One day, he was warm with wine and would have me lie with him, but I objected, saying, I may not grant thee this except thou become a Moslem. He refused and I said to him, Now for the Sultan's market.[255] So he sold me to thee and I taught my young mistress, making it a condition with her that she should do naught without my counsel, and that whoso might wed her should wed

me also, one night for me and one night for her." Then she took a cup of water and conjuring over it, sprinkled the dog therewith; saying, "Return 204 thou to form of man." And he straightway was restored to his former shape; whereupon the broker saluted him with the salam and asked him the reason of his enchantment. So Ali told him all that had passed——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the broker, having saluted Ali of Cairo with the salam, asked him the reason of his enchantment and what had befallen him; and he answered by telling him all that had passed, when the broker said to him, "Will not my daughter and the handmaid suffice thee?" but he answered, "Needs must I have Zaynab also." Now suddenly there came a rap at the door and the maid said, "Who is at the door?" The knocker replied, "Kamar, daughter of Azariah the Jew; say me, is Ali of Cairo with you?" Replied the broker's daughter, "O thou daughter of a dog! If he be with us, what wilt thou with him? Go down, O maid, and open to her." So the maid let her in, and when she looked upon Ali and he upon her, he said, "What bringeth thee hither O dog's daughter?" Quoth she, "I testify that there is no god but *the* God and I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God." And, having thus Islamised, she asked him, "Do men in the Faith of Al-Islam give marriage portions to women or do women dower men?" Quoth he, "Men endow women." "Then," said she, "I come and dower myself for thee, bringing thee, as my marriage-portion, my dress together with the rod and charger and chains and the head of my father, the enemy of thee and the foeman of Allah." And she threw down the Jew's head before him. Now the cause of her slaying her sire was as follows. On the night of his turning Ali into a dog, she saw, in a dream, a speaker who said to her, "Become a Moslemah." She did so; and as soon as she awoke next morning she expounded Al-Islam to her father who refused to embrace the Faith; so she drugged him with Bhang and killed him. As for Ali, he took the gear and said to the broker, "Meet we to-morrow at the Caliph's Divan, that I may take thy daughter and the handmaid to wife." Then he set out rejoicing, to return to the barrack of the Forty. On his way he met a sweetmeat seller, who was beating hand upon hand and 205 saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Folk's labour hath waxed sinful and man is active only in fraud!" Then said he to Ali, "I conjure thee, by Allah, taste of this confection!" So Ali took a piece and ate it and fell down senseless, for there was Bhang therein; whereupon the sweetmeat-seller seized the dress and the charger and the rest of the gear and thrusting them into the box where he kept his sweetmeats hoisted it up and made off. Presently he met a Kazi, who called to him, saying, "Come hither, O sweetmeat seller!" So he went up to him and setting down his sack laid the tray of sweetmeats upon it and asked, "What dost thou want?" "Halwá and dragées,[256]" answered the Kazi and, taking some in his hand, said, "Both

of these are adulterated." Then he brought out sweetmeats from his breast-pocket[257] and gave them to the sweetmeat-seller, saying, "Look at this fashion; how excellent it is! Eat of it and make the like of it." So he ate and fell down senseless, for the sweetmeats were drugged with Bhang, whereupon the Kazi bundled him into the sack and made off with him, charger and chest and all, to the barrack of the Forty. Now the Judge in question was Hasan Shuman and the reason of this was as follows. When Ali had been gone some days in quest of the dress and they heard no news of him, Calamity Ahmad said to his men, "O lads, go and seek for your brother Ali of Cairo." So they sallied forth in quest of him and among the rest Hasan Shuman the Pestilence, disguised in a Kazi's gear. He came upon the sweetmeat-seller and, knowing him for Ahmad al-Lakit[258] suspected him of having played some trick upon Ali; so he drugged him and did as we have seen. Meanwhile, the other Forty fared about the streets and highways making search in different directions, and amongst them Ali Kitf al-Jamal, who espying a crowd, made towards the people and found the Cairene Ali lying drugged and senseless in their midst. So he revived him and he came to himself and seeing the folk flocking around him asked, "Where am I?" Answered Ali Camel-shoulder and his comrades, "We found thee lying here drugged but know not who drugged thee." Quoth Ali, "'Twas 206 a certain sweetmeat-seller who drugged me and took the gear from me; but where is he gone?" Quoth his comrades, "We have seen nothing of him; but come, rise and go home with us." So they returned to the barrack, where they found Ahmad al-Danaf, who greeted Ali and enquired if he had brought the dress. He replied, "I was coming hither with it and other matters, including the Jew's head, when a sweetmeat-seller met me and drugged me with Bhang and took them from me." Then he told him the whole tale ending with, "If I come across that man of goodies again, I will requite him." Presently Hasan Shuman came out of a closet and said to him, "Hast thou gotten the gear, O Ali?" So he told him what had befallen him and added, "If I know whither the rascal is gone and where to find the knave, I would pay him out. Knowest thou whither he went?" Answered Hasan, "I know where he is," and opening the door of the closet, showed him the sweetmeat-seller within, drugged and senseless. Then he aroused him and he opened his eyes and finding himself in presence of Mercury Ali and Calamity Ahmad and the Forty, started up and said, "Where am I and who hath laid hands on me?" Replied Shuman, "'Twas I laid hands on thee;" and Ali cried, "O perfidious wretch, wilt thou play thy pranks on me?" And he would have slain him: but Hasan said to him, "Hold thy hand for this fellow is become thy kinsman." "How my kinsman?" quoth Ali; and quoth Hasan, "This is Ahmad al-Lakit son of Zaynab's sister." Then said Ali to the prisoner, "Why didst thou thus, O Lakit?" and he replied, "My grandmother, Dalilah the Wily, bade me do it; only because Zurayk the fishmonger foregathered with the old woman and said:—Mercury Ali of Cairo is a sharper and a past master in knavery, and he will certainly slay the Jew and bring hither the dress. So she sent for me and said to me, O Ahmad, dost thou know Ali of

Cairo? Answered I:—Indeed I do and 'twas I directed him to Ahmad al-Danaf's lodging when he first came to Baghdad. Quoth she:—Go and set thy nets for him, and if he have brought back the gear, put a cheat on him and take it from him. So I went round about the highways of the city, till I met a sweetmeat-seller and buying his clothes and stock-in-trade and gear for ten dinars, did what was done." Thereupon quoth Ali, "Go back to thy grandmother and Zurayk, and tell them that I have brought the gear and the Jew's head and say to them:—Meet me to-morrow at the Caliph's [207] Divan, there to receive Zaynab's dowry." And Calamity Ahmad rejoiced in this and said, "We have not wasted our pains in rearing thee, O Ali!" Next morning Ali took the dress, the charger, the rod and the chains of gold, together with the head of Azariah the Jew mounted on a pike, and went up, accompanied by Ahmad al-Danaf and the Forty, to the Divan, where they kissed ground before the Caliph——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ali the Cairene went up to the Caliph's Divan, accompanied by his uncle Ahmad al-Danaf and his lads they kissed ground before the Caliph who turned and seeing a youth of the most valiant aspect, enquired of Calamity Ahmad concerning him and he replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, this is Mercury Ali the Egyptian captain of the brave boys of Cairo, and he is the first of my lads." And the Caliph loved him for the valour that shone from between his eyes, testifying for him and not against him. Then Ali rose; and, casting the Jew's head down before him, said, "May thine every enemy be like this one, O Prince of True Believers!" Quoth Al-Rashid, "Whose head is this?"; and quoth Ali, "'Tis the head of Azariah the Jew." "Who slew him?" asked the Caliph. So Ali related to him all that had passed, from first to last, and the Caliph said, "I had not thought thou wouldst kill him, for that he was a sorcerer." Ali replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, my Lord made me prevail to his slaughter." Then the Caliph sent the Chief of Police to the Jew's palace, where he found him lying headless; so he laid the body on a bier,[259] and carried it to Al-Rashid, who commanded to burn it. Whereat, behold, up came Kamar and kissing the ground before the Caliph, informed him that she was the daughter of Jew Azariah and that she had become a Moslemah. Then she renewed her profession [208] of Faith before the Commander of the Faithful and said to him "Be thou my intercessor with Sharper Ali that he take me to wife." She also appointed him her guardian to consent to her marriage with the Cairene, to whom he gave the Jew's palace and all its contents, saying, "Ask a boon of me." Quoth Ali, "I beg of thee to let me stand on thy carpet and eat of thy table;" and quoth the Caliph, "O Ali, hast thou any lads?" He replied, "I have forty lads; but they are in Cairo." Rejoined the Caliph, "Send to Cairo and fetch them hither," presently adding, "But, O Ali, hast thou a barrack for them?" "No," answered Ali; and Hasan Shuman said, "I make him a present of my barrack with all that is therein, O Commander of the

Faithful." However, the Caliph retorted, saying, "Thy lodging is thine own, O Hasan;" and he bade his treasurer give the court architect ten thousand dinars, that he might build Ali a hall with four daïses and forty sleeping-closets for his lads. Then said he, "O Ali, hast thou any further wish, that we may command its fulfilment?"; and said Ali, "O King of the age, be thou my intercessor with Dalilah the Wily that she give me her daughter Zaynab to wife and take the dress and gear of Azariah's girl in lieu of dower." Dalilah accepted the Caliph's intercession and accepted the charger and dress and what not, and they drew up the marriage contracts between Ali and Zaynab and Kamar, the Jew's daughter and the broker's daughter and the handmaid. Moreover, the Caliph assigned him a solde with a table morning and evening, and stipends and allowances for fodder; all of the most liberal. Then Ali the Cairene fell to making ready for the wedding festivities and, after thirty days, he sent a letter to his comrades in Cairo, wherein he gave them to know of the favours and honours which the Caliph had bestowed upon him and said, "I have married four maidens and needs must ye come to the wedding." So, after a reasonable time the forty lads arrived and they held high festival; he homed them in his barrack and entreated them with the utmost regard and presented them to the Caliph, who bestowed on them robes of honour and largesse. Then the tiring-women displayed Zaynab before Ali in the dress of the Jew's daughter, and he went in unto her and found her a pearl unthridden and a filly by all save himself unridden. Then he went in unto the three other maidens and found them accomplished in beauty and loveliness. After this it befel that Ali of Cairo was one night on guard by the Caliph who said to him, "I wish thee 209 O Ali, to tell me all that hath befallen thee from first to last with Dalilah the Wily and Zaynab the Coney-catcher and Zurayk the Fishmonger." So Ali related to him all his adventures and the Commander of the Faithful bade record them and lay them up in the royal muniment-rooms. So they wrote down all that had befallen him and kept it in store with other histories for the people of Mohammed the Best of Men. And Ali and his wives and comrades abode in all solace of life, and its joyance, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Societies; and Allah (be He extolled and exalted!) is All-knowing![260] And also men relate the tale of

29- ARDASHIR AND HAYAT AL-NUFUS.[261]

There was once in the city of Shíráz a mighty King called Sayf al-A'azam Shah, who had grown old, without being blessed with a son. So he summoned the physicists and physicians and said to them, "I am now in years and ye know my case and the state of the kingdom and its ordinance; and I fear for my subjects after me; for that up to this present I have not been vouchsafed a son." Thereupon they replied, "We will compound thee a somewhat of drugs wherein shall be efficacy, if it please Almighty Allah!" So they mixed him drugs, which he used and knew his wife carnally, and she conceived by leave of the Most High Lord, who saith to a thing, "Be," and it becometh. When her months were accomplished, she gave birth to a male child like the moon, whom his father named Ardashir,[262] and he grew up and throve and applied himself to the study of learning and letters, till he attained the age of fifteen. Now there was in Al-Irak a King called Abd al-Kádir who had a daughter, by name Hayát al-Nufús, and she was like the rising full moon; but she had an hatred for men and the folk very hardly dared name mankind in her presence. The Kings of the Chosroës had sought her in 210 marriage of her sire; but, when he spoke with her thereof, she said, "Never will I do this; and if thou force me thereto, I will slay myself." Now Prince Ardashir heard of her fame and fell in love with her and told his father who, seeing his case, took pity on him and promised him day by day that he should marry her. So he despatched his Wazir to demand her in wedlock, but King Abd al-Kadir refused, and when the Minister returned to King Sayf al-A'azam and acquainted him with what had befallen his mission and the failure thereof, he was wroth with exceeding wrath and cried, "Shall the like of me send to one of the Kings on a requisition and he accomplish it not?" Then he bade a herald make proclamation to his troops, bidding them bring out the tents and equip them for war with all diligence, though they should borrow money for the necessary expenses; and he said, "I will on no wise turn back, till I have laid waste King Abd al-Kadir's dominions and slain his men and plundered his treasures and blotted out his traces!" When the report of this reached Ardashir he rose from his carpet-bed, and going in to his father, kissed ground[263] between his hands and said, "O mighty King, trouble not thyself with aught of this thing"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when report of this reached the Prince he went in to his sire the King and, kissing ground between his

hands, said, “O mighty King, trouble not thy soul with aught of this thing and levy not thy champions and armies neither spend thy monies. Thou art stronger than he, and if thou loose upon him this thy host, thou wilt lay waste his cities and dominions and spoil his good and slay his strong men and himself; but when his daughter shall come to know what hath befallen her father and his people by reason of her, she will slay herself, and I shall die on her account; for I can never live after her; no, never.” Asked the King, “And what 211then thinkest thou to do, O my son?” and the Prince answered, “I will don a merchant’s habit and cast about how I may win to the Princess and compass my desire of her.” Quoth Sayf al-A’azam, “Art thou determined upon this?”; and quoth the Prince, “Yes, O my sire;” whereupon the King called to his Wazir, and said to him, “Do thou journey with my son, the core of my heart, and help him to win his will and watch over him and guide him with thy sound judgment, for thou standest to him even in my stead.” “I hear and obey,” answered the Minister; and the King gave his son three hundred thousand dinars in gold and great store of jewels and precious stones and goldsmiths’ ware and stuffs and other things of price. Then Prince Ardashir went in to his mother and kissed her hands and asked her blessing. She blessed him and, forthright opening her treasures, brought out to him necklaces and trinkets and apparel and all manner of other costly objects hoarded up from the time of the bygone Kings, whose price might not be evened with coin. Moreover, he took with him of his Mamelukes and negro-slaves and cattle all that he needed for the road and clad himself and the Wazir and their company in traders’ gear. Then he farewelled his parents and kinsfolk and friends; and, setting out, fared on over wolds and wastes all hours of the day and watches of the night; and whenas the way was longsome upon him he improvised these couplets:—

My longing bred of love with mine unease for ever grows; ✿ Nor against all the wrongs of time one succourer arose:

When Pleiads and the Fishes show in sky the rise I watch, ✿ As worshipper within whose breast a pious burning glows:

For Star o’ Morn I speer until at last when it is seen, ✿ I’m madded with my passion and my fancy’s woes and throes:

I swear by you that never from your love have I been loosed; ✿ Naught am I save a watcher who of slumber nothing knows!

Though hard appear my hope to win, though languor aye increase, ✿ And after thee my patience fails and ne’er a helper shows;

Yet will I wait till Allah shall be pleased to join our loves; ✿ I’ll mortify the jealous and I’ll mock me of my foes.

When he ended his verse he swooned away and the Wazir sprinkled rose-water on him, till the Prince came to himself, when the Minister said to him, “O King’s son, possess thy soul in patience; for the consequence of patience is consolation, and behold, thou art on the way to whatso thou wishest.” And he ceased not to bespeak him fair and comfort him till his trouble 212subsided; and they continued their

journey with all diligence. Presently, the Prince again became impatient of the length of the way and bethought him of his beloved and recited these couplets:—

Longsome is absence, restlessness increaseth and despite; ✿ And burn my vitals in the blaze my love and longings light:

Grows my hair gray from pains and pangs which I am doomèd bear ✿ For pine, while tear-floods stream from eyes and sore offend my sight:

I swear, O Hope of me, O End of every wish and will, ✿ By Him who made mankind and every branch with leafage dight,

A passion-load for thee, O my Desire, I must endure, ✿ And boast I that to bear such load no lover hath the might.

Question the Night of me and Night thy soul shall satisfy ✿ Mine eyelids never close in sleep throughout the livelong night.

Then he wept with sore weeping and 'plained of that he suffered for stress of love-longing; but the Wazir comforted him and spoke him fair, promising him the winning of his wish; after which they fared on again for a few days, when they drew near to the White City, the capital of King Abd al-Kadir, soon after sunrise. Then said the Minister to the Prince, "Rejoice, O King's son, in all good; for see, yonder is the White City, that which thou seekest." Whereat the Prince rejoiced with exceeding joy and recited these couplets:—

My friends, I yearn in heart distraught for him; ✿ Longing abides and with sore pains I brim:

I mourn like childless mother, nor can find ✿ One to console me when the light grows dim;

Yet when the breezes blow from off thy land, ✿ I feel their freshness shed on heart and limb;

And rail mine eyes like water-laden clouds, ✿ While in a tear-sea shed by heart I swim.

Now when they entered the White City they asked for the Merchants' Khan, a place of moneyed men; and when shown the hostelry they hired three magazines and on receiving the keys[264] they laid up therein all their goods and gear. They abode in the Khan till they were rested, when the Wazir applied himself to devise a device for the Prince,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Prince and the Minister alighted at the Khan and lodged their goods in the ground-floor magazines and there settled their servants. Then they tarried awhile till they had rested when the Wazir arose and applied himself to devise a device for the Prince, and said to him, "I have bethought me of somewhat wherein, methinks, will be success for thee, so it please Almighty Allah." Quoth Ardashir, "O thou Wazir of good counsel, do what cometh to thy mind, and may the Lord direct thy rede aright!" Quoth the Minister, "I purpose to

hire thee a shop in the market-street of the stuff-sellers and set thee therein; for that all, great and small, have recourse to the bazar and, meseems, when the folk see thee with their own eyes sitting in the shop their hearts will incline to thee and thou wilt thus be enabled to attain thy desire, for thou art fair of favour and souls incline to thee and sight rejoiceth in thee." The other replied, "Do what seemeth good to thee." So the Wazir forthright began to robe the Prince and himself in their richest raiment and, putting a purse of a thousand dinars in his breast-pocket, went forth and walked about the city, whilst all who looked upon them marvelled at the beauty of the King's son, saying, "Glory be to Him who created this youth 'of vile water'[265]! Blessed be Allah excellentest of Creators!" Great was the talk anent him and some said, "This is no mortal, 'this is naught save a noble angel'";[266] and others, "Hath Rizwán, the doorkeeper of the Eden-garden, left the gate of Paradise unguarded, that this youth hath come forth?" The people followed them to the stuff-market, where they entered and stood, till there came up to them an old man of dignified presence and venerable appearance, who saluted them, and they returned his salam. Then the Shaykh said to them, "O my lords, have ye any need, that we may have the honour of accomplishing?"; and the Wazir asked him, "Who art thou, O elder?" He answered, "I am the Overseer of the market." Quoth the Wazir, "Know then, O Shaykh, that this youth is my son and I wish to hire him a shop in the 214 bazar, that he may sit therein and learn to sell and buy and take and give, and come to ken merchants' ways and habits." "I hear and I obey," replied the Overseer and brought them without stay or delay the key of a shop, which he caused the brokers sweep and clean. And they did his bidding. Then the Wazir sent for a high mattress, stuffed with ostrich-down, and set it up in the shop, spreading upon it a small prayer-carpet, and a cushion fringed with broidery of red gold. Moreover he brought pillows and transported thither so much of the goods and stuffs that he had brought with him as filled the shop. Next morning the young Prince came and opening the shop, seated himself on the divan, and stationed two Mamelukes, clad in the richest of raiment before him and two black slaves of the goodliest of the Abyssinians in the lower part of the shop. The Wazir enjoined him to keep his secret from the folk, so thereby he might find aid in the winning of his wishes; then he left him and charging him to acquaint him with what befel him in the shop, day by day returned to the Khan. The Prince sat in the shop till night as he were the moon at its fullest, whilst the folk, hearing tell of his comeliness, flocked to the place, without errand, to gaze on his beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace and glorify the Almighty who created and shaped him, till none could pass through that bazar for the excessive crowding of the folk about him. The King's son turned right and left, abashed at the throng of people that stared at him, hoping to make acquaintance with some one about the court, of whom he might get news of the Princess; but he found no way to this, wherefore his breast was straitened. Meanwhile, the Wazir daily promised him the attainment of his desire and the case so continued for a time till, one morning, as the youth sat in the shop, there

came up an old woman of respectable semblance and dignified presence clad in raiment of devotees[267] and followed by two slave-girls like moons. She stopped before the shop and, having considered the Prince awhile, cried, “Glory be to God who fashioned that face and perfected that figure!” Then she saluted him and he returned her salam and seated her by his side. Quoth she, “Whence cometh thou, O fair of favour?”; and quoth he, “From the parts of Hind, O my mother; and I have come to this city to 215 see the world and look about me.” “Honour to thee for a visitor! What goods and stuffs hast thou? Show me something handsome, fit for Kings.” “If thou wish for handsome stuffs, I will show them to thee; for I have wares that beseem persons of every condition.” “O my son, I want somewhat costly of price and seemly to sight; brief, the best thou hast.” “Thou must needs tell me for whom thou seekest it, that I may show thee goods according to the rank of the requirer.” “Thou speakest sooth, O my son,” said she, “I want somewhat for my mistress Hayat al-Nufus, daughter of Abd al-Kadir, lord of this land and King of this country.” Now when Ardashir heard his mistress’s name, his reason flew for joy and his heart fluttered and he gave no order to slave or servant, but, putting his hand behind him, pulled out a purse of an hundred dinars and offered it to the old woman, saying, “This is for the washing of thy clothes.” Then he again put forth his hand and brought out of a wrapper a dress worth ten thousand dinars or more and said to her, “This is of that which I have brought to your country.” When the old woman saw it, it pleased her and she asked, “What is the price of this dress, O perfect in qualities?” Answered he, “I will take no price for it!” whereupon she thanked him and repeated her question; but he said, “By Allah, I will take no price for it. I make thee a present of it, an the Princess will not accept it and ’tis a guest-gift from me to thee. Alhamdolillah—Glory be to God—who hath brought us together, so that, if one day I have a want, I shall find thee a helper to me in winning it!” She marvelled at the goodliness of his speech and the excess of his generosity and the perfection of his courtesy and said to him, “What is thy name, O my lord?” He replied, “My name is Ardashir;” and she cried, “By Allah this is a rare name! Therewith are Kings’ sons named, and thou art in a guise of the sons of the merchants!” Quoth he, “Of the love my father bore me, he gave me this name, but a name signifieth naught;” and quoth she in wonder, “O my son, take the price of thy goods.” But he swore that he would not take aught. Then the old lady said to him, “O my dear one, Truth (I would have thee know) is the greatest of all things and thou hadst not dealt thus generously by me but for a special reason: so tell me thy case and thy secret thought; belike thou hast some wish to whose winning I may help thee.” Thereupon he laid his hand in hers and, after exacting an oath of secrecy, 216 told her the whole story of his passion for the Princess and his condition by reason thereof. The old woman shook her head and said, “True; but O my son, the wise say, in the current adage:—An thou wouldest be obeyed, abstain from ordering what may not be made; and thou, my son, thy name is Merchant, and

though thou hadst the keys of the Hidden Hoards, yet wouldst thou be called naught but Merchant. An thou wouldst rise to high rank, according to thy station, then seek the hand of a Kazi's daughter or even an Emir's; but why, O my son, aspirest thou to none but the daughter of the King of the age and the time, and she a clean maid, who knoweth nothing of the things of the world and hath never in her life seen anything but her palace wherein she dwelleth? Yet, for all her tender age, she is intelligent, shrewd, vivacious, penetrating, quick of wit, sharp of act and rare of rede: her father hath no other child and she is dearer to him than his life and soul. Every morning he cometh to her and giveth her good-morrow, and all who dwell in the palace stand in dread of her. Think not, O my son, that any dare bespeak her with aught of these words; nor is there any way for me thereto. By Allah, O my son, my heart and vitals love thee and were it in my power to give thee access to her, I would assuredly do it; but I will tell thee somewhat, wherein Allah may haply appoint the healing of thy heart, and will risk life and goods for thee, till I win thy will for thee." He asked, "And what is that, O my mother"; and she answered, "Seek of me the daughter of a Wazir or an Emir, and I will grant thy request; but it may not be that one should mount from earth to heaven at one bound." When the Prince heard this, he replied to her with courtesy and sense, "O my mother, thou art a woman of wit and knowest how things go. Say me doth a man, when his head irketh him, bind up his hand?" Quoth she, "No, by Allah, O my son"; and quoth he, "Even so my heart seeketh none but her and naught slayeth me but love of her. By Allah, I am a dead man, and I find not one to counsel me aright and succour me! Allah upon thee, O my mother, take pity on my strangerhood and the streaming of my tears!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ardashir, the King's son said to the old woman, "Allah upon thee, O 217 my mother, take pity on my strangerhood and the streaming of my tears." Replied she, "By Allah, O my son, thy words rend my heart, but my hand hath no cunning wherewith to help thee." Quoth he, "I beseech thee of thy favour, carry her a letter and kiss her hands for me." So she had compassion on him and said, "Write what thou wilt and I will bear it to her." When he heard this, he was ready to fly for joy and calling for ink-case and paper, wrote these couplets:—

O Hayát al-Nufús, be gen'rous, and incline ✿ To one who loving thee for parting's doomed to pine.

I was in all delight, in gladsomest of life, ✿ But now I am distraught with sufferings condign.

To wakefulness I cling through longsomeness of night ✿ And with me sorrow chats[268] through each sad eve of mine;

Pity a lover sad, a sore afflicted wretch ✿ Whose eyelids ever ulcered are with tearful brine;

And when the morning comes at last, the real morn ✿ He finds him drunken and distraught with passion's wine.

Then he folded the scroll and kissing it, gave it to the old woman; after which he put his hand to a chest and took out a second purse containing an hundred dinars, which he presented to her, saying, "Divide this among the slave girls." She refused it and cried, "By Allah, O my son, I am not with thee for aught of this!"; however, he thanked her and answered, "There is no help but that thou accept of it." So she took it and kissing his hands, returned home; and going in to the Princess, cried, "O my lady, I have brought thee somewhat the like whereof is not with the people of our city, and it cometh from a handsome young man, than whom there is not a goodlier on earth's face!" She asked, "O my nurse, and whence cometh the youth?" and the old 218 woman answered, "From the parts of Hind; and he hath given me this dress of gold brocade, embroidered with pearls and gems and worth the Kingdom of Chosroës and Cæsar." Thereupon she opened the dress and the whole palace was illuminated by its brightness, because of the beauty of its fashion and the wealth of unions and jewels wherewith it was broidered, and all who were present marvelled at it. The Princess examined it and, judging it to be worth no less than a whole year's revenue of her father's kingdom, said to the old woman, "O my nurse, cometh this dress from him or from another?"[269] Replied she, "From him;" and Hayat al-Nufus asked, "Is this trader of our town or a stranger?" The old woman answered, "He is a foreigner, O my lady, newly come hither; and by Allah he hath servants and slaves; and he is fair of face, symmetrical of form, well mannered, open-handed and open-hearted, never saw I a goodlier than he, save thyself." The King's daughter rejoined, "Indeed this is an extraordinary thing, that a dress like this, which money cannot buy, should be in the hands of a merchant! What price did he set on it, O my nurse?" Quoth she, "By Allah, he would set no price on it, but gave me back the money thou sentest by me and swore that he would take naught thereof, saying:—'Tis a gift from me to the King's daughter; for it beseemeth none but her; and if she will not accept it, I make thee a present of it." Cried the Princess, "By Allah, this is indeed marvellous generosity and wondrous munificence! But I fear the issue of his affair, lest haply[270] he be brought to necessity. Why didst thou not ask him, O my nurse, if he had any desire, that we might fulfil it for him?" The nurse replied, "O my lady, I did ask him, and he said to me:—I have indeed a desire; but he would not tell me what it was. However, he gave me this letter and said:—Carry it to the Princess." So Hayat al-Nufus took the letter and opened and read it to the end; whereupon she was sore chafed; and lost temper and changing colour for anger she cried out to the old woman, saying, "Woe to thee, O nurse! What is the name of this dog who durst write this language to a King's daughter? What affinity is there between me and this hound that he should address me thus? By Almighty Allah, Lord of the well Zemzem and of the Hatim 219 Wall,[271] but that I fear the Omnipotent, the Most High, I would send and bind the cur's hands behind him and slit his nostrils, and shear off his nose and ears and after, by way of

example, crucify him on the gate of the bazar wherein is his booth!" When the old woman heard these words, she waxed yellow; her side muscles[272] quivered and her tongue clave to her mouth; but she heartened her heart and said, "Softly, O my lady! What is there in his letter to trouble thee thus? Is it aught but a memorial containing his complaint to thee of poverty or oppression, from which he hopeth to be relieved by thy favour?" Replied she, "No, by Allah, O my nurse, 'tis naught of this; but verses and shameful words! However, O my nurse, this dog must be in one of three cases: either he is Jinn-mad, and hath no wit, or he seeketh his own slaughter, or else he is assisted to his wish of me by some one of exceeding puissance and a mighty Sultan. Or hath he heard that I am one of the baggages of the city, who lie a night or two with whosoever seeketh them, that he writeth me immodest verses to debauch my reason by talking of such matters?" Rejoined the old woman, "By Allah, O my lady, thou sayst sooth! But reck not thou of yonder ignorant hound, for thou art seated in thy lofty, firm-builded and unapproachable palace, to which the very birds cannot soar neither the wind pass over it, and as for him, he is clean distraught. Wherefore do thou write him a letter and chide him angrily and spare him no manner of reproof, but threaten him with dreadful threats and menace him with death and say to him:—Whence hast thou knowledge of me, that thou durst write me, O dog of a merchant, O thou who trudgest far and wide all thy days in wilds and wolds for the sake of gaining a dirham or a dinar? By Allah, except thou awake from thy sleep and put off thine intoxication, I will assuredly crucify thee on the gate of the market-street wherein is thy shop!" Quoth the Princess, "I fear lest he presume, if I write to him"; and quoth the nurse, "And pray what is he and what is his rank that he should presume to us? Indeed, we write him but to the intent that his presumption may be cut off and his fear magnified." 220 And she ceased not craftily to persuade her, till she called for ink-case and paper and wrote him these couplets:—

O thou who claimest to be prey of love and ecstasy; ✿ Thou, who for passion spendest nights in grief and saddest gree:

Say, dost thou (haughty one!) desire enjoyment of the moon? ✿ Did man e'er sue the moon for grace whate'er his lunacy?

I verily will counsel thee with rede the best to hear: ✿ Cut short this course ere come thou nigh sore risk, nay death, to dree!

If thou to this request return, surely on thee shall fall ✿ Sore punishment, for vile offence a grievous penalty.

Be reasonable then, be wise, hark back unto thy wits; ✿ Behold, in very truth I speak with best advice to thee:

By Him who did all things that be create from nothingness; ✿ Who dressed the face of heaven with stars in brightest radiancy:

If in the like of this thy speech thou dare to sin again! ✿ I'll surely have thee crucified upon a trunk of tree.

Then she rolled up the letter and gave it to the old woman who took it and, repairing to Ardashir's shop, delivered it to him,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman took that letter from Hayat al-Nufus she fared forth till she found the youth who was sitting in his shop and gave it to him, saying, "Read thine answer and know that when she perused thy paper she was wroth with exceeding wrath; but I soothed her and spake her fair, till she consented to write thee a reply." He took the letter joyfully but, when he had read it and understood its drift, he wept sore, whereat the old woman's heart ached and she cried, "O my son, Allah never cause thine eyes to weep nor thy heart to mourn! What can be more gracious than that she should answer thy letter when thou hast done what thou diddest?" He replied, "O my mother what shall I do for a subtle device? Behold, she writeth to me, threatening me with death and crucifixion and forbidding me from writing to her; and I, by Allah, see my death to be better than my life; but I beg thee of thy grace[273] to carry her another letter from me." She 221 said, "Write and I warrant I'll bring thee an answer. By Allah, I will assuredly venture my life to win for thee thy wish, though I die to pleasure thee!" He thanked her and kissing her hands, wrote these verses:—

Do you threaten me wi' death for my loving you so well? ✿ When Death to me were rest and all dying is by Fate?

And man's death is but a boon, when so longsome to him grows ✿ His life, and rejected he lives in lonest state:

Then visit ye a lover who hath ne'er a soul to aid; ✿ For on pious works of men Heaven's blessing shall await.

But an ye be resolved on this deed then up and on; ✿ I'm in bonds to you, a bondsman confined within your gate:

What path have I whose patience without you is no more? ✿ How is this, when a lover's heart in stress of love is strait?

O my lady show me ruth, who by passion am misused; ✿ For all who love the noble stand for evermore excused.

He then folded the scroll and gave it to the old woman, together with two purses of two hundred dinars, which she would have refused, but he conjured her by oath to accept of them. So she took them both and said, "Needs must I bring thee to thy desire, despite the noses of thy foes." Then she repaired to the palace and gave the letter to Hayat al-Nufus who said, "What is this, O my nurse? Here are we in a correspondence and thou coming and going! Indeed, I fear lest the matter get wind and we be disgraced." Rejoined the old woman, "How so, O my lady? Who dare speak such word?" So she took the letter and after reading and understanding it she smote hand on hand, saying, "Verily, this is a calamity which is fallen upon us, and I know not whence this young man came to us!" Quoth the old woman, "O my lady, Allah upon thee, write him another letter; but be rough with him this time and say to him:—An thou write me another word after this, I will have thy head struck off." Quoth the Princess, "O my nurse, I am assured that the matter will not end on such wise; 'twere better to break off this exchange of letters; and, except the puppy take

warning by my previous threats, I will strike off his head." The old woman said, "Then write him a letter and give him to know this condition." So Hayat al-Nufus called for pen-case and paper and wrote these couplets:—

Ho, thou heedless of Time and his sore despight! ✿ Ho, thou heart whom hopes of my favours excite!

222 Think O pride-full! would'st win for thyself the skies? ✿ Would'st attain to the moon shining clear and bright?

I will burn thee with fire that shall ne'er be quenched, ✿ Or will slay thee with scymitar's sharpest bite!

Leave it, friend, and 'scape the tormenting pains, ✿ Such as turn hair-partings[274] from black to white.

Take my warning and fly from the road of love; ✿ Draw thee back from a course nor seemly nor right!

Then she folded the scroll and gave it to the old woman, who was puzzled and perplexed by the matter. She carried it to Ardashir, and the Prince read the letter and bowed his head to the earth, making as if he wrote with his finger and speaking not a word. Quoth the old woman, "How is it I see thee silent stay and not say thy say?"; and quoth he, "O my mother, what shall I say, seeing that she doth but threaten me and redoubleth in hardheartedness and aversion?" Rejoined the nurse, "Write her a letter of what thou wilt: I will protect thee; nor let thy heart be cast down, for needs must I bring you twain together." He thanked her for her kindness and kissing her hand, wrote these couplets:—

A heart, by Allah! never soft to lover-wight, ✿ Who sighs for union only with his friends, his sprite!

Who with tear-ulcered eyelids evermore must bide, ✿ When falleth upon earth first darkness of the night:

Be just, be gen'rous, lend thy ruth and deign give alms ✿ To love-molested lover, parted, forced to flight!

He spends the length of longsome night without a doze; ✿ Fire-brent and drent in tear-flood flowing infinite:

Ah; cut not off the longing of my fondest heart ✿ Now disappointed, wasted, flutt'ring for its blight.

Then he folded the scroll and gave it to the old woman, together with three hundred dinars, saying, "This is for the washing of thy hands." She thanked him and kissed his hands, after which she returned to the palace and gave the letter to the Princess, who took it and read it and throwing it from her fingers, sprang to her feet. Then she walked, shod as she was with pattens of gold, set with pearls and jewels, till she came to her sire's palace, whilst the vein of anger started out between her eyes, and none dared 223 ask her of her case. When she reached the palace, she enquired for the King, and the slave-girls and concubines replied to her, "O my lady, he is gone forth a-hunting and sporting." So she returned, as she were a rending lioness, and bespake none for the space of three hours, when her brow cleared and her wrath cooled. As soon as the old woman saw that her irk and anger were past, she went up to her and, kissing ground between her hands, asked her, "O my lady, whither went those noble steps?" The Princess answered, "To the palace of the King my sire." "And could no one do thine errand?" enquired the nurse. Replied the Princess, "No, for I went to acquaint him of that which hath befallen me with yonder cur of a merchant, so he might lay hands on him and on all the merchants of his bazar and crucify them over

their shops nor suffer a single foreign merchant to tarry in our town." Quoth the old woman, "And was this thine only reason, O my lady, for going to thy sire?"; and quoth Hayat al-Nufus, "Yes, but I found him absent a-hunting and sporting and now I await his return." Cried the old nurse, "I take refuge with Allah, the All-hearing, the All-knowing! Praised be He! O my lady, thou art the most sensible of women and how couldst thou think of telling the King these fond words, which it behoveth none to publish?" Asked the Princess, "And why so?" and the nurse answered, "Suppose thou had found the King in his palace and told him all this tale and he had sent after the merchants and commanded to hang them over their shops, the folk would have seen them hanging and asked the reason and it would have been answered them:—They sought to seduce the King's daughter."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman said to the Princess, "Suppose thou had told this to the King and he had ordered the merchants to be hanged, would not folk have seen them and have asked the cause of the execution when the answer would have been:—They sought to seduce the King's daughter? Then would they have dispread divers reports concerning thee, some saying:—She abode with them ten days, away from her palace, till they had taken their fill of her; and 224other some in otherguise; for woman's honour, O my lady, is like curded milk, the least dust fouleth it; and like glass, which, if it be cracked, may not be mended. So beware of telling thy sire or any other of this matter, lest thy fair fame be smirched, O mistress mine, for 'twill never profit thee to tell folk aught; no, never! Weigh what I say with thy keen wit, and if thou find it not just, do whatso thou wilt." The Princess pondered her words, and seeing them to be altogether profitable and right, said, "Thou speakest sooth, O my nurse; but anger had blinded my judgment." Quoth the old woman, "Thy resolve to tell no one is pleasing to the Almighty; but something remaineth to be done: we must not let the shamelessness of yonder vile dog of a merchant pass without notice. Write him a letter and say to him:—O vilest of traders, but that I found the King my father absent, I had straightway commanded to hang thee and all thy neighbours. But thou shalt gain nothing by this; for I swear to thee, by Allah the Most High, that an thou return to the like of this talk, I will blot out the trace of thee from the face of earth! And deal thou roughly with him in words, so shalt thou discourage him in this attempt and arouse him from his heedlessness." "And will these words cause him to abstain from his offending?" asked the Princess; and the old woman answered, "How should he not abstain? Besides, I will talk with him and tell him what hath passed." So the Princess called for ink-case and paper and wrote these couplets:—

To win our favours still thy hopes are bent; ✿ And still to win thy will art confident!
Naught save his pride-full aim shall slay a man; ✿ And he by us shall die of his intent.
Thou art no lord of might, no chief of men, ✿ Nabob or Prince or Soldan Heaven-sent;
And were this deed of one who is our peer, ✿ He had returned with hair for fear white-sprent:
Yet will I deign once more excuse thy sin ✿ So from this time thou prove thee penitent.

Then she gave the missive to the old woman, saying, "O my nurse, do thou admonish this puppy lest I be forced to cut off his head and sin on his account." Replied the old woman, "By Allah, O my lady, I will not leave him a side to turn on!" Then she returned to the youth and, when salams had been exchanged, she gave him the letter. He read it and shook his head, saying, 225"Verily, we are Allah's and unto him shall we return!" adding, "O my mother, what shall I do? My fortitude faileth me and my patience palleth upon me!" She replied, "O my son, be long-suffering: peradventure, after this Allah shall bring somewhat to pass. Write that which is in thy mind and I will fetch thee an answer, and be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; for needs must I bring about union between thee and her,—Inshallah!" He blessed her and wrote to the Princess a note containing these couplets:—

Since none will lend my love a helping hand, ✿ And I by passion's bale in death low-lain,
I bear a flaming fire within my heart ✿ By day and night nor place of rest attain,
How cease to hope in thee, my wishes' term? ✿ Or with my longings to be glad and fain?
The Lord of highmost Heaven to grant my prayer ✿ Pray I, whom love of lady fair hath slain;
And as I'm clean o'erthrown by love and fear, ✿ To grant me speedy union deign, oh deign!

Then he folded the scroll and gave it to the old woman, bringing out at the same time a purse of four hundred dinars. She took the whole and returning to the palace sought the Princess to whom she gave the letter; but the King's daughter refused to take it and cried, "What is this?" Replied the old woman, "O my lady, this is only the answer to the letter thou sentest to that merchant dog." Quoth Hayat al-Nufus, "Didst thou forbid him as I told thee?"; and quoth she, "Yes, and this is his reply." So the Princess took the letter and read it to the end; then she turned to the old woman and exclaimed, "Where is the result of thy promise?" "O my lady, saith he not in his letter that he repenteth and will not again offend, excusing himself for the past?" "Not so, by Allah!: on the contrary, he increaseth." "O my lady, write him a letter and thou shalt presently see what I will do with him." "There needeth nor letter nor answer." "I must have a letter that I may rebuke him roughly and cut off his hopes." "Thou canst do that without a letter." "I cannot do it without the letter." So Hayat al-Nufus called for pen-case and paper and wrote these verses:—

Long have I chid thee but my chiding hindereth thee not ✿ How often would my verse with writ o' hand ensnare thee, ah!
Then keep thy passion hidden deep and ever unrevealed, ✿ And if thou dare gainsay me Earth shall no more bear thee, ah!

226 And if, despite my warning, thou dost to such words return ✿ Death's Messenger[275] shall go his rounds and dead declare thee, ah!

Soon shall the wold's fierce chilling blast o'erblow that corse o' thine; ✿ And birds o' the wild with ravening bills and beaks shall tear thee, ah!

Return to righteous course; perchance that same will profit thee; ✿ If bent on wilful aims and lewd I fain forswear thee, ah!

When she had made an end of her writing this, she cast the writ from her hand in wrath, and the old woman picked it up and went with it to Ardashir. When he read it to the last he knew that she had not softened to him, but only redoubled in rage against him, and that he would never win to meet her, so he bethought himself to write her an answer invoking Allah's help against her. Thereupon he indited these couplets:—

O Lord, by the Five Shaykhs, I pray deliver me ✿ From love, which gars me bear such grief and misery.

Thou knowest what I bear for passion's fiery flame; ✿ What stress of sickness for that merciless maid I dree.

She hath no pity on the pangs to me decreed ✿ How long on weakly wight shall last her tyranny?

I am distraught for her with passing agonies ✿ And find no friend, O folk! to hear my plaint and plea.

How long, when Night hath drooped her pinions o'er the world ✿ Shall I lament in public as in privacy?

For love of you I cannot find forgetfulness; ✿ And how forget when Patience taketh wings to flee?

O thou wild parting-bird[276] say is she safe and sure ✿ From shift and change of time and the world's cruelty?

Then he folded the scroll and gave it to the old woman, adding a purse of five hundred dinars; and she took it and carried it to the Princess, who read it to the end and learned its purport. Then, casting it from her hand, she cried, "Tell me O wicked old woman, the cause of all that hath befallen me from thee and from thy 227 cunning and thine advocacy of him, so that thou hast made me write letter after letter and thou ceasest not to carry messages, going and coming between us twain, till thou hast brought about a correspondence and a connection. Thou leavest not to say:—I will ensure thee against his mischief and cut off from thee his speech; but thou speakest not thus save only to the intent that I may continue to write thee letters and thou to fetch and carry between us, evening and morning, till thou ruin my repute. Woe to thee! Ho, eunuchs, seize her!" Then Hayat al-Nufus commanded them to beat her, and they lashed her till her whole body flowed with blood and she fainted away, whereupon the King's daughter caused her slave-women to drag her forth by the feet and cast her without the palace and bade one of them stand by her head till she recovered, and say to her, "The Princess hath sworn an oath that thou shalt never return to and re-enter this palace; and she hath commanded to slay thee without mercy an thou dare return hither." So, when she came to herself, the damsel told her what the King's daughter said and she answered, "Hearkening and obedience." Presently the slave-girls fetched a basket and a porter whom they caused carry her to her own house; and they sent after her a physician, bidding him tend her assiduously till she recovered. He did what he was told to do and as soon as she was whole she mounted

and rode to the shop of Ardashir who was concerned with sore concern for her absence and was longing for news of her. As soon as he saw her, he sprang up and coming to meet her, saluted her; then he noticed that she was weak and ailing; so he questioned her of her case and she told him all that had befallen her from her nursling. When he heard this, he found it grievous and smote hand upon hand, saying, "By Allah, O my mother, this that hath betided thee straiteneth my heart! But, what, O my mother, is the reason of the Princess's hatred to men?" Replied the old woman, "Thou must know O my son, that she hath a beautiful garden, than which there is naught goodlier on earth's face and it chanced that she lay there one night. In the joyance of sleep, she dreamt a dream and 'twas this, that she went down into the garden, where she saw a fowler set up his net and strew corn thereabout, after which he withdrew and sat down afar off to await what game should fall into it. Ere an hour had passed the birds flocked to pick up the corn and a male pigeon[277] 228 fell into the net and struggled in it, whereat all the others took fright and fled from him. His mate was amongst them, but she returned to him after the shortest delay; and, coming up to the net, sought out the mesh wherein his foot was entangled and ceased not to peck at it with her bill, till she severed it and released her husband, with whom she flew away. All this while, the fowler sat dozing, and when he awoke, he looked at the net and found it spoilt. So he mended it and strewed fresh grain, then withdrew to a distance and sat down to watch it again. The birds soon returned and began to pick up the corn, and among the rest the pair of pigeons. Presently, the she-pigeon fell into the net and struggled to get free; whereupon all the other birds flew away, and her mate, whom she had saved, fled with the rest and did not return to her. Meantime, sleep had again overcome the fowler; and, when he awoke after long slumbering, he saw the she-pigeon caught in the net; so he went up to her and freeing her feet from the meshes, cut her throat. The Princess startled by the dream awoke troubled, and said:—Thus do men with women, for women have pity on men and throw away their lives for them, when they are in difficulties; but if the Lord decree against a woman and she fall into calamity, her mate deserteth her and rescueth her not, and wasted is that which she did with him of kindness. Allah curse her who putteth her trust in men, for they ill requite the fair offices which women do them! And from that day she conceived an hatred to men." Said the King's son, "O my mother, doth she never go out into the highways?"; and the old woman replied, "Nay, O my son; but I will tell thee somewhat wherein, Allah willing, there shall be profit for thee. She hath a garden which is of the goodliest pleasaunces of the age; and every year, at the time of the ripening of the fruits, she goeth thither and taketh her pleasure therein only one day, nor layeth the night but in her pavilion. She entereth the garden by the private wicket of the palace which leadeth thereto; and thou must know that it wanteth now but a month to the time of her going forth. So take my advice and hie thee this very day to the keeper of that garden and make acquaintance with him and gain his good graces, for he admitteth not one of Allah's creatures into the garth, because of its communication

with the Princess's palace. I will let thee know two days beforehand of the day fixed for her coming forth, when do thou repair to the garden, as of thy wont, and make shift to night there. When the King's daughter cometh be thou 229 hidden in some place or other;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman charged the King's son, saying, "I will let thee know two days beforehand of the King's daughter going down to the garden: do thou hide thee in some place or other; and, when thou espiest her, come forth and show thyself to her. When she seeth thee, she will fall in love with thee; for thou art fair to look upon and love covereth all things. So keep thine eyes cool and clear[278] and be of good cheer, O my son, for needs must I bring about union between thee and her." The young Prince kissed her hand and thanked her and gave her three pieces of Alexandrian silk and three of satin of various colours, and with each piece, linen for shifts and stuff for trousers and a kerchief for the turband and fine white cotton cloth of Ba'albak for the linings, so as to make her six complete suits, each handsomer than its sister. Moreover, he gave her a purse containing six hundred gold pieces and said to her, "This is for the tailoring." She took the whole and said to him, "O my son, art thou not pleased to acquaint me with thine abiding-place and I also will show thee the way to my lodging?" "Yes," answered he and sent a Mameluke with her to note her home and show her his own house. Then he rose and bidding his slaves shut the shop, went back to the Wazir, to whom he related all that had passed between him and the old woman, from first to last. Quoth the Minister, "O my son, should the Princess Hayat al-Nufus come out and look upon thee and thou find no favour with her what wilt thou do?" Quoth Ardashir, "There will be nothing left but to pass from words to deeds and risk my life with her; for I will snatch her up from amongst her attendants and set her behind me on a swift horse and make for the wildest of the wold. If I escape, I shall have won my wish and if I perish, I shall be at rest from 230 this hateful life." Rejoined the Minister, "O my son, dost thou think to do this thing and live? How shall we make our escape, seeing that our country is far distant, and how wilt thou deal thus with a King of the Kings of the Age, who hath under his hand an hundred thousand horse, nor can we be sure but that he will despatch some of his troops to cut off our way? Verily, there is no good in this project which no wise man would attempt." Asked Ardashir, "And how then shall we do, O Wazir of good counsel? For unless I win her I am a dead man without a chance." The Minister answered, "Wait till to-morrow when we will visit this garden and note its condition and see what betideth us with the care-taker." So when the morning morrowed they took a thousand dinars in a poke and, repairing to the garden,

found it compassed about with high walls and strong, rich in trees and rill-full leas and goodly fruiteries. And indeed its flowers breathed perfume and its birds warbled amid the bloom as it were a garden of the gardens of Paradise. Within the door sat a Shaykh, an old man on a stone bench and they saluted him. When he saw them and noted the fairness of their favour, he rose to his feet after returning their salute, and said, "O my lords, perchance ye have a wish which we may have the honour of satisfying?" Replied the Wazir, "Know, O elder, that we are strangers and the heat hath overcome us: our lodging is afar off at the other end of the city; so we desire of thy courtesy that thou take these two dinars and buy us somewhat of provaunt and open us meanwhile the door of this flower garden and seat us in some shaded place, where there is cold water, that we may cool ourselves there, against thou return with the provision, when we will eat, and thou with us, and then, rested and refreshed, we shall wend our ways." So saying, he pulled out of his pouch a couple of dinars and put them into the keeper's hand. Now this care-taker was a man aged threescore and ten, who had never in all his life possessed so much money: So, when he saw the two dinars in his hand, he was like to fly for joy and rising forthwith opened the garden gate to the Prince and the Wazir, and made them enter and sit down under a wide-spreading, fruit-laden, shade-affording tree, saying, "Sit ye here and go no further into the garden, for it hath a privy door communicating with the palace of the Princess Hayat al-Nufus." They replied, "We will not stir hence." Whereupon he went out to buy what they had ordered and returned after awhile, with a porter bearing on his head a 231 roasted lamb and bread. They ate and drank together and talked awhile, till, presently, the Wazir, looking about him in all corners right and left, caught sight of a lofty pavilion at the farther end of the garden; but it was old and the plaster was peeled from its walls and its buttresses were broken down. So he said to the Gardener, "O Shaykh, is this garden thine own or dost thou hire it?"; and he replied, "I am neither owner nor tenant of the garden, only its care-taker." Asked the Minister, "And what is thy wage?" whereto the old man answered, "A dinar a month," and quoth the Wazir, "Verily they wrong thee, especially an thou have a family." Quoth the elder, "By Allah, O my lord; I have eight children and I"—The Wazir broke in, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Thou makest me bear thy grief my poor fellow! What wouldst thou say of him who should do thee a good turn, on account of this family of thine?" Replied the old man, "O my lord, whatsoever good thou dost shall be garnered up for thee with God the Most High!" Thereupon said the Wazir, "O Shaykh, thou knowest this garden of thine to be a goodly place; but the pavilion yonder is old and ruinous. Now I mean to repair it and stucco it anew and paint it handsomely, so that it will be the finest thing in the garth; and when the owner comes and finds the pavilion restored and beautified, he will not fail to question thee concerning it. Then do thou say:—O my lord, at great expense I set it in repair, for that I saw it in ruins and none could make use of it nor could anyone sit therein. If he says:—Whence hadst thou the money for this? reply, I spent

of my own money upon the stucco, thereby thinking to whiten my face with thee and hoping for thy bounties. And needs must he recompense thee fairly over the extent of thine expenses. To-morrow I will bring builders and plasterers and painters to repair this pavilion and will give thee what I promised thee." Then he pulled out of his poke a purse of five hundred dinars and gave it to the Gardener, saying, "Take these gold pieces and expend them upon thy family and let them pray for me and for this my son." Thereupon the Prince asked the Wazir, "What is the meaning of all this?" and he answered, "Thou shalt presently see the issue thereof."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir gave five hundred ducats to the old Gardener, saying, "Take these gold pieces and expend them upon thy family and let them pray for this my son," the old man looked at the gold and his wits fled; so he fell down at the Wazir's feet, kissing them and invoking blessings on him and his son; and when they went away, he said to them, "I shall expect you to-morrow: for by Allah Almighty, there must be no parting between us, night or day." Next morning the Wazir went to the Prince's shop and sent for the syndic of the builders; then he carried him and his men to the garth, where the Gardener rejoiced in their sight. He gave them the price of rations[279] and what was needful to the workmen for the restoration of the pavilion, and they repaired it and stucco'd it and decorated it. Then said the Minister to the painters, "Harkye, my masters, listen to my words and apprehend my wish and my aim. Know that I have a garden like this, where I was sleeping one night among the nights and saw in a dream a fowler set up nets and sprinkle corn thereabout. The birds flocked to pick up the grain, and a cock-bird fell into the net, whereupon the others took fright and flew away, and amongst the rest his mate: but, after awhile, she returned alone and picked at the mesh that held his feet, till she set him free and they flew away together. Now the fowler had fallen asleep and, when he awoke, he found the net empty; so he mended it and strewing fresh grain sat down afar off, waiting for game to fall into that snare. Presently the birds assembled again to pick up the grains, and amongst the rest the two pigeons. By-and-by, the hen-bird fell into the net, when all the other birds took fright at her and flew away, and her husband flew with them and did not return; whereupon the fowler came up and taking the quarry, cut her throat. Now, when her mate flew away with the others, a bird of raven seized him and slew him and ate his flesh and drank his blood, and I would have 233 you pourtray me the presentment of this my dream, even as I have related it to you, in the liveliest colours, laying the fair scene in this rare garden, with its walls and trees and rills, and dwell especially on the

fowler and the falcon. If ye do this I have set forth to you and the work please me, I will give you what shall gladden your hearts, over and above your wage." The painters, hearing these words, applied themselves with all diligence to do what he required of them and wrought it out in masterly style; and when they had made an end of the work, they showed it to the Wazir who, seeing his so-called dream set forth as it was[280] was pleased and thanked them and rewarded them munificently. Presently, the Prince came in, according to his custom, and entered the pavilion, unweeting what the Wazir had done. So when he saw the portraiture of the fowler and the birds and the net and beheld the male pigeon in the clutches of the hawk, which had slain him and was drinking his blood and eating his flesh, his understanding was confounded and he returned to the Minister and said, "O Wazir of good counsel, I have seen this day a marvel which, were it graven with needle-gravers on the eye-corners would be a warner to whoso will be warned?" Asked the Minister, "And what is that, O my lord?"; and the Prince answered, "Did I not tell thee of the dream the Princess had and how it was the cause of her hatred for men?" "Yes," replied the Wazir; and Ardashir rejoined, "By Allah, O Minister, I have seen the whole dream pourtrayed in painting, as I had eyed it with mine own eyes; but I found therein a circumstance which was hidden from the Princess, so that she saw it not, and 'tis upon this that I rely for the winning of my wish." Quoth the Wazir, "And what is that, O my son?"; and quoth the Prince, "I saw that, when the male bird flew away; and, leaving his mate entangled in the net, failed to return and save her, a falcon pounced on him and slaying him, ate his flesh and drank his blood. Would to Heaven the Princess had seen the whole of the dream and had beheld the cause of his failure to return and rescue her!" Replied the Wazir, "By Allah, 234 O auspicious King, this is indeed a rare thing and a wonderful!" And the King's son ceased not to marvel at the picture and lament that the King's daughter had not beheld the dream to its end, saying in himself, "Would she had seen it to the last or might see the whole over again, though but in the imbroglio of sleep!" Then quoth the Wazir to him, "Thou saidst to me:—Why wilt thou repair the pavilion?; and I replied:—Thou shalt presently see the issue thereof. And behold, now its issue thou seest; for it was I did this deed and bade the painters pourtray the Princess's dream thus and paint the male bird in the pounces of the falcon which eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood; so that when she cometh to the pavilion, she will behold her dream depicted and see how the cock-pigeon was slain and excuse him and turn from her hate for men." When the Prince heard the Wazir's words, he kissed his hands and thanked him, saying, "Verily, the like of thee is fit to be Minister to the most mighty King, and, by Allah, an I win my wish and return to my sire, rejoicing, I will assuredly acquaint him with this, that he may redouble in honouring thee and advance thee in dignity and hearken to thine every word." So the Wazir kissed his hand and they both went to the old Gardener and said, "Look at yonder pavilion and see how fine it is!" And he replied, "This is all of your happy thought." Then said they, "O elder, when the owners of the place question thee concerning the

restoration of the pavilion, say thou:—'Twas I did it of my own monies; to the intent that there may betide thee fair favour and good fortune." He said, "I hear and I obey"; and the Prince continued to pay him frequent visits. Such was the case with the Prince and the Wazir; but as regards Hayat al-Nufus, when she ceased to receive the Prince's letters and messages and when the old woman was absent from her, she rejoiced with joy exceeding and concluded that the young man had returned to his own country. One day, there came to her a covered tray from her father; so she uncovered it and finding therein fine fruits, asked her waiting-women, "Is the season of these fruits come?" Answered they, "Yes." Thereupon she cried, "Would we might make ready to take our pleasure in the flower-garden!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Princess, after receiving the fruit from her sire, asked, "Is the season of these fruits set in?"; and they answered, "Yes!" Thereupon she cried, "Would we might make ready to take our pleasure in the flower-garden!" "O my lady," they replied, "thou sayest well, and by Allah, we also long for the garden!" So she enquired, "How shall we do, seeing that every year it is none save my nurse who taketh us to walk in the garden and who pointeth out to us the various trees and plants; and I have beaten her and forbidden her from me? Indeed, I repent me of what was done by me to her, for that, in any case, she is my nurse and hath over me the right of fosterage. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" When her handmaids heard this, they all sprang up; and, kissing the ground between her hands, exclaimed, "Allah upon thee, O my lady, do thou pardon her and bid her to the presence!"; and quoth she, "By Allah, I am resolved upon this; but which of you will go to her, for I have prepared her a splendid robe of honour?" Hereupon two damsels came forward, by name Bulbul and Siwád al-'Ayn, who were comely and graceful and the principals among the Princess's women, and her favourites. And they said, "We will go to her, O King's daughter!"; and she said, "Do what seemeth good to you." So they went to the house of the nurse and knocked at the door and entered; and she, recognising the twain, received them with open arms and welcomed them. When they had sat awhile with her, they said to her, "O nurse, the Princess pardoneth thee and desireth to take thee back into favour." She replied, "This may never be, though I drink the cup of ruin! Hast thou forgotten how she put me to shame before those who love me and those who hate me, when my clothes were dyed with my blood and I well nigh died for stress of beating, and after this they dragged me forth by the feet, like a dead dog, and cast me without the door? So by Allah, I will never return to her nor fill my eyes with her sight!" Quoth the two girls, "Disappoint not our pains in coming to thee nor

send us away unsuccessful. Where is thy courtesy uswards? Think but who it is that cometh in to visit thee: canst thou wish for any higher of standing than we with the King's daughter?" She replied, "I take refuge with [236]Allah: well I wot that my station is less than yours; were it not that the Princess's favour exalted me above all her women, so that, were I wroth with the greatest of them, she had died in her skin of fright." They rejoined, "All is as it was and naught is in anywise changed. Indeed, 'tis better than before, for the Princess humbleth herself to thee and seeketh a reconciliation without intermediary." Said the old woman, "By Allah, were it not for your presence and intercession with me, I had never returned to her; no, not though she had commanded to slay me!" They thanked her for this and she rose and dressing herself accompanied them to the palace. Now when the King's daughter saw her, she sprang to her feet in honour, and the old woman said, "Allah! Allah! O King's daughter, say me, whose was the fault, mine or thine?" Hayat al-Nufus replied, "The fault was mine, and 'tis thine to pardon and forgive. By Allah, O my nurse, thy rank is high with me and thou hast over me the right of fosterage; but thou knowest that Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath allotted to His creatures four things, disposition, life, daily bread and death; nor is it in man's power to avert that which is decreed. Verily, I was beside myself and could not recover my senses; but, O my nurse, I repent of what deed I did." With this, the crone's anger ceased from her and she rose and kissed the ground before the Princess, who called for a costly robe of honour and threw it over her, whereat she rejoiced with exceeding joy in the presence of the Princess's slaves and women. When all ended thus happily, Hayat al-Nufus said to the old woman, "O my nurse, how go the fruits and growths of our garth?"; and she replied, "O my lady, I see excellent fruits in the town; but I will enquire of this matter and return thee an answer this very day." Then she withdrew, honoured with all honour and betook herself to Ardashir, who received her with open arms and embraced her and rejoiced in her coming, for that he had expected her long and longingly. She told him all that had passed between herself and the Princess and how her mistress was minded to go down into the garden on such a day.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman betook herself to the Prince and told him all that had [237]passed between herself and the Princess Hayat al-Nufus; and how her mistress was minded to go down into the garden on such a day and said to him, "Hast thou done as I bade thee with the Warder of the garden and hast thou made him taste of thy bounties?" He replied, "Yes, and the oldster is become my good friend: my way is his way and he would well I had need of him." Then he told her all that had happened and of the dream-paintings

which the Wazir had caused to be limned in the pavilion; especially of the fowler, the net and the falcon: whereat she joyed with great joy and said, "Allah upon thee, do thou set thy Minister midmost thy heart, for this that he hath done pointeth to the keenness of his wit and he hath helped thee to the winning thy wish. So rise forthright, O my son, and go to the Hammam-bath and don thy daintiest dress, wherein may be our success. Then fare thou to the Gardener and make shift to pass the night in the garden, for though he should give the earth full of gold none may win to pass into it, whilst the King's daughter is therein. When thou hast entered, hide thee where no eye may espy thee and keep concealed till thou hear me cry:—O Thou whose boons are hidden, save us from that we fear! Then come forth from thine ambush and walk among the trees and show thy beauty and loveliness which put the moons to shame, to the intent that Princess Hayat al-Nufus may see thee and that her heart and soul may be filled with love of thee; so shalt thou attain to thy wish and thy grief be gone." "To hear is to obey," replied the young Prince and gave her a purse of a thousand dinars, which she took and went away. Thereupon Ardashir fared straight for the bath and washed; after which he arrayed himself in the richest of robes of the apparel of the Kings of the Chosroës and girt his middle with a girdle wherein were conjoined all manner precious stones and donned a turband inwoven with red gold and purfled with pearls and gems. His cheeks shone rosy-red and his lips were scarlet; his eyelids like the gazelle's wantoned; like a wine-struck wight in his gait he swayed; beauty and loveliness garbed him, and his shape shamed the bowing of the bough. Then he put in his pocket a purse containing a thousand dinars and, repairing to the flower-garden, knocked at the door. The Gardener opened to him and rejoicing with great joy salamed to him in most worshipful fashion; then, observing that his face was overcast, he asked him how he did. The King's son answered, "Know, O elder, that I am dear to my father and he never laid his hand on 238me till this day, when words arose between us and he abused me and smote me on the face and struck me with his staff and drave me away. Now I have no friend to turn to and I fear the perfidy of Fortune, for thou knowest that the wrath of parents is no light thing. Wherefore I come to thee, O uncle, seeing that to my father thou art known, and I desire of thy favour that thou suffer me abide in the garden till the end of the day, or pass the night there, till Allah grant good understanding between myself and my sire." When the old man heard these words he was concerned anent what had occurred and said, "O my lord, dost thou give me leave to go to thy sire and be the means of reconciliation between thee and him?" Replied Ardashir, "O uncle, thou must know that my father is of impatient nature, and irascible; so an thou proffer him reconciliation in his heat of temper he will make thee no answer; but when a day or two shall have passed, his heat will soften. Then go thou in to him and thereupon he will relent." "Hearkening and obedience," quoth the Gardener; "but, O my lord, do thou come with me to my house, where thou shalt night with my children and my family and none shall reproach this to us." Quoth Ardashir, "O uncle, I must be alone when I am

angry."[281] The old man said, "It irketh me that thou shouldst lie solitary in the garden, when I have a house." But Ardashir said, "O uncle, I have an aim in this, that the trouble of my mind may be dispelled from me and I know that in this lies the means of regaining his favour and softening his heart to me." Rejoined the Gardener, "I will fetch thee a carpet to sleep on and a coverlet wherewith to cover thee;" and the Prince said, "There is no harm in that, O uncle." So the keeper rose and opened the garden to him, and brought him the carpet and coverlet, knowing not that the King's daughter was minded to visit the garth. On this wise fared it with the Prince; but as regards the nurse, she returned to the Princess and told her that the fruits were kindly ripe on the garden trees; whereupon she said, "O my nurse, go down with me to-morrow into the garden, that we may walk about in it and take our 239 pleasure,—Inshallah; and send meanwhile to the Gardener, to let him know what we purpose." So she sent to the Gardener to say:—The Princess will visit the parterre to-morrow, so leave neither water-carriers nor tree-tenders therein, nor let one of Allah's creatures enter the garth. When word came to him, he set his water-ways and channels in order and, going to Ardashir, said to him, "O my lord, the King's daughter is mistress of this garden; and I have only to crave thy pardon, for the place is thy place and I live only in thy favours, except that my tongue is under thy feet.[282] I must tell thee that the Princess Hayat al-Nufus hath a mind to visit it to-morrow at the first of the day and hath bidden me leave none therein who might look upon her. So I would have thee of thy favour go forth of the garden this day, for the Queen will abide only in it till the time of mid-afternoon prayer and after it shall be at thy service for se'nnights and fortnights, months and years." Ardashir asked, "O elder, haply we have caused thee some mishap?"; and the other answered, "By Allah, O my lord, naught hath betided me from thee but honour!" Rejoined the Prince, "An it be so, nothing but all good shall befal thee through us; for I will hide in the garden and none shall espy me, till the King's daughter hath gone back to her palace." Said the Gardener, "O my lord, an she espy the shadow of a man in the garden or any of Allah's male creatures she will strike off my head;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Gardener said to the Prince, "An the King's daughter espy the shadow of a man in her garden, she will strike off my head;" the youth replied, "Have no fear, I will on no wise let any see me. But doubtless to-day thou lackest of spending-money for thy family." Then he put his hand to his purse and pulled out five hundred ducats, which he gave to him saying, "Take this gold and lay it out on thy family, that thy heart may be at ease concerning them." When the Shaykh looked upon the gold, his 240 life seemed a light thing to

him[283] and he suffered the Prince to tarry where he was, charging him straitly not to show himself in the garden. Then he left him loitering about. Meanwhile, when the eunuchs went in to the Princess at break of day, she bade open the private wicket leading from the palace to the parterres and donned a royal robe, embroidered with pearls and jewels and gems, over a shift of fine silk purfled with rubies. Under the whole was that which tongue refuseth to explain, whereat was confounded the brain and whose love would embrave the craven's strain. On her head she set a crown of red gold, inlaid with pearls and gems and she tripped in pattens of cloth of gold, embroidered with fresh pearls[284] and adorned with all manner precious stones. Then she put her hand upon the old woman's shoulder and commanded to go forth by the privy door; but the nurse looked at the garden and, seeing it full of eunuchs and handmaids walking about, eating the fruits and troubling the streams and taking their ease of sport and pleasure in the water said to the Princess, "O my lady, is this a garden or a madhouse?" Quoth the Princess, "What meaneth thy speech, O nurse?"; and quoth the old woman, "Verily the garden is full of slave-girls and eunuchs, eating of the fruits and troubling the streams and scaring the birds and hindering us from taking our ease and sporting and laughing and what not else; and thou hast no need of them. Wert thou going forth of thy palace into the highway, this would be fitting, as an honour and a ward to thee; but, now, O my lady, thou goest forth of the wicket into the garden, where none of Almighty Allah's creatures may look on thee." Rejoined the Princess, "By Allah, O nurse mine, thou sayst sooth! But how shall we do?"; and the old woman said, "Bid the eunuchs send them all away and keep only two of the slave-girls, that we may make merry with them." So she dismissed them all, with the exception of two of her handmaids who were most in favour with her. But when the old woman saw that her heart was light and that the season was pleasant to her, she said to her, "Now we can enjoy ourselves aright: so up and let us take our pleasance in the garden." The 241 Princess put her hand upon her shoulder and went out by the private door. The two waiting-women walked in front and she followed them laughing at them and swaying gracefully to and fro in her ample robes; whilst the nurse forewent her, showing her the trees and feeding her with fruits; and so they fared on from place to place, till they came to the pavilion, which when the King's daughter beheld and saw that it had been restored, she asked the old woman, "O my nurse, seest thou yonder pavilion? It hath been repaired and its walls whitened." She answered, "By Allah, O my lady, I heard say that the keeper of the garden had taken stuffs of a company of merchants and sold them and bought bricks and lime and plaster and stones and so forth with the price; so I asked him what he had done with all this, and he said:—I have repaired the pavilion which lay in ruins, presently adding:—And when the merchants sought their due of me, I said to them, Wait till the Princess visit the garden and see the repairs and they satisfy her; then will I take of her what she is pleased to bestow on me, and pay you what is your due. Quoth I—What moved thee to do this thing?; and quoth he:—I saw the pavilion in ruins, the

coigns thrown down and the stucco peeled from the walls, and none had the grace to repair it; so I borrowed the coin on my own account and restored the place; and I trust in the King's daughter to deal with me as befitteth her dignity. I said:—The Princess is all goodness and generosity and will no doubt requite thee. And he did all this but in hopes of thy bounty." Replied the Princess, "By Allah, he hath dealt nobly in rebuilding it and hath done the deed of generous men! Call me my purse-keeperess." The old woman accordingly fetched the purse-keeperess, whom the Princess bade give the Gardener two thousand dinars; whereupon the nurse sent to him, bidding him to the presence of the King's daughter. But when the messenger said to him, "Obey the Queen's order," the Gardener felt feeble and, trembling in every joint, said in himself, "Doubtless, the Princess hath seen the young man, and this day will be the most unlucky of days for me." So he went home and told his wife and children what had happened and gave them his last charges and farewelled them, while they wept for and with him. Then he presented himself before the Princess, with a face the colour of turmeric and ready to fall flat at full length. The old woman remarked his plight and hastened to forestall him, saying, "O Shaykh, kiss the earth in thanksgiving [242] to Almighty Allah and be constant in prayer to Him for the Princess. I told her what thou didst in the matter of repairing the ruined pavilion, and she rejoiceth in this and bestoweth on thee two thousand dinars in requital of thy pains; so take them from the purse-keeperess and kiss the earth before the King's daughter and bless her and wend thy way." Hearing these words he took the gold and kissed the ground before Hayat al-Nufus, calling down blessings on her. Then he returned to his house, and his family rejoiced in him and blessed him[285] who had been the prime cause of this business.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Care-taker took the two thousand ducats from the Princess and returned to his house, all his family rejoiced in him and blessed him who had been the prime cause of this business. Thus it fared with these; but as regards the old woman, she said to the Princess, "O my lady, this is indeed become a fine place! Never saw I a purer white than its plastering nor properer than its painting! I wonder if he have also repaired it within: else hath he made the outside white and left the inside black. Come, let us enter and inspect." So they went in, the nurse preceding, and found the interior painted and gilded in the goodliest way. The Princess looked right and left, till she came to the upper end of the estrade, when she fixed her eyes upon the wall and gazed long and earnestly thereat; whereupon the old woman knew that her glance had lighted on the presentment of her dream and took the two waiting-women away with her, that they might not divert her mind. When the King's daughter had made an end of examining the painting, she turned to the old woman, wondering and beating hand on hand, and said to her, "O

my nurse, come, see a wondrous thing which were it graven with needle-gravers on the eye corners would be a warner to whoso will be warned." She replied, "And what is that, O my lady?"; when the Princess rejoined, "Go, look at the upper end of the estrade, and tell me what thou seest there." So she went up and considered the dream-drawing: then she came down, wondering, and said, "By 243 Allah, O my lady, here is depicted the garden and the fowler and his net and the birds and all thou sawest in thy dream; and verily, nothing but urgent need withheld the male pigeon from returning to free his mate after he had fled her, for I see him in the talons of a bird of raven which hath slaughtered him and is drinking his blood and rending his flesh and eating it; and this, O my lady, caused his tarrying to return and rescue her from the net. But, O my mistress, the wonder is how thy dream came to be thus depicted, for, wert thou minded to set it forth in painture, thou hadst not availed to portray it. By Allah, this is a marvel which should be recorded in histories! Surely, O my lady, the angels appointed to attend upon the sons of Adam, knew that the cock-pigeon was wronged of us, because we blamed him for deserting his mate; so they embraced his cause and made manifest his excuse; and now for the first time we see him in the hawk's pounces a dead bird." Quoth the Princess, "O my nurse, verily, Fate and Fortune had course against this bird, and we did him wrong." Quoth the nurse, "O my mistress, foes shall meet before Allah the Most High: but, O my lady, verily, the truth hath been made manifest and the male pigeon's excuse certified to us; for had the hawk not seized him and drunk his blood and rent his flesh he had not held aloof from his mate, but had returned to her, and set her free from the net; but against death there is no recourse, nor, O my lady, is there aught in the world more tenderly solicitous than the male for the female, among all creatures which Almighty Allah hath created. And especially 'tis thus with man; for he starveth himself to feed his wife, strippeth himself to clothe her, angereth his family to please her and disobeyeth and denieth his parents to endow her. She knoweth his secrets and concealeth them and she cannot endure from him a single hour.[286] An he be absent from her one night, her eyes sleep not, nor is there a dearer to her than he: she loveth him more than her parents and they lie down to sleep in each other's arms, with his hand under her neck and her hand under his neck, even as saith the poet:—

I made my wrist her pillow and I lay with her in litter; ✿ And I said to Night "Be long!" while the full moon showed glitter:

Ah me, it *was* a night, Allah never made its like; ✿ Whose first was sweetest sweet and whose last was bitt'rest bitter![287]

244 Then he kisseth her and she kisseth him; and I have heard of a certain King that, when his wife fell sick and died, he buried himself alive with her, submitting himself to death, for the love of her and the strait companionship which was between them. Moreover, a certain King sickened and died, and when they were about to bury him, his wife said to her people: Let me bury myself alive with him: else will I slay myself

and my blood shall be on your heads. So, when they saw she would not be turned from this thing, they left her, and she cast herself into the grave with her dead husband, of the greatness of her love and tenderness for him." And the old woman ceased not to ply the Princess with anecdotes of conjugal love between men and women, till there ceased that which was in her heart of hatred for the sex masculine; and when she felt that she had succeeded in renewing in her the natural inclination of woman to man, she said to her, "'Tis time to go and walk in the garden." So they fared forth from the pavilion and paced among the trees. Presently the Prince chanced to turn and his eyes fell on Hayat al-Nufus; and when he saw the symmetry of her shape and the rosiclearness of her cheeks and the blackness of her eyes and her exceeding grace and her passing loveliness and her excelling beauty and her prevailing elegance and her abounding perfection, his reason was confounded and he could not take his eyes off her. Passion annihilated his right judgment and love overpassed all limits in him; his vitals were occupied with her service and his heart was aflame with the fire of repine, so that he swooned away and fell to the ground. When he came to himself, she had passed from his sight and was hidden from him among the trees;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Prince Ardashir, who lay hid in the garden, saw the Princess and her nurse walking amongst the trees, he swooned away for very love-longing. When he came to himself Hayat al-Nufus had passed from his sight and was hidden from him among the trees; so he sighed from his heart-core and improvised these couplets:—

Whenas mine eyes behold her loveliness, ✿ My heart is torn with love's own ecstasy.

I wake o'erthrown, cast-down on face of earth ✿ Nor can the Princess[288] my sore torment see.

She turned and ravished this sad Love-thrall'd sprite; ✿ Mercy, by Allah, ruth; nay, sympathy!

O Lord, afford me union, deign Thou soothe ✿ My soul, ere grave-niche house this corse of me;

I'll kiss her ten times ten times, and times ten ✿ For lover's wasted cheek the kisses be!

The old woman ceased not to lead the Princess a-pleasuring about the garden, till they reached the place where the Prince lay ambushed, when, behold she said, "O Thou whose bounties are hidden, vouchsafe us assurance from that we fear!" The King's son hearing the signal, left his lurking-place and, surprised by the summons, walked among the trees, swaying to and fro with a proud and graceful gait and a shape that shamed the branches. His brow was crowned with pearly drops and his cheeks red as the afterglow, extolled be Allah the Almighty in that He hath created! When the King's daughter caught sight of him, she gazed a long while on him and noticed his beauty and grace and loveliness and his eyes that wantoned like the gazelle's, and his shape that outvied the branches of the myrobalan; wherefore her wits were

confounded and her soul captivated and her heart transfixed with the arrows of his glaces. Then she said to the old woman, “O my nurse, whence came yonder handsome youth?”; and the nurse asked, “Where is he, O my lady?” “There he is,” answered Hayat al-Nufus; “near hand, among the trees.” The old woman turned right and left, as if she knew not of his presence, and cried, “And pray, who can have taught this youth the way into this garden?” Quoth Hayat al-Nufus, “Who shall give us news of the young man? Glory be to Him who created men! But say me, dost thou know him, O my nurse?” Quoth the old woman, “O my lady, he is the young merchant who wrote to thee by me.” The Princess (and indeed she was drowned in the sea of her desire and the fire of her passion and love-longing) broke out, “O my nurse, how goodly is this youth! Indeed he *is* fair of favour. Methinks, there is not on the face of earth a goodlier than he!” Now when the old woman was assured that the love of him had gotten possession of the Princess, she said to her, “Did I not tell thee, O my lady, that he was a comely youth with a beaming favour?” Replied Hayat al-Nufus, “O my nurse, 246 King’s daughters know not the ways of the world nor the manners of those that be therein, for that they company with none, neither give they nor take they. O my nurse, how shall I do to bring about a meeting and present myself to him, and what shall I say to him and what will he say to me?” Said the old woman, “What device is left me? Indeed, we were confounded in this matter by thy behaviour”; and the Princess said, “O my nurse, know thou that if any ever died of passion, I shall do so, and behold, I look for nothing but death on the spot by reason of the fire of my love-longing.” When the old woman heard her words and saw the transport of her desire for him, she answered, “O my lady, now as for his coming to thee, there is no way thereto; and indeed thou art excused from going to him, because of thy tender age; but rise with me and follow me. I will accost him: so shalt thou not be put to shame, and in the twinkling of an eye affection shall ensue between you.” The King’s daughter cried, “Go thou before me, for the decree of Allah may not be rejected.” Accordingly they went up to the place where Ardashir sat, as he were the full moon at its fullest, and the old woman said to him, “See O youth, who is present before thee! ’Tis the daughter of our King of the age, Hayat al-Nufus: bethink thee of her rank and appreciate the honour she doth thee in coming to thee and rise out of respect for her and stand before her.” The Prince sprang to his feet in an instant and his eyes met her eyes, whereupon they both became as they were drunken without wine. Then the love of him and desire redoubled upon the Princess and she opened her arms and he his, and they embraced; but love-longing and passion overcame them and they swooned away and fell to the ground and lay a long while without sense. The old woman, fearing scandalous exposure, carried them both into the pavilion, and, sitting down at the door, said to the two waiting-women, “Seize the occasion to take your pleasure in the garden, for the Princess sleepeth.” So they returned to their diversion. Presently the lovers revived from their swoon and found themselves in the pavilion, whereat quoth the Prince, “Allah upon thee, O Princess of fair ones, is this vision or sleep-

illusion?" Then the twain embraced and intoxicated themselves without wine, complaining each to other of the anguish of passion; and the Prince improvised these couplets:—

Sun riseth sheen from her brilliant brow, ✿ And her cheek shows the rosiest afterglow:

247 And when both appear to the looker-on, ✿ The skyline star ne'er for shame will show:

An the leven flash from those smiling lips, ✿ Morn breaks and the rays dusk and gloom o'erthrow.

And when with her graceful shape she sways, ✿ Droops leafiest Bán-tree[289] for envy low:

Me her sight suffices; naught crave I more: ✿ Lord of Men and Morn, be her guard from foe!

The full moon borrows a part of her charms; ✿ The sun would rival but fails his lowe.

Whence could Sol aspire to that bending grace? ✿ Whence should Luna see such wit and such mind-gifts know?

Who shall blame me for being all love to her, ✿ 'Twixt accord and discord aye doomed to woe:

'Tis she won my heart with those forms that bend ✿ What shall lover's heart from such charms defend?

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Prince had made an end of his verses, the Princess strained him to her bosom and kissed him on the mouth and between the eyes; whereupon his soul returned to him and he fell to complaining to her of that he had endured for stress of love and tyranny of longing and excess of transport and distraction and all he had suffered for the hardness of her heart. Hearing those words she kissed his hands and feet and bared her head,[290] whereupon the gloom gathered and the full moons dawned therein. Then said she to him, "O my beloved and term of all my wishes, would the day of estrangement had never been and Allah grant it may never return between us!" And they embraced and wept together, whilst she recited these couplets:—

248 O who shamest the Moon and the sunny glow: ✿ Thou whose slaught'ring tyranny lays me low;

With the sword of a look thou hast shorn my heart, ✿ How escape thy sword-glance fatal of blow?

Thus eke are thine eyebrows a bow that shot ✿ My bosom with shafts of fiercest lowe:

From thy cheeks' rich crop cometh Paradise; ✿ How, then, shall my heart the rich crop forego?

Thy graceful shape is a blooming branch, ✿ And shall pluck the fruits who shall bear that bough.

Perforce thou drawest me, robst my sleep; ✿ In thy love I strip me and shameless show:[291]

Allah lend thee the rays of most righteous light, ✿ Draw the farthest near and a tryst bestow:

Then have ruth on the vitals thy love hath seared, ✿ And the heart that flies to thy side the mo'e!

And when she ended her recitation, passion overcame her and she was distraught for love and wept copious tears, rain-like streaming down. This burnt the Prince's heart and he in turn became troubled and distracted for love of her. So he drew nearer to her and kissed her hands and wept with sore weeping and they ceased not from lover-reproaches and converse and versifying, until the call to mid-afternoon prayer (nor

was there aught between them other than this), when they bethought them of parting and she said to him, “O light of mine eyes and core of my heart, the time of severance has come between us twain: when shall we meet again?” “By Allah,” replied he (and indeed her words shot him as with shafts), “to mention of parting I am never fain!” Then she went forth of the pavilion, and he turned and saw her sighing sighs would melt the rock and weeping shower-like tears; whereupon he for love was sunken in the sea of desolation and improvised these couplets:—

O my heart’s desire! grows my misery ✿ From the stress of love, and what cure for me?
By thy face, like dawn when it lights the dark, ✿ And thy hair whose hue beareth night-tide’s blee,
And thy form like the branch which in grace inclines ✿ To Zephyr’s[2921] breath blowing fain and free,
By the glance of thine eyes like the fawn’s soft gaze, ✿ When she views pursuer of high degree,
249 And thy waist down borne by the weight of hips, ✿ These so heavy and that lacking gravity,
By the wine of thy lip-dew, the sweetest of drink, ✿ Fresh water and musk in its purity,
O gazelle of the tribe, ease my soul of grief, ✿ And grant me thy phantom in sleep to see!

Now when she heard his verses in praise of her, she turned back to him and embracing him, with a heart on fire for the anguish of severance, fire which naught save kisses and embraces might quench, cried, “Sooth the byword saith, Patience is for a lover and not the lack thereof. There is no help for it but I contrive a means for our reunion.” Then she farewelled him and fared forth, knowing not where she set her feet, for stress of her love; nor did she stay her steps till she found herself in her own chamber. When she was gone, passion and love-longing redoubled upon the young Prince and the delight of sleep was forbidden him, and the Princess in her turn tasted not food and her patience failed and she sickened for desire. As soon as dawned the day, she sent for the nurse, who came and found her condition changed and she cried, “Question me not of my case; for all I suffer is due to thy handiwork. Where is the beloved of my heart?” “O my lady, when did he leave thee? Hath he been absent from thee more than this night?” “Can I endure absence from him an hour? Come, find some means to bring us together speedily, for my soul is like to flee my body.” “O my lady, have patience till I contrive thee some subtle device, whereof none shall be ware.” “By the Great God, except thou bring him to me this very day, I will tell the King that thou hast corrupted me, and he will cut off thy head!” “I conjure thee, by Allah, have patience with me, for this is a dangerous matter!” And the nurse humbled herself to her, till she granted her three days’ delay, saying, “O my nurse, the three days will be three years to me; and if the fourth day pass and thou bring him not, I will go about to slay thee.” So the old woman left her and returned to her lodging, where she abode till the morning of the fourth day, when she summoned the tirewomen of the town and sought of them fine dyes and rouge for the painting of a virgin girl and adorning; and they brought her cosmetics of the best. Then she sent for the Prince and, opening her chest, brought out a bundle containing a suit of woman’s apparel, worth five thousand dinars, and a head-kerchief fringed with all manner

gems. Then 250 said she to him, “O my son, hast thou a mind to foregather with Hayat al-Nufus?”; and he replied, “Yes.” So she took a pair of tweezers and pulled out the hairs of his face and pencilled his eyes with Kohl.[293] Then she stripped him and painted him with Henna[294] from his nails to his shoulders and from his insteps to his thighs and tattooed[295] him about the body, till he was like red roses upon alabaster slabs. After a little, she washed him and dried him and bringing out a shift and a pair of petticoat-trousers made him put them on. Then she clad him in the royal suit aforesaid and, binding the kerchief about his head, veiled him and taught him how to walk, saying, “Advance thy left and draw back thy right.” He did her bidding and forewent her, as he were a Houri faring abroad from Paradise. Then said she to him, “Fortify thy heart, for thou art going to the King’s palace, where there will without fail be guards and eunuchs at the gate; and if thou be startled at them and show doubt or dread, they will suspect thee and examine thee, and we shall 251 both get into grievous trouble and haply lose our lives: wherefore an thou feel thyself unable to this, tell me.” He answered, “In very sooth this thing hath no terrors for me, so be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear.” Then she went out preceding him till the twain came to the palace-gate, which was full of eunuchs. She turned and looked at him, as much as to say, “Art thou troubled or no?” and finding him all unchanged, went on. The chief eunuch glanced at the nurse and knew her but, seeing a damsel following her, whose charms confounded the reason, he said in his mind, “As for the old woman, she is the nurse; but as for the girl who is with her there is none in our land resembleth her in favour or approacheth her in fairness save the Princess Hayat al-Nufus, who is secluded and never goeth out. Would I knew how she came into the streets and would Heaven I wot whether or no ’twas by leave of the King!” Then he rose to learn somewhat concerning her and well nigh thirty castratos followed him; which when the old woman saw, her reason fled for fear and she said, “Verily, we are Allah’s and to Him we shall return! Without recourse we are dead folk this time.”—

—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old nurse saw the head of the eunuchry and his assistants making for her she was in exceeding fear and cried, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily we are God’s and unto him we shall return; without recourse we be dead folk this time.” When the head eunuch heard her speak thus, fear gat hold upon him, by reason of that which he knew of the Princess’s violence and that her father was ruled by her, and he said to himself, “Belike the King hath commanded the nurse to carry his daughter forth upon some occasion of hers, whereof she would have none know; and if I oppose her, she will be wroth with me and will say:—This eunuch fellow stopped me, that he might pry into my affairs. So she will do her best to kill me, and I have no call to meddle in this matter.” So saying, he turned back, and with

him the thirty assistants who drove the people from the door of the palace[252]; whereupon the nurse entered and saluted the eunuchs with her head, whilst all the thirty stood to do her honour and returned her salam. She led in the Prince and he ceased not following her from door to door, and the Protector protected them, so that they passed all the guards, till they came to the seventh door: it was that of the great pavilion, wherein was the King's throne, and it communicated with the chambers of his women and the saloons of the Harim, as well as with his daughter's pavilion. So the old woman halted and said, "Here we are, O my son, and glory be to Him who hath brought us thus far in safety! But, O my son, we cannot foregather with the Princess except by night; for night enveileth the fearful." He replied, "True, but what is to be done?" Quoth she, "Hide thee in this black hole," showing him behind the door a dark and deep cistern, with a cover thereto. So he entered the cistern, and she went away and left him there till ended day, when she returned and carried him into the palace, till they came to the door of Hayat al-Nufus's apartment. The old woman knocked and a little maid came out and said, "Who is at the door?" Said the nurse, "'Tis I," whereupon the maid returned and craved permission of her lady, who said, "Open to her and let her come in with any who may accompany her." So they entered and the nurse, casting a glance around, perceived that the Princess had made ready the sitting-chamber and ranged the lamps in row and lighted candles of wax in chandeliers of gold and silver and spread the divans and estrades with carpets and cushions. Moreover, she had set on trays of food and fruits and confections and she had perfumed the place with musk and aloes-wood and ambergris. She was seated among the lamps and the tapers and the light of her face outshone the lustre of them all. When she saw the old woman, she said to her, "O nurse, where is the beloved of my heart?"; and the other replied, "O my lady, I cannot find him nor have mine eyes espied him; but I have brought thee his own sister; and here she is." Cried the Princess, "Art thou Jinn-mad? What need have I of his sister? Say me, an a man's head irk him, doth he bind up his hand?" The old woman answered, "No, by Allah, O my lady! But look on her, and if she pleases thee, let her be with thee." Then she uncovered the Prince's face, whereupon Hayat al-Nufus knew him and running to him, pressed him to her bosom, and he pressed her to his breast.[253] Then they both fell down in a swoon and lay without sense a long while. The old woman sprinkled rose-water upon them till they came to themselves, when she kissed him on the mouth more than a thousand times and improvised these couplets:—

Sought me this heart's dear love at gloom of night; ✿ I rose in honour till he sat forthright,
And said, "O aim of mine, O sole desire ✿ In such night-visit hast of guards no fright?"
Replied he, "Yes, I fearèd much, but Love ✿ Robbed me of all my wits and reft my sprite."
We clipt with kisses and awhile clung we ✿ For here 'twas safe; nor feared we watchman-wight:
Then rose we parting without doubtful deed ✿ And shook out skirts where none a stain could sight.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when her lover visited Hayat al-Nufus in her palace, the twain embraced and she improvised some happy couplets beseeming the occasion. And when she had ended her extempore lines she said, "Is it indeed true that I see thee in my abode and that thou art my cup-mate and my familiar?" Then passion grew on her and love was grievous to her, so that her reason well-nigh fled for joy and she improvised these couplets:—

With all my soul I'll ransom him who came to me in gloom ✿ Of night, whilst I had waited long to see his figure loom;

And naught aroused me save his weeping voice of tender tone ✿ And whispered I, "Fair fall thy foot and welcome and well come!"

His cheek I kissed a thousand times, and yet a thousand more; ✿ Then clipt and clung about his breast enveiled in darkling room.

And cried, "Now verily I've won the aim of every wish ✿ So praise and prayers to Allah for this grace now best become."

Then slept we even as we would the goodliest of nights ✿ Till morning came to end our night and light up earth with bloom.

As soon as it was day, she made him enter a place in her apartment unknown to any and he abode there till nightfall, when she brought him out and they sat in converse and carouse. Presently 254 he said to her, "I wish to return to my own country and tell my father what hath passed between us, that he may equip his Wazir to demand thee in marriage of thy sire." She replied, "O my love, I fear, an thou return to thy country and kingdom, thou wilt be distracted from me and forget the love of me; or that thy father will not further thy wishes in this matter and I shall die. Meseems the better rede were that thou abide with me and in my hand-grasp, I looking on thy face, and thou on mine, till I devise some plan, whereby we may escape together some night and flee to thy country; for I have cut off my hopes from my own people and I despair of them." He rejoined, "I hear and obey;" and they fell again to their carousal and conversing. He tarried with her thus for some time till, one night, the wine was pleasant to them and they lay not down nor did they sleep till break of day. Now it chanced that one of the Kings sent her father a present, and amongst other things, a necklace of union jewels, nine-and-twenty grains, to whose price a King's treasures might not suffice. Quoth Abd-al-Kadir, "This rivière beseemeth none but my daughter Hayat al-Nufus;" and, turning to an eunuch, whose jaw-teeth the Princess had knocked out for reasons best known to herself,[296] he called to him and said, "Carry the necklace to thy lady and say to her:—One of the Kings hath sent thy father this, as a present, and its price may not be paid with money; put it on thy neck." The slave took the necklace, saying in himself, "Allah Almighty make it the last thing she shall put on in this world, for that she deprived me of the benefit of my grinder-teeth!"; and

repairing to the Princess's apartment, found the door locked and the old woman asleep before the threshold. He shook her, and she awoke in affright and asked, "What dost thou want?"; to which he answered, "The King hath sent me on an errand to his daughter." Quoth the nurse, "The key is not here, go away, whilst I fetch it;" but quoth he, "I cannot go back to the King without having done his 255 commandment." So she went away, as if to fetch the key; but fear overtook her and she sought safety in flight. Then the eunuch awaited her awhile; then, finding she did not return, he feared that the King would be angry at his delay; so he rattled at the door and shook it, whereupon the bolt gave way and the leaf opened. He entered and passed on, till he came to the seventh door and walking in to the Princess's chamber found the place splendidly furnished and saw candles and flagons there. At this spectacle he marvelled and going close up to the bed, which was curtained by a hanging of silk, embroidered with a net-work of jewels, drew back the curtain from before the Princess and saw her sleeping with her arms about the neck of a young man handsomer than herself; whereat he magnified Allah Almighty, who had created such a youth of vile water, and said, "How goodly be this fashion for one who hateth men! How came she by this fellow? Methinks 'twas on his account that she knocked out my back teeth!" Then he drew the curtain and made for the door; but the King's daughter awoke in affright and seeing the eunuch, whose name was Káfúr, called to him. He made her no answer: so she came down from the bed on the estrade; and catching hold of his skirt laid it on her head and kissed his feet, saying, "Veil what Allah veileth!" Quoth he, "May Allah not veil thee nor him who would veil thee! Thou didst knock out my grinders and saidst to me:—Let none make mention to me aught of men and their ways!" So saying, he disengaged himself from her grasp and running out, locked the door on them and set another eunuch to guard it. Then he went in to the King who said to him? "Hast thou given the necklace to Hayat al-Nufus?" The eunuch replied, "By Allah, thou deservest altogether a better fate;" and the King asked, "What hath happened? Tell me quickly;" whereto he answered, "I will not tell thee, save in private and between our eyes," but the King retorted, saying, "Tell me at once and in public." Cried the eunuch, "Then grant me immunity." So the King threw him the kerchief of immunity and he said, "O King, I went into the Princess Hayat al-Nufus and found her asleep in a carpeted chamber and on her bosom was a young man. So I locked the door upon the two and came back to thee." When the King heard these words he started up and taking a sword in his hand, cried out to the Rais of the eunuchs, saying, "Take thy lads and go to the Princess's chamber and bring me her and 256 him who is with her as they twain lie on the bed; but cover them both up."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King commanded the head eunuch to take his lads and to fetch and set before him Hayat al-Nufus and

him who was with her, the chief and his men entered the Princess's apartment where he found her standing up, dissolved in railing tears, and the Prince by her side; so he said to them, "Lie down on the bed, as thou wast and let him do likewise." The King's daughter feared for her lover[297] and said to him, "This is no time for resistance." So they both lay down and the eunuchs covered them up and carried the twain into the King's presence. Thereupon Abd al-Kadir pulled off the coverings and the Princess sprang to her feet. He looked at her and would have smitten her neck: but the Prince threw himself on the father's breast, saying, "The fault was not hers but mine only: kill me before thou killest her." The King made at him, to cut him down, but Hayat al-Nufus cast herself on her father and said, "Kill me not him; for he is the son of a great King, lord of all the land in its length and breadth." When the King heard this, he turned to the Chief Wazir, who was a gathering-place of all that is evil, and said to him, "What sayst thou of this matter, O Minister?" Quoth his Wazir, "What I say is that all who find themselves in such case as this have need of lying, and there is nothing for it but to cut off both their heads, after torturing them with all manner of tortures." Hereupon the King called his sworder of vengeance, who came with his lads, and said to him, "Take this gallows bird and strike off his head and after do the like with this harlot and burn their bodies, and consult me not about them a second time." So the headsmen put his hand to her back, to take her; but the King cried out at him and cast at him somewhat he hent in hand, which had well-nigh killed him, saying, "O dog, how durst thou show ruth to those with whom I am wroth? Put thy hand to her hair and drag her along by it, so that 257 she may fall on her face." Accordingly he haled her by her hair and the Prince in like manner to the place of blood, where he tore off a piece of his skirt and therewith bound the Prince's eyes putting the Princess last, in the hope that some one would intercede for her. Then, having made ready the Prince he swung his sharp sword three times (whilst all the troops wept and prayed Allah to send them deliverance by some intercessor), and raised his hand to cut off Ardashir's head when, behold, there arose a cloud of dust, that spread and flew till it veiled the view. Now the cause thereof was that when the young Prince had delayed beyond measure, the King, his sire, had levied a mighty host and had marched with it in person to get tidings of his son. Such was his case; but as regards King Abd al-Kadir, when he saw this, he said, "O wights, what is the meaning of yonder dust that dimmeth sights?" The Grand Wazir sprang up and went out to reconnoitre and found behind the cloud men like locusts, of whom no count could be made nor aught avail of aid, filling the hills and plains and valleys. So he returned with the report to the King, who said to him, "Go down and learn for us what may be this host and the cause of its marching upon our country. Ask also of their commander and salute him for me and enquire the reason of his coming. An he came in quest of aught, we will aid him, and if he have a blood-feud with one of the Kings, we will ride with him; or, if he desire a gift, we will handsel him; for this is indeed a numerous host and a power uttermost, and we fear for our land from its mischief." So

the Minister went forth and walked among the tents and troopers and body-guards, and ceased not faring on from the first of the day till near sundown, when he came to the warders with gilded swords in tents star-studded. Passing these, he made his way through Emirs and Wazirs and Nabobs and Chamberlains, to the pavilion of the Sultan, and found him a mighty King. When the King's officers saw him, they cried out to him, saying, "Kiss ground! Kiss ground!"[298] He did so and would have risen, but they cried out at him a second and a third time. So he kissed the earth again and again and raised his head and would have stood up, but fell down at full length for excess of awe. When at last he was set between the hands of the King he said to him, "Allah prolong thy days and increase thy sovranty and exalt thy rank, O thou auspicious King! And furthermore, 258 of a truth, King Abd al-Kadir saluteth thee and kisseth the earth before thee and asketh on what weighty business thou art come. An thou seek to avenge thee for blood on any King, he will take horse in thy service; or, an thou come in quest of aught, wherein it is in his power to help thee, he standeth up at thy service on account thereof." So Ardashir's father replied to the Wazir, saying, "O messenger, return to thy lord and tell him that the most mighty King Sayf al-A'azam Shah, Lord of Shiraz, had a son who hath been long absent from him and news of him have not come and all traces of him have been cut off. An he be in this city, he will take him and depart from you; but, if aught have befallen him or any mischief have ensued to him from you, his father will lay waste your land and make spoil of your goods and slay your men and seize your women. Return, therefore, to thy lord in haste and tell him this, ere evil befal him." Answered the Minister, "To hear is to obey!" and turned to go away, when the Chamberlains cried out to him, saying, "Kiss ground! Kiss ground!" So he kissed the ground a score of times and rose not till his life-breath was in his nostrils.[299] Then he left the King's high court and returned to the city, full of anxious thought concerning the affair of this King and the multitude of his troops, and going in to King Abd al-Kadir, pale with fear and trembling in his side-muscles, acquainted him with that had befallen him;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir returned from the court of the Great King, pale with fear and with side-muscles quivering for dread exceeding; and acquainted his lord with that had befallen him. Hereat disquietude and terror for himself and for his people laid hold upon him and he said to the Minister, "O Wazir, and who is this King's son?" Replied the other, "'Tis even he whom thou badest put to death, but praised be Allah who hastened not his slaughter! Else had his father wasted our lands and spoiled our good." Quoth the King, "See now thy corrupt judgment, in that thou didst counsel 259 us to slay him! Where is the young man, the son of yonder magnanimous King?" And quoth the Wazir, "O mighty King, thou didst command him be put to death." When the King heard this, he was clean

distraught and cried out from his heart's core and in-most of head, saying, "Woe to you! Fetch me the Headsman forthright, lest death fall on him!" So they fetched the Sworder and he said, "O King of the Age, I have smitten off his head even as thou badest me." Cried Abd al-Kadir, "O dog, an this be true, I will assuredly send thee after him." The Headsman replied, "O King, thou didst command me to slay him without consulting thee a second time." Said the King, "I was in my wrath; but speak the truth, ere thou lose thy life;" and said the Sworder, "O King, he is yet in the chains of life." At this Abd al-Kadir rejoiced and his heart was set at rest; then he called for Ardashir, and when he came, he stood up to receive him and kissed his mouth, saying, "O my son, I ask pardon of Allah Almighty for the wrong I have done thee, and say thou not aught that may lower my credit with thy sire, the Great King." The Prince asked "O King of the Age, and where is my father?" and the other answered, "He is come hither on thine account." Thereupon quoth Ardashir, "By thy worship, I will not stir from before thee till I have cleared my honour and the honour of thy daughter from that which thou laidest to our charge; for she is a pure virgin. Send for the midwives and let them examine her before thee. An they find her maidenhead gone, I give thee leave to shed my blood; and if they find her a clean maid, her innocence of dishonour and mine also will be made manifest." So he summoned the midwives, who examined the Princess and found her a pure virgin and so told the King, seeking largesse of him. He gave them what they sought, putting off his royal robes to bestow on them, and in like manner he was bountiful to all who were in the Harim. And they brought forth the scent-cups and perfumed all the Lords of estate and Grandees; and not one but rejoiced with exceeding joy. Then the King threw his arms about Ardashir's neck and entreated him with all worship and honour, bidding his chief eunuchs bear him to the bath. When he came out, he cast over his shoulders a costly robe and crowned him with a coronet of jewels; he also girt him with a girdle of silk, purfled with red gold and set with pearls and gems, and mounted him on one of his noblest mares, with selle and trappings of gold inlaid with pearls and jewels. Then he bade his Grandees and Captains 260 mount on his service and escort him to his father's presence; and charged him tell his sire that King Abd al-Kadir was at his disposal, hearkening to and obeying him in whatso he should bid or forbid. "I will not fail of this," answered Ardashir and farewelling him, repaired to his father who, at sight of him, was transported for delight and springing up, advanced to meet him and embraced him, whilst joy and gladness spread among all the host of the Great King. Then came the Wazirs and Chamberlains and Captains and guards and kissed the ground before the Prince and rejoiced in his coming: and it was a great day with them for enjoyment, for the King's son gave leave to those of King Abd al-Kadir's officers who had accompanied him and others of the townsfolk, to view the ordinance of his father's host, without let or stay, so they might know the multitude of the Great King's troops and the might of his empire. And all who had seen him selling stuffs in the linendrapers' bazar marvelled how his soul could have consented thereto,

considering the nobility of his spirit and the loftiness of his dignity; but it was his love and inclination to the King's daughter that to this had constrained him. Meanwhile, news of the multitude of her lover's troops came to Hayat al-Nufus, who was still jailed by her sire's commandment, till they knew what he should order respecting her, whether pardon and release or death and burning; and she looked down from the terrace-roof of the palace and, turning towards the mountains, saw even these covered with armed men. When she beheld all those warriors and knew that they were the army of Ardashir's father, she feared lest he should be diverted from her by his sire and forget her and depart from her, whereupon her father would slay her. So she called a handmaid that was with her in her apartment by way of service, and said to her, "Go to Ardashir, son of the Great King, and fear not. When thou comest into his presence, kiss the ground before him and tell him what thou art and say to him:—My lady saluteth thee and would have thee to know that she is a prisoner in her father's palace, awaiting his sentence, whether he be minded to pardon her or put her to death, and she beseecheth thee not to forget her or forsake her; for to-day thou art all-powerful; and, in whatso thou commandest, no man dare cross thee. Wherefore, an it seem good to thee to rescue her from her sire and take her with thee, it were of thy bounty, for indeed she endureth all these trials for thy sake. But, an this seem not good to thee, for that thy desire of her is at an end, still speak to 261 thy sire, so haply he may intercede for her with her father and he depart not, till he have made him set her free and taken surety from and made covenant with him, that he will not go about to put her to death nor work her aught of harm. This is her last word to thee, may Allah not desolate her of thee, and so The Peace!"[300]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the bondmaid sent by Hayat al-Nufus made her way to Ardashir and delivered him her lady's message, which when he heard, he wept with sore weeping and said to her, "Know that Hayat al-Nufus is my mistress and that I am her slave and the captive of her love. I have not forgotten what was between us nor the bitterness of the parting day; so do thou say to her, after thou hast kissed her feet, that I will speak with my father of her, and he shall send his Wazir, who sought her aforetime in marriage for me, to demand her hand once more of her sire, for he dare not refuse. So, if he send to her to consult her, let her make no opposition; for I will not return to my country without her." Then the handmaid returned to Hayat al-Nufus; and, kissing her hands, delivered to her the message, which when she heard, she wept for very joy and returned thanks to Almighty Allah. Such was her case; but as regards Ardashir, he was alone with his father that night and the Great King questioned him of his case, whereupon he told him all that had befallen him, first and last. Then quoth the King, "What wilt thou

have me do for thee, O my son? An thou desire Abd al-Kadir's ruin, I will lay waste his lands and spoil his hoards and dishonour his house." Replied Ardashir, "I do not desire that, O my father, for he hath done nothing to me deserving thereof; but I wish for union with her; wherefore I beseech thee of thy favour to make ready a present for her father, (but let it be a magnificent gift!) and send it to him by thy Minister, the man of just judgment." Quoth the King, "I hear and consent;" and sending for the treasures he had laid up from 262 time past, brought out all manner precious things and showed them to his son, who was pleased with them. Then he called his Wazir and bade him bear the present with him[3011] to King Abd al-Kadir and demand his daughter in marriage for Ardashir, saying, "Accept the present and return him a reply." Now from the time of Ardashir's departure, King Abd al-Kadir had been troubled and ceased not to be heavy at heart, fearing the laying waste of his reign and the spoiling of his realm; when behold, the Wazir came in to him and saluting him, kissed ground before him. He rose up standing and received him with honour; but the Minister made haste to fall at his feet and kissing them cried, "Pardon, O King of the Age! The like of thee should not rise to the like of me, for I am the least of servants' slaves. Know, O King, that Prince Ardashir hath acquainted his father with some of the favours and kindnesses thou hast done him, wherefore he thanketh thee and sendeth thee in company of thy servant who standeth before thee, a present, saluting thee and wishing thee especial blessings and prosperities." Abd al-Kadir could not believe what he heard of the excess of his fear, till the Wazir laid the present before him, when he saw it to be such gift as no money could purchase nor could one of the Kings of the earth avail to the like thereof; wherefore he was belittled in his own eyes and springing to his feet, praised Almighty Allah and glorified Him and thanked the Prince. Then said the Minister to him, "O noble King, give ear to my word and know that the Great King sendeth to thee, desiring thine alliance, and I come to thee seeking and craving the hand of thy daughter, the chaste dame and treasured gem Hayat al-Nufus, in wedlock for his son Ardashir, wherefore, if thou consent to this proposal and accept of him, do thou agree with me for her marriage-portion." Abd al-Kadir hearing these words replied, "I hear and obey. For my part, I make no objection, and nothing can be more pleasurable to me; but the girl is of full age and reason and her affair is in her own hand. So be assured that I will refer it to her and she shall chose for herself." Then he turned to the chief eunuch and bade him go and acquaint the Princess with the event. So he repaired to the Harim and, kissing the Princess's hands, acquainted her with the Great King's offer adding, "What 263 sayest thou in answer?" "I hear and I obey," replied she.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the chief eunuch of the Harim having informed the Princess how she had been demanded in marriage by the Great King and having heard her reply, "I hear and I obey," returned therewith to the King and gave him this answer, whereat he rejoiced with exceeding joy and, calling for a costly robe of honour, threw it over the Wazir's shoulders. Furthermore, he ordered him ten thousand dinars and bade him carry the answer to the Great King and crave leave for him to pay him a visit. "Hearing and obeying," answered the Minister; and, returning to his master, delivered him the reply and Abd al-Kadir's message, and repeated all their talk, whereat he rejoiced greatly and Ardashir was transported for delight and his breast broadened and he was a most happy man. King Sayf al-A'azam also gave King Abd al-Kadir leave to come forth to visit him; so, on the morrow, he took horse and rode to the camp of the Great King, who came to meet him and saluting him, seated him in the place of honour, and gave him welcome; and they two sat whilst Ardashir stood before them. Then arose an orator of the King Abd al-Kadir's court and pronounced an eloquent discourse, giving the Prince joy of the attainment of his desire and of his marriage with the Princess, a Queen among King's daughters. When he sat down the Great King caused bring a chest full of pearls and gems, together with fifty thousand dinars, and said to King Abd al-Kadir, "I am my son's deputy in all that concerneth this matter." So Abd al-Kadir acknowledged receipt of the marriage-portion and amongst the rest, fifty thousand dinars for the nuptial festivities; after which they fetched the Kazis and the witnesses, who wrote out the contract of marriage between the Prince and Princess, and it was a notable day, wherein all lovers made merry and all haters and enviers were mortified. They spread the marriage-feasts and banquets and lastly Ardashir went in unto the Princess and found her a jewel which had been hidden, an union pearl unthridden and a filly that none but he had ridden, so he notified this to his sire. Then King Sayf al-A'azam 264 asked his son, "Hast thou any wish thou wouldst have fulfilled ere we depart?"; and he answered, "Yes, O King, know that I would fain take my wreak of the Wazir who entreated us on evil wise and the eunuch who forged a lie against us." So the King sent forthright to Abd al-Kadir, demanding of him the Minister and the castrato, whereupon he despatched them both to him and he commanded to hang them over the city gate. After this, they abode a little while and then sought of Abd al-Kadir leave for his daughter to equip her for departure. So he equipped her and mounted her in a Takhtrawán, a travelling litter of red gold, inlaid with pearls and gems and drawn by noble steeds. She carried with her all her waiting-women and eunuchs, as well as the nurse, who had returned, after her flight, and resumed her office. Then King Sayf al-A'azam and his son mounted and Abd al-Kadir mounted also with all the lords of his land, to take leave of his son-in-law and daughter; and it was a day to be reckoned of the goodliest of days. After they had gone some distance, the Great King conjured Abd al-Kadir to turn back; so he farewelled him and his son, after he had strained him to his breast and kissed him between the eyes and thanked him for his grace and

favours and commended his daughter to his care. Then he went in to the Princess and embraced her; and she kissed his hands and they wept in the standing-place of parting. After this he returned to his capital and Ardashir and his company fared on, till they reached Shiraz, where they celebrated the marriage-festivities anew. And they abode in all comfort and solace and joyance of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Severer of societies; the Depopulator of palaces and the Garnerer of graveyards. And men also relate the tale of

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old Queen heard the handmaid's words she was wroth with sore wrath because of her and cried, "How shall there be accord between man and Jinn?" But Sayf al-Muluk replied, "Indeed, I will conform to thy will and be thy page and die in thy love and will keep with thee covenant and regard none but thee: so right soon shalt thou see my truth and lack of falsehood and the excellence of my manly dealing with thee, Inshallah!" The old woman pondered for a full hour with brow earthwards bent; after which she raised her head and said to him, "O thou beautiful youth, wilt thou indeed keep compact and covenant?" He replied, "Yes, by Him who raised the heavens and dispread the earth upon the waters, I will indeed keep faith and troth!" Thereupon quoth she, "I will win for thee thy wish, Inshallah! but for the present go thou into the garden and take thy pleasure therein and eat of its fruits, that have neither like in the world nor equal, whilst I send for my son Shahyal and confabulate with him of the matter. Nothing but good shall come of it, so Allah please, for he will not gainsay me nor disobey my commandment and I will marry thee with his daughter Badi'a al-Jamal. So be of good heart for she shall assuredly be thy wife, O Sayf al-Muluk." The Prince thanked her for those words and kissing her hands and feet, went forth from her into the garden; whilst she turned to Marjanah and said to her, "Go seek my son Shahyal wherever he is and bring him to me." So Marjanah went out in quest of King Shahyal and found him and set him before his mother. On such wise fared it with them; but as regards Sayf al-Muluk, whilst he walked in the garden, lo and behold! five Jinn of the people of the Blue King espied him and said to one another, "Whence cometh yonder wight and who brought him hither? Haply 'tis he who slew the son and heir of our lord and master the Blue King;" presently adding, "But we will go about with him and question him and find out all from him." So they walked gently and softly up to him, as he sat in a corner of the garden, and sitting down by him, said to him, "O beauteous youth, thou didst right well in slaying the son of the Blue King and delivering from him Daulat Khatun; for he was a treacherous hound and had 2tricked her, and had not Allah appointed thee to her, she had never won free; no, never! But how diddest thou slay him?" Sayf al-Muluk looked at them and deeming them of the garden-folk, answered, "I slew him by means of this ring which is on my finger." Therewith they were assured that it was he who had slain him; so they seized him, two of them holding his hands, whilst other two held his feet and the fifth his mouth, lest he should cry out and King Shahyal's people should hear him and rescue him from their hands. Then they lifted him up and flying away with him ceased not their flight till they came to their King and set him down before him, saying, "O King of the Age, we bring thee the murderer of thy son." "Where is he?" asked the King and they

answered, “This is he.” So the Blue King said to Sayf al-Muluk, “How slewest thou my son, the core of my heart and the light of my sight, without aught of right, for all he had done thee no ill deed?” Quoth the Prince, “Yea, verily! I slew him because of his violence and frowardness, in that he used to seize Kings’ daughters and sever them from their families and carry them to the Ruined Well and the High-builded Castle of Japhet son of Noah and entreat them lewdly by debauching them. I slew him by means of this ring on my finger, and Allah hurried his soul to the fire and the abiding-place dire.” Therewithal the King was assured that this was indeed he who slew his son; so presently he called his Wazirs and said to them, “This is the murtherer of my son sans shadow of doubt: so how do you counsel me to deal with him? Shall I slay him with the foulest slaughter or torture him with the terriblest torments or how?” Quoth the Chief Minister, “Cut off his limbs, one a day.” Another, “Beat him with a grievous beating every day till he die.” A third, “Cut him across the middle.” A fourth, “Chop off all his fingers and burn him with fire.” A fifth, “Crucify him;” and so on, each speaking according to his rede. Now there was with the Blue King an old Emir, versed in the vicissitudes and experienced in the exchanges of the times, and he said, “O King of the Age, verily I would say to thee somewhat, and thine is the rede whether thou wilt hearken or not to my say.” Now he was the King’s privy Councillor and the Chief Officer of his empire, and the sovran was wont to give ear to his word and conduct himself by his counsel and gainsay him not in aught. So he rose and kissing ground before his liege lord, said to him, “O King of the Age, if I advise thee in this matter, wilt thou follow my advice and grant me indemnity?” Quoth the King, “Set forth thine opinion, and thou shalt have immunity.” Then quoth he, “O King of the Age, an thou slay this one nor accept my advice nor hearken to my word, in very sooth I say that his death were now inexpedient, for that he is thy prisoner and in thy power, and under thy protection; so whenas thou wilt, thou mayst lay hand on him and do with him what thou desirest. Have patience, then, O King of the Age, for he hath entered the garden of Iram and is become the betrothed of Badi’a al-Jamal, daughter of King Shahyal, and one of them. Thy people seized him there and brought him hither and he did not hide his case from them or from thee. So an thou slay him, assuredly King Shahyal will seek blood-revenge and lead his host against thee for his daughter’s sake, and thou canst not cope with him nor make head against his power.” So the King hearkened to his counsel and commanded to imprison the captive. Thus fared it with Sayf al-Muluk; but as regards the old Queen, grandmother of Badi’a al-Jamal, when her son Shahyal came to her she despatched Marjanah in search of Sayf al-Muluk; but she found him not and returning to her mistress, said, “I found him not in the garden.” So the ancient dame sent for the gardeners and questioned them of the Prince. Quoth they, “We saw him sitting under a tree when behold, five of the Blue King’s folk alighted by him and spoke with him, after which they took him up and having gagged him flew away with him.” When the old Queen heard the damsel’s words it was no light matter to her and she was wroth

with exceeding wrath: so she rose to her feet and said to her son, King Shahyal, "Art a King and shall the Blue King's people come to our garden and carry off our guests unhindered, and thou alive?" And she proceeded to provoke him, saying, "It behoveth not that any transgress against us during *thy* lifetime."[1] Answered he, "O mother of me, this man slew the Blue King's son, who was a Jinni and Allah threw him into his hand. He is a Jinni and I am a Jinni: how then shall I go to him and make war on him for the sake of a mortal?" But she rejoined, "Go to him and demand our guest of him, and if he be still alive and the Blue King deliver him to thee, take him and return; but an he have slain him, take the King and all his children and Hiram and household depending on him; then bring them to me alive that I may cut their throats with my own hand and lay in ruins his 4reign. Except thou go to him and do my bidding, I will not acquit thee of my milk and my rearing of thee shall be counted unlawful."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the grandmother of Badi'a al-Jamal said to Shahyal, "Fare thee to the Blue King and look after Sayf al-Muluk: if he be still in life come with him hither; but an he have slain him take that King and all his children and Harim and the whole of his dependents and protégés and bring them here alive that I may cut their throats with my own hand and ruin his realm. Except thou go to him and do my bidding, I will not acquit thee of my milk and my rearing of thee shall be accounted unlawful." Thereupon Shahyal rose and assembling his troops, set out, in deference to his mother, desiring to content her and her friends, and in accordance with whatso had been foreordained from eternity without beginning; nor did they leave journeying till they came to the land of the Blue King, who met them with his army and gave them battle. The Blue King's host was put to the rout and the conquerors having taken him and all his sons, great and small, and Grandees and officers bound and brought them before King Shahyal, who said to the captive, "O Azrak,[2] where is the mortal Sayf al-Muluk who whilome was my guest?" Answered the Blue King, "O Shahyal, thou art a Jinni and I am a Jinni and is't on account of a mortal who slew my son that thou hast done this deed; yea, the murtherer of my son, the core of my liver and solace of my soul. How couldest thou work such work and spill the blood of so many thousand Jinn?" He replied, "Leave this talk! Knowest thou not that a single mortal is better, in Allah's sight, 5than a thousand Jinn?[3] If he be alive, bring him to me, and I will set thee free and all whom I have taken of thy sons and people; but an thou have slain him, I will slaughter thee and thy sons." Quoth the Malik al-Azrak, "O King, is this man of more account with thee than my son?" and quoth Shahyal, "Verily, thy son was an evildoer who kidnapped Kings' daughters and shut them up in the Ruined Well and the High-builded Castle of Japhet

son of Noah and entreated them lewdly." Then said the Blue King, "He is with me; but make thou peace between us." So he delivered the Prince to Shahyal, who made peace between him and the Blue King, and Al-Azrak gave him a bond of absolution for the death of his son. Then Shahyal conferred robes of honour on them and entertained the Blue King and his troops hospitably for three days, after which he took Sayf al-Muluk and carried him back to the old Queen, his own mother, who rejoiced in him with an exceeding joy, and Shahyal marvelled at the beauty of the Prince and his loveliness and his perfection. Then the Prince related to him his story from beginning to end, especially what did befel him with Badi'a al-Jamal and Shahyal said, "O my mother, since 'tis thy pleasure that this should be, I hear and I obey all that to command it pleaseth thee; wherefore do thou take him and bear him to Sarandib and there celebrate his wedding and marry him to her in all state, for he is a goodly youth and hath endured horrors for her sake." So she and her maidens set out with Sayf al-Muluk for Sarandib and, entering the Garden belonging to the Queen of Hind, foregathered with Daulat Khatun and Badi'a al-Jamal. Then the lovers met, and the old Queen acquainted the two Princesses with all that had passed between Sayf al-Muluk and the Blue King and how the Prince had been nearhand to a captive's death; but in repetition is no fruition. Then King Taj al-Muluk father of Daulat Khatun assembled the lords of his land and drew up the contract of marriage between Sayf al-Muluk and Badi'a al-Jamal; and he conferred costly robes of honour and gave banquets to the lieges. Then Sayf al-Muluk rose and, kissing ground before the King, said to him, "O King, pardon! I would fain ask of thee somewhat but I fear lest thou refuse it to my disappointment." Taj al-Muluk replied, "By Allah, though thou soughtest my soul of me, I would not refuse it to thee, after all the kindness thou hast done me!" Quoth Sayf al-Muluk, "I wish thee to marry the Princess Daulat Khatun to my brother Sa'id, and we will both be thy pages." "I hear and obey," answered Taj al-Muluk, and assembling his Grandees a second time, let draw up the contract of marriage between his daughter and Sa'id; after which they scattered gold and silver and the King bade decorate the city. So they held high festival and Sayf al-Muluk went in unto Badi'a al-Jamal and Sa'id went in unto Daulat Khatun on the same night. Moreover Sayf al-Muluk abode forty days with Badi'a al-Jamal, at the end of which she said to him, "O King's son, say me, is there left in thy heart any regret for aught?" And he replied, "Allah forfend! I have accomplished my quest and there abideth no regret in my heart at all: but I would fain meet my father and my mother in the land of Egypt and see if they continue in welfare or not." So she commanded a company of her slaves to convey them to Egypt, and they carried them to Cairo, where Sayf al-Muluk and Sa'id foregathered with their parents and abode with them a week; after which they took leave of them and returned to Sarandib-city; and from this time forwards, whenever they longed for their folk, they used to go to them and return. Then Sayf al-Muluk and Badi'a al-Jamal abode in all solace of life and its joyance as did Sa'id and Daulat Khatun, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and

Severer of Societies; and they all died good Moslems. So glory be to the Living One who dieth not, who createth all creatures and decreeth to them death and who is the First, without beginning, and the Last, without end! This is all that hath come down to us of the story of Sayf al-Muluk and Badi'a al-Jamal. And Allah alone wotteth the truth.[4] But not less excellent than this tale is the History of



30- JULNAR THE SEA-BORN AND HER SON KING BADR BASIM OF PERSIA.

There was once in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, in Ajam-land, a King Shahrimán[302] hight, whose abiding-place was Khorásán. He owned an hundred concubines, but by 265none of them had he been blessed with boon of child, male or female, all the days of his life. One day, among the days, he bethought him of this and fell lamenting for that the most part of his existence was past and he had not been vouchsafed a son, to inherit the kingdom after him, even as he had inherited it from his fathers and forebears; by reason whereof there betided him sore cark and care and chagrin exceeding. As he sat thus one of his Mamelukes came in to him and said, "O my lord, at the door is a slave-girl with her merchant, and fairer than she eye hath never seen." Quoth the King, "Hither to me with merchant and maid!"; and both came in to him. Now when Shahriman beheld the girl, he saw that she was like a Rudaynian lance,[303] and she was wrapped in a veil of gold-purfled silk. The merchant uncovered her face, whereupon the place was illumined by her beauty and her seven tresses hung down to her anklets like horses' tails. She had Nature-kohl'd eyes, heavy hips and thighs and waist of slenderest guise; her sight healed all maladies and quenched the fire of sighs, for she was even as the poet cries:—

I love her madly for she is perfect fair, ✿ Complete in gravity and gracious way;
Nor over-tall nor over-short, the while ✿ Too full for trousers are those hips that sway:
Her shape is midmost 'twixt o'er small and tall; ✿ Nor long to blame nor little to gainsay:
O'erfall her anklets tresses black as night ✿ Yet in her face resplends eternal day.

31- KING MOHAMMED BIN SABAIK AND THE MERCHANT HASAN.

There was once, in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, a King of the Kings of the Persians, by name Mohammed bin Sabáik, who ruled over Khorásán-land and used every year to go on razzia into the countries of the Miscreants in Hind and Sind and China and the lands of Máwarannahr beyond the Oxus and other regions of the barbarians and what not else. He was a 309 just King, a valiant and a generous, and loved table-talk[349] and tales and verses and anecdotes and histories and entertaining stories and legends of the ancients. Whoso knew a rare recital and related it to him in such fashion as to please him he would bestow on him a sumptuous robe of honour and clothe him from head to foot and give him a thousand dinars, and mount him on a horse saddled and bridled besides other great gifts; and the man would take all this and wend his way. Now it chanced that one day there came an old man before him and related to him a rare story, which pleased the King and made him marvel, so he ordered him a magnificent present, amongst other things a thousand dinars of Khorasan and a horse with its housings and trappings. After this, the bruit of the King's munificence was blazed abroad in all countries and there heard of him a man, Hasan the Merchant hight, who was generous, open-handed and learned, a scholar and an accomplished poet. Now that King had an envious Wazir, a multum-in-parvo of ill, loving no man, rich nor poor, and whoso came before the King and he gave him aught he envied him and said, "Verily, this fashion annihilateth wealth and ruineth the land; and such is the custom of the King." But this was naught save envy and despite in that Minister. Presently the King heard talk of Hasan the Merchant and sending for him, said to him as soon as he came into the presence, "O Merchant Hasan, this Wazir of mine vexeth and thwarteth me concerning the money I give to poets and boon-companions and story-tellers and glee-men, and I would have thee tell me a goodly history and a rare story, such as I have never before heard. An it please me, I will give thee lands galore, with their forts, in free tenure, in addition to thy fiefs and untaxed lands; besides which I will put my whole kingdom in thy hands and make thee my Chief Wazir; so shalt thou sit on my right hand and rule my subjects. But, an thou bring me not that which I bid thee, I will take all that is in thy hand and banish thee my realm." Replied Hasan, "Hearkening and obedience to our lord the King! But thy slave beseecheth thee to have patience with him a year; than will he tell thee a

tale, such as thou hast never in thy life heard, neither hath other than thou heard its like, not to say a better than it." Quoth the King, "I grant thee a 310 whole year's delay." And he called for a costly robe of honour wherein he robed Hasan, saying, "Keep thy house and mount not horse, neither go nor come for a year's time, till thou bring me that I seek of thee. An thou bring it, especial favour awaiteth thee and thou mayst count upon that which I have promised thee; but, an thou bring it not, thou art not of us nor are we of thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Mohammed son of Sabaik said to Hasan the Merchant, "An thou bring me that I seek of thee, especial favour awaiteth thee and thou mayest now rejoice in that which I have promised thee; but, an thou bring it not, thou art not of us nor are we of thee." Hasan kissed ground before the King and went out from the presence. Then he chose five of the best of his Mamelukes, who could all write and read and were learned, intelligent, accomplished; and he gave each of them five thousand dinars, saying, "I reared you not save for the like of this day; so do ye help me to further the King's desire and deliver me from his hand." Quoth they, "What wilt thou have us do? Our lives be thy ransom!" Quoth he, "I wish you to go each to a different country and seek out diligently the learned and erudite and literate and the tellers of wondrous stories and marvellous histories and do your endeavour to procure me the story of Sayf al-Mulúk. If ye find it with any one, pay him what price soever he asketh for it although he demand a thousand dinars; give him what ye may and promise him the rest and bring me the story; for whoso happeneth on it and bringeth it to me, I will bestow on him a costly robe of honour and largesse galore, and there shall be to me none more worshipped than he." Then said he to one of them, "Hie thou to Al-Hind and Al-Sind and all their provinces and dependencies." To another, "Hie thou to the home of the Persians and to China and her climates." To the third, "Hie thou to the land of Khorasan with its districts." To the fourth, "Hie thou to Mauritania and all its regions, districts, provinces and quarters." And to the fifth, "Hie thou to Syria and Egypt and their outliers." Moreover, he chose them out an 311 auspicious day and said to them, "Fare ye forth this day and be diligent in the accomplishment of my need and be not slothful, though the case cost you your lives." So they farewelled him and departed, each taking the direction prescribed to him. Now, four of them were absent four months, and searched but found nothing; so they returned and told their master, whose breast was straitened, that they had ransacked towns and cities and countries for the thing he sought, but had happened upon naught thereof. Meanwhile, the fifth servant journeyed till he came to the land of Syria and entered Damascus, which he found a pleasant city and a secure,

abounding in trees and rills, leas and fruiteries and birds chanting the praises of Allah the One, the All-powerful of sway, Creator of Night and Day. Here he tarried some time, asking for his master's desire, but none answered him wherefore he was on the point of departing thence to another place, when he met a young man running and stumbling over his skirts. So he asked to him, "Wherefore runnest thou in such eagerness and whither dost thou press?" And he answered, "There is an elder here, a man of learning, who every day at this time taketh his seat on a stool[350] and relateth tales and stories and delectable anecdotes, whereof never heard any the like; and I am running to get me a place near him and fear I shall find no room, because of the much folk." Quoth the Mameluke, "Take me with thee;" and quoth the youth, "Make haste in thy walking." So he shut his door and hastened with him to the place of recitation, where he saw an old man of bright favour seated on a stool holding forth to the folk. He sat down near him and addressed himself to hear his story, till the going down of the sun, when the old man made an end of his tale and the people, having heard it all, dispersed from about him; whereupon the Mameluke accosted him and saluted him, and he returned his salam and greeted him with the utmost worship and courtesy. Then said the messenger to him, "O my lord Shaykh, thou art a comely and reverend man, and thy discourse is goodly; but I would fain ask thee of somewhat." Replied the old man, "Ask of what thou wilt!" Then said the Mameluke, "Hast thou the story of Sayf al-Muluk and Badí'a al-Jamál?" Rejoined the 312 elder, "And who told thee of this story and informed thee thereof?" Answered the messenger, "None told me of it, but I am come from a far country, in quest of this tale, and I will pay thee whatever thou askest for its price if thou have it and wilt, of thy bounty and charity, impart it to me and make it an alms to me, of the generosity of thy nature for, had I my life in my hand and lavished it upon thee for this thing, yet were it pleasing to my heart." Replied the old man, "Be of good cheer and keep thine eye cool and clear: thou shalt have it; but this is no story that one telleth in the beaten highway, nor do I give it to every one." Cried the other, "By Allah, O my lord, do not grudge it me, but ask of me what price thou wilt." And the old man, "If thou wish for the history give me an hundred dinars and thou shalt have it; but upon five conditions." Now when the Mameluke knew that the old man had the story and was willing to sell it to him, he joyed with exceeding joy and said, "I will give thee the hundred dinars by way of price and ten to boot as a gratuity and take it on the conditions of which thou speakest." Said the old man, "Then go and fetch the gold pieces, and take that thou seekest." So the messenger kissed his hands and joyful and happy returned to his lodging, where he laid an hundred and ten dinars[351] in a purse he had by him. As soon as morning morrowed, he donned his clothes and taking the dinars, repaired to the story-teller, whom he found seated at the door of his house. So he saluted him and the other returned his salam. Then he gave him the gold and the old man took it and carrying the messenger into his house made him sit down in a convenient place, when he set before him inkcase and reed-pen and paper and giving him a book, said to him,

"Write out what thou seekest of the night-story[352] of Sayf al-Muluk from this book." Accordingly the Mameluke fell to work and wrote till he had made an end of his copy, when he read it to the old man, and he corrected it and presently said to him, "Know, O my son, that my five conditions are as follows; firstly, that thou tell not this story in the beaten high road nor before women and slave-girls nor to black slaves nor feather-heads; nor again to boys; but read it only before Kings and Emirs and Wazirs and men of learning, such as expounders of the Koran 313 and others." Thereupon the messenger accepted the conditions and kissing the old man's hand, took leave of him, and fared forth.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Mameluke of Hasan the Merchant had copied the tale out of the book belonging to the old man of Damascus, and had accepted his conditions and farewelled him, he fared forth on the same day, glad and joyful, and journeyed on diligently, of the excess of his contentment, for that he had gotten the story of Sayf al-Muluk, till he came to his own country, when he despatched his servant to bear the good news to his master and say to him, "Thy Mameluke is come back in safety and hath won his will and his aim." (Now of the term appointed between Hasan and the King there wanted but ten days.) Then, after taking rest in his own quarters he himself went in to the Merchant and told him all that had befallen him and gave him the book containing the story of Sayf al-Muluk and Badi'a al-Jamal, when Hasan joyed with exceeding joy at the sight and bestowed on him all the clothes he had on and gave him ten thoroughbred horses and the like number of camels and mules and three negro chattels and two white slaves. Then Hasan took the book and copied out the story plainly in his own hand; after which he presented himself before the King and said to him, "O thou auspicious King, I have brought thee a night-story and a rarely pleasant relation, whose like none ever heard at all." When these words reached the King's ear, he sent forthright for all the Emirs, who were men of understanding, and all the learned doctors and folk of erudition and culture and poets and wits; and Hasan sat down and read the history before the King, who marvelled thereat and approved it, as did all who were present, and they showered gold and silver and jewels upon the Merchant. Moreover, the King bestowed on him a costly robe of honour of the richest of his raiment and gave him a great city with its castles and outliers; and he appointed him one of his Chief Wazirs and seated him on his right hand. Then he caused the scribes write the story in letters of gold and lay it up in his privy treasures; and whenever his breast was 314 straitened, he would summon Hasan and he would read him the story,[353] which was as follows:—

STORY OF PRINCE SAYF AL-MULUK AND THE PRINCESS BADI'A AL-JAMAL.

There was once, in days of old and in ages and times long told, a King in Egypt called Asim bin Safwán,[354] who was a liberal and beneficent sovran, venerable and majestic. He owned many cities and sconces and fortresses and troops and warriors and had a Wazir named Fáris bin Sálih,[355] and he and all his subjects worshipped the sun and the fire, instead of the All-powerful Sire, the Glorious, the Victorious. Now this King was become a very old man, weakened and wasted with age and sickness and decrepitude; for he had lived an hundred and fourscore years and had no child, male or female, by reason whereof he was ever in cark and care from morning to night and from night to morn. It so happened that one day of the days, he was sitting on the throne of his Kingship, with his Emirs and Wazirs and Captains and Grandees in attendance on him, according to their custom, in their several stations, and whenever there came in an Emir, who had with him a son or two sons, or haply three who stood at the sides of their sires the King envied him and said in himself, "Every one of these is happy and rejoiceth in his children, whilst I, I have no child, and to-morrow I die and leave my reign and throne and lands and hoards, and strangers will take them and none will bear me in memory nor will there remain any mention of me in the world." Then he became drowned in the sea of thought and for the much thronging of griefs and anxieties upon his heart, like travellers faring for the well, he shed tears and descending from his throne, sat down upon the floor,[356] weeping and humbling himself before the Lord. Now when the Wazir and 315 notables of the realm and others who were present in the assembly saw him do thus with his royal person, they feared for their lives and let the poursuivants cry aloud to the lieges, saying, "Hie ye to your homes and rest till the King recover from what aileth him." So they went away, leaving none in the presence save the Minister who, as soon as the King came to himself, kissed ground between his hands and said, "O King of the Age and the time, wherefore this weeping and wailing? Tell me who hath transgressed against thee of the Kings or Castellans or Emirs or Grandees, and inform me who hath thwarted thee, O my liege lord, that we may all fall on him and tear his soul from his two sides." But he spake not neither raised his head; whereupon the Minister kissed ground before him a second time and said to him, "O Master,[357] I am even as thy son and thy slave, nay, I have reared thee; yet know I not the cause of thy cark and chagrin and of this thy case; and who should know but I who should stand in my stead between thy hands? Tell me therefore why this weeping and wherefore thine affliction." Nevertheless, the King neither opened his mouth nor raised his head, but ceased not to weep and cry with a loud crying and lament with exceeding lamentation and ejaculate, "Alas!" The Wazir took patience with him awhile, after which he said

to him, “Except thou tell me the cause of this thine affliction, I will set this sword to my heart and will slay myself before thine eyes, rather than see thee thus distressed.” Then King Asim raised his head and, wiping away his tears, said, “O Minister of good counsel and experience, leave me to my care and my chagrin, for that which is in my heart of sorrow sufficeth me.” But Faris said, “Tell me, O King, the cause of this thy weeping, haply Allah will appoint thee relief at my hands.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir said to King Asim, “Tell me the cause of this thy weeping: 316 haply Allah shall appoint thee relief at my hands.” Replied the King, “O Wazir, I weep not for monies nor horses nor kingdoms nor aught else, but that I am become an old man, yea, very old nigh upon an hundred and fourscore years of age, and I have not been blessed with a child, male or female: so, when I die, they will bury me and my trace will be effaced and my name cut off; the stranger will take my throne and reign and none will ever make mention of my being.” Rejoined the Minister Faris, “O King of the Age, I am older than thou by an hundred years yet have I never been blest with boon of child and cease not day and night from cark and care and concern; so how shall we do, I and thou?” Quoth Asim, “O Wazir, hast thou no device or shift in this matter?” and quoth the Minister, “Know, O King that I have heard of a Sovran in the land of Sabá[358] by name Solomon David-son (upon the twain be the Peace!),[359] who pretendeth to prophetship and avoucheth that he hath a mighty Lord who can do all things and whose kingdom is in the Heavens and who hath dominion over all mankind and birds and beasts and over the wind and the Jinn. Moreover, he kenneth the speech of birds and the language of every other created thing; and withal, he calleth all creatures to the worship of his Lord and discourseth to them of their service. So let us send him a messenger in the King’s name and seek of him our need, beseeching him to put up prayer to his Lord, that He vouchsafe each of us boon of issue. If his Faith be soothfast and his Lord Omnipotent, He will assuredly bless each of us with a child male or female, and if the thing thus fall out, we will enter his faith and worship his Lord; else will we take patience and devise us another device.” The King cried, “This is well seen, and my breast is broadened by this thy speech; but where shall we find a messenger befitting this grave matter, for that this Solomon is no Kinglet and the approaching him is no light affair? Indeed, I will send him none, on the like of this matter, save thyself; for thou art ancient and versed in all manner affairs and the like of thee is the like of myself; wherefore I desire that thou weary thyself and journey to him and occupy thyself sedulously with accomplishing this 317 matter, so haply solace may be at thy hand.” The Minister said, “I hear and I obey; but rise thou forthwith and seat thee upon the throne, so the Emirs and Lords of the realm and officers and the lieges may enter applying themselves to thy service, according to their custom; for

they all went away from thee, troubled at heart on thine account. Then will I go out and set forth on the Sovran's errand." So the King arose forthright and sat down on the throne of his kingship, whilst the Wazir went out and said to the Chamberlain, "Bid the folk proceed to their service, as of their wont." Accordingly the troops and Captains and Lords of the land entered, after they had spread the tables and ate and drank and withdrew as was their wont, after which the Wazir Faris went forth from King Asim and, repairing to his own house, equipped himself for travel and returned to the King, who opened to him the treasuries and provided him with rarities and things of price and rich stuffs and gear without compare, such as nor Emir nor Wazir hath power to possess. Moreover, King Asim charged him to accost Solomon with reverence, foregoing him with the salam but not exceeding in speech; "and (continued he) then do thou ask of him thy need, and if he say 'tis granted, return to us in haste, for I shall be awaiting thee." Accordingly, the Minister kissed hands and took the presents and setting out, fared on night and day, till he came within fifteen days' journey of Saba. Meanwhile Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) inspired Solomon the son of David (the Peace be upon both!) and said to him, "O Solomon, the King of Egypt sendeth unto thee his Chief Wazir, with a present of rarities and such and such things of price; so do thou also despatch thy Counsellor Asaf bin Barkhiyá to meet him with honour and with victual at the halting-places; and when he cometh to thy presence, say unto him:—Verily, thy King hath sent thee in quest of this and that and thy business is thus and thus. Then do thou propound to him The Saving Faith."[360] Whereupon Solomon bade his Wazir make ready a company of his retainers and go forth to meet the 318 Minister of Egypt with honour and sumptuous provision at the halting-places. So Asaf made ready all that was needed for their entertainment and setting out, fared on till he fell in with Faris and accosted him with the salam, honouring him and his company with exceeding honour. Moreover, he brought them provaunt and provender at the halting-places and said to them, "Well come and welcome and fair welcome to the coming guests! Rejoice in the certain winning of your wish! Be your souls of good cheer and your eyes cool and clear and your breasts be broadened!" Quoth Faris in himself, "Who acquainted him with this?"; and he said to Asaf,[361] "O my lord, and who gave thee to know of us and our need?" "It was Solomon son of David (on whom be the Peace!), told us of this!" "And who told our lord Solomon?" "The Lord of the heaven and the earth told him, the God of all creatures!" "This is none other than a mighty God!" "And do ye not worship him?" "We worship the Sun, and prostrate ourselves thereto." "O Wazir Faris, the sun is but a star of the stars created by Allah (extolled and exalted be He!), and Allah forbid that it should be a Lord! Because whiles it riseth and whiles it setteth, but our Lord is ever present and never absent and He over all things is Omnipotent!" Then they journeyed on a little while till they came to the land Saba and drew near the throne of Solomon David-son, (upon the twain be peace!), who commanded his hosts of men and Jinn and others[362] to form line on their road. So the beasts of the sea and the elephants and

leopards and lynxes and all beasts of the land ranged themselves in espalier on either side of the way, after their several kinds, and similarly the Jinn drew out in two ranks, appearing all to mortal eyes without concealment, in divers forms grisly and gruesome. So they lined the road on either hand, and the birds bespread their wings over the host of creatures to shade them, warbling one to other in all manner of voices and tongues. Now when the people of Egypt came to this terrible array, they dreaded it and durst not proceed; but Asaf said to them, "Pass on amidst them and walk forward and fear them not: for they are slaves of Solomon son of David, and none of them will harm you." So saying, he 319 entered between the ranks, followed by all the folk and amongst them the Wazir of Egypt and his company, fearful: and they ceased not faring forwards till they reached the city, where they lodged the embassy in the guest-house and for the space of three days entertained them sumptuously entreating them with the utmost honour. Then they carried them before Solomon, prophet of Allah (on whom be the Peace!), and when entering they would have kissed the earth before him; but he forbade them, saying, "It besitteth not a man prostrate himself to earth save before Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!), Creator of Earth and Heaven and all other things; wherefore, whosoever of you hath a mind to sit let him be seated in my service, or to stand, let him stand, but let none stand to do me worship." So they obeyed him and the Wazir Faris and some of his intimates sat down, whilst certain of the lesser sort remained afoot to wait on him. When they had sat awhile, the servants spread the tables and they all, men and beasts, ate their sufficiency.[363] Then Solomon bade Faris expound his errand, that it might be accomplished, saying, "Speak and hide naught of that wherefor thou art come; for I know why ye come and what is your errand, which is thus and thus." The King of Egypt who despatched thee, Asim hight, hath become a very old man, infirm, decrepit; and Allah (whose name be exalted!) hath not blessed him with offspring, male or female. So he abode in cark and care and chagrin from morn to night and from night to morn. It so happened that one day of the days as he sat upon the throne of his kingship with his Emirs and Wazirs, and Captains and Grandees in attendance on him, he saw some of them with two sons, others with one and others with even three who came with their sire to do him service. So he said in himself, of the excess of his sorrow, "Who shall get my kingdom after my death? Will any save a stranger take it? And thus shall I pass out of being as though I had never been!" On this account he became drowned in the sea of thought, until his eyes were flooded with tears and he covered his face with his kerchief and wept with sore weeping. Then he rose from off his 320 throne and sat down upon the floor wailing and lamenting and none knew what was in heart as he grovelled in the ground save Allah Almighty.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Solomon David-son (upon both of whom be peace!) after disclosing to the Wazir Faris that which had passed between himself and his master, King Asim, said to him, “Is this that I have told thee the truth, O Wazir?” Replied Faris, “O prophet of Allah, this thou hast said is indeed sooth and verity; but when we discoursed of this matter, none was with the King and myself, nor was any ware of our case; who, then told thee of all these things?” Answered Solomon, “They were told to me by my Lord who knoweth whatso is concealed[364] from the eye and what is hidden in the breasts.” Quoth Faris, “O Prophet of Allah, verily this is none other than a mighty Lord and an omnipotent God!” And he Islamized with all his many. Then said Solomon to him, “Thou hast with thee such and such presents and rarities;” and Faris replied “Yes.” The prophet continued, “I accept them all and give them in free gift unto thee. So do ye rest, thou and thy company, in the place where you have been lodging, till the fatigue of the journey shall cease from you; and to-morrow, Inshallah! thine errand shall be accomplished to the uttermost, if it be the will of Allah the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth and the light which followeth the gloom; Creator of all creatures.” So Faris returned to his quarters and passed the night in deep thought. But when morning morrowed he presented himself before the Lord Solomon, who said to him, “When thou returnest to King Asim bin Safwan and you twain are reunited, do ye both go forth some day armed with bow, bolts and brand, and fare to such a place, where ye shall find a certain tree. Mount upon it and sit silent until the mid-hour between noon-prayer and that of mid-afternoon, when the noontide heat hath cooled; then descend and look at the foot of the tree, whence ye will see two serpents come forth, one with a head like an ape’s and the other with a head like an 321Ifrit’s. Shoot them ye twain with bolts and kill them both; then cut off a span’s length from their heads and the like from their tails and throw it away. The rest of the flesh cook and cook well and give it to your wives to eat: then lie with them that night and, by Allah’s leave, they shall conceive and bear male children.” Moreover, he gave him a seal-ring a sword and a wrapper containing two tunics[365] embroidered with gold and jewels, saying, “O Wazir Faris, when your sons grow up to man’s estate, give to each of them one of these tunics.” Then said he, “In the name of Allah! May the Almighty accomplish your desire! And now nothing remaineth for thee but to depart, relying on the blessing of the Lord the Most High, for the King looketh for thy return night and day and his eye is ever gazing on the road.” So the Wazir advanced to the prophet Solomon son of David (upon both of whom be the Peace!) and farewelled him and fared forth from him after kissing his hands. Rejoicing in the accomplishment of his errand he travelled on with all diligence night and day, and ceased not wayfaring till he drew near to Cairo, when he despatched one of his servants to acquaint King Asim with his approach and the successful issue of his journey; which when the King heard he joyed with exceeding joy, he and his Grandees and Officers and troops especially in the Wazir’s safe return. When they met, the Minister dismounted and, kissing ground

before the King, gave him the glad news anent the winning of his wish in fullest fashion; after which he expounded the True Faith to him, and the King and all his people embraced Al-Islam with much joy and gladness. Then said Asim to his Wazir, "Go home and rest this night and a week to boot; then go to the Hammam-bath and come to me, that I may inform thee of what we shall have to consider." So Faris kissed ground and withdrew, with his suite, pages and eunuchs, to his house, where he rested eight days; after which he repaired to the King and related to him all that had passed between Solomon and himself, adding, "Do thou rise and go forth with me alone." Then the King and the Minister took two bows and two bolts and repairing to the tree indicated by Solomon, clomb up into it and there sat in silence till the mid-day heat had passed away and it was near upon the 322 hour of mid-afternoon prayer, when they descended and looking about them saw a serpent-couple[366] issue from the roots of the tree. The King gazed at them, marvelling to see them ringed with collars of gold about their necks, and said to Faris, "O Wazir, verily these snakes have golden torques! By Allah, this is forsooth a rare thing! Let us catch them and set them in a cage and keep them to look upon." But the Minister said, "These hath Allah created for profitable use;[367] so do thou shoot one and I will shoot the other with these our shafts." Accordingly they shot at them with arrows and slew them; after which they cut off a span's length of their heads and tails and threw it away. Then they carried the rest to the King's palace, where they called the kitchener and giving him that flesh said, "Dress this meat daintily, with onion-sauce[368] and spices, and ladle it out into two saucers and bring them hither at such an hour, without delay!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King and the Wazir gave the serpents' flesh to the kitchener, saying, "Cook it and ladle it out into two saucers and bring them hither without delay!"; the cook took the meat and went with it to the kitchen, where he cooked it and dressed it in skilful fashion with a mighty fine onion-sauce and hot spices; after which he ladled it out into two saucers and set them before the King and the Wazir, who took each a dish and gave their wives to eat of the meat. Then they went in that night unto them and knew them carnally, and by the good pleasure of Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) and His all-might and furtherance, they both conceived on one and the same night. The King abode three 323 months, troubled in mind and saying in himself, "I wonder whether this thing will prove true or untrue"; till one day, as the lady his Queen was sitting, the child stirred in her womb and she felt a pain and her colour changed. So she knew that she was with child and calling the chief of her eunuchs, gave him this command, "Go to the King, wherever he may be and congratulate him saying:—O King of the Age, I bring thee the glad tidings that our lady's pregnancy is become manifest, for the child stirreth in her womb." So the eunuch went out in haste, rejoicing, and finding the

King alone, with cheek on palm, pondering this thing, kissed ground between his hands and acquainted him with his wife's pregnancy. When the King heard his words, he sprang to his feet and in the excess of his joy, he kissed[369] the eunuch's hands and head and doffing the clothes he had on, gave them to him. Moreover, he said to those who were present in his assembly, "Whoso loveth me, let him bestow largesse upon this man."[370] And they gave him of coin and jewels and jacinths and horses and mules and estates and gardens what was beyond count or calculation. At that moment in came the Wazir Faris and said to Asim, "O my master, but now I was sitting alone at home and absorbed in thought, pondering the matter of the pregnancy and saying to myself:—Would I wot an this thing be true and whether my wife Khátún[371] have conceived or not! when, behold, an eunuch came in to me and brought me the glad tidings that his lady was indeed pregnant, for that her colour was changed and the child stirred in her womb; whereupon, in my joy, I doffed all the clothes I had on and gave them to him, together with a thousand dinars, and made him Chief of the Eunuchs." Rejoined the King, "O Minister, Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath, of His grace and bounty and goodness, and beneficence, made gift to us of the True Faith and brought us out of night into light, and hath been bountiful to us, of His 324 favour and benevolence; wherefore I am minded to solace the folk and cause them to rejoice." Quoth Faris, "Do what thou wilt,"[372] and quoth the King, "O Wazir, go down without stay or delay and set free all who are in the prisons, both criminals and debtors, and whoso transgresseth after this, we will requite as he deserveth even to the striking off of his head. Moreover, we forgive the people three years' taxes, and do thou set up kitchens all around about the city walls[373] and bid the kitcheners hang over the fire all kinds of cooking pots and cook all manner of meats, continuing their cooking night and day, and let all comers, both of our citizens and of the neighbouring countries, far and near, eat and drink and carry to their houses. And do thou command the people to make holiday and decorate the city seven days and shut not the taverns night nor day;[374] and if thou delay I will behead thee!"[375] So he did as the King bade him and the folk decorated the city and citadel and bulwarks after the goodliest fashion and, donning their richest attire, passed their time in feasting and sporting and making merry, till the days of the Queen's pregnancy were accomplished and she was taken, one night, with labour pains hard before dawn. Then the King bade summon all the Olema and astronomers, mathematicians and men of learning, astrologers, scientists and scribes in the city, and they assembled and sat awaiting the throwing of a bead into the cup[376] which was to be the signal to the Astrophils, as well as to the nurses and attendants, that the child was born. Presently, as they sat in expectation, the Queen gave birth to a boy like a slice of the moon when fullest and the astrologers fell to calculating and noted his star and nativity and drew his horoscope. Then, on being summoned they rose and, kissing the earth before the King, gave him the glad tidings, saying, "In very sooth the new-born child is of happy augury and born under

an auspicious aspect, but" they 325added, "in the first of his life there will befall him a thing which we fear to name before the King." Quoth Asim, "Speak and fear not;" so quoth they, "O King, this boy will fare forth from this land and journey in strangerhood and suffer shipwreck and hardship and prisonment and distress, and indeed he hath before him the sorest of sufferings; but he shall free him of them in the end, and win to his wish and live the happiest of lives the rest of his days, ruling over subjects with a strong hand and having dominion in the land, despite enemies and enviers." Now when the King heard the astrologers' words, he said, "The matter is a mystery; but all that Allah Almighty hath written for the creature of good and bad cometh to pass and needs must betide him from this day to that a thousand solaces." So he paid no heed to their words or attention to their speeches but bestowed on them robes of honour, as well upon all who were present, and dismissed them; when, behold, in came Faris the Wazir and kissed the earth before the King in huge joy, saying, "Good tidings, O King! My wife hath but now given birth to a son, as he were a slice of the moon." Replied Asim, "O Wazir, go, bring thy wife and child hither, that she may abide with my wife in my palace, and they shall bring up the two boys together." So Faris fetched his wife and son and they committed the two children to the nurses wet and dry. And after seven days had passed over them, they brought them before the King and said to him, "What wilt thou name the twain?" Quoth he, "Do ye name them;" but quoth they, "None nameth the son save his sire." So he said, "Name my son Sayf al-Muluk, after my grandfather, and the Minister's son Sái'd."[377] Then he bestowed robes of honour on the nurses wet and dry and said to them, "Be ye ruthful over them and rear them after the goodliest fashion." So they brought up the two boys diligently till they reached the age of five, when the King committed them to a doctor of Sciences[378] who taught them to read the Koran and write. When they were ten years old, King Asim gave them in charge to masters, 326who instructed them in cavalarice and shooting with shafts and lunging with lance and play of Polo and the like till, by the time they were fifteen years old, they were clever in all manner of martial exercises, nor was there one to vie with them in horsemanship, for each of them would do battle with a thousand men and make head against them single handed. So when they came to years of discretion, whenever King Asim looked on them he joyed in them with exceeding joy; and when they attained their twenty-fifth year, he took Faris his Minister apart one day and said to him, "O Wazir, I am minded to consult with thee concerning a thing I desire to do." Replied he, "Whatever thou hast a mind to do, do it; for thy judgment is blessed." Quoth the King, "O Wazir, I am become a very old and decrepit man, sore stricken in years, and I desire to take up my abode in an oratory, that I may worship Allah Almighty and give my kingdom and Sultanate to my son Sayf al-Muluk for that he is grown a goodly youth, perfect in knightly exercises and intellectual attainments, polite letters and gravity, dignity and the art of government. What sayst thou, O

Minister, of this project?" And quoth the counsellor, "Right indeed is thy rede: the idea is a blessed and a fortunate, and if thou do this, I will do the like and my son Sa'id shall be the Prince's Wazir, for he is a comely young man and complete in knowledge and judgment. Thus will the two youths be together, and we will order their affair and neglect not their case, but guide them to goodness and in the way that is straight." Quoth the King, "Write letters and send them by couriers to all the countries and cities and sconces and fortresses that be under our hands, bidding their chiefs be present on such a day at the Horse-course of the Elephant."[379] So the Wazir 327 went out without stay or delay and despatched letters of this purport to all the deputies and governors of fortresses and others under King Asim; and he commanded also that all in the city should be present far and near, high and low. When the appointed time drew nigh, King Asim bade the tent-pitchers plant pavilions in the midst of the Champ-de-Mars and decorate them after the most sumptuous fashion and set up the great throne whereon he sat not but on festivals. And they at once did his bidding. Then he and all his Nabobs and Chamberlains and Emirs sallied forth, and he commanded proclamation be made to the people, saying, "In the name of Allah, come forth to the Maydán!" So all the Emirs and Wazirs and Governors of provinces and Feudatories[380] came forth to the place of assembly and, entering the royal pavilion, addressed themselves to the service of the King as was their wont, and abode in their several stations some sitting and others standing, till all the people were gathered together, when the King bade spread the tables and they ate and drank and prayed for him. Then he commanded the Chamberlains[381] to proclaim to the people that they should not depart: so they made proclamation to them, saying, "Let none of you fare hence till he have heard the King's words!" So they withdrew the curtains of the royal pavilion and the King said, "Whoso loveth me, let him remain till he have heard my speech!" Whereupon all the folk sat down in mind tranquil after they had been fearful, saying, "Wherefore have we been summoned by the King?" Then the Sovran rose to his feet, and making them swear that none would stir from his stead, said to them, "O ye Emirs and Wazirs and Lords of the land; the great and the small of you, and all ye who are present of the people; say me, wot ye not that this kingdom was an inheritance to me from my fathers and forefathers?" Answered they, "Yes, O King we all know that." And he continued, "I and you, we all worshipped the sun and moon, till Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) vouchsafed us the knowledge of the True Faith and brought us out of darkness unto light, and directed us to the religion of Al-Islam. Know that I am become 328 a very old man, feeble and decrepit, and I desire to take up my abode in a hermitage[382] there to worship Allah Almighty and crave His pardon for past offences and make this my son Sayf al-Muluk ruler. Ye know full well that he is a comely youth, eloquent, liberal, learned, versed in affairs, intelligent, equitable; wherefore I am minded presently to resign to him my realm and to make him ruler over you and seat him as Sultan in my stead, whilst I give myself to solitude

and to the worship of Allah in an oratory and my son and heir shall judge between you. What say ye then, all of you?" Thereupon they all rose and kissing ground before him, made answer with "Hearing and obedience," saying, "O our King and our defender an thou should set over us one of thy blackamoor slaves we would obey him and hearken to thy word and accept thy command: how much more then with thy son Sayf al-Muluk? Indeed, we accept of him and approve him on our eyes and heads!" So King Asim bin Safwan arose and came down from his seat and seating his son on the great throne,[383] took the crown from his own head and set it on the head of Sayf al-Muluk and girt his middle with the royal girdle.[384] Then he sat down beside his son on the throne of his kingship, whilst the Emirs and Wazirs and Lords of the land and all the rest of the folk rose and kissed ground before him, saying, "Indeed, he is worthy of the kingship and hath better right to it than any other." Then the Chamberlains made proclamation crying, "Amán! Amán! Safety! Safety!" and offered up prayers for his victory and prosperity. And Sayf al-Muluk scattered gold and silver on the heads of the lieges one and all.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Asim seated his son, Sayf al-Muluk, upon the throne and all the 329 people prayed for his victory and prosperity, the youth scattered gold and silver on the heads of the lieges, one and all, and conferred robes of honour and gave gifts and largesse. Then, after a moment, the Wazir Faris arose and kissing ground said, "O Emirs, O Grandees, ye ken that I am Wazir and that my Wazirate dateth from old, before the accession of King Asim bin Safwan, who hath now divested himself of the Kingship and made his son King in his stead?" Answered they, "Yes, we know that thy Wazirate is from sire after grandsire." He continued, "And now in my turn I divest myself of office and invest this my son Sa'id, for he is intelligent, quick-witted, sagacious. What say ye all?" And they replied, "None is worthy to be Wazir to King Sayf al-Muluk but thy son Sa'id, and they befit each other." With this Faris arose and taking off his Wazirial turband, set it on his son's head and eke laid his ink-case of office before him, whilst the Chamberlains and the Emirs said, "Indeed, he is deserving of the Wazirship" and the Heralds cried aloud, "Mubárak! Mubárak!—Felix sit et faustus!" After this, King Asim and Faris the Minister arose and, opening the royal treasuries, conferred magnificent robes of honour on all the Viceroys and Emirs and Wazirs and Lords of the land and other folk and gave salaries and benefactions and wrote them new mandates and diplomas with the signatures of King Sayf al-Muluk and his Wazir Sa'id. Moreover, he made distribution of money to the men-at-arms and gave guerdons, and the provincials abode in the city a full week ere they departed each to his own country and place. Then King Asim carried his son and his Wazir Sa'id back

to the palace which was in the city and bade the treasurer bring the seal-ring and signet,[385] sword and wrapper; which being done, he said to the two young men, "O my sons, come hither and let each of you choose two of these things and take them." The first to make choice was Sayf al-Muluk, who put out his hand and took the ring and the wrapper, whilst Sa'id took the sword and the signet; after which they both kissed the King's hands and went away to their lodging. Now Sayf al-Muluk opened not the wrapper to see what was therein, but threw it on the couch where he and Sa'id slept by night, for it was their habit to lie together. Presently they spread them the bed and the two lay down with a pair of wax candles burning over 330 them, and slept till midnight, when Sayf al-Muluk awoke and, seeing the bundle at his head, said in his mind, "I wonder what thing of price is in this wrapper my father gave me!" So he took it together with a candle and descended from the couch leaving Sa'id sleeping and carried the bundle into a closet, where he opened it and found within a tunic of the fabric of the Jánn. He spread it out and saw on the lining[386] of the back, the portraiture wroughten in gold of a girl and marvellous was her loveliness; and no sooner had he set eyes on the figure than his reason fled his head and he became Jinn-mad for love thereof, so that he fell down in a swoon and presently recovering, began to weep and lament, beating his face and breast and kissing her. And he recited these verses:—

Love, at the first, is a spurt of spray[387] ✿ Which Doom disposes and Fates display;

Till, when deep diveth youth in passion-sea ✿ Unbearable sorrows his soul waylay.

And also these two couplets:—

Had I known of love in what fashion he ✿ Robbeth heart and soul I had guarded me:

But of malice prepense I threw self away, ✿ Unwitting of Love what his nature be.

And Sayf al-Muluk ceased not to weep and wail and beat face and breast, till Sa'id awoke and missing him from the bed and seeing but a single candle, said to himself, "Whither is Sayf al-Muluk gone?" Then he took the other candle and went round about the palace, till he came upon the closet where he saw the Prince lying at full length, weeping with sore weeping and lamenting aloud. So he said to him, "O my brother, for what cause are these tears and what hath befallen thee? Speak to me and tell me the reason thereof." But Sayf al-Muluk spoke not neither raised his head and continued to weep and wail and beat hand on breast. Seeing him in this case quoth Sa'id, "I am thy Wazir and thy brother, and we were reared together, I and thou; so an thou do not unburden thy breast and discover thy secret to me, to whom shalt thou reveal it and disclose its cause?" And he went on to 331 humble himself and kiss the ground before him a full hour, whilst Sayf al-Muluk paid no heed to him nor answered him a word, but gave not over weeping. At last, being affrighted at his case and weary of striving with him, he went out and fetched a sword, with which he returned to the closet, and setting the point to his own breast, said to the Prince, "Rouse thee, O my brother! An thou tell me not what aileth thee, I will slay myself

and see thee no longer in this case." Whereupon Sayf al-Muluk raised his head towards the Wazir and answered him, "O my brother, I am ashamed to tell thee what hath betided me;" but Sa'id said, "I conjure thee by Allah, Lord of Lords, Liberator of Necks,[388] Causer of causes, the One, the Ruthful, the Gift-full, the Bountiful, that thou tell me what aileth thee and be not abashed at me, for I am thy slave and thy Minister and counsellor in all thine affairs!" Quoth Sayf al-Muluk, "Come and look at this likeness." So Sa'id looked at it awhile and considering it straitly, behold, he saw written, as a crown over its head, in letters of pearl, these words, "This is the counterfeit presentment of Badi'a al-Jamal, daughter of Shahyál bin Shárukh, a King of the Kings of the true-believing Jann who have taken up their abode in the city of Babel and sojourn in the garden of Iram, Son of 'Ad the Greater"[389]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sa'id, son of the Wazir Faris, had read to Sayf al-Muluk son of King Asim the writ on the tunic, which showed the portraiture of Badi'a al-Jamal, daughter of Shahyal bin Sharukh, a King of the Kings of the Moslem Jinns dwelling in Babel-city and in the Garden of Iram, son of 'Ad the Greater, he cried, "O my brother, knowest thou of what woman this is the presentment, that we may seek for her?" Sayf al-Muluk replied, "No, by Allah, O my brother, I know her not!" and Sa'id rejoined, "Come, read this 332 writing on the crown." So Sayf al-Muluk read it and cried out from his heart's core and very vitals, saying, "Alas! Alas! Alas!" Quoth Sa'id, "O my brother, an the original of the portrait exist and her name be Badi'a al-Jamal, and she abide in the world, I will hasten to seek her, that thou mayst win thy will without delay. But, Allah upon thee, O my brother, leave this weeping and ascend thy throne, that the Officers of the State may come in to do their service to thee, and in the undurn, do thou summon the merchants and fakirs and travellers and pilgrims and paupers and ask of them concerning this city and the garden of Iram; haply by the help and blessing of Allah (extolled and exalted be He!), some one of them shall direct us thither." So, when it was day, Sayf al-Muluk went forth and mounted the throne, clasping the tunic in his arms, for he could neither stand nor sit without it, nor would sleep visit him save it were with him; and the Emirs and Wazirs and Lords and Officers came in to him. When the Divan was complete all being assembled in their places he said to his Minister, "Go forth to them and tell them that the King hath been suddenly struck by sickness and he, by Allah, hath passed the night in ill case." So Sa'id fared forth and told the folk what he said; which when old King Asim heard, he was concerned for his son and, summoning the physicians and astrologers, carried them in to Sayf al-Muluk. They looked at him and prescribed him ptisans and diet-drinks, simples and medicinal waters and wrote him charcts and incensed him with Nadd and aloes-wood and ambergris three days' space; but his malady persisted three months, till King Asim

was wroth with the leaches and said to them, “Woe to you, O dogs! What? Are all of you impotent to cure my son? Except ye heal him forthright, I will put the whole of you to death.” The Archiater replied, “O King of the Age, in very sooth we know that this is thy son and thou wottest that we fail not of diligence in tending a stranger; so how much more with medicining thy son? But thy son is afflicted with a malady hard to heal, which, if thou desire to know, we will discover it to thee.” Quoth Asim, “What then find ye to be the malady of my son?”; and quoth the leach, “O King of the Age, thy son is in love and he loveth one to whose enjoyment he hath no way of access.” At this the King was wroth and asked, “How know ye that my son is in love and how came love to him?”; they answered, “Enquire of his Wazir and brother Sa’id, for he knoweth his case.” The King rose and repaired to his 333 private closet and summoning Sa’id said to him, “Tell me the truth of thy brother’s malady.” But Sa’id replied, “I know it not.” So King Asim said to the Sworder, “Take Sa’id and bind his eyes and strike his neck.” Whereupon Sa’id feared for himself and cried, “O King of the Age, grant me immunity.” Replied the King, “Speak and thou shalt have it.” “Thy son is in love.” “With whom is he in love?” “With a King’s daughter of the Jann.” “And where could he have espied a daughter of the Jinns?” “Her portrait was wroughten on the tunic that was in the bundle given thee by Solomon, prophet of Allah!” When the King heard this, he rose, and going in to Sayf al-Muluk, said to him, “O my son, what hath afflicted thee? What is this portrait whereof thou art enamoured? And why didst thou not tell me?” He replied, “O my sire, I was ashamed to name this to thee and could not bring myself to discover aught thereof to any one at all; but now thou knowest my case, look how thou mayest do to cure me.” Rejoined his father, “What is to be done? Were this one of the daughters of men we might devise a device for coming at her; but she is a King’s daughter of the Jinns and who can woo and win her, save it be Solomon David-son, and hardly he?[390] However, O my son, do thou arise forthright and hearten thy heart and take horse and ride out a-hunting or to weapon-play in the Maydan. Divert thyself with eating and drinking and put away cark and care from thy heart, and I will bring thee an hundred maids of the daughters of Kings; for thou hast no need to the daughters of the Jann, over whom we lack control and of kind other than ours.” But he said, “I cannot renounce her nor will I seek other than her.” Asked King Asim, “How then shall we do, O my son?”; and Sayf al-Muluk answered, “Bring us all the merchants and travellers and wanderers in the city, that we may question them thereof. Peradventure, Allah will lead us to the city of Babel and the garden of Iram.” So King Asim bade summon all the merchants in the city and strangers and sea-captains and, as each came, enquired of him anent the city of Babel and its peninsula[391] and the garden of Iram; but none of them knew these places nor could any give him tidings thereof. However, when the séance broke up, one of them said, “O King 334 of the Age, an thou be minded to ken this thing, up and hie thee to the land of China; for it hath a vast city[392] and a safe wherein are store

of rarities and things of price and folk of all kinds; and thou shalt not come to the knowledge of this city and garden but from its folk; it may be one of them will direct thee to that thou seekest." Whereupon quoth Sayf al-Muluk, "O my sire, equip me a ship, that I may fare to the China-land; and do thou rule the reign in my stead." Replied the old King, "O my son, abide thou on the throne of thy kingship and govern thy commons, and I myself will make the voyage to China and ask for thee of the city of Babel and the garden of Iram." But Sayf al-Muluk rejoined, "O my sire, in very sooth this affair concerneth me and none can search after it like myself: so, come what will, an thou give me leave to make the voyage, I will depart and wander awhile. If I find trace or tidings of her, my wish will be won, and if not, belike the voyage will broaden my breast and recruit my courage; and haply by foreign travel my case will be made easy to me, and if I live, I shall return to thee safe and sound."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sayf al-Muluk said to his sire King Asim, "Equip me a ship that I may fare therein to the China-land and search for the object of my desire. If I live I shall return to thee safe and sound." The old King looked at his son and saw nothing for it but to do what he desired; so he gave him the leave he wanted and fitted him forty ships, manned with twenty thousand armed Mamelukes, besides servants, and presented him with great plenty of money and necessaries and warlike gear, as much as he required. When the ships were laden with water and victual, weapons and troops, Sayf al-Muluk's father and mother farewelled him and King Asim said, "Depart, O my son, and travel in weal and health and safety. I commend thee to Him with Whom deposits are not lost."[393] So the Prince bade adieu to his parents and embarked, with his brother 335 Sa'id, and they weighed anchor and sailed till they came to the City of China. When the Chinamen heard of the coming of forty ships, full of armed men and stores, weapons and hoards, they made sure that these were enemies come to battle with them and siege them; so they bolted the gates of the town and made ready the mangonels.[394] But Sayf al-Muluk, hearing of this, sent two of his Chief Mamelukes to the King of China, bidding them say to him, "This is Sayf al-Muluk, son of King Asim of Egypt, who is come to thy city as a guest, to divert himself by viewing thy country awhile, and not for conquest or contention; wherefore, an thou wilt receive him, he will come ashore to thee; and if not he will return and will not disquiet thee nor the people of thy capital." They presented themselves at the city gates and said, "We are messengers from King Sayf al-Muluk." Whereupon the townsfolk opened the gates and carried them to their King, whose name was Faghfúr[395] Sháh and between whom and King Asim there had erst been acquaintance. So, when he heard that the new-comer Prince was the son of King Asim, he bestowed robes of honour on the messengers and, bidding open the gates, made ready guest-gifts and went forth in person with the chief officers of his realm, to

meet Sayf al-Muluk, and the two Kings embraced. Then Faghfur said to his guest, "Well come and welcome and fair cheer to him who cometh to us! I am thy slave and the slave of thy sire: my city is between thy hands to command and whatso thou seekest shall be brought before thee." Then he presented him with the guest-gifts and victual for the folk at their stations; and they took horse, with the Wazir Sa'id and the chiefs of their officers and the rest of their troops, and rode from the sea-shore to the city, which they entered with cymbals clashing and drums 336 beating in token of rejoicing. There they abode in the enjoyment of fair entertainment for forty days, at the end of which quoth the King of China to Sayf al-Muluk, "O son of my brother, how is thy case[396]? Doth my country please thee?"; and quoth Sayf al-Muluk, "May Allah Almighty long honour it with thee, O King!" Said Faghfur, "Naught hath brought thee hither save some need which hath occurred to thee; and whatso thou desirest of my country I will accomplish it to thee." Replied Sayf al-Muluk, "O King, my case is a wondrous," and told him how he had fallen in love with the portrait of Badi'a al-Jamal, and wept bitter tears. When the King of China heard his story, he wept for pity and solicitude for him and cried, "And what wouldst thou have now, O Sayf al-Muluk?"; and he rejoined, "I would have thee bring me all the wanderers and travellers, the seafarers and sea-captains, that I may question them of the original of this portrait; perhaps one of them may give me tidings of her." So Faghfur Shah sent out his Nabobs and Chamberlains and body-guards to fetch all the wanderers and travellers in the land, and they brought them before the two Kings, and they were a numerous company. Then Sayf al-Muluk questioned them of the City of Babel and the Garden of Iram, but none of them returned him a reply, whereupon he was bewildered and wist not what to do; but one of the sea-captains said to him, "O auspicious King, an thou wouldst know of this city and that garden up and hie thee to the Islands of the Indian realm."[397] Thereupon Sayf al-Muluk bade bring the ships; which being done, they freighted them with vivers and water and all that they needed, and the Prince and his Wazir re-embarked, with all their men, after they had farewelled King Faghfur Shah. They sailed the seas four months with a fair wind, in safety and satisfaction till it chanced that one day of the days there came out upon them a wind and the billows buffeted them from all quarters. The rain and hail[398] descended on them and during twenty days the sea was troubled for the violence of the wind; wherefor the ships drave one against other and brake up, as did the carracks[399] and all on board were drowned, except 337 Sayf al-Muluk and some of his servants, who saved themselves in a little cock-boat. Then the wind fell by the decree of Allah Almighty and the sun shone out; whereupon Sayf al-Muluk opened his eyes and seeing no sign of the ships nor aught but sky and sea, said to the Mamelukes who were with him, "Where are the carracks and cock-boats and where is my brother Sa'id?" They replied, "O King of the Age, there remain nor ships nor boats nor those who were therein; for they are all drowned and become food for

fishes." Now when he heard this, he cried aloud and repeated the saying which whoso saith shall not be confounded, and it is, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Then he fell to buffeting his face and would have cast himself into the sea, but his Mamelukes withheld him, saying, "O King, what will this profit thee? Thou hast brought all this on thyself; for, hadst thou hearkened to thy father's words, naught thereof had betided thee. But this was written from all eternity by the will of the Creator of Souls."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sayf al-Muluk would have cast himself into the main, his Mamelukes withheld him saying, "What will this profit thee? Thou hast done this deed by thyself, yet was it written from all eternity by the will of the Creator of Souls, that the creature might accomplish that which Allah hath decreed unto him. And indeed, at the time of thy birth, the astrologers assured thy sire that all manner troubles should befal thee. So there is naught for it but patience till Allah deliver us from this our strait." Replied the Prince, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Neither is there refuge nor fleeing from that which He decreeth!" And he sighed and recited these couplets:—

By the Compassionate, I'm dazed about my case, for lo! Troubles and griefs beset me sore; I know not whence they grow.

I will be patient, so the folk, that I against a thing Bitt'rer than very aloes' self,[4001] endurèd have, may know.

338 Less bitter than my patience is the taste of aloes-juice; I've borne with patience what's more hot than coals with fire aglow.

In this my trouble what resource have I, save to commit My case to Him who orders all that is, for weal or woe?

Then he became drowned in the depth of thoughts and his tears ran down upon his cheeks like torrent-rain; and he slept a while of the day, after which he awoke and sought of food somewhat. So they set meat before him and he ate his sufficiency, till they removed the food from before him, whilst the boat drove on with them they knew not whither it was wandering. It drifted with them at the will of the winds and the waves, night and day a great while, till their victual was spent and they saw themselves shent and were reduced to extreme hunger and thirst and exhaustion, when behold, suddenly they sighted an island from afar and the breezes wafted them on, till they came thither. Then, making the cock-boat fast to the coast and leaving one therein to guard it, they fared on into the island, where they found abundance of fruits of all colours and ate of them till they were satisfied. Presently, they saw a person sitting among those trees and he was long-faced, of strange favour and white of beard and body. He called to one of the Mamelukes by his name, saying, "Eat not of these fruits, for they are unripe; but come hither to me, that I may give thee to eat of the best and the ripest." The slave looked at him and thought that he was one of the

shipwrecked, who had made his way to that island; so he joyed with exceeding joy at sight of him and went close up to him, knowing not what was decreed to him in the Secret Purpose nor what was writ upon his brow. But, when he drew near, the stranger in human shape leapt upon him, for he was a Marid,[401] and riding upon his shoulder-blades and twisting one of his legs about his neck, let the other hang down upon his back, saying, "Walk on, fellow; for there is no escape for thee from me and thou art become mine ass." Thereupon the Mameluke fell a-weeping and cried out to his comrades, "Alas, my lord! Flee ye forth of this wood and save yourselves, for one of the dwellers therein hath mounted on my shoulders, and the rest seek you, desiring to ride you like me." When they heard these words, all fled down to the boat and 339 pushed off to sea; whilst the islanders followed them into the water, saying, "Whither wend ye? Come, tarry with us and we will mount on your backs and give you meat and drink, and you shall be our donkeys." Hearing this they hastened the more seawards till they left them in the distance and fared on, trusting in Allah Almighty; nor did they leave faring for a month, till another island rose before them and thereon they landed. Here they found fruits of various kinds and busied themselves with eating of them, when behold, they saw from afar, somewhat lying in the road, a hideous creature as it were a column of silver. So they went up to it and one of the men gave it a kick, when lo! it was a thing of human semblance, long of eyes and cloven of head and hidden under one of his ears, for he was wont, whenas he lay down to sleep, to spread one ear under his head and cover his face with the other ear.[402] He snatched up the Mameluke who had kicked him and carried him off into the middle of the island, and behold, it was all full of Ghuls who eat the sons of Adam. The man cried out to his fellows, "Save yourselves, for this is the island of the man-eating Ghuls, and they mean to tear me to bits and devour me." When they heard these words they fled back to the boat, without gathering any store of the fruits and, putting out to sea, fared on some days till it so happened that they came to another island, where they found a high mountain. So they climbed to the top and there saw a thick copse. Now they were sore anhungered; so they took to eating of the fruits; but, before they were aware, there came upon them from among the trees black men of terrible aspect, each fifty cubits high with eye-teeth[403] protruding from their mouths like elephants' tusks; and, laying hands on Sayf al-Muluk and his company, carried them to their King, whom they found seated on a piece of black felt laid on a rock, and about him a great company of Zanzibar-blacks, standing in his service. The blackamoors who had captured the Prince and his Mamelukes set them before the King and said to him, "We found these birds among the trees"; and the King was sharp-set; so he took two of the servants and cut their throats and ate them;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Zanzibar-blacks took Sayf al-Muluk and his Mamelukes and set them before the King, saying, "O King, we came upon these birds among the trees." Thereupon the King seized two of the Mamelukes and cut their throats and ate them; which, when Sayf al-Muluk saw, he feared for himself and wept and repeated these verses:—

Familiar with my heart are woes and with them I ✿ Who shunned them; for familiar are great hearts and high.

The woes I suffer are not all of single kind ✿ I have, thank Allah, varied thousands to aby!

Then he sighed and repeated these also:—

The World hath shot me with its sorrows till ✿ My heart is coverèd with shafts galore;

And now, when strike me other shafts, must break ✿ Against th' old points the points that latest pour.

When the King heard his weeping and wailing, he said, "Verily these birds have sweet voices and their song pleaseth me: put them in cages." So they set them each in his own cage and hung them up at the King's head that he might listen to their warbling. On this wise Sayf al-Muluk and his Mamelukes abode and the blackamoors gave them to eat and drink: and now they wept and now laughed, now spake and now were hushed, whilst the King of the blacks delighted in the sound of their voices. And so they continued for a long time. Now this King had a daughter married in another island who, hearing that her father had birds with sweet voices, sent a messenger to him seeking of him some of them. So he sent her, by her Cossid,[404] Sayf al-Muluk and three of his men in four cages; and, when she saw them, 341 they pleased her and she bade hang them up in a place over her head. The Prince fell to marvelling at that which had befallen him and calling to mind his former high and honourable estate and weeping for himself; and the three servants wept for themselves; and the King's daughter deemed that they sang. Now it was her wont, whenever any one from the land of Egypt or elsewhere fell into her hands and he pleased her, to advance him to great favour with her; and by the decree of Allah Almighty it befel that, when she saw Sayf al-Muluk she was charmed by his beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace, and she commanded to entreat him and his companions with honour and to loose them from their cages. Now one day she took the Prince apart and would have him enjoy her; but he refused, saying, "O my lady, I am a banisht wight and with passion for a beloved one in piteous plight, nor with other will I consent to love-delight." Then she coaxed him and importuned him, but he held aloof from her, and she could not approach him nor get her desire of him by any ways and means. At last, when she was weary of courting him in vain, she waxed wroth with him and his Mamelukes, and commanded that they should serve her and fetch her wood and water. In such condition they abode four years till Sayf al-Muluk became weary of his life and sent to intercede with the Princess, so haply she might release them and let them wend their ways and be at rest from that their hard labour. So she sent for him and said to him, "If thou wilt do my desire, I will free thee from this thy durance vile and thou shalt go to thy country, safe and sound." And she wept and ceased not to

humble herself to him and wheedle him, but he would not hearken to her words; whereupon she turned from him, in anger, and he and his companions abode on the island in the same plight. The islanders knew them for "The Princess's birds" and durst not work them any wrong; and her heart was at ease concerning them, being assured that they could not escape from the island. So they used to absent themselves from her two and three days at a time and go round about the desert parts in all directions, gathering firewood, which they brought to the Princess's kitchen; and thus they abode five[405] years. Now one day it so chanced that the Prince and his men were sitting on the sea-shore, devising of what had befallen, and Sayf al-Muluk, seeing himself and his men in such case, bethought 342 him of his mother and father and his brother Sa'id and, calling to mind what high degree he had been in, fell a-weeping and lamenting passing sore, whilst his slaves wept likewise. Then said they to him, "O King of the Age, how long shall we weep? Weeping availeth not; for this thing was written on our brows by the ordinance of Allah, to whom belong Might and Majesty. Indeed, the Pen runneth with that He decreeth and nought will serve us but patience: haply Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) who hath saddened us shall gladden us!" Quoth he, "O my brothers, how shall we win free from this accursed woman? I see no way of escape for us, save Allah of his grace deliver us from her; but methinks we may flee and be at rest from this hard labour." And quoth they, "O King of the Age, whither shall we flee? For the whole island is full of Ghuls which devour the Sons of Adam, and whithersoever we go, they will find us there and either eat us or capture and carry us back to that accursed, the King's daughter, who will be wroth with us." Sayf al-Muluk rejoined, "I will contrive you somewhat, whereby peradventure Allah Almighty shall deliver us and help us to escape from this island." They asked, "And how wilt thou do?"; and he answered, "Let us cut some of these long pieces of wood, and twist ropes of their bark and bind them one with another, and make of them a raft[406] which we will launch and load with these fruits: then we will fashion us paddles and embark on the raft after breaking our bonds with the axe. It may be that Almighty Allah will make it the means of our deliverance from this accursed woman and vouchsafe us a fair wind to bring us to the land of Hind, for He over all things is Almighty!" Said they, "Right is thy rede," and rejoiced thereat with exceeding joy. So they arose without stay or delay and cut with their axes wood for the raft and twisted ropes to bind the logs and at this they worked a whole month. Every day about evening they gathered somewhat of fuel and bore it to the Princess's kitchen, and employed the rest of the twenty-four hours working at the raft.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sayf al-Muluk and his Mamelukes, having cut the wood and twisted the ropes for their raft, made an end of it and launched it upon the sea; then, after breaking their bonds with the axe, and loading the craft with fruits plucked from the island-trees, they embarked at close of day; nor did any wot of their intent. They put out to sea in their raft and paddled on four months, knowing not whither the craft carried them, till their provaunt failed them and they were suffering the severest extreme of hunger and thirst, when behold, the sea waxed troubled and foamed and rose in high waves, and there came forth upon them a frightful crocodile,[407] which put out its claw and catching up one of the Mamelukes swallowed him. At the sight of this horror Sayf al-Muluk wept bitterly and he and the two men[408] that remained to him pushed off from the place where they had seen the crocodile, sore affrighted. After this they continued drifting on till one day they espied a mountain terrible tall and spiring high in air, whereat they rejoiced, when presently an island appeared. They made towards it with all their might congratulating one another on the prospect of making land; but hardly had they sighted the island on which was the mountain, when the sea changed face and boiled and rose in big waves and a second crocodile raised its head and putting out its claw caught up the two remaining Mamelukes and swallowed them. So Sayf al-Muluk abode alone, and making his way to the island, toiled till he reached the mountain-top, where he looked about and found a copse, and walking among the trees fell to eating of the fruits. Presently, he saw among the branches more than twenty great apes, each bigger than a he-mule, whereat he was seized with exceeding fear. The apes came down and surrounded him;[409] then 344 they forewent him, signing to him to follow them, and walked on, and he too, till he came to a castle, tall of base and strong of build whose ordinance was one brick of gold and one of silver. The apes entered and he after them, and he saw in the castle all manner of rarities, jewels and precious metals such as tongue faileth to describe. Here also he found a young man, passing tall of stature with no hair on his cheeks, and Sayf al-Muluk was cheered by the sight for there was no human being but he in the castle. The stranger marvelled exceedingly at sight of the Prince and asked him, “What is thy name and of what land art thou and how camest thou hither? Tell me thy tale and hide from me naught thereof.” Answered the Prince, “By Allah, I came not hither of my own consent nor is this place of my intent; yet I cannot but go from place to place till I win my wish.” Quoth the youth, “And what is thy object?”; and quoth the other, “I am of the land of Egypt and my name is Sayf al-Muluk son of King Asim bin Safwan”; and told him all that had passed with him, from first to last. Whereupon the youth arose and stood in his service, saying, “O King of the Age, I was erst in Egypt and heard that thou hadst gone to the land of China; but where is this land and where lies China-land?[410] Verily, this is a wondrous thing and marvellous matter!” Answered the Prince, “Sooth thou speakest but, when I left China-land, I set out, intending for the land of Hind and a stormy wind arose and the sea boiled and broke all my ships”; brief, he told him all

that had befallen him till he came thither; whereupon quoth the other, “O King’s son, thou hast had enough of strangerhood and its sufferings; Alhamdolillah,—praised be Allah who hath brought thee hither! So now do thou abide with me, that I may enjoy thy company till I die, when thou shalt become King over this island, to which no bound is known, and these apes thou seest are indeed skilled in all manner of crafts; and whatso thou seekest here shalt thou find.” Replied Sayf al-Muluk, “O my brother, I may not tarry in any place till my wish be won, albeit I compass the whole world in pursuit thereof and make quest of every one so peradventure 345 Allah may bring me to my desire or my course lead me to the place wherein is the appointed term of my days, and I shall die my death.” Then the youth turned with a sign to one of the apes, and he went out and was absent awhile, after which he returned with other apes girt with silken zones.[411] They brought the trays and set on near[412] an hundred chargers of gold and saucers of silver, containing all manner of meats. Then they stood, after the manner of servants between the hands of Kings, till the youth signalled to the Chamberlains, who sat down, and he whose wont it was to serve stood, whilst the two Princes ate their sufficiency. Then the apes cleared the table and brought basins and ewers of gold, and they washed their hands in rose water; after which they set on fine sugar and nigh forty flagons, in each a different kind of wine, and they drank and took their pleasure and made merry and had a fine time. And all the apes danced and gambolled before them, what while the eaters sat at meat; which when Sayf al-Muluk saw, he marvelled at them and forgot that which had befallen him of sufferings.—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sayf al-Muluk saw the gestures and gambols of the apes, he marvelled thereat and forgot that which had betided him of strangerhood and its sufferings. At nightfall they lighted waxen candles in candlesticks of gold studded with gems and set on dishes of confections and fruits of sugar-candy. So they ate; and when the hour of rest was come, the apes spread them bedding and they slept. And when morning morrowed, the young man arose, as was his wont, before sunrise and waking Sayf al-Muluk said to him, “Put thy head forth of this lattice and see what standeth beneath it.” So he put out his head and saw the wide waste and all the wold filled with apes, whose number none knew save Allah Almighty. Quoth he, “Here be great plenty of apes, for they cover the whole country: but why are they assembled 346 at this hour?” Quoth the youth, “This is their custom. Every Sabbath,[413] all the apes in the island come hither, some from two and three days’ distance, and stand here till I awake from sleep and put forth my head from this lattice, when they kiss ground before me and go about their business.” So saying, he put his head out of the window; and when the apes saw him, they kissed the earth before him and went their way. Sayf al-Muluk abode with the young man a whole month when he farewelled him and departed, escorted by a party of nigh a

hundred apes, which the young man bade escort him. They journeyed with him seven days, till they came to the limits of their islands,[414] when they took leave of him and returned to their places, while Sayf al-Muluk fared on alone over mount and hill, desert and plain, four months' journey, one day anhungered and the next satiated, now eating of the herbs of the earth and then of the fruits of the trees, till he repented him of the harm he had done himself by leaving the young man; and he was about to retrace his steps to him, when he saw a something black afar off and said to himself, "Is this a city or trees? But I will not turn back till I see what it is." So he made towards it and when he drew near, he saw that it was a palace tall of base. Now he who built it was Japhet son of Noah (on whom be peace!) and it is of this palace that God the Most High speaketh in His precious Book, whenas He saith, "And an abandoned well and a high-builded palace."[415] Sayf al-Muluk sat 347 down at the gate and said in his mind, "Would I knew what is within yonder palace and what King dwelleth there and who shall acquaint me whether its folk are men or Jinn? Who will tell me the truth of the case?" He sat considering awhile, but, seeing none go in or come out, he rose and committing himself to Allah Almighty entered the palace and walked on, till he had counted seven vestibules; yet saw no one. Presently looking to his right he beheld three doors, while before him was a fourth, over which hung a curtain. So he went up to this and raising the curtain, found himself in a great hall[416] spread with silken carpets. At the upper end rose a throne of gold whereon sat a damsel, whose face was like the moon, arrayed in royal raiment and beautified as she were a bride on the night of her displaying; and at the foot of the throne was a table of forty trays spread with golden and silvern dishes full of dainty viands. The Prince went up and saluted her, and she returned his salam, saying, "Art thou of mankind or of the Jinn?" Replied he, "I am a man of the best of mankind;[417] for I am a King, son of a King." She rejoined, "What seekest thou? Up with thee and eat of yonder food, and after tell me thy past from first to last and how thou camest hither." So he sat down at the table and removing the cover from a tray of meats (he being hungry) and ate till he was full; then washed his right hand and going up to the throne, sat down by the damsel who asked him, "Who art thou and what is thy name and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither?" He answered, "Indeed my story is a long but do thou first tell me who and what and whence thou art and why thou dwellest in this place alone." She rejoined, "My name is Daulat Khátún[418] and I am the daughter of the King of Hind. My father dwelleth in the Capital-city of Sarandíb and hath a great and goodly garden, there is no goodlier in all the land of Hind or its dependencies; 348 and in this garden is a great tank. One day, I went out into the garden with my slave-women and I stripped me naked and they likewise and, entering the tank, fell to sporting and solacing ourselves therein. Presently, before I could be ware, a something as it were a cloud swooped down on me and snatching me up from amongst my handmaids, soared aloft with me betwixt heaven and earth, saying, "Fear

not, O Daulat Khatun, but be of good heart." Then he flew on with me a little while, after which he set me down in this palace and straightway without stay or delay became a handsome young man daintily apparelled, who said to me:—Now dost thou know me? Replied I:—No, O my lord; and he said:—I am the Blue King, Sovran of the Jann; my father dwelleth in the Castle Al-Kulzum[419] hight, and hath under his hand six hundred thousand Jinn, flyers and divers. It chanced that while passing on my way I saw thee and fell in love with thee for thy lovely form: so I swooped down on thee and snatched thee up from among the slave-girls and brought thee to this the High-builded Castle, which is my dwelling-place. None may fare hither be he man or be he Jinni, and from Hind hither is a journey of an hundred and twenty years: wherefore do thou hold that thou wilt never again behold the land of thy father and thy mother; so abide with me here, in contentment of heart and peace, and I will bring to thy hands whatso thou seekest." Then he embraced me and kissed me,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the damsel said to Sayf al-Muluk, "Then the King of the Jann, after he had acquainted me with his case, embraced me and kissed me, saying:—Abide here and fear nothing; whereupon he went away from me for an hour and presently returned with these 349 tables and carpets and furniture. He comes to me every Third[420] and abideth with me three days and on Friday, at the time of mid-afternoon prayer, he departeth and is absent till the following Third. When he is here, he eateth and drinketh and kisseth and huggeth me, but doth naught else with me, and I am a pure virgin, even as Allah Almighty created me. My father's name is Táj al-Mulúk, and he wotteth not what is come of me nor hath he hit upon any trace of me. This is my story: now tell me thy tale." Answered the Prince, "My story is a long and I fear lest while I am telling it to thee the Ifrit come." Quoth she "He went out from me but an hour before thy entering and will not return till Third: so sit thee down and take thine ease and hearten thy heart and tell me what hath betided thee, from beginning to end." And quoth he, "I hear and I obey." So he fell to telling her all that had befallen him from commencement to conclusion but, when she heard speak of Badi'a al-Jamal, her eyes ran over with railing tears and she cried, "O Badi'a al-Jamal, I had not thought this of thee! Alack for our luck! O Badi'a al-Jamal, dost thou not remember me nor say:—My sister Daulat Khatun whither is she gone?" And her weeping redoubled, lamenting for that Badi'a al-Jamal had forgotten her.[421] Then said Sayf al-Muluk, "O Daulat Khatun, thou art a mortal and she is a Jinniyah: how then can she be thy sister?" Replied the Princess, "She is my sister by fosterage and this is how it came about. My mother went out to solace herself in the garden, when labour-pangs seized her and she bare me. Now the mother of Badi'a al-Jamal chanced to be passing with her guards, when she also was taken with travail-pains; so she alighted in a side of the garden and there brought forth

Badi'a al-Jamal. She despatched one of her women to seek food and childbirth-gear of my mother, who sent her what she sought and invited her to visit her. So she came to her with Badi'a al-Jamal and my mother suckled the child, who with her mother tarried with us in the garden two months. And before wending her ways the mother of Badi'a al-Jamal gave my mother somewhat,[422] saying:—When thou hast need of me, I will come to thee a middlemost the 350 garden, and departed to her own land; but she and her daughter used to visit us every year and abide with us awhile before returning home. Wherefore an I were with my mother, O Sayf al-Muluk, and if thou wert with me in my own country and Badi'a al-Jamal and I were together as of wont, I would devise some device with her to bring thee to thy desire of her: but I am here and they know naught of me; for that an they kenned what is become of me, they have power to deliver me from this place; however, the matter is in Allah's hands (extolled and exalteth be He!) and what can I do?" Quoth Sayf al-Muluk, "Rise and let us flee and go whither the Almighty willeth;" but, quoth she, "We cannot do that: for, by Allah, though we fled hence a year's journey that accursed would overtake us in an hour and slaughter us." Then said the Prince, "I will hide myself in his way, and when he passeth by I will smite him with the sword and slay him." Daulat Khatun replied, "Thou canst not succeed in slaying him save thou slay his soul." Asked he, "And where is his soul?"; and she answered, "Many a time have I questioned him thereof but he would not tell me, till one day I pressed him and he waxed wroth with me and said to me:—How often wilt thou ask me of my soul? What hast thou to do with my soul? I rejoined:——O Hátim,[423] there remaineth none to me but thou, except Allah; and my life dependeth on thy life and whilst thou livest, all is well for me; so, except I care for thy soul and set it in the apple of this mine eye, how shall I live in thine absence? An I knew where thy soul abideth, I would never cease whilst I live, to hold it in mine embrace and would keep it as my right eye. Whereupon said he to me:—— What time I was born, the astrologers predicted that I should lose my soul at the hands of the son of a king of mankind. So I took it and set it in the crop of a sparrow, and shut up the bird in a box. The box I set in a casket, and enclosing this in seven other caskets and seven chests, laid the whole in a alabastrine coffer,[424] which I buried within the marge of yon earth-circling sea; for that these parts are far from the world of men and none of them can win hither. So now see I have told thee what thou wouldst know, and do thou tell none thereof, for it is a secret between me and thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Daulat Khatun acquainted Sayf al-Muluk with the whereabouts of the soul of the Jinni who had carried her off and repeated to him his speech ending with, “And this is a secret between me and thee!” “I rejoined,” quoth she:—“To whom should I tell it, seeing that none but thou cometh hither with whom I may talk thereof?” adding, “By Allah, thou hast indeed set thy soul in the strongest of strongholds to which none may gain access! How should a man win to it, unless the impossible be fore-ordained and Allah decree like as the astrologers predicted?” Thereupon the Jinni:—Peradventure one may come, having on his finger the seal-ring of Solomon son of David (on the twain be peace!) and lay his

hand with the ring on the face of the water, saying:—"By the virtue of the names engraven upon this ring, let the soul of such an one come forth! Whereupon the coffer will rise to the surface and he will break it open and do the like with the chests and caskets, till he come to the little box, when he will take out the sparrow and strangle it, and I shall die." Then said Sayf al-Muluk, "I am the King's son of whom he spake, and this is the ring of Solomon David-son on my finger: so rise, let us go down to the sea-shore and see if his words be leal or leasing!" Thereupon the two walked down to the sea-shore and the Princess stood on the beach, whilst the Prince waded into the water to his waist and laying his hand with the ring on the surface of the sea, said, "By the virtue of the names and talismans engraven on this ring, and by the might of Sulayman bin Dáúd (on whom be the Peace!), let the soul of Hatim the Jinni, son of the Blue King, come forth!" Whereat the sea boiled in billows and the coffer of alabaster rose to the surface. Sayf al-Muluk took it and shattered it against the rock and broke open the chests and caskets, till he came to the little box and drew thereout the sparrow. Then the twain returned to the castle and sat down on the throne; but hardly had they done this, when lo and behold! there arose a dust-cloud terrifying and some huge thing came flying and crying, "Spare me, O King's son, and slay me not; but make me thy freedman, and I will bring thee to thy desire!" Quoth Daulat Khatun, "The Jinni cometh; slay the sparrow, lest this accursed enter the palace and take it from thee and 352 slaughter me and slaughter thee after me." So the Prince wrung the sparrow's neck and it died, whereupon the Jinni fell down at the palace-door and became a heap of black ashes. Then said Daulat Khatun, "We are delivered from the hand of yonder accursed; what shall we do now?"; and Sayf al-Muluk replied, "It behoveth us to ask aid of Allah Almighty who hath afflicted us; belike He will direct us and help us to escape from this our strait." So saying, he arose and pulling up[425] half a score of the doors of the palace, which were of sandal-wood and lign-aloes with nails of gold and silver, bound them together with ropes of silk and floss[426]-silk and fine linen and wrought of them a raft, which he and the Princess aided each other to hale down to the sea-shore. They launched it upon the water till it floated and, making it fast to the beach, returned to the palace, whence they removed all the chargers of gold and saucers of silver and jewels and precious stones and metals and what else was light of load and weighty of worth and freighted the raft therewith. Then they embarked after fashioning two pieces of wood into the likeness of paddles and casting off the rope-moorings, let the raft drift out to sea with them, committing themselves to Allah the Most High, who contenteth those that put their trust in Him and disappointeth not them who rely upon Him. They ceased not faring on thus four months until their victual was exhausted and their sufferings waxed severe and their souls were straitened; so they prayed Allah to vouchsafe them deliverance from that danger. But all this time when they lay down to sleep, Sayf al-Muluk set Daulat Khatun behind him and laid a naked brand at his back, so that, when he turned in

sleep the sword was between them.[427] At last it chanced one night, 353 when Sayf al-Muluk was asleep and Daulat Khatun awake, that behold, the raft drifted landwards and entered a port wherein were ships. The Princess saw the ships and heard a man, he being the chief and head of the captains, talking with the sailors; whereby she knew that this was the port of some city and that they were come to an inhabited country. So she joyed with exceeding joy and waking the Prince said to him, "Ask the captain the name of the city and harbour." Thereupon Sayf al-Muluk arose and said to the captain, "O my brother, how is this harbour hight and what be the names of yonder city and its King?" Replied the Captain, "O false face![428] O frosty beard! an thou knew not the name of this port and city, how camest thou hither?" Quoth Sayf al-Muluk, "I am a stranger and had taken passage in a merchant ship which was wrecked and sank with all on board; but I saved myself on a plank and made my way hither; wherefore I asked thee the name of the place, and in asking is no offence." Then said the captain, "This is the city of 'Amáriyah and this harbour is called Kamín al-Bahrayn."[429] When the Princess heard this she rejoiced with exceeding joy and said, "Praised be Allah!" He asked, "What is to do?"; and she answered, "O Sayf al-Muluk, rejoice in succour near hand; for the King of this city is my uncle, my father's brother."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Daulat Khatun said to Sayf al-Muluk, "Rejoice in safety near hand; for the King of this city is my uncle, my father's brother 354 and his name is 'Áli al-Mulúk,"[430] adding, "Say thou then to the captain:—Is the Sultan of the city, Ali al-Muluk, well?" He asked but the captain was wroth with him and cried, "Thou sayest:—I am a stranger and never in my life came hither. Who then told thee the name of the lord of the city?" When Daulat Khatun heard this, she rejoiced and knew him for Mu'ín al-Dín,[431] one of her father's captains. Now he had fared forth in search of her, after she was lost and finding her not, he never ceased cruising till he came to her uncle's city. Then she bade Sayf al-Muluk say to him, "O Captain Mu'in al-Din, come and speak with thy mistress!" So he called out to him as she bade, whereat he was wroth with exceeding wrath and answered, "O dog, O thief, O spy, who art thou and how knowest thou me?" Then he said to one of the sailors, "Give me an ash[432]-stave, that I may go to yonder plaguing Arab and break his head." So he took the stick and made for Sayf al-Muluk, but, when he came to the raft, he saw a something, wondrous, beauteous, which confounded his wits and considering it straitly he made sure that it was Daulat Khatun sitting there, as she were a slice of the moon; whereat he said to the Prince, "Who is that with thee?" Replied he, "A damsel by name Daulat Khatun." When the captain heard the

Princess's name and knew that she was his mistress and the daughter of his King, he fell down in a fainting-fit, and when he came to himself, he left the raft and whatso was thereon and riding up to the palace, craved an audience of the King; whereupon the chamberlain went in to the presence and said, "Captain Mu'in al-Din is come to bring thee good news; so bid he be brought in." The King bade admit him; accordingly he entered and kissing ground[433] said to him, "O King, thou owest me a gift for glad tidings; for thy brother's daughter Daulat Khatun hath reached our city safe and sound, and is now on a raft in the harbour, in company with a young man like the moon on the night of its full." When the King heard this, he rejoiced and conferred a costly robe of honour on the captain. Then he 355 straightway bade decorate the city in honour of the safe return of his brother's daughter, and sending for her and Sayf al-Muluk, saluted the twain and gave them joy of their safety; after which he despatched a messenger to his brother, to let him know that his daughter was found and was with him. As soon as the news reached Taj al-Muluk he gat him ready and assembling his troops set out for his brother's capital, where he found his daughter and they rejoiced with exceeding joy. He sojourned with his brother a week, after which he took his daughter and Sayf al-Muluk and returned to Sarandib, where the Princess foregathered with her mother and they rejoiced at her safe return; and held high festival and that day was a great day, never was seen its like. As for Sayf al-Muluk, the King entreated him with honour and said to him, "O Sayf al-Muluk, thou hast done me and my daughter all this good for which I cannot requite thee nor can any requite thee, save the Lord of the three Worlds; but I wish thee to sit upon the throne in my stead and rule the land of Hind, for I offer thee of my throne and kingdom and treasures and servants, all this in free gift to thee." Whereupon Sayf al-Muluk rose and kissing the ground before the King, thanked him and answered, "O King of the Age, I accept all thou givest me and return it to thee in freest gift: for I, O King of the Age, covet not sovranty nor sultanate nor desire aught but that Allah the Most High bring me to my desire." Rejoined the King, "O Sayf al-Muluk these my treasures are at thy disposal: take of them what thou wilt, without consulting me, and Allah requite thee for me with all weal!" Quoth the Prince, "Allah advance the King! There is no delight for me in money or in dominion till I win my wish: but now I have a mind to solace myself in the city and view its thoroughfares and market-streets." So the King bade bring him a mare of the thoroughbreds, saddled and bridled; and Sayf al-Muluk mounted her and rode through the streets and markets of the city. As he looked about him right and left, lo! his eyes fell on a young man, who was carrying a tunic and crying it for sale at fifteen dinars: so he considered him and saw him to be like his brother Sa'id; and indeed it was his very self, but he was wan of blee and changed for long strangerhood and the travails of travel, so that he knew him not. However, he said to his attendants, "Take yonder youth and carry him to the palace where I lodge, and keep him with you till my return from the ride when I will

question him." But they understood him 356 to say, "Carry him to the prison," and said in themselves "Haply this is some runaway Mameluke of his." So they took him and bore him to the bridewell, where they laid him in irons and left him seated in solitude, unremembered by any. Presently Sayf al-Muluk returned to the palace, but he forgot his brother Sa'id, and none made mention of him. So he abode in prison, and when they brought out the prisoners, to cut ashlar from the quarries they took Sa'id with them, and he wrought with the rest. He abode a month's space, in this squalor and sore sorrow, pondering his case and saying in himself, "What is the cause of my imprisonment?"; while Sayf al-Muluk's mind was diverted from him by rejoicing and other things; but one day, as he sat, he bethought him of Sa'id and said to his Mamelukes, "Where is the white slave I gave into your charge on such a day?" Quoth they, "Didst thou not bid us bear him to the bridewell?"; and quoth he, "Nay I said not so; I bade you carry him to my palace after the ride." Then he sent his Chamberlains and Emirs for Sa'id and they fetched him in fetters, and loosing him from his irons set him before the Prince, who asked him, "O young man, what countryman art thou?"; and he answered, "I am from Egypt and my name is Sa'id, son of Faris the Wazir." Now hearing these words Sayf al-Muluk sprang to his feet and throwing himself off the throne and upon his friend, hung on his neck, weeping aloud for very joy and saying, "O my brother, O Sa'id, praise be Allah for that I see thee alive! I am thy brother Sayf al-Muluk, son of King Asim." Then they embraced and shed tears together and all who were present marvelled at them. After this Sayf al-Muluk bade his people bear Sa'id to the Hammam-bath: and they did so. When he came out, they clad him in costly clothing and carried him back to Sayf al-Muluk who seated him on the throne beside himself. When King Taj al-Muluk heard of the reunion of Sayf al-Muluk and his brother Sa'id, he joyed with joy exceeding and came to them, and the three sat devising of all that had befallen them in the past from first to last. Then said Sa'id:—O my brother, O Sayf al-Muluk, when the ship sank with all on board I saved myself on a plank with a company of Mamelukes and it drifted with us a whole month, when the wind cast us, by the ordinance of Allah Almighty, upon an island. So we landed and entering among the trees took to eating of the fruits, for we were anhungred. Whilst we were busy eating, there fell on us unawares, 357 folk like Ifrits[434] and springing on our shoulders rode us[435] and said to us, "Go on with us; for ye are become our asses." So I said to him who had mounted me, "What art thou and why mountest thou me?" At this he twisted one of his legs about my neck, till I was all but dead, and beat upon my back the while with the other leg, till I thought he had broken my backbone. So I fell to the ground on my face, having no strength left in me for famine and thirst. From my fall he knew that I was hungry and taking me by the hand, led me to a tree laden with fruit which was a pear-tree[436] and said to me, "Eat thy fill of this tree." So I ate till I had enough and rose to walk against my will; but, ere I had fared afar the creature turned and leaping on my shoulders again drove me

on, now walking, now running and now trotting, and he the while mounted on me, laughing and saying, “Never in my life saw I a donkey like unto thee!” We abode thus for years till, one day of the days, it chanced that we saw there great plenty of vines, covered with ripe fruit; so we gathered a quantity of grape-bunches and throwing them into a pit, trod them with our feet, till the pit became a great water-pool. Then we waited awhile and presently returning thither, found that the sun had wroughten on the grape-juice and it was become wine. So we used to drink it till we were drunken and our faces flushed and we fell to singing and dancing and running about in the merriment of drunkenness[437]; whereupon our masters said to us, “What is it that reddeneth your faces and maketh you dance and sing?” We replied, “Ask us not, what is your quest in questioning us hereof?” But they insisted, saying, “You must tell us so that we may know the truth of the case,” till we told them how we 358 had pressed grapes and made wine. Quoth they, “Give us to drink thereof”; but quoth we, “The grapes are spent.” So they brought us to a Wady, whose length we knew not from its breadth nor its beginning from its end wherein were vines each bunch of grapes on them weighing twenty pounds[438] by the scale and all within easy reach, and they said, “Gather of these.” So we gathered a mighty great store of grapes and finding there a big trench bigger than the great tank in the King’s garden we filled it full of fruit. This we trod with our feet and did with the juice as before till it became strong wine, which it did after a month; whereupon we said to them, “’Tis come to perfection; but in what will ye drink it?” And they replied, “We had asses like unto you; but we ate them and kept their heads: so give us to drink in their skulls.” We went to their caves which we found full of heads and bones of the Sons of Adam, and we gave them to drink, when they became drunken and lay down, nigh two hundred of them. Then we said to one another, “Is’t not enough that they should ride us, but they must eat us also? There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! But we will ply them with wine, till they are overcome by drunkenness, when we will slay them and be at rest from them.” Accordingly, we awoke them and fell to filling the skulls and gave them to drink, but they said, “This is bitter.” We replied, “Why say ye ’tis bitter? Whoso saith thus, except he drink of it ten times, he dieth the same day.” When they heard this, they feared death and cried to us, “Give us to drink the whole ten times.” So we gave them to drink, and when they had swallowed the rest of the ten draughts they waxed drunken exceedingly and their strength failed them and they availed not to mount us. Thereupon we dragged them together by their hands and laying them one upon another, collected great plenty of dry vine-stalks and branches and heaped it about and upon them: then we set fire to the pile and stood afar off, to see what became of them.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sa'id continued:—When we set fire to the pile wherein were the Ghuls, I with the Mamelukes stood afar off to see what became of them; and, as soon the fire was burnt out, we came back and found them a heap of ashes, wherefore we praised Allah Almighty who had delivered us from them. Then we went forth about the island and sought the sea-shore, where we parted and I and two of the Mamelukes fared on till we came to a thick copse full of fruit and there busied ourselves with eating, and behold, presently up came a man tall of stature long of beard and lengthy of ear, with eyes like cressets driving before him and feeding a great flock of sheep:[439] When he saw us he rejoiced and said to us, "Well come, and fair welcome to you! Draw near me that I may slaughter you an ewe of these sheep and roast it and give you to eat." Quoth we, "Where is thine abode?" And quoth he, "Hard by yonder mountain; go on towards it till ye come to a cave and enter therein, for you will see many guests like yourselves; and do ye sit with them, whilst we make ready for you the guest-meal." We believed him so fared on, as he bade us, till we came to the cavern, where we found many guests, Sons of Adam like ourselves, but they were all blinded[440]; and when we entered, one said, "I'm sick"; and another, "I'm weak." So we cried to them, "What is this you say and what is the cause of your sickness and weakness?" They asked, "Who are ye?"; and we answered, "We are guests." Then said they, "What hath made you fall into the hands of yonder accursed? But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great? This is a Ghul who devoureth the Sons of Adam and he hath blinded us and meaneth to eat us." Said 360we, "And how did he blind you?" and they replied, "Even as he will blind yourselves anon." Quoth we, "And how so?" And quoth they, "He will bring you bowls of soured milk[441] and will say to you:—Ye are weary with wayfare: take this milk and drink it. And when ye have drunken thereof, ye will become blind like us." Said I to myself, "There is no escape for us but by contrivance." So I dug a hole in the ground and sat over it. After an hour or so in came the accursed Ghul with bowls of milk, whereof he gave to each of us, saying, "Ye come from the desert and are athirst: so take this milk and drink it, whilst I roast you the flesh." I took the cup and carried it to my mouth but emptied it into the hole; then I cried out, "Alas! my sight is gone and I am blind!" and clapping my hand to my eyes, fell a-weeping and a-wailing, whilst the accursed laughed and said, "Fear not, thou art now become like mine other guests." But, as for my two comrades, they drank the milk and became blind. Thereupon the Ghul arose and stopping up the mouth of the cavern came to me and felt my ribs, but found me lean and with no flesh on my bones: so he tried another and finding him fat, rejoiced. Then he slaughtered three sheep and skinned them and fetching iron spits, spitted the flesh thereon and set them over the fire to roast. When the meat was done, he placed it before my

comrades, who ate and he with them; after which he brought a leather-bag full of wine and drank thereof and lay down prone and snored. Said I to myself, “He’s drowned in sleep: how shall I slay him?” Then I bethought me of the spits and thrusting two of them into the fire, waited till they were as red-hot coals: whereupon I arose and girded myself and taking a spit in each hand went up to the accursed Ghul and thrust them into his eyes, pressing upon them with all my might. He sprang to his feet for sweet life and would have laid hold of me; but he was blind. So I fled from him into the inner cavern, whilst he ran after me; but I found no place of refuge from him nor whence I might escape into the open country, for the cave was stopped up with stones; wherefore I was bewildered and said to the blind men, “How shall I do with this accursed?” Replied one of them, “O Sa’id, 361 with a run and a spring mount up to yonder niche[442] and thou wilt find there a sharpened scymitar of copper: bring it to me and I will tell thee what to do.” So I clombed to the niche and taking the blade, returned to the blind man, who said to me, “Smite him with the sword in his middle, and he will die forthright.” So I rushed after the Ghul, who was weary with running after me and felt for the blind men that he might kill them and, coming up to him smote him with the sword a single stroke across his waist and he fell in twain. Then he screamed and cried out to me, “O man, an thou desire to slay me, strike me a second stroke.” Accordingly, I was about to smite him another cut; but he who had directed me to the niche and the scymitar said, “Smite him not a second time, for then he will not die, but will live and destroy us.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Sa’id continued:—Now when I struck the Ghul with the sword he cried out to me, “O man, an thou desire to slay me, strike me a second stroke!” I was about so to do when he who had directed me to the scymitar said, “Smite him not a second time, for then he will not die but will live and destroy us!” So I held my hand as he bade me, and the Ghul died. Then said the blind man to me, “Open the mouth of the cave and let us fare forth; so haply Allah may help us and bring us to rest from this place.” And I said, “No harm can come to us now; let us rather abide here and repose and eat of these sheep and drink of this wine, for long is the land. Accordingly we tarried there two months, eating of the sheep and of the fruits of the island and drinking the generous grape-juice till it so chanced one day, as we sat upon the beach, we caught sight of a ship looming large in the distance; so we made signs for the crew and holla’d to them.” They feared to draw near, knowing that the island was inhabited by a Ghul[443] who ate Adamites, and would have sheered off; but 362 we ran down to the marge of the sea and made signs to them, with our turband-ends and shouted to them, whereupon one of the sailors, who was

sharp of sight, said to the rest, "Harkye, comrades, I see these men formed like ourselves, for they have not the fashion of Ghuls." So they made for us, little by little, till they drew near us in the dinghy[444] and were certified that we were indeed human beings, when they saluted us and we returned their salam and gave them the glad tidings of the slaying of the accursed, wherefore they thanked us. Then we carried to the ship all that was in the cave of stuffs and sheep and treasure, together with a viaticum of the island-fruits, such as should serve us days and months, and embarking, sailed on with a fair breeze three days; at the end of which the wind veered round against us and the air became exceeding dark; nor had an hour passed before the wind drave the craft on to a rock, where it broke up and its planks were torn asunder.[445] However, the Great God decreed that I should lay hold of one of the planks, which I bestrode, and it bore me along two days, for the wind had fallen fair again, and I paddled with my feet awhile, till Allah the Most High brought me safe ashore and I landed and came to this city, where I found myself a stranger, solitary, friendless, not knowing what to do; for hunger was sore upon me and I was in great tribulation. Thereupon I, O my brother, hid myself and pulling off this my tunic, carried it to the market, saying in my mind, "I will sell it and live on its price, till Allah accomplish to me whatso he will accomplish." Then I took the tunic in my hand and cried it for sale, and the folk were looking at it and bidding for it, when, O my brother, thou camest by and seeing me commandedst me to the palace; but thy pages arrested and thrust me into the prison and there I abode till thou bethoughtest thee of me and badst bring me before thee. So now I have told thee what befel me, and Alhamdolillah—Glorified be God—for reunion! Much marvelled the two Kings at Sa'id's tale and Taj al-Muluk 363 having made ready a goodly dwelling for Sayf al-Muluk and his Wazir, Daulat Khatun used to visit the Prince there and thank him for his favours and talk with him. One day, he met her and said to her, "O my lady, where is the promise thou madest me, in the palace of Japhet son of Noah, saying:—Were I with my people, I would make shift to bring thee to thy desire?" And Sa'id said to her, "O Princess, I crave thine aid to enable him to win his will." Answered she, "Yea, verily; I will do my endeavour for him, that he may attain his aim, if it please Allah Almighty." And she turned to Sayf al-Muluk and said to him, "Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear." Then she rose and going in to her mother, said to her, "Come with me forthright and let us purify ourselves and make fumigations[446] that Badi'a al-Jamal and her mother may come and see me and rejoice in me." Answered the Queen, "With love and goodly gree;" and rising, betook herself to the garden and burnt off these perfumes which she always had by her; nor was it long before Badi'a al-Jamal and her mother made their appearance. The Queen of Hind foregathered with the other Queen and acquainted her with her daughter's safe return, whereat she rejoiced; and Badi'a al-Jamal and Daulat Khatun foregathered likewise and rejoiced in each other. Then they pitched the pavilions[447] and dressed dainty viands and made ready the place of entertainment; whilst the two Princesses withdrew to a tent apart

and ate together and drank and made merry; after which they sat down to converse, and Badi'a al-Jamal said, "What hath befallen thee in thy strangerhood?" Replied Daulat Khatun, "O my sister how sad is severance and how gladsome is reunion; ask me not what hath befallen me! Oh, what hardships mortals suffer!" cried she, "How so?" and the other said to her, "O my sister, I was immured in the High-builded Castle of Japhet son of Noah, whither the son of the Blue King carried me off till Sayf al-Muluk slew the Jinni and brought me back to my sire;" and she told her to boot all that the Prince had undergone of hardships and horrors before he came to the Castle.[448] Badi'a al-Jamal marvelled at her tale and said, "By Allah, O my sister, this is the most wondrous of wonders! This 364 Sayf al-Muluk is indeed a man! But why did he leave his father and mother and betake himself to travel and expose himself to these perils?" Quoth Daulat Khatun, "I have a mind to tell thee the first part of his history; but shame of thee hindereth me therefrom." Quoth Badi'a al-Jamal, "Why shouldst thou have shame of me, seeing that thou art my sister and my bosom-friend and there is muchel a matter between thee and me and I know thou willest me naught but well? Tell me then what thou hast to say and be not abashed at me and hide nothing from me and have no fear of consequences." Answered Daulat Khatun, "By Allah, all the calamities that have betided this unfortunate have been on thine account and because of thee!" Asked Badi'a al-Jamal, "How so, O my sister?"; and the other answered, "Know that he saw thy portrait wrought on a tunic which thy father sent to Solomon son of David (on the twain be peace!) and he opened it not neither looked at it, but despatched it, with other presents and rarities to Asim bin Safwan, King of Egypt, who gave it, still unopened, to his son Sayf al-Muluk. The Prince unfolded the tunic, thinking to put it on, and seeing thy portrait, became enamoured of it; wherefore he came forth in quest of thee, and left his folk and reign and suffered all these terrors and hardships on thine account."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Daulat Khatun related to Badi'a al-Jamal the first part of Sayf al-Muluk's history; how his love for her was caused by the tunic whereon her presentment was wrought; how he went forth, passion-distraught, in quest of her; how he forsook his people and his kingdom for her sake and how he had suffered all these terrors and hardships on her account. When Badi'a al-Jamal heard this, she blushed rosy red and was confounded at Daulat Khatun and said, "Verily this may never, never be; for man accordeth not with the Jann." Then Daulat Khatun went on to praise Sayf al-Muluk and extol his comeliness and courage and cavalarice, and ceased not repeating her memories of his prowess and his excellent qualities till she ended with saying, "For the sake of Almighty Allah and of

me, O sister mine, come and speak with 365 him, though but one word!" But Badi'a al-Jamal cried, "By Allah, O sister mine, this that thou sayest I will not hear, neither will I assent to thee therein;" and it was as if she heard naught of what the other said and as if no love of Sayf al-Muluk and his beauty and bearing and bravery had gotten hold upon her heart. Then Daulat Khatun humbled herself and said, "O Badi'a al-Jamal, by the milk we have sucked, I and thou, and by that which is graven on the seal-ring of Solomon (on whom be peace!) hearken to these my words for I pledged myself in the High-builded Castle of Japhet, to show him thy face. So Allah upon thee, show it to him once, for the love of me, and look thyself on him!" And she ceased not to weep and implore her and kiss her hands and feet, till she consented and said, "For thy sake I will show him my face once and he shall have a single glance." With that Daulat Khatun's heart was gladdened and she kissed her hands and feet. Then she went forth and fared to the great pavilion in the garden and bade her slave-women spread it with carpets and set up a couch of gold and place the wine-vessels in order; after which she went into Sayf al-Muluk and to his Wazir Sa'id, whom she found seated in their lodging, and gave the Prince the glad tidings of the winning of his wish, saying, "Go to the pavilion in the garden, thou and thy brother, and hide yourselves there from the eyes of men so none in the palace may espy you, till I come to you with Badi'a al-Jamal." So they rose and repaired to the appointed pavilion, where they found the couch of gold set and furnished with cushions, and meat and wine ready served. So they sat awhile, whilst Sayf al-Muluk bethought him of his beloved and his breast was straitened and love and longing assailed him: wherefore he rose and walked forth from the vestibule of the pavilion. Sa'id would have followed him, but he said to him, "O my brother, follow me not, but sit in thy stead till I return to thee." So Sa'id abode seated, whilst Sayf al-Muluk went down into the garden, drunken with the wine of desire and distracted for excess of love-longing and passion-fire: yearning agitated him and transport overcame him and he recited these couplets:—

O passing Fair[449] I have none else but thee; ✿ Pity this slave in thy love's slavery!

Thou art my search, my joy and my desire! ✿ None save thyself shall love this heart of me:

366 Would Heaven I knew thou knewest of my wails ✿ Night-long and eyelids oped by memory.

Bid sleep to sojourn on these eyen-lids ✿ Haply in vision I thy sight shall see.

Show favour then to one thus love-distraught: ✿ Save him from ruin by thy cruelty!

Allah increase thy beauty and thy weal; ✿ And be thy ransom every enemy!

So shall on Doomsday lovers range beneath ✿ Thy flag, and beauties 'neath thy banner be.

Then he wept and recited these also:—

That rarest beauty ever bides my foe ✿ Who holds my heart and lurks in secresy:

Speaking, I speak of nothing save her charms ✿ And when I'm dumb in heart-core woneth she.

Then he wept sore and recited the following:—

And in my liver higher flames the fire; ✿ You are my wish and longsome still I yearn:
To you (none other!) bend I and I hope ✿ (Lovers long-suffering are!) your grace to earn;
And that you pity me whose frame by Love ✿ Is waste and weak his heart with sore concern:
Relent, be gen'rous, tender-hearted, kind: ✿ From you I'll ne'er remove, from you ne'er turn!

Then he wept and recited these also:—

Came to me care when came the love of thee, ✿ Cruel sleep fled me like thy cruelty:
Tells me the messenger that thou art wroth: ✿ Allah forefend what evils told me he!

Presently Sa'id waxed weary of awaiting him and going forth in quest of him, found him walking in the garden, distraught and reciting these two couplets:—

By Allah, by th' Almighty, by his right[450] ✿ Who read the Koran-Chapter "Fátir"[451] hight;
Ne'er roam my glances o'er the charms I see; ✿ Thy grace, rare beauty, is my talk by night.

367 So he joined him and the twain walked about the garden together solacing themselves and ate of its fruits. Such was their case;[452] but as regards the two Princesses, they came to the pavilion and entering therein after the eunuchs had richly furnished it, according to command, sat down on the couch of gold, beside which was a window that gave upon the garden. The castratos then set before them all manner rich meats and they ate, Daulat Khatun feeding her foster-sister by mouthfuls,[453] till she was satisfied; when she called for divers kinds of sweetmeats, and when the neutrals brought them, they ate what they would of them and washed their hands. After this Daulat Khatun made ready wine and its service, setting on the ewers and bowls and she proceeded to crown the cups and give Badi'a al-Jamal to drink, filling for herself after and drinking in turn. Then Badi'a al-Jamal looked from the window into the garden and gazed upon the fruits and branches that were therein, till her glance fell on Sayf al-Muluk, and she saw him wandering about the parterres, followed by Sa'id, and she heard him recite verses, raining the while railing tears. And that glance of eyes cost her a thousand sighs,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Badi'a al-Jamal caught sight of Sayf al-Muluk as he wandered about the garden, that glance of eyes cost her a thousand sighs, and she turned to Daulat Khatun and said to her (and indeed the wine sported with her senses), "O my sister, who is that young man I see in the garden, distraught, love-abying, disappointed, sighing?" Quoth the other, "Dost thou give me leave to bring him hither, that we may look on him?"; and quoth the other, "An thou can avail to bring him, bring him." So Daulat Khatun called to him, saying, "O King's son, come up to us and bring us thy beauty and thy loveliness!" Sayf al-Muluk recognised her 368 voice and came up into the pavilion; but no sooner had he

set eyes on Badi'a al-Jamal, than he fell down in a swoon; whereupon Daulat Khatun sprinkled on him a little rose-water and he revived. Then he rose and kissed ground before Badi'a al-Jamal who was amazed at his beauty and loveliness; and Daulat Khatun said to her, "Know, O Princess, that this is Sayf al-Muluk, whose hand saved me by the ordinance of Allah Almighty and he it is who hath borne all manner burthens on thine account: wherefore I would have thee look upon him with favour." Hearing this Badi'a al-Jamal laughed and said, "And who keepeth faith, that this youth should do so? For there is no true love in men." Cried Sayf al-Muluk, "O Princess, never shall lack of faith be in me, and all men are not created alike." And he wept before her and recited these verses:—

O thou, Badí'a 'l-Jamál, show thou some clemency ✿ To one those lovely eyes opprest with witchery!
By rights of beauteous hues and tints thy cheeks combine ✿ Of snowy white and glowing red anemone,
Punish not with disdain one who is sorely sick ✿ By long, long parting waste hath waxed this frame of me:
This is my wish, my will, the end of my desire, ✿ And Union is my hope an haply this may be!

Then he wept with violent weeping; and love and longing got the mastery over him and he greeted her with these couplets:—

Peace be to you from lover's wasted love, ✿ All noble hearts to noble favour show:
Peace be to you! Ne'er fail your form my dreams; ✿ Nor hall nor chamber the fair sight forego!
Of you I'm jealous: none may name your name: ✿ Lovers to lovers aye should bend thee low:
So cut not off your grace from him who loves ✿ While sickness wastes and sorrows overthrow.
I watch the flowery stars which frighten me; ✿ While cark and care mine every night foreslow.
Nor Patience bides with me nor plan appears: ✿ What shall I say when questioned of my foe?
God's peace be with you in the hour of need, ✿ Peace sent by lover patient bearing woe!

Then for the excess of his desire and ecstasy he repeated these couplets also:—

369 If I to aught save you, O lords of me, incline; ✿ Ne'er may I win of you my wish, my sole design!
Who doth comprise all loveliness save only you? ✿ Who makes the Doomsday dawn e'en now before these eyne?
Far be it Love find any rest, for I am one ✿ Who lost for love of you this heart, these vitals mine.

When he had made an end of his verses, he wept with sore weeping and she said to him, "O Prince, I fear to grant myself wholly to thee lest I find in thee nor fondness nor affection; for oftentimes man's fidelity is small and his perfidy is great and thou knowest how the lord Solomon, son of David (on whom be the Peace!), took Bilkis to his love but, whenas he saw another fairer than she, turned from her thereto." Sayf al-Muluk replied, "O my eye and O my soul, Allah hath not made all men alike, and I, Inshallah, will keep my troth and die beneath thy feet. Soon shalt thou see what I will do in accordance with my words, and for whatso I say Allah is my warrant." Quoth Badi'a al-Jamal, "Sit and be of good heart and swear to me by the right of thy Faith and let us covenant together that each will not be false to other; and whichever of us breaketh faith may Almighty Allah punish!" At these words he sat down and set his

hand in her hand and they sware each to other that neither of them would ever prefer to the other any one, either of man or of the Jann. Then they embraced for a whole hour and wept for excess of their joy, whilst passion overcame Sayf al-Muluk and he recited these couplets:—

I weep for longing love's own ardency ✿ To her who claims the heart and soul of me.
And sore's my sorrow parted long from you, ✿ And short's my arm to reach the prize I see;
And mourning grief for what my patience marred ✿ To blamer's eye unveiled my secresy;
And waxed strait that whilome was so wide ✿ Patience nor force remains nor power to dree.
Would Heaven I knew if God will ever deign to join ✿ Our lives, and from our cark and care and grief set free!

After this mutual troth-plighting, Sayf al-Muluk arose and walked in the garden and Badi'a al-Jamal arose also and went forth also afoot followed by a slave-girl bearing somewhat of food and a 370 flask[454] of wine. The Princess sat down and the damsel set the meat and wine before her: nor remained they long ere they were joined by Sayf al-Muluk, who was received with greeting and the two embraced and sat them down.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that having provided food and wine, Badi'a al-Jamal met Sayf al-Muluk with greetings, and the twain having embraced and kissed sat them down awhile to eat and drink. Then said she to him, "O King's son, thou must now go to the garden of Iram, where dwelleth my grandmother, and seek her consent to our marriage. My slave-girl Marjánah will convey thee thither and as thou farest therein thou wilt see a great pavilion of red satin, lined with green silk. Enter the pavilion heartening thyself and thou wilt see inside it an ancient dame sitting on a couch of red gold set with pearls and jewels. Salute her with respect and courtesy; then look at the foot of the couch, where thou wilt descry a pair of sandals[455] of cloth interwoven with bars of gold, embroidered with jewels. Take them and kiss them and lay them on thy head[456]; then put them under thy right armpit and stand before the old woman, in silence and with thy head bowed down. If she ask thee, Who art thou and how camest thou hither and who led thee to this land? And why hast thou taken up the sandals? make her no answer, but abide silent till Marjanah enter, when she will speak with her and seek to win her approof for thee and cause her look on thee with consent; so haply Allah Almighty may incline her heart to thee and she may grant thee thy wish." Then she called the handmaid Marjanah hight and said to her, "As thou lovest me, do my errand this day and be not neglectful therein! An thou accomplish it, thou shalt be a free woman for the sake of Allah Almighty, and I will deal honourably by thee 371 with gifts and there shall be none dearer to me than thou, nor will I discover my secrets to any save thee. So, by my love for thee, fulfil this my need and be not slothful therein." Replied Marjanah,

"O my lady and light of mine eyes, tell me what is it thou requirest of me, that I may accomplish it with both mine eyes." Badi'a rejoined, "Take this mortal on thy shoulders and bear him to the bloom-garden of Iram and the pavilion of my grandmother, my father's mother, and be careful of his safety. When thou hast brought him into her presence and seest him take the slippers and do them homage, and hearest her ask him, saying:—Whence art thou and by what road art come and who led thee to this land, and why hast thou taken up the sandals and what is thy need that I give heed to it? do thou come forward in haste and salute her with the salam and say to her:—O my lady, I am she who brought him hither and he is the King's son of Egypt.[457] 'Tis he who went to the High-builded Castle and slew the son of the Blue King and delivered the Princess Daulat Khatun from the Castle of Japhet son of Noah and brought her back safe to her father: and I have brought him to thee, that he may give thee the glad tidings of her safety: so deign thou be gracious to him. Then do thou say to her:—Allah upon thee! is not this young man handsome, O my lady? She will reply, Yes; and do rejoin:—O my lady, indeed he is complete in honour and manhood and valour and he is lord and King of Egypt and compriseth all praiseworthy qualities. An she ask thee, What is his need? do thou make answer, My lady saluteth thee and saith to thee, 372 how long shall she sit at home, a maid and unmarried? Indeed, the time is longsome upon her for she is as a magazine wherein wheat is heaped up.[458] What then is thine intent in leaving her without a mate and why dost thou not marry her in thy life-tide and that of her mother, like other girls? If she say, How shall we do to marry her? An she have any one in mind, let her tell us of him, and we will do her will as far as may be! do thou make answer, O my lady, thy daughter saith to thee, "Ye were minded aforetime to marry me to Solomon (on whom be peace!) and portrayed him my portrait on a tunic. But he had no lot in me; so he sent the tunic to the King of Egypt and he gave it to his son, who saw my portrait figured thereon and fell in love with me; wherefore he left his father and mother's realm and turning away from the world and whatso is therein, went forth at a venture, a wanderer, love-distraught, and hath borne the utmost hardships and honors for my sake of me." Now thou seest his beauty and loveliness, and thy daughter's heart is enamoured of him; so, if ye have a mind to marry her, marry her to this young man and forbid her not from him for he is young and passing comely and King of Egypt, nor wilt thou find a goodlier than he; and if ye will not give her to him, she will slay herself and marry none neither man nor Jinn." "And," continued Badi'a al-Jamal, "Look thou, O Marjanah, *ma mie*,[459] how thou mayst do with my grandmother, to win her consent, and beguile her with soft words, so haply she may do my desire." Quoth the damsel, "O my lady, upon my head and eyes will I serve thee and do what shall content thee." Then she took Sayf al-Muluk on her shoulders and said to him, "O King's son, shut thine eyes." He did so and she flew up with him into the welkin; and after awhile she said to him, "O King's son, open thine eyes." He opened them and found himself in a garden, which was none other than the garden of Iram; and she

showed him the pavilion and said, “O Sayf al-Muluk, enter therein!” Thereupon he pronounced the name of Allah Almighty and entering cast a look upon the garden, 373 when he saw the old Queen sitting on the couch, attended by her waiting women. So he drew near her with courtesy and reverence and taking the sandals bussed them and did as Badi’a al-Jamal had enjoined him. Quoth the ancient dame, “Who art thou and what is thy country; whence comest thou and who brought thee hither and what may be thy wish? Wherefore dost thou take the sandals and kiss them and when didst thou ask of me a favour which I did not grant?” With this in came Marjanah[460] and saluting her reverently and worshipfully, repeated to her what Badi’a al-Jamal had told her; which when the old Queen heard, she cried out at her and was wroth with her and said, “How shall there be accord between man and Jinn?”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

The King seeing her marvelled at her beauty and loveliness, her symmetry and perfect grace and said to the merchant, “O Shaykh, how much for this maiden?” Replied the merchant, “O my lord, I bought her for two thousand dinars of the merchant who owned her before myself, since when I have travelled with her three years and she hath cost me, up to the time of my coming hither, other three thousand gold pieces; but she is a gift from me to thee.” The King robed him with a splendid robe of honour and ordered him ten thousand ducats, whereupon he kissed his hands, thanking him for his bounty and beneficence, and went his ways. Then the King committed the damsel to the tire-women, 266 saying, “Amend ye the case of this maiden[304] and adorn her and furnish her a bower and set her therein.” And he bade his chamberlains carry her everything she needed and shut all the doors upon her. Now his capital wherein he dwelt, was called the White City and was seated on the sea-shore; so they lodged her in a chamber, whose latticed casements overlooked the main.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King after taking the maiden, committed her to the tire-women bidding them amend her case and set her in a bower, and ordered his chamberlains to shut all the doors upon her when they had lodged her in a chamber whose latticed casements overlooked the main. Then Shahriman went in to her; but she spake not to him neither took any note of him.[305] Quoth he, “’Twould seem she hath been with folk who have not taught her manners.” Then he looked at the damsel and saw her surpassing beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace, with a face like the rondure of the moon at its full or the sun shining in the sheeny sky. So he marvelled at her charms of favour and figure and he praised Allah the Creator (magnified be His might!), after which he walked up

to her and sat him down by her side; then he pressed her to his bosom and seating her on his thighs, sucked the dew of her lips, which he found sweeter than honey. Presently he called for trays spread with richest viands of all kinds and ate and fed her by mouthfuls, till she had enough; yet she spoke not one word. The King began to talk to her and asked her of her name; but she abode still silent and uttered not a syllable nor made him any answer, neither ceased to hang down her head groundwards; and it was but the excess of her beauty and loveliness and the amorous 267grace that saved her from the royal wrath. Quoth he to himself, "Glory be to God, the Creator of this girl! How charming she is, save that she speaketh not! But perfection belongeth only to Allah the Most High." And he asked the slave-girls whether she had spoken, and they said, "From the time of her coming until now she hath not uttered a word nor have we heard her address us." Then he summoned some of his women and concubines and bade them sing to her and make merry with her, so haply she might speak. Accordingly they played before her all manner instruments of music and sports and what not and sang, till the whole company was moved to mirth, except the damsel, who looked at them in silence, but neither laughed nor spoke. The King's breast was straitened; thereupon he dismissed the women and abode alone with that damsel: after which he doffed his clothes and disrobing her with his own hand, looked upon her body and saw it as it were a silvern ingot. So he loved her with exceeding love and falling upon her, took her maidenhead and found her a pure virgin; whereat he rejoiced with excessive joy and said in himself, "By Allah, 'tis a wonder that a girl so fair of form and face should have been left by the merchants a clean maid as she is!"[306] Then he devoted himself altogether to her, heeding none other and forsaking all his concubines and favourites, and tarried with her a whole year as it were a single day. Still she spoke not till, one morning he said to her (and indeed the love of her and longing waxed upon him), "O desire of souls, verily passion for thee is great with me, and I have forsaken for thy sake all my slave-girls and concubines and women and favourites and I have made thee my portion of the world and had patience with thee a whole year; and now I beseech Almighty Allah, of His favour, to soften thy heart to me, so thou mayst speak to me. Or, an thou be dumb, tell me by a sign, that I may give up hope of thy speech. I pray the Lord (extolled be He!) to vouchsafe me by thee a son child, who shall inherit the kingdom after me; for I am old and lone and have none to be my heir. Wherefore, Allah upon thee, an thou love me, return me a reply." The damsel bowed her head awhile in thought, and presently raising it, smiled in his face; whereat it seemed to him as if lightning filled the chamber. Then she said, "O magnanimous liege lord, and 268valorous lion, Allah hath answered thy prayer, for I am with child by thee and the time of my delivery is near at hand, though I know not if the unborn babe be male or female.[307] But, had I not conceived by thee, I had not spoken to thee one word." When the King heard her speech, his face shone with joy and gladness and he kissed her head and hands for excess of delight, saying,

"Alhamdolillah—laud to Lord—who hath vouchsafed me the things I desired!; first, thy speech, and secondly, thy tidings that thou art with child by me." Then he rose up and went forth from her and, seating himself on the throne of his kingship, in an ecstasy of happiness, bade his Wazir distribute to the poor and needy and widows and others an hundred thousand dinars, by way of thank-offering to Allah Most High and alms on his own account. The Minister did as bidden by the King who, returning to the damsel, sat with her and embraced and pressed her to his breast, saying, "O my lady, my queen, whose slave I am, prithee what was the cause of this thy silence? Thou hast been with me a whole year, night and day, waking and sleeping, yet hast not spoken to me till this day." She replied, "Hearken, O King of the Age, and know that I am a wretched exile, broken-hearted and far-parted from my mother and my family and my brother." When the King heard her words, he knew her desire and said, "As for thy saying that thou art wretched, there is for such speech no ground, inasmuch as my kingdom and good and all I possess are at thy service and I also am become thy bondman; but, as for thy saying:—I am parted from my mother and brother and family, tell me where they are and I will send and fetch them to thee." Thereupon she answered, "Know, then, O auspicious King, that I am called Julnár[308] the Sea-born and that my father was of the Kings of the 269 Main. He died and left us his reign, but while we were yet unsettled, behold, one of the other Kings arose against us and took the realm from our hands. I have a brother called Sálih, and my mother also is a woman of the sea; but I fell out with my brother "The Pious" and swore that I would throw myself into the hands of a man of the folk of the land. So I came forth of the sea and sat down on the edge of an island in the moonshine,[309] where a passer-by found me and, carrying me to his house, besought me of love-liesse; but I smote him on the head, so that he all but died; whereupon he carried me forth and sold me to the merchant from whom thou hadst me, and this was a good man and a virtuous; pious, loyal and generous. Were it not that thy heart loved me and that thou promotedest me over all thy concubines, I had not remained with thee a single hour, but had cast myself from this window into the sea and gone to my mother and family; but I was ashamed to fare them-wards, being with child by thee; for they would have deemed evilly of me and would not have credited me, even although I swore to them, an I told them that a King had bought me with his gold and made me his portion of the world and preferred me over all his wives and every thing that his right hand possessed. This then is my story and—the Peace!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Julnar[310] the Sea-born, answering the question of King Shahriman, told him her past from first to last, the King thanked her and kissed her between the eyes, saying, "By Allah, O my lady and light of mine eyes, I cannot bear to be parted from thee one hour; and given thou leave

me, I shall die forthright. What then is to be done?" Replied she, "O my lord, the time of my delivery [270]is at hand and my family needs must be present, that they may tend me; for the women of the land know not the manner of child-bearing of the women of the sea, nor do the daughters of the ocean know the manner of the daughters of the earth; and when my people come, I shall be reconciled to them and they will be reconciled to me." Quoth the King, "How do the people of the sea walk therein, without being wetted?"; and quoth she, "O King of the Age, we walk in the waters with our eyes open, as do ye on the ground, by the blessing of the names graven upon the seal-ring of Solomon David-son (on whom be peace!). But, O King, when my kith and kin come, I will tell them how thou boughtest me with thy gold, and hast entreated me with kindness and benevolence. It behoveth that thou confirm my words to them and that they witness thine estate with their own eyes and they learn that thou art a King, son of a King." He rejoined, "O my lady, do what seemeth good to thee and what pleaseth thee; and I will consent to thee in all thou wouldst do." The damsel continued, "Yes, we walk in the sea and see what is therein and behold the sun, moon, stars and sky, as it were on the surface of earth; and this irketh us naught. Know also that there be many peoples in the main and various forms and creatures of all kinds that are on the land, and that all that is on the land compared with that which is in the main is but a very small matter." And the King marvelled at her words. Then she pulled out from her bosom two bits of Comorin lign-aloes and, kindling fire in a chafing-dish, chose somewhat of them and threw it in, then she whistled a loud whistle and spake words none understood. Thereupon arose a great smoke and she said to the King, who was looking on, "O my lord, arise and hide thyself in a closet, that I may show thee my brother and mother and family, whilst they see thee not; for I design to bring them hither, and thou shalt presently espy a wondrous thing and shalt marvel at the several creatures and strange shapes which Almighty Allah hath created." So he arose without stay or delay and entering a closet, fell a-watching what she should do. She continued her fumigations and conjurations till the sea foamed and frothed turbid and there rose from it a handsome young man of a bright favour, as he were the moon at its full, with brow flower-white, cheeks of ruddy light and teeth like the marguerite. He was the likest of all creatures to his sister and the tongue of the case spoke in his praise these two couplets:—

[271]The full moon groweth perfect once a month ✿ But thy face each day we see perfectèd.

And the full moon dwelleth in single sign, ✿ But to thee all hearts be a dwelling stead.

After him there came forth of the sea an ancient dame with hair speckled gray and five maidens, as they were moons, bearing a likeness to the damsel hight Julnar. The King looked upon them as they all walked upon the face of the water, till they drew near the window and saw Julnar, whereupon they knew her and went in to her. She rose to them and met them with joy and gladness, and they embraced her and wept with sore weeping. Then said they to her, "O Julnar, how couldst thou leave us four

years, and we unknowing of thine abiding place? By Allah the world hath been straitened upon us for stress of severance from thee, and we have had no delight of food or drink; no, not for one day, but have wept with sore weeping night and day for the excess of our longing after thee!" Then she fell to kissing the hands of the youth her brother and her mother and cousins, and they sat with her awhile, questioning her of her case and of what had betided her, as well as of her present estate. "Know," replied she, "that, when I left you, I issued from the sea and sat down on the shore of an island, where a man found me and sold me to a merchant, who brought me to this city and sold me for ten thousand dinars to the King of the country, who entreated me with honour and forsook all his concubines and women and favourites for my sake and was distracted by me from all he had and all that was in his city." Quoth her brother, "Praised be Allah, who hath reunited us with thee! But now, O my sister, 'tis my purpose that thou arise and go with us to our country and people." When the King heard these words, his wits fled him for fear lest the damsel accept her brother's words and he himself avail not to stay her, albeit he loved her passionately, and he became distracted with fear of losing her. But Julnar answered, "By Allah, O my brother, the mortal who bought me is lord of this city and he is a mighty King and a wise man, good and generous with extreme generosity. Moreover, he is a personage of great worth and wealth and hath neither son nor daughter. He hath entreated me with honour and done me all manner of favour and kindness; nor, from the day of his buying me to this time have I heard from him an ill word to hurt my heart; but he hath never ceased to use me courteously; doing nothing save with my counsel, and I am in the best of case 272 with him and in the perfection of fair fortune. Furthermore, were I to leave him, he would perish; for he cannot endure to be parted from me an hour; and if I left him, I also should die, for the excess of the love I bear him, by reason of his great goodness to me during the time of my sojourn with him; for, were my father alive, my estate with him would not be like my estate with this great and glorious and puissant potentate. And verily, ye see me with child by him and praise be to Allah, who hath made me a daughter of the Kings of the sea, and my husband the mightest of the Kings of the land, and Allah, in very sooth, he hath compensated me for whatso I lost."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Julnar the Sea-born told her brother all her tale, adding "Allah hath not cut me off, but hath compensated me for whatso I lost. Now this King hath no issue, male or female, so I pray the Almighty to vouchsafe me a son who shall inherit of this mighty sovran that which the Lord hath bestowed upon him of lands and palaces and possessions." Now when her brother and the daughters of her uncle heard this her speech, their eyes were cooled thereby and they said, "O Julnar, thou knowest thy value with us and thou wottest the affection we

bear thee and thou art certified that thou art to us the dearest of all creatures and thou art assured that we seek but ease for thee, without travail or trouble. Wherefore, an thou be in unease, arise and go with us to our land and our folk; but, an thou be at thine ease here, in honour and happiness, this is our wish and our will; for we desire naught save thy welfare in any case."[311] Quoth she, "By Allah, I am here in the utmost ease and solace and honour and grace!" When the King heard what she said, he joyed with a heart set at rest and thanked her silently for this; the love of her redoubled on him and entered his heart-core and he knew that she loved him as he loved her and that she desired to abide with him, that she might see his child by her. Then Julnar bade her women lay the tables and set on all sorts of viands, which had been cooked in kitchen under her own eyes, 273 and fruits and sweetmeats, whereof she ate, she and her kinsfolk. But, presently, they said to her, "O Julnar, thy lord is a stranger to us, and we have entered his house, without his leave or weeting. Thou hast extolled to us his excellence and eke thou hast set before us of his victual whereof we have eaten; yet have we not companied with him nor seen him, neither hath he seen us nor come to our presence and eaten with us, so there might be between us bread and salt." And they all left eating and were wroth with her, and fire issued from their mouths, as from cressets; which when the King saw, his wits fled for excess of fear of them. But Julnar arose and soothed them and going to the closet where was the King her lord, said to him, "O my lord, hast thou seen and heard how I praised thee and extolled thee to my people and hast thou noted what they said to me of their desire to carry me away with them?" Quoth he, "I both heard and saw: May the Almighty abundantly requite thee for me! By Allah, I knew not the full measure of thy fondness until this blessed hour, and now I doubt not of thy love to me!" Quoth she, "O my lord, is the reward of kindness aught but kindness? Verily, thou hast dealt generously with me and hast entreated me with worship and I have seen that thou lovest me with the utmost love, and thou hast done me all manner of honour and kindness and preferred me above all thou lovest and desirest. So how should my heart be content to leave thee and depart from thee, and how should I do thus after all thy goodness to me? But now I desire of thy courtesy that thou come and salute my family, so thou mayst see them and they thee and pure love and friendship may be between you; for know, O King of the Age, that my brother and mother and cousins love thee with exceeding love, by reason of my praises of thee to them, and they say:—We will not depart from thee nor go to our homes till we have foregathered with the King and saluted him. For indeed they desire to see thee and make acquaintance with thee." The King replied, "To hear is to obey, for this is my very own wish." So saying, he rose and went in to them and saluted them with the goodliest salutation; and they sprang up to him and received him with the utmost worship, after which he sat down in the palace and ate with them; and he entertained them thus for the space of thirty days. Then, being desirous of returning home, they took leave of the King and Queen and departed with due permission to their own land, after he had done them all possible honour. Awhile

after this, Julnar completed the days of her 274pregnancy and the time of her delivery being come, she bore a boy, as he were the moon at its full; whereat the utmost joy betided the King, for that he had never in his life been vouchsafed son or daughter. So they held high festival and decorated the city seven days, in the extreme of joy and jollity: and on the seventh day came Queen Julnar's mother, Faráshah Hight,[312] and brother and cousins, whenas they knew of her delivery.——And Shahrazad perceived the light of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-second Night,



She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Julnar was brought to bed and was visited by her people, the King received them with joy at their coming and said to them, "I said that I would not give my son a name till you should come and name him of your knowledge." So they named him Badr Básim,[313] and all agreed upon this name. Then they showed the child to his uncle Salih, who took him in his arms and arising began to walk about the chamber with him in all directions right and left. Presently he carried him forth of the palace and going down to the salt sea, fared on with him, till he was hidden from the King's sight. Now when Shahriman saw him take his son and disappear with him in the depth of the sea, he gave the child up for lost and fell to weeping and wailing; but Julnar said to him, "O King of the Age, fear not, neither grieve for thy son, for I love my child more than thou and he is with my brother; so reck thou not of the sea neither fear for him drowning. Had my brother known that aught of harm would betide the little one, he had not done this deed; and he will presently bring thee thy son safe, Inshallah—an it please the Almighty." Nor was an hour past before the sea became turbid and troubled and King Salih came forth and flew from the sea till he came up to them with the child lying quiet and showing a face like the moon on the night of fulness. Then, looking at the King he said, "Haply thou fearedst harm for thy son, whenas I plunged into the sea with him?" Replied the father, "Yes, O my lord, I did indeed fear for him and thought he 275 would never be saved therefrom." Rejoined Salih, "O King of the land, we pencilled his eyes with an eye-powder we know of and recited over him the names graven upon the seal-ring of Solomon David-son (on whom be the Peace!), for this is what we use to do with children newly born among us; and now thou needst not fear for him drowning or suffocation in all the oceans of the world, if he should go down into them; for, even as ye walk on the land, so walk we in the sea." Then he pulled out of his pocket a casket, graven and sealed and, breaking open the seals, emptied it; whereupon there fell from it strings of all manner jacinths and other jewels, besides three hundred bugles of emerald and other three hundred hollow gems, as big as ostrich eggs, whose light dimmed that of sun and moon. Quoth Salih, "O King of the Age, these jewels and jacinths are a present from me to thee. We never yet brought thee a gift, for that we knew not Julnar's abiding-place neither had we of her any tidings or trace; but now that we see thee to be united with her and we are all become one thing, we have brought thee this present; and every little while we will bring thee the like thereof, Inshallah! for that these jewels and jacinths are more plentiful with us than pebbles on the beach and we know the good and the bad of them and their whereabouts and the way to them, and they are easy to us." When the King saw the jewels, his wits were bewildered and his sense was astounded and he said, "By Allah, one single gem of these jewels is worth my realm!" Then he thanked for his bounty Salih the Sea-born and, looking towards Queen Julnar, said, "I am abashed before thy brother, for that he hath dealt munificently by me and bestowed on me this splendid gift, which the folk of the land were unable to present." So she thanked her brother for his deed and he

said, “O King of the Age, thou hast the prior claim on us and it behoves us to thank thee, for thou hast entreated our sister with kindness and we have entered thy dwelling and eaten of thy victual;” and the poet saith[314]:—

Had *I* wept before *she* did in my passion for Saada, I had healed my soul before repentance came.

But *she* wept before *I* did: her tears drew mine; and I said, The merit belongs to the precedent.

“And” (resumed Salih the Pious) “if we stood on our faces in thy 276service, O King of the Age, a thousand years, yet had we not the might to requite thee, and this were but a scantling of thy due.” The King thanked him with heartiest thanks and the Merman and Merwomen abode with him forty days’ space, at the end of which Salih arose and kissed the ground before his brother-in-law, who asked “What wantest thou, O Salih?” He answered, “O King of the Age, indeed thou hast done us overabundant favours, and we crave of thy bounties that thou deal charitably with us and grant us permission to depart; for we yearn after our people and country and kinsfolk and our homes; so will we never forsake thy service nor that of my sister and my nephew; and by Allah, O King of the Age, ’tis not pleasant to my heart to part from thee; but how shall we do, seeing that we have been reared in the sea and that the sojourn of the shore liketh us not?” When the King heard these words he rose to his feet and farewelled Salih the Sea-born and his mother and his cousins, and all wept together, because of parting and presently they said to him, “Anon we will be with thee again, nor will we forsake thee, but will visit thee every few days.” Then they flew off and descending into the sea, disappeared from sight.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the relations of Julnar the Sea-born farewelled the King and her, weeping together because of parting; then they flew off and descending into the depths disappeared from sight. After this King Shahriman showed the more kindness to Julnar and honoured her with increase of honour; and the little one grew up and flourished, whilst his maternal uncle and grandam and cousins visited the King every few days and abode with him a month or two months at a time. The boy ceased not to increase in beauty and loveliness with increase of years, till he attained the age of fifteen and was unique in his perfection and symmetry. He learnt writing and Koran-reading; history, syntax and lexicography; archery, spear-play and horsemanship and what not else behoveth the sons of Kings; nor was there one of the children of the folk of the city, men or women, but would talk of the youth’s charms, for he 277was of surpassing beauty and perfection, even such an one as is praised in the saying of the poet:[315]—

The whiskers write upon his cheek, with ambergris on pearl, Two lines, as ’twere with jet upon an apple, line for line.

Death harbours in his languid eye and slays with every glance, And in his cheek is drunkenness, and not in any wine.

And in that of another:—

Upsprings from table of his lovely cheek[316] ✿ A growth like broidery my wonder is:

As 'twere a lamp that burns through night hung up ✿ Beneath the gloom[317] in chains of ambergris.

And indeed the King loved him with exceeding love, and summoning his Wazir and Emirs and the Chief Officers of state and Grandees of his realm, required of them a binding oath that they would make Badr Basim King over them after his sire; and they sware the oath gladly, for the sovran was liberal to the lieges, pleasant in parley and a very compend of goodness, saying naught but that wherein was advantage for the people. On the morrow Shahriman mounted, with all his troops and Emirs and Lords, and went forth into the city and returned. When they drew near the palace, the King dismounted, to wait upon his son who abode on horseback, and he and all the Emirs and Grandees bore the saddlecloth of honour before him, each and every of them bearing it in his turn, till they came to the vestibule of the palace, where the Prince alighted and his father and the Emirs embraced him and seated him on the throne of Kingship, whilst they (including his sire) stood before him. Then Badr Basim judged the people, deposing the unjust and promoting the just and continued so doing till near upon noon, when he descended from the throne and went in to his mother, Julnar the Sea-born, with the crown upon his head, as he were the moon. When she saw him, with the King standing before him, she rose and kissing him, gave him joy of the Sultanate and wished him and his sire length of life and victory over their foes. He sat with her and rested till the hour of mid-afternoon prayer, when he took horse and repaired, 278 with the Emirs before him, to the Maydán-plain, where he played at arms with his father and his lords, till nightfall, when he returned to the palace, preceded by all the folk. He rode forth thus every day to the tilting-ground, returning to sit and judge the people and do justice between carl and churl; and thus he continued doing a whole year, at the end of which he began to ride out a-hunting and a-chasing and to go round about in the cities and countries under his rule, proclaiming security and satisfaction and doing after the fashion of Kings; and he was unique among the people of his day for glory and valour and just dealing among the subjects. And it chanced that one day the old King fell sick and his fluttering heart forebode him of translation to the Mansion of Eternity. His sickness grew upon him till he was nigh upon death, when he called his son and commended his mother and subjects to his care and caused all the Emirs and Grandees once more swear allegiance to the Prince and assured himself of them by strongest oaths; after which he lingered a few days and departed to the mercy of Almighty Allah. His son and widow and all the Emirs and Wazirs and Lords mourned over him, and they built him a tomb and buried him therein. They ceased not ceremonially to mourn for him a whole month, till Salih and his mother and cousins arrived and condoled with their grieving for the King and said, "O Julnar, though the King be dead, yet hath he left this noble and peerless youth, and not dead

is whoso leaveth the like of him, the rending lion and the shining moon;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Salih brother of Julnar and her mother and cousins said to her, "Albeit the King be dead, yet hath he left behind him as successor this noble and peerless youth, the rending lion and the shining moon." Thereupon the Grandees and notables of the Empire went in to King Badr Basim and said to him, "O King, there is no harm in mourning for the late sovran: but over-mourning beseemeth none save women; wherefore occupy thou not thy heart and our hearts with mourning for thy sire; inasmuch as he hath left thee behind him, and whoso leaveth the like of thee is not dead." Then they comforted him and diverted him and lastly carried him to the bath. 279 When he came out of the Hammam, he donned a rich robe, purfled with gold and embroidered with jewels and jacinths; and, setting the royal crown on his head, sat down on his throne of kingship and ordered the affairs of the folk, doing equal justice between strong and weak, and exacting from the prince the dues of the pauper; wherefore the people loved him with exceeding love. Thus he continued doing for a full year, whilst, every now and then, his kinsfolk of the sea visited him, and his life was pleasant and his eye was cooled. Now it came to pass that his uncle Salih went in one night of the nights to Julnar and saluted her; whereupon she rose and embracing him seated him by her side and asked him, "O my brother, how art thou and my mother and my cousins." He answered, "O my sister, they are well and glad and in good case, lacking naught save a sight of thy face." Then she set somewhat of food before him and he ate, after which talk ensued between the twain and they spake of King Badr Basim and his beauty and loveliness, his symmetry and skill in cavalarice and cleverness and good breeding. Now Badr was propped upon his elbow hard by them; and, hearing his mother and uncle speak of him, he feigned sleep and listened to their talk.[318] Presently Salih said to his sister, "Thy son is now seventeen years old and is unmarried, and I fear least mishap befal him and he have no son; wherefore it is my desire to marry him to a Princess of the princesses of the sea, who shall be a match for him in beauty and loveliness." Quoth Julnar, "Name them to me for I know them all." So Salih proceeded to enumerate them to her, one by one, but to each she said, "I like not this one for my son; I will not marry him but to one who is his equal in beauty and loveliness and wit and piety and good breeding and magnanimity and dominion and rank and lineage."[319] Quoth Salih, "I know none other of the daughters of the Kings of the sea, for I have numbered to thee more than an hundred girls and not one of them pleaseth thee: but see, O my sister, whether thy son be asleep or no." So she felt Badr and finding on him the signs of slumber said to Salih, "He is asleep; what hast thou to say and 280 what is thine

object in making sure his sleeping?" Replied he, "O my sister, know that I have bethought me of a Mermaid of the mermaids who befitteth thy son; but I fear to name her, lest he be awake and his heart be taken with her love and maybe we shall be unable to win to her; so should he and we and the Grandees of the realm be wearied in vain and trouble betide us through this;" for, as saith the poet:—

Love, at first sight, is a spurt of spray;[320] ✿ But a spreading sea when it gaineth sway.

When she heard these words, she cried, "Tell me the condition of this girl, and her name for I know all the damsels of the sea, Kings' daughters and others; and, if I judge her worthy of him, I will demand her in marriage for him of her father, though I spend on her whatso my hand possesseth. So recount to me all anent her and fear naught, for my son sleepeth." Quoth Salih, "I fear lest he be awake;" and the poet saith:—

I loved him, soon as his praise I heard; ✿ For ear oft loveth ere eye survey.

But Julnar said, "Speak out and be brief and fear not, O my brother." So he said, "By Allah, O my sister, none is worthy of thy son save the Princess Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal,[321] for that she is like unto him in beauty and loveliness and brilliancy and perfection; nor is there found, in sea or on land, a sweeter or pleasanter of gifts than she; for she is prime in comeliness and seemlihead of face and symmetrical shape of perfect grace; her cheek is ruddy dight, her brow flower white, her teeth gem-bright, her eyes blackest black and whitest white, her hips of heavy weight, her waist slight and her favour exquisite. When she turneth she shameth the wild cattle[322] and the gazelles and when she walketh, she breedeth envy in the willow branch: when she unveileth her face outshineth sun and moon and all who look upon her she enslaveth soon: sweet-lipped and soft-sided indeed is she." 281 Now when Julnar heard what Salih said, she replied, "Thou sayest sooth, O my brother! By Allah, I have seen her many and many a time and she was my companion, when we were little ones; but now we have no knowledge of each other, for constraint of distance; nor have I set eyes on her for eighteen years. By Allah, none is worthy of my son but she!" Now Badr heard all they said and mastered what had passed, first and last, of these praises bestowed on Jauharah daughter of King Al-Samandal; so he fell in love with her on hearsay, pretending sleep the while, wherefore fire was kindled in his heart on her account full sore and he was drowned in a sea without bottom or shore.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Badr Basim heard the words of his uncle Salih and his mother Julnar, praising the daughter of King Al-Samandal, a flame of fire burnt in his heart full sore and he was drowned in a sea which hath nor bottom nor shore. Then Salih, looking at his sister, exclaimed, "By

Allah, O my sister, there is no greater fool among the Kings of the sea than her father nor one more violent of temper than he! So name thou not the girl to thy son, till we demand her in marriage of her father. If he favour us with his assent, we will praise Allah Almighty; and if he refuse us and will not give her to thy son to wife, we will say no more about it and seek another match." Answered Julnar, "Right is thy rede;" and they parleyed no more; but Badr passed the night with a heart on fire with passion for Princess Jauharah. However he concealed his case and spake not of her to his mother or his uncle, albeit he was on coals of fire for love of her. Now when it was morning, the King and his uncle went to the Hammam-bath and washed, after which they came forth and drank wine and the servants set food before them, whereof they and Julnar ate their sufficiency, and washed their hands. Then Salih rose and said to his nephew and sister, "With your leave, I would fain go to my mother and my folk for I have been with you some days and their hearts are troubled with awaiting me." But Badr Basim said to him, "Tarry with us this day;" and he consented. Then quoth the King, "Come, O my uncle, let us go forth to the garden." So 282 they sallied forth and promenaded about the pastures and took their solace awhile, after which King Badr lay down under a shady tree, thinking to rest and sleep; but he remembered his uncle's description of the maiden and her beauty and loveliness and shed railing tears, reciting these two couplets[323]:—

Were it said to me while the flame is burning within me, ✿ And the fire blazing in my heart and bowels,

Wouldst thou rather that thou shouldest behold them ✿ Or a draught of pure water?—I would answer, Them.

Then he sighed and wept and lamented, reciting these verses also:—

Who shall save me from love of a lovely gazelle, ✿ Brighter browed than the sunshine, my bonnibel!

My heart, erst free from her love, now burns ✿ With fire for the maid of Al-Samandal.

When Salih heard what his nephew said, he smote hand upon hand and said, "There is no god but *the* God! Mohammed is the Apostle of God and there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" adding, "O my son, heardest thou what passed between me and thy mother respecting Princess Jauharah?" Replied Badr Basim, "Yes, O my uncle, and I fell in love with her by hearsay through what I heard you say. Indeed, my heart cleaveth to her and I cannot live without her." Rejoined his uncle, "O King, let us return to thy mother and tell her how the case standeth and crave her leave that I may take thee with me and seek the Princess in marriage of her sire; after which we will farewell her and I and thou will return. Indeed, I fear to take thee and go without her leave, lest she be wroth with me; and verily the right would be on her side, for I should be the cause of her separation from us. Moreover, the city would be left without king and there would be none to govern the citizens and look to their affairs; so should the realm be disordered against thee and the kingship depart from thy hands." But Badr Basim, hearing these words, cried, "O my uncle, if I return to my mother and consult her on such matter, she will not suffer me to do this; wherefore I will not return to 283 my mother nor consult her."

And he wept before him and presently added, “I will go with thee and tell her not and after will return.” When Salih heard what his nephew said, he was confused anent his case and said, “I crave help of the Almighty in any event.” Then, seeing that Badr Basim was resolved to go with him, whether his mother would let him or no, he drew from his finger a seal-ring, whereon were graven certain of the names of Allah the Most High, and gave it to him, saying, “Put this on thy finger, and thou shalt be safe from drowning and other perils and from the mischief of sea-beasts and great fishes.” So King Badr Basim took the ring and set it on his finger. Then they drove into the deep——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Badr Basim and his uncle, after diving into the deep, fared on till they came to Salih’s palace, where they found Badr Basim’s grandmother, the mother of his mother, seated with her kinsfolk; and, going in to them, kissed their hands. When the old Queen saw Badr, she rose to him and embracing him, kissed him between the eyes and said to him, “A blessed coming, O my son! How didst thou leave thy mother Julnar?” He replied, “She is well in health and fortune, and saluteth thee and her uncle’s daughters.” Then Salih related to his mother what had occurred between him and his sister and how King Badr Basim had fallen in love with the Princess Jauharah daughter of Al-Samandal by report and told her the whole tale from beginning to end adding, “He hath not come save to demand her in wedlock of her sire;” which when the old Queen heard, she was wroth against her son with exceeding wrath and sore troubled and concerned and said, “O Salih, O my son, in very sooth thou diddest wrong to name the Princess before thy nephew, knowing, as thou dost, that her father is stupid and violent, little of wit and tyrannical of temper, grudging his daughter to every suitor; for all the Monarchs of the Main have sought her hand, but he rejected them all; nay, he would none of them, saying:—Ye are no match for her in beauty or in loveliness or in aught else. Wherefore we fear to demand her in wedlock of him, lest he reject us, even as he hath rejected 284 others; and we are a folk of high spirit and should return broken-hearted.” Hearing these words Salih answered, “O my mother, what is to do? For King Badr Basim saith:—There is no help but that I seek her in marriage of her sire, though I expend my whole kingdom; and he avoucheth that, an he take her not to wife, he will die of love for her and longing.” And Salih continued, “He is handsomer and goodlier than she; his father was King of all the Persians, whose King he now is, and none is worthy of Jauharah save Badr Basim. Wherefore I purpose to carry her father a gift of jacinths and jewels befitting his dignity, and demand her of him in marriage. An he object to us that he is a King, behold, our man also is a King and the son of a King; or, if he object to us her beauty, behold our man is more beautiful than she; or, again, if he object to us the vastness of his dominion, behold our man’s dominion is vaster than

hers and her father's and numbereth more troops and guards, for that his kingdom is greater than that of Al-Samandal. Needs must I do my endeavour to further the desire of my sister's son, though it relieve me of my life; because I was the cause of whatso hath betided; and, even as I plunged him into the ocean of her love, so will I go about to marry him to her, and may Almighty Allah help me thereto!" Rejoined his mother, "Do as thou wilt, but beware of giving her father rough words, whenas thou speakest with him; for thou knowest his stupidity and violence and I fear lest he do thee a mischief, for he knoweth not respect for any." And Salih answered, "Hearkening and obedience." Then he sprang up and taking two bags full of gems such as rubies and bugles of emerald, noble ores and all manner jewels gave them to his servants to carry and set out with his nephew for the palace of Al-Samandal. When they came thither, he sought audience of the King and being admitted to his presence, kissed ground before him and saluted him with the goodliest Salam. The King rose to him and honouring him with the utmost honour, bade him be seated. So he sat down and presently the King said to him, "A blessed coming: indeed thou has desolated us, O Salih! But what bringeth thee to us? Tell me thine errand that we may fulfil it to thee." Whereupon Salih arose and, kissing the ground a second time, said, "O King of the age, my errand is to Allah and the magnanimous liege lord and the valiant lion, the report of whose good qualities the caravans far and near have dispread and whose renown for benefits and beneficence and 285 clemency and graciousness and liberality to all climes and countries hath sped." Thereupon he opened the two bags and, displaying their contents before Al-Samandal, said to him, "O King of the Age, haply wilt thou accept my gift and by showing favour to me heal my heart."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Salih offered his gift to the King, saying, "My aim and end is that the Sovran show favour to me and heal my heart by accepting my present," King Al-Samandal asked, "With what object dost thou gift me with this gift? Tell me thy tale and acquaint me with thy requirement. An its accomplishment be in my power I will straightway accomplish it to thee and spare thee toil and trouble; and if I be unable thereunto, Allah compelleth not any soul aught beyond its power."[324] So Salih rose and kissing ground three times, said, "O King of the Age, that which I desire thou art indeed able to do; it is in thy power and thou art master thereof; and I impose not on the King a difficulty, nor am I Jinn-demented, that I should crave of the King a thing whereto he availeth not; for one of the sages saith:—An thou wouldst be complied with ask that which can be readily supplied. Wherefore, that of which I am come in quest, the King (whom Allah preserve!) is able to grant." The King replied, "Ask what thou wouldst have, and state thy case and seek thy need." Then said Salih,[325] "O King of the Age, know that I come

as a suitor, seeking the unique pearl and the hoarded jewel, the Princess Jauharah, daughter of our lord the King; wherefore, O King disappoint thou not thy suitor." Now when the King heard this, he laughed till he fell backwards, in mockery of him and said, "O Salih, I had thought thee a man of worth and a youth of sense, seeking naught save what was reasonable and speaking not save advisedly. What then hath befallen thy reason and urged thee to this monstrous matter and mighty hazard, 286 that thou seekest in marriage daughters of Kings, lords of cities and climates? Say me, art thou of a rank to aspire to this great eminence and hath thy wit failed thee to this extreme pass that thou affrontest me with this demand?" Replied Salih, "Allah amend the King! I seek her not for myself (albeit, an I did, I am her match and more than her match, for thou knowest that my father was King of the Kings of the sea, for all thou art this day our King), but I seek her for King Badr Basim, lord of the lands of the Persians and son of King Shahriman, whose puissance thou knowest. An thou object that thou art a mighty great King, King Badr is a greater; and if thou object thy daughter's beauty, King Badr is more beautiful than she and fairer of form and more excellent of rank and lineage; and he is the champion of the people of his day. Wherefore, if thou grant my request, O King of the Age thou wilt have set the thing in its stead; but, if thou deal arrogantly with us, thou wilt not use us justly nor travel with us the 'road which is straight[326].' Moreover, O King, thou knowest that the Princess Jauharah, the daughter of our lord the King, must needs be wedded and bedded, for the sage saith, a girl's lot is either grace of marriage or the grave.[327] Wherefore, an thou mean to marry her, my sister's son is worthier of her than any other man." Now when King Al-Samandal heard Salih's words, he was wroth with exceeding wrath; his reason well nigh fled and his soul was like to depart his body for rage, and he cried, "O dog, shall the like of thee dare to bespeak me thus and name my daughter in the assemblies,[328] saying that the son of thy sister Julnar is a match for her? Who art thou and who is this sister of thine and who is her son and who was his father,[329] that thou durst say to me such say and address me with such address? What are ye all, in comparison with my daughter, but dogs?" And he cried out to his pages, saying, "Take yonder gallows-bird's head?" So they drew their swords and made for Salih, but he fled and for the palace-gate sped; and reaching the entrance, he found of his cousins and kinsfolk and servants, more than a thousand horse armed cap-à-pie in iron and close knitted 287 mail-coats, hending in hand spears and naked swords glittering white. And these when they saw Salih come running out of the palace (they having been sent by his mother to his succour,) questioned him and he told them what was to do; whereupon they knew that the King was a fool and violent-tempered to boot. So they dismounted and baring their blades, went in to the King Al-Samandal, whom they found seated upon the throne of his Kingship, unaware of their coming and enraged against Salih with furious rage; and they beheld his eunuchs and pages and officers unprepared. When the King saw them enter, drawn

brand in hand, he cried out to his people, saying "Woe to you! Take me the heads of these hounds!" But ere an hour had sped Al-Samandal's party were put to the rout and relied upon flight, and Salih and his kinsfolk seized upon the King and pinioned him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Salih and his king-folk pinioned the King, Princess Jauharah awoke and knew that her father was a captive and his guards slain. So she fled forth the palace to a certain island, and climbing up into a high tree, hid herself in its summit. Now when the two parties came to blows, some of King Al-Samandal's pages fled and Badr Basim meeting them, questioned them of their case and they told him what had happened. But when he heard that the King was a prisoner, Badr feared for himself and fled, saying in his heart, "Verily, all this turmoil is on my account and none is wanted but I." So he sought safety in flight, security to sight, knowing not whither he went; but destiny from Eternity fore-ordained drave him to the very island where the Princess had taken refuge, and he came to the very tree whereon she sat and threw himself down, like a dead man, thinking to lie and repose himself and knowing not there is no rest for the pursued, for none knoweth what Fate hideth for him in the future. As he lay down, he raised his eyes to the tree and they met the eyes of the Princess. So he looked at her and seeing her to be like the moon rising in the East, cried, "Glory to Him who fashioned yonder perfect form, Him who is the Creator of all 288 things and who over all things is Almighty! Glory to the Great God, the Maker, the Shaper and Fashioner! By Allah, if my presentiments be true, this is Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal! Methinks that, when she heard of our coming to blows with her father, she fled to this island and, happening upon this tree, hid herself on its head; but, if this be not the Princess herself, 'tis one yet goodlier than she." Then he bethought himself of her case and said in himself, "I will arise and lay hands on her and question her of her condition; and, if she be indeed the she, I will demand her in wedlock of herself and so win my wish." So he stood up and said to her, "O end of all desire, who art thou and who brought thee hither?" She looked at Badr Basim and seeing him to be as the full moon,[330] when it shineth from under the black cloud, slender of shape and sweet of smile, answered, "O fair of fashion, I am Princess Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal, and I took refuge in this place, because Salih and his host came to blows with my sire and slew his troops and took him prisoner, with some of his men; wherefore I fled, fearing for my very life," presently adding, "And I weet not what fortune hath done with my father." When King Badr Basim heard these words he marvelled with exceeding marvel at this strange chance and thought. "Doubtless I have won my wish by the capture of her sire." Then he looked at Jauharah and said to

her, “Come down, O my lady; for I am slain for love of thee and thine eyes have captivated me. On my account and thine are all these broils and battles; for thou must know that I am King Badr Basim, Lord of the Persians and Salih is my mother’s brother and he it is who came to thy sire to demand thee of him in marriage. As for me, I have quitted my kingdom for thy sake, and our meeting here is the rarest coincidence. So come down to me and let us twain fare for thy father’s palace, that I may beseech uncle Salih to release him and I may make thee my lawful wife.” When Jauharah heard his words, she said in herself, “’Twas on this miserable gallows bird’s account, then, that all this hath befallen and that my father hath fallen prisoner and his chamberlains and suite have been slain and I have been departed from my palace, a miserable exile and have fled for refuge to this island. But, an I devise not against him some device to defend myself from him, he will 289 possess himself of me and take his will of me; for he is in love and for aught that he doeth a lover is not blamed.” Then she beguiled him with winning words and soft speeches, whilst he knew not the perfidy against him she purposed, and asked him, “O my lord and light of my eyes, say me, art thou indeed King Badr Basim, son of Queen Julnar?” And he answered, “Yes, O my lady.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal, asked the youth, “Art thou in very soth King Badr Basim, son of Queen Julnar?” And he answered, “Yes, O my lady!” Then she, “May Allah cut off my father and gar his kingdom cease from him and heal not his heart neither avert from him strangerhood, if he could desire a comelier than thou or aught goodlier than these fair qualities of thine! By Allah, he is of little wit and judgment!” presently adding, “But, O King of the Age, punish him not for that he hath done; more by token that an thou love me a span, verily I love thee a cubit. Indeed, I have fallen into the net of thy love and am become of the number of thy slain. The love that was with thee hath transferred itself to me and there is left thereof with thee but a tithe of that which is with me.” So saying, she came down from the tree and drawing near him strained him to her bosom and fell to kissing him; whereat passion and desire for her redoubled on him and doubting not but she loved him, he trusted in her, and returned her kisses and caresses. Presently he said to her, “By Allah, O Princess, my uncle Salih set forth to me not a fortieth part of thy charms; no, nor a quarter-carat[331] of the four-and-twenty.” Then Jauharah pressed him to her bosom and pronounced some unintelligible words; then spat on his face, saying, “Quit this form of man and take shape of bird, the handsomest of birds, white of robe, with red bill and legs.” Hardly had she spoken, when 290 King Badr Basim found himself transformed into a bird, the handsomest of birds, who shook himself and stood looking at her. Now Jauharah had with her one of her slave-girls, by name Marsínah;[332] so she called her and said to her, “By Allah, but

that I fear for the life of my father, who is his uncle's prisoner, I would kill him! Allah never requite him with good! How unlucky was his coming to us; for all this trouble is due to his hard-headedness! But do thou, O slave-girl, bear him to the Thirsty Island and leave him there to die of thirst." So Marsinah carried him to the island in question and would have returned and left him there; but she said in herself, "By Allah, the lord of such beauty and loveliness deserveth not to die of thirst!" So she went forth from that island and brought him to another abounding in trees and fruits and rills and, setting him down there, returned to her mistress and told her, "I have left him on the Thirsty Island." Such was the case with Badr Basim; but as regards King Salih, he sought for Jauharah after capturing the King and killing his folk; but, finding her not, returned to his palace and said to his mother, "Where is my sister's son, King Badr Basim?" "By Allah, O my son," replied she, "I know nothing of him! For when it reached him that you and King Al-Samandal had come to blows and that strife and slaughter had betided between you, he was affrighted and fled." When Salih heard this, he grieved for his nephew and said, "O my mother, by Allah, we have dealt negligently by King Badr and I fear lest he perish or lest one of King Al-Samandal's soldiers or his daughter Jauharah fall in with him. So should we come to shame with his mother and no good betide us from her, for that I took him without her leave." Then he despatched guards and scouts throughout the sea and elsewhere to seek for Badr; but they could learn no tidings of him; so they returned and told King Salih, wherefore cark and care redoubled on him and his breast was straitened for King Badr Basim. So far concerning nephew and uncle, but as for Julnar the Sea-born, after their departure she abode in expectation of them, but her son returned not and she heard no report of him. So when many days of fruitless waiting had gone by, she arose and going down into the sea, repaired to her mother, who sighting her rose to her and kissed her and embraced her, as did the Mermaids her cousins. [291] Then she questioned her mother of King Badr Basim, and she answered, saying, "O my daughter, of a truth he came hither with his uncle, who took jacinths and jewels and carrying them to King Al-Samandal, demanded his daughter in marriage for thy son; but he consented not and was violent against thy brother in words. Now I had sent Salih nigh upon a thousand horse and a battle befel between him and King Al-Samandal; but Allah aided thy brother against him, and he slew his guards and troops and took himself prisoner. Meanwhile, tidings of this reached thy son, and it would seem as if he feared for himself; wherefore he fled forth from us, without our will, and returned not to us, nor have we heard any news of him." Then Julnar enquired for King Salih, and his mother said, "He is seated on the throne of his kingship, in the stead of King Al-Samandal, and hath sent in all directions to seek thy son and Princess Jauharah." When Julnar heard the maternal words, she mourned for her son with sad mourning and was highly incensed against her brother Salih for that he had taken him and gone down with him into the sea without her leave; and she said, "O my mother, I fear for our realm; as I came to thee without letting any know; and I

dread tarrying with thee, lest the state fall into disorder and the kingdom pass from our hands. Wherefore I deem best to return and govern the reign till it please Allah to order our son's affair for us. But look ye forget him not neither neglect his case; for should he come to any harm, it would infallibly kill me, since I see not the world save in him and delight but in his life." She replied, "With love and gladness, O my daughter. Ask not what we suffer by reason of his loss and absence." Then she sent to seek for her grandson, whilst Julnar returned to her kingdom, weeping-eyed and heavy-hearted, and indeed the gladness of the world was straitened upon her.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Queen Julnar returned from her mother to her own realm, her breast was straitened and she was in ill-case. So fared it with her; but as regards King Badr Basim, after Princess Jauharah had ensorcelled him and had sent him with her handmaid to the Thirsty Island, [292] saying, "Leave him there to die of thirst," and Marsinah had set him down in a green islet, he abode days and nights in the semblance of a bird eating of its fruits and drinking of its waters and knowing not whither to go nor how to fly; till, one day, there came a certain fowler to the island to catch somewhat wherewithal to get his living. He espied King Badr Basim in his form of a white-robed bird, with red bill and legs, captivating the sight and bewildering the thought; and, looking thereat, said in himself, "Verily, yonder is a beautiful bird: never saw I its like in fairness or form." So he cast his net over Badr and taking him, carried him to the town, mentally resolved to sell him for a high price. On his way one of the townsfolk accosted him and said, "For how much this fowl, O fowler?" Quoth the fowler, "What wilt thou do with him an thou buy him?" Answered the other, "I will cut his throat and eat him;" whereupon said the birder, "Who could have the heart to kill this bird and eat him? Verily, I mean to present him to our King, who will give me more than thou wouldest give me and will not kill him, but will divert himself by gazing upon his beauty and grace, for in all my life, since I have been a fowler, I never saw his like among land game or water fowl. The utmost thou wouldst give me for him, however much thou covet him, would be a dirham, and, by Allah Almighty, I will not sell him!" Then he carried the bird up to the King's palace and when the King saw it, its beauty and grace pleased him and the red colour of its beak and legs. So he sent an eunuch to buy it, who accosted the fowler and said to him, "Wilt thou sell this bird?" Answered he, "Nay, 'tis a gift from me to the King"[333] So the eunuch carried the bird to the King and told him what the man had said; and he took it and gave the fowler ten dinars, whereupon he kissed ground and fared forth. Then the eunuch carried the bird to the palace and placing him in a fine cage, hung him up after setting meat and drink by him. When the King came down from the Divan, he said to the eunuch, "Where is the bird? Bring it to me, that I may look upon it; for, by Allah, 'tis beautiful!" So the eunuch brought the cage and

set it between the hands of the King, who looked and seeing the food untouched, said, "By Allah, I wis not what it will eat, that I may nourish it!" [293]Then he called for food and they laid the tables and the King ate. Now when the bird saw the flesh and meats and fruits and sweetmeats, he ate of all that was upon the trays before the King, whereat the Sovran and all the bystanders marvelled and the King said to his attendants, eunuchs and Mamelukes, "In all my life I never saw a bird eat as doth this bird!" Then he sent an eunuch to fetch his wife that she might enjoy looking upon the bird, and he went in to summon her and said, "O my lady, the King desireth thy presence, that thou mayst divert thyself with the sight of a bird he hath bought. When we set on the food, it flew down from its cage and perching on the table, ate of all that was thereon. So arise, O my lady, and solace thee with the sight for it is goodly of aspect and is a wonder of the wonders of the age." Hearing these words she came in haste; but, when she noted the bird, she veiled her face and turned to fare away. The King rose up and looking at her, asked, "Why dost thou veil thy face when there is none in presence save the women and eunuchs who wait on thee and thy husband?" Answered she, "O King, this bird is no bird, but a man like thyself." He rejoined, "Thou liest, this is too much of a jest. How should he be other than a bird?"; and she "O King, by Allah, I do not jest with thee nor do I tell thee aught but the truth; for verily this bird is King Badr Basim, son of King Shahriman, Lord of the land of the Persians, and his mother is Julnar the Sea-born."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King's wife said to the King, "Verily, this is no bird but a man like thyself: he is King Badr Basim son of King Shariman and his mother is Julnar the Sea-born," quoth the King, "And how came he in this shape?"; and quoth she, "Princess Jauharah, daughter of King Al-Samandal, hath enchanted him:" and told him all that had passed with King Badr Basim from first to last.[334] The King marvelled exceedingly at his wife's words and conjured her, on his life, to free Badr from his enchantment (for she was the notablest enchantress of her age), and not leave him in torment, [294]saying, "May Almighty Allah cut off Jauharah's hand, for a foul witch as she is! How little is her faith and how great her craft and perfidy!" Said the Queen, "Do thou say to him:—O Badr Basim, enter yonder closet!" So the King bade him enter the closet and he went in obediently. Then the Queen veiled her face and taking in her hand a cup of water,[335] entered the closet, where she pronounced over the water certain incomprehensible words ending with, "By the virtue of these mighty names and holy verses and by the majesty of Allah Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, the Quickener of the dead and Appointer of the means of daily bread and the terms determined, quit this thy form wherein thou art and return to the shape in which the Lord created thee!" Hardly had she made an end of her words, when the bird trembled

once and became a man; and the King saw before him a handsome youth, than whom on earth's face was none goodlier. But when King Badr Basim found himself thus restored to his own form he cried, "There is no god but *the* God and Mohammed is the Apostle of God! Glory be to the Creator of all creatures and Provider of their provision, and Ordainer of their life-terms preordained!" Then he kissed the King's hand and wished him long life, and the King kissed his head and said to him, "O Badr Basim, tell me thy history from commencement to conclusion." So he told him his whole tale, concealing naught; and the King marvelled thereat and said to him, "O Badr Basim, Allah hath saved thee from the spell: but what hath thy judgment decided and what thinkest thou to do?" Replied he, "O King of the Age, I desire of thy bounty that thou equip me a ship with a company of thy servants and all that is needful; for 'tis long since I have been absent and I dread lest the kingdom depart from me. And I misdoubt me my mother is dead of grief for my loss; and this doubt is the stronger for that she knoweth not what is come of me nor whether I am alive or dead. Wherefore, I beseech thee, O King, to crown thy favours to me by granting me what I seek." The King, after beholding the beauty and grace of Badr Basim and listening to his sweet speech, said, "I hear and obey." So he fitted him out a ship, to which he transported all that was needful 295 and which he manned with a company of his servants; and Badr Basim set sail in it, after having taken leave of the King. They sailed over the sea ten successive days with a favouring wind; but, on the eleventh day, the ocean became troubled with exceeding trouble, the ship rose and fell and the sailors were powerless to govern her. So they drifted at the mercy of the waves, till the craft neared a rock in mid-sea which fell upon her[336] and broke her up and all on board were drowned, save King Badr Basim who got astride one of the planks of the vessel, after having been nigh upon destruction. The plank ceased not to be borne by the set of the sea, whilst he knew not whither he went and had no means of directing its motion, as the wind and waves wrought for three whole days. But on the fourth the plank grounded with him on the sea-shore where he sighted a white city, as it were a dove passing white, builded upon a tongue of land that jutted out into the deep and it was goodly of ordinance, with high towers and lofty walls against which the waves beat. When Badr Basim saw this, he rejoiced with exceeding joy, for he was well-nigh dead of hunger and thirst, and dismounting from the plank, would have gone up the beach to the city; but there came down to him mules and asses and horses, in number as the sea-sands and fell to striking at him and staying him from landing. So he swam round to the back of the city, where he waded to shore and entering the place, found none therein and marvelled at this, saying, "Would I knew to whom doth this city belong, wherein is no lord nor any liege, and whence came these mules and asses and horses that hindered me from landing?" And he mused over his case. Then he walked on at hazard till he espied an old man, a grocer.[337] So he saluted him and the other returned his salam and seeing him to be a handsome young man, said to him, "O youth, whence comest thou and what brought thee to this city?" Badr told him his story; at

which the old man marvelled and said, “O my son, didst thou see any on thy way?” He replied, “Indeed, O my father, I wondered in good sooth to sight a city void of folk.” Quoth the 296 Shaykh, “O my son, come up into the shop, lest thou perish.” So Badr Basim went up into the shop and sat down; whereupon the old man set before him somewhat of food, saying, “O my son, enter the inner shop; glory be to Him who hath preserved thee from yonder she-Sathanas!” King Badr Basim was sore affrighted at the grocer’s words; but he ate his fill and washed his hands; then glanced at his host and said to him, “O my lord, what is the meaning of these words? Verily thou hast made me fearful of this city and its folk.” Replied the old man, “Know, O my son, that this is the City of the Magicians and its Queen is as she were a she-Satan, a sorceress and a mighty enchantress, passing crafty and perfidious exceedingly. All thou sawest of horses and mules and asses were once sons of Adam like thee and me; they were also strangers, for whoever entereth this city, being a young man like thyself, this miscreant witch taketh him and hometh him for forty days, after which she enchanteth him, and he becometh a mule or a horse or an ass, of those animals thou sawest on the sea-shore.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old grocer related to King Badr Basim the history of the enchantress ending with, “All these people hath she spelled; and, when it was thy intent to land they feared lest thou be transmewed like themselves; so they counselled thee by signs that said:—Land not, of their solicitude for thee, fearing that haply she should do with thee like as she had done with them. She possessed herself of this city and seized it from its citizens by sorcery and her name is Queen Láb, which being interpreted, meaneth in Arabic ’Almanac of the Sun.’”[338] When Badr Basim heard what the old man said, he was affrighted with sore affright and trembled like reed in wind saying in himself, “Hardly do I feel me free from the affliction wherein I was by reason of sorcery, when Destiny casteth me into yet sorrier 297 case!” And he fell a-musing over his condition and that which had betided him. When the Shaykh looked at him and saw the violence of his terror, he said to him, “O my son, come, sit at the threshold of the shop and look upon yonder creatures and upon their dress and complexion and that wherein they are by reason of gramarye and dread not; for the Queen and all in the city love and tender me and will not vex my heart or trouble my mind.” So King Badr Basim came out and sat at the shop-door, looking out upon the folk; and there passed by him a world of creatures without number. But when the people saw him, they accosted the grocer and said to him, “O elder, is this thy captive and thy prey gotten in these days?” The old man replied, “He is my brother’s son, I heard that his father was dead; so I sent for him and brought him here that I might quench with him the fire of my home-sickness.” Quoth they, “Verily, he is a comely youth; but we fear for him from Queen Lab, lest

she turn on thee with treachery and take him from thee, for she loveth handsome young men." Quoth the Shaykh, "The Queen will not gainsay my commandment, for she loveth and tendereth me; and when she shall know that he is my brother's son, she will not molest him or afflict me in him neither trouble my heart on his account." Then King Badr Basim abode some months with the grocer, eating and drinking, and the old man loved him with exceeding love. One day, as he sat in the shop according to his custom, behold, there came up a thousand eunuchs, with drawn swords and clad in various kinds of raiment and girt with jewelled girdles: all rode Arabian steeds and bore in baldrick Indian blades. They saluted the grocer, as they passed his shop and were followed by a thousand damsels like moons, clad in various raiments of silks and satins fringed with gold and embroidered with jewels of sorts, and spears were slung to their shoulders. In their midst rode a damsel mounted on a Rabite mare, saddled with a saddle of gold set with various kinds of jewels and jacinths; and they reached in a body the Shaykh's shop. The damsels saluted him and passed on, till, lo and behold! up came Queen Lab, in great state, and seeing King Badr Basim sitting in the shop, as he were the moon at its full, was amazed at his beauty and loveliness and became passionately enamoured of him, and distraught with desire of him. So she alighted and sitting down by King Badr Basim said to the old man, "Whence hadst thou this handsome one?"; and the Shaykh replied, "He is my brother's son, and is lately come to 298 me." Quoth Lab, "Let him be with me this night, that I may talk with him;" and quoth the old man, "Wilt thou take him from me and not enchant him?" Said she, "Yes," and said he, "Swear to me." So she sware to him that she would not do him any hurt or ensorcell him, and bidding bring him a fine horse, saddled and bridled with a golden bridle and decked with trappings all of gold set with jewels, gave the old man a thousand dinars, saying, "Use this."[339] Then she took Badr Basim and carried him off, as he were the full moon on its fourteenth night, whilst all the folk, seeing his beauty, were grieved for him and said, "By Allah, verily, this youth deserveth not to be bewitched by yonder sorceress, the accursed!" Now King Badr Basim heard all they said, but was silent, committing his case to Allah Almighty, till they came to——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Badr Basim ceased not faring with Queen Lab and her suite till they came to her palace-gate, where the Emirs and eunuchs and Lords of the realm took foot and she bade the Chamberlains dismiss her Officers and Grandees, who kissed ground and went away, whilst she entered the palace with Badr Basim and her eunuchs and women. Here he found a place, whose like he had never seen at all, for it was builded of gold and in its midst was a great basin brimfull of water midmost a vast flower-garden. He looked at the garden and saw it abounding in birds of various kinds and colours, warbling in all

manner tongues and voices, pleasurable and plaintive. And everywhere he beheld great state and dominion and said, "Glory be to God, who of His bounty and long-suffering provideth those who serve other than Himself!" The Queen sat down at a latticed window overlooking the garden on a couch of ivory, whereon was a high bed, and King Badr Basim seated himself by her side. She kissed him and pressing him to her breast, bade her women bring a tray of food. So they brought a tray of red gold, inlaid with pearls and jewels and spread with all manner of viands and he and she ate, till they 299 were satisfied, and washed their hands; after which the waiting-women set on flagons of gold and silver and glass, together with all kinds of flowers and dishes of dried fruits. Then the Queen summoned the singing-women and there came ten maidens, as they were moons, hending all manner of musical instruments. Queen Lab crowned a cup and drinking it off, filled another and passed it to King Badr Basim, who took it and drank; and they ceased not to drink till they had their sufficiency. Then she bade the damsels sing, and they sang all manner modes till it seemed to Badr Basim as if the palace danced with him for joy. His sense was ecstasied and his breast broadened, and he forgot his strangerhood and said in himself, "Verily, this Queen is young and beautiful[340] and I will never leave her; for her kingdom is vaster than my kingdom and she is fairer than Princess Jauharah." So he ceased not to drink with her till eventide came, when they lighted the lamps and waxen candles and diffused censer-perfumes; nor did they leave drinking, till they were both drunken, and the singing-women sang the while. Then Queen Lab, being in liquor, rose from her seat and lay down on a bed and dismissing her women called to Badr Basim to come and sleep by her side. So he lay with her, in all delight of life till the morning.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Queen awoke she repaired to the Hammam-bath in the palace, King Badr Basim being with her, and they bathed and were purified; after which she clad him in the finest of raiment and called for the service of wine. So the waiting women brought the drinking-gear and they drank. Presently, the Queen arose and taking Badr Basim by the hand, sat down with him on chairs and bade bring food, whereof they ate, and washed their hands. Then the damsels fetched the drinking-gear and fruits and flowers 300 and confections, and they ceased not to eat and drink,[341] whilst the singing-girls sang various airs till the evening. They gave not over eating and drinking and merry-making for a space of forty days, when the Queen said to him, "O Badr Basim, say me whether is the more pleasant, this place or the shop of thine uncle the grocer?" He replied, "By Allah, O Queen, this is the pleasanter, for my uncle is but a beggarly man, who vendeth pot-herbs." She laughed at his words and the twain lay together in the pleasantest of case till the morning, when King Badr Basim awoke from sleep and found not Queen Lab by his side, so he said, "Would Heaven I knew where can she have gone!" And indeed

he was troubled at her absence and perplexed about the case, for she stayed away from him a great while and did not return; so he donned his dress and went seeking her but not finding her, and he said to himself, “Haply, she is gone to the flower-garden.” Thereupon he went out into the garden and came to a running rill beside which he saw a white she-bird and on the stream-bank a tree full of birds of various colours, and he stood and watched the birds without their seeing him. And behold, a black bird flew down upon that white she-bird and fell to billing her pigeon-fashion, then he leapt on her and trod her three consecutive times, after which the bird changed and became a woman. Badr looked at her and lo! it was Queen Lab. So he knew that the black bird was a man transmewed and that she was enamoured of him and had transformed herself into a bird, that he might enjoy her; wherefore jealousy got hold upon him and he was wroth with the Queen because of the black bird. Then he returned to his place and lay down on the carpet-bed and after an hour or so she came back to him and fell to kissing him and jesting with him; but being sore incensed against her he answered her not a word. She saw what was to do with him and was assured that he had witnessed what befel her when she was a white bird and was trodden by the black bird; yet she discovered naught to him but concealed what ailed her. When he had done her need, he said to her, “O Queen, I would have thee give me leave to go to my uncle’s shop, for I long after him and have not 301 seen him these forty days.” She replied, “Go to him but tarry not from me, for I cannot brook to be parted from thee, nor can I endure without thee an hour.” He said, “I hear and I obey,” and mounting, rode to the shop of the Shaykh, the grocer, who welcomed him and rose to him and embracing him said to him, “How hast thou fared with yonder idolatress?” He replied, “I was well in health and happiness till this last night,” and told him what had passed in the garden with the black bird.[342] Now when the old man heard his words, he said, “Beware of her, for know that the birds upon the trees were all young men and strangers, whom she loved and enchanted and turned into birds. That black bird thou sawest was one of her Mamelukes whom she loved with exceeding love, till he cast his eyes upon one of her women. Wherefore she changed him into a black bird;”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Badr Basim acquainted the old grocer with all the doings of Queen Lab and what he had seen of her proceedings, the Shaykh gave him to know that all the birds upon the tree were young men and strangers whom she had enchanted, and that the black bird was one of her Mamelukes whom she had transmewed. “And,” continued the Shaykh, “whenas she lusteth after him she transformeth herself into a she-bird that he may enjoy her, for she still loveth him with passionate love. When she found that thou knewest of her case, she plotted evil against thee, for she loveth thee not wholly. But no harm shall

betide thee from her, so long as I protect thee; therefore fear nothing; for I am a Moslem, by name Abdallah, and there is none in my day more magical than I; yet do I not make use of gramarye save upon constraint. Many a time have I put to naught the sorceries of yonder accursed and delivered folk from her, and I care not for her, because she can do me no hurt: nay, she feareth me with exceeding fear, as do all in the city who, like her, are magicians and serve the fire, not the Omnipotent Sire. So to-morrow, come 302thou to me and tell me what she doth with thee; for this very night she will cast about to destroy thee, and I will tell thee how thou shalt do with her, that thou mayst save thyself from her malice." Then King Badr Basim farewelled the Shaykh and returned to the Queen whom he found awaiting him. When she saw him, she rose and seating him and welcoming him brought him meat and drink and the two ate till they had enough and washed their hands; after which she called for wine and they drank till the night was well nigh half spent, when she plied him with cup after cup till he was drunken and lost sense[343] and wit. When she saw him thus, she said to him, "I conjure thee by Allah and by whatso thou worshippest, if I ask thee a question wilt thou inform me rightly and answer me truly?" And he being drunken, answered, "Yes, O my lady." Quoth she, "O my lord and light of mine eyes, when thou awokest last night and foundest me not, thou soughtest me, till thou sawest me in the garden, under the guise of a white she-bird, and also thou sawest the black bird leap on me and tread me. Now I will tell the truth of this matter. That black bird was one of my Mamelukes, whom I loved with exceeding love; but one day he cast his eyes upon a certain of my slave-girls, wherefore jealousy gat hold upon me and I transformed him by my spells into a black bird and her I slew. But now I cannot endure without him a single hour; so, whenever I lust after him, I change myself into a she-bird and go to him, that he may leap me and enjoy me, even as thou hast seen. Art thou not therefore incensed against me, because of this, albeit, by the virtue of Fire and Light, Shade and Heat, I love thee more than ever and have made thee my portion of the world?" He answered (being drunken), "Thy conjecture of the cause of my rage is correct, and it had no reason other than this." With this she embraced him and kissed him and made great show of love to him; then she lay down to sleep and he by her side. Presently, about midnight she rose from the carpet-bed and King Badr Basim was awake; but he feigned sleep and watched stealthily to see what she would do. She took out of a red bag a something red, which she planted a-middlemost the chamber, and it became a stream, running like the sea; after which she took a handful of barley and strewing it on the ground, watered it with water from 303the river; whereupon it became wheat in the ear, and she gathered it and ground it into flour. Then she set it aside and returning to bed, lay down by Badr Basim till morning when he arose and washed his face and asked her leave to visit the Shaykh his uncle. She gave him permission and he repaired to Abdallah and told him what had passed. The old man laughed and said, "By Allah, this miscreant witch plotteth mischief against

thee; but reck thou not of her ever!" Then he gave him a pound of parched corn[344] and said to him, "Take this with thee and know that, when she seeth it, she will ask thee:—What is this and what wilt thou do with it? Do thou answer:—Abundance of good things is good; and eat of it. Then will she bring forth to thee parched grain of her own and say to thee:—Eat of this Sawík; and do thou feign to her that thou eatest thereof, but eat of this instead, and beware and have a care lest thou eat of hers even a grain; for, an thou eat so much as a grain thereof, her spells will have power over thee and she will enchant thee and say to thee:—Leave this form of a man. Whereupon thou wilt quit thine own shape for what shape she will. But, an thou eat not thereof, her enchantments will be null and void and no harm will betide thee therefrom; whereat she will be shamed with shame exceeding and say to thee:—I did but jest with thee! Then will she make a show of love and fondness to thee; but this will all be but hypocrisy in her and craft. And do thou also make a show of love to her and say to her:—O my lady and light of mine eyes, eat of this parched barley and see how delicious it is. And if she eat thereof, though it be but a grain, take water in thy hand and throw it in her face, saying:—Quit this human form (for what form soever thou wilt have her take). Then leave her and come to me and I will counsel thee what to do." So Badr Basim took leave of him and returning to the palace, went in to the Queen, who said to him, "Welcome and well come and good cheer to thee!" And she rose and kissed him, saying, "Thou hast tarried long from me, O my lord." He replied, "I have been with my uncle, and he gave me to eat of this Sawik." Quoth she, "We have better than that." Then she 304 laid his parched Sawik in one plate and hers in another and said to him, "Eat of this, for 'tis better than thine." So he feigned to eat of it and when she thought he had done so, she took water in her hand and sprinkled him therewith, saying, "Quit this form, O thou gallows-bird, thou miserable, and take that of a mule one-eyed and foul of favour." But he changed not; which when she saw, she arose and went up to him and kissed him between the eyes, saying, "O my beloved, I did but jest with thee; bear me no malice because of this." Quoth he, "O my lady, I bear thee no whit of malice; nay, I am assured that thou lovest me: but eat of this my parched barley." So she eat a mouthful of Abdallah's Sawik; but no sooner had it settled in her stomach than she was convulsed; and King Badr Basim took water in his palm and threw it in her face, saying, "Quit this human form and take that of a dapple mule." No sooner had he spoken than she found herself changed into a she-mule, whereupon the tears rolled down her cheeks and she fell to rubbing her muzzle against his feet. Then he would have bridled her, but she would not take the bit; so he left her and, going to the grocer, told him what had passed. Abdallah brought out for him a bridle and bade him rein her forthwith. So he took it to the palace, and when she saw him, she came up to him and he set the bit in her mouth and mounting her, rode forth to find the Shaykh. But when the old man saw her, he rose and said to her, "Almighty Allah confound thee, O accursed woman!" Then quoth he to Badr, "O my son, there is no more tarrying for thee in this city; so ride her and fare with her whither thou wilt

and beware lest thou commit the bridle[345] to any." King Badr thanked him and farewelling him, fared on three days, without ceasing, till he drew near another city and there met him an old man, gray-headed and comely, who said to him, "Whence comest thou, O my son?" Badr replied, "From the city of this witch"; and the old man said, "Thou art my guest to-night." He consented and went with him; but by the way behold, they met an old woman, who wept when she saw the mule, 305 and said, "There is no god but *the* God! Verily, this mule resembleth my son's she-mule, which is dead, and my heart acheth for her; so, Allah upon thee, O my lord, do thou sell her to me!" He replied, "By Allah, O my mother, I cannot sell her." But she cried, "Allah upon thee, do not refuse my request, for my son will surely be a dead man except I buy him this mule." And she importuned him, till he exclaimed, "I will not sell her save for a thousand dinars," saying in himself, "Whence should this old woman get a thousand gold pieces?" Thereupon she brought out from her girdle a purse containing a thousand ducats, which when King Badr Basim saw, he said, "O my mother, I did but jest with thee; I cannot sell her." But the old man looked at him and said, "O my son, in this city none may lie, for whoso lieth they put to death." So King Badr Basim lighted down from the mule.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Badr Basim dismounted from and delivered the mule to the old woman, she drew the bit from her mouth and, taking water in her hand, sprinkled the mule therewith, saying, "O my daughter, quit this shape for that form wherein thou wast aforetime!" Upon this she was straightway restored to her original semblance and the two women embraced and kissed each other. So King Badr Basim knew that the old woman was Queen Lab's mother and that he had been tricked and would have fled; when, lo! the old woman whistled a loud whistle and her call was obeyed by an Ifrit as he were a great mountain, whereat Badr was affrighted and stood still. Then the old woman mounted on the Ifrit's back, taking her daughter behind her and King Badr Basim before her, and the Ifrit flew off with them; nor was it a full hour ere they were in the palace of Queen Lab, who sat down on the throne of kingship and said to Badr, "Gallows-bird that thou art, now am I come hither and have attained to that I desired and soon will I show thee how I will do with thee and with yonder old man the grocer! How many favours have I shown him! Yet he doth me frowardness; for thou hast not attained thine end but by means of him." Then she took water and sprinkled him therewith, saying, 306 "Quit the shape wherein thou art for the form of a foul-favoured fowl, the foulest of all fowls; and she set him in a cage and cut off from him meat and drink;" but one of her women seeing this cruelty, took compassion on him and gave him food and water without her knowledge. One day, the damsel took her mistress at unawares and going forth the palace, repaired to the old grocer, to whom she told the whole

case, saying, “Queen Lab is minded to make an end of thy brother’s son.” The Shaykh thanked her and said, “There is no help but that I take the city from her and make thee Queen thereof in her stead.” Then he whistled a loud whistle and there came forth to him an Ifrit with four wings, to whom he said, “Take up this damsel and carry her to the city of Julnar the Sea-born and her mother Faráshah[346] for they twain are the most powerful magicians on face of earth.” And he said to the damsel, “When thou comest thither, tell them that King Badr Basim is Queen Lab’s captive.” Then the Ifrit took up his load and, flying off with her, in a little while set her down upon the terrace roof of Queen Julnar’s palace. So she descended and going in to the Queen, kissed the earth and told her what had passed to her son, first and last, whereupon Julnar rose to her and entreated her with honour and thanked her. Then she let beat the drums in the city and acquainted her lieges and the lords of her realm with the good news that King Badr Basim was found; after which she and her mother Farashah and her brother Salih assembled all the tribes of the Jinn and the troops of the main; for the Kings of the Jinn obeyed them since the taking of King Al-Samandal. Presently they all flew up into the air and lighting down on the city of the sorceress, sacked the town and the palace and slew all the Unbelievers therein in the twinkling of an eye. Then said Julnar to the damsel, “Where is my son?” And the slave-girl brought her the cage and signing to the bird within, cried, “This is thy son.” So Julnar took him forth of the cage and sprinkled him with water, saying, “Quit this shape for the form wherein thou wast aforetime;” nor had she made an end of her speech ere he shook and became a man as before; whereupon his mother, seeing him restored to human shape, embraced him and he wept with sore weeping. On like wise did his uncle Salih 307 and his grandmother and the daughters of his uncle and fell to kissing his hands and feet. Then Julnar sent for Shaykh Abdallah and thanking him for his kind dealing with her son, married him to the damsel, whom he had despatched to her with news of him, and made him King of the city. Moreover, she summoned those who survived of the citizens (and they were Moslems), and made them swear fealty to him and take the oath of loyalty, whereto they replied, “Hearkening and obedience!” Then she and her company farewelled him and returned to their own capital. The townsfolk came out to meet them, with drums beating, and decorated the place three days and held high festival, of the greatness of their joy for the return of their King Badr Basim. After this Badr said to his mother, “O my mother, naught remains but that I marry and we be all united.” She replied, “Right is thy rede, O my son, but wait till we ask who befitteth thee among the daughters of the Kings.” And his grandmother Farashah, and the daughters of both his uncles said, “O Badr Basim, we will help thee to win thy wish forthright.” Then each of them arose and fared forth questing in the lands, whilst Julnar sent out her waiting women on the necks of Ifrits, bidding them leave not a city nor a King’s palace without noting all the handsome girls that were therein. But, when King Badr Basim saw the trouble they were taking in this matter, he said to Julnar, “O my mother, leave this thing, for none will content me save Jauharah, daughter of King

Al-Samandal; for that she is indeed a jewel,[347] according to her name." Replied Julnar, "I know that which thou seekest;" and bade forthright bring Al-Samandal the King. As soon as he was present, she sent for Badr Basim and acquainted him with the King's coming, whereupon he went in to him. Now when Al-Samandal was aware of his presence, he rose to him and saluted him and bade him welcome; and King Badr Basim demanded of him his daughter Jauharah in marriage. Quoth he, "She is thine handmaid and at thy service and disposition," and despatched some of his suite bidding them seek her abode and, after telling her that her sire was in the hands of King Badr Basim, to bring her forthright. So they flew up into the air and disappeared and they returned after a while, with the Princess who, as soon as she saw her father, went up to him and threw her arms round his neck. Then looking at her he said, "O my 308 daughter, know that I have given thee in wedlock to this magnanimous Sovran, and valiant lion King Badr Basim, son of Queen Julnar the Sea-born, for that he is the goodliest of the folk of his day and most powerful and the most exalted of them in degree and the noblest in rank; he befitteth none but thee and thou none but him." Answered she, "I may not gainsay thee, O my sire; do as thou wilt, for indeed chagrin and despite are at an end, and I am one of his handmaids." So they summoned the Kazi and the witnesses who drew up the marriage-contract between King Badr Basim and the Princess Jauharah, and the citizens decorated the city and beat the drums of rejoicing, and they released all who were in the jails, whilst the King clothed the widows and the orphans and bestowed robes of honour upon the Lords of the Realm and Emirs and Grandees: and they made bride-feasts and held high festival night and morn ten days, at the end of which time they displayed the bride, in nine different dresses, before King Badr Basim who bestowed an honourable robe upon King Al-Samandal and sent him back to his country and people and kinsfolk. And they ceased not from living the most delectable of life and the most solaceful of days, eating and drinking and enjoying every luxury, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of Societies; and this is the end of their story,[348] may Allah have mercy on them all! Moreover, O auspicious King, a tale is also told anent

32- HASAN OF BASSORAH.[5]

There was once of days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, a merchant, who dwelt in the land of Bassorah and who owned two sons and wealth galore. But in due time Allah, the All-hearing the All-knowing, decreed that he should be admitted to the mercy of the Most High; so he died, and his two sons laid him out and buried him, after which they divided his gardens and estates equally between them and of his portion each one opened a shop.[6] Presently the elder son, Hasan hight, a youth of passing beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace, betook himself to the company of lewd folk, women and low boys, frolicking with them in gardens and feasting them with meat and wine for months together and occupying himself not with his business like as his father had done, for that he exulted in the abundance of his good. After some time he had wasted all his ready money, so he sold all his father's lands and houses and played the wastrel until there remained in his hand nothing, neither little nor muchel, nor was one of his comrades left who knew him. He abode thus anhungred, he and his widowed mother, three days, and on the fourth day, as he walked along, unknowing whither to wend, there met him a man of his father's friends, who questioned him of his case. He told him what had befallen him and the other said, "O my son, I have a brother who is a goldsmith; an thou wilt, thou shalt be with him and learn his craft and become skilled therein." Hasan consented and accompanied him to his brother, to whom he commended him, saying, "In very sooth this is my son; do thou 8teach him for my sake." So Hasan abode with the goldsmith and busied himself with the craft; and Allah opened to him the door of gain and in due course he set up shop for himself. One day, as he sat in his booth in the bazar, there came up to him an 'Ajamí, a foreigner, a Persian, with a great white beard and a white turband[7] on his head, having the semblance of a merchant who, after saluting him, looked at his handiwork and examined it knowingly. It pleased him and he shook his head, saying, "By Allah, thou art a cunning goldsmith! What may be thy name?" "Hasan," replied the other, shortly.[8] The Persian continued to look at his wares, whilst Hasan read in an old book[9] he hent in hand and the folk were taken up with his beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace, till the hour of mid-afternoon prayer, when the shop became clear of people and the Persian accosted the young man, saying, "O my son, thou art a comely youth! What book is that? Thou hast no sire and

I have no son, and I know an art, than which there is no goodlier in the world."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Persian accosted the young man saying, "O my son, thou art a comely youth! Thou hast no sire and I have no son, and I know an art than which there is no goodlier in the world. Many have sought of me instruction therein, but I consented not to instruct any of them in it; yet hath my soul consented that I teach it to thee, for thy love hath gotten hold upon my heart and I will make thee my son and set up between thee and poverty a barrier, so shalt thou be quit of this handicraft and toil no more with hammer and anvil,[10] charcoal and fire." Hasan asked, "O my lord and when 9 wilt thou teach me this?"; and the Persian answered, "To-morrow, Inshallah, I will come to thee betimes and make thee in thy presence fine gold of this copper." Whereupon Hasan rejoiced and sat talking with the Persian till nightfall, when he took leave of him and going in to his mother, saluted her with the salam and ate with her; but he was dazed, without memory or reason, for that the stranger's words had gotten hold upon his heart. So she questioned him and he told her what had passed between himself and the Persian, which when she heard, her heart fluttered and she strained him to her bosom, saying, "O my son, beware of hearkening to the talk of the folk, and especially of the Persians, and obey them not in aught; for they are sharpers and tricksters, who profess the art of alchemy[11] and swindle people and take their money and devour it in vain." Replied Hasan, "O my mother, we are paupers and have nothing he may covet, that he should put a cheat on us. Indeed, this Persian is a right worthy Shaykh and the signs of virtue are manifest on him; Allah hath inclined his heart to me and he hath adopted me to son." She was silent in her chagrin, and he passed the night without sleep, his heart being full of what the Persian had said to him; nor did slumber visit him for the excess of his joy therein. But when morning morrowed, he rose and taking the keys, opened the shop, whereupon behold, the Persian accosted him. Hasan stood up to him and would have kissed his hands; but he forbade him from this and suffered it not, saying, "O Hasan, set on the crucible and apply the bellows."[12] So he did as the stranger bade him and lighted the charcoal. Then said the Persian, "O my son, hast thou any copper?" and he replied, "I have a broken platter." So he bade him work the shears[13] and cut it into bittocks and cast it into the crucible and blow up the fire with the bellows, till the copper became liquid, when he put hand to turband and took 10 therefrom a folded paper and opening it, sprinkled thereout into the pot about half a drachm of somewhat like yellow Kohl or eye-powder.[14] Then he bade Hasan blow upon it with the bellows, and he did so, till the contents of the crucible became a lump of gold.[15] When the youth saw this, he was stupefied and at his wits' end for the joy he felt and taking the

ingot from the crucible handled it and tried it with the file and found it pure gold of the finest quality: whereupon his reason fled and he was dazed with excess of delight and bent over the Persian's hand to kiss it. But he forbade him, saying, "Art thou married?" and when the youth replied "No!" he said, "Carry this ingot to the market and sell it and take the price in haste and speak not." So Hasan went down into the market and gave the bar to the broker, who took it and rubbed it upon the touchstone and found it pure gold. So they opened the biddings at ten thousand dirhams and the merchants bid against one another for it up to fifteen thousand dirhams,[16] at which price he sold it and taking the money, went home and told his mother all that had passed, saying, "O my mother, I have learnt this art and mystery." But she laughed at him, saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan the goldsmith told his mother what he had done with the Ajami and cried, "I have learnt this art and mystery," she laughed at him, saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"; and she was silent for vexation. Then of his ignorance, he took a metal mortar and returning to the shop, laid it before the Persian, who was still sitting there and who asked him, "O my son, what wilt thou do with this mortar?" Hasan answered, "Let us put it in the fire, and make of it lumps of gold." The Persian laughed and rejoined, 11"O my son, art thou Jinn-mad that thou wouldst go down into the market with two ingots of gold in one day? Knowest thou not that the folk would suspect us and our lives would be lost? Now, O my son, an I teach thee this craft, thou must practise it but once in each twelvemonth; for that will suffice thee from year to year." Cried Hasan, "True, O my lord," and sitting down in his open shop, set on the crucible and cast more charcoal on the fire. Quoth the Persian, "What wilt thou, O my son?"; and quoth Hasan, "Teach me this craft." "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" exclaimed the Persian, laughing; "Verily, O my son, thou art little of wit and in nowise fitted for this noble craft. Did ever any during all his life learn this art on the beaten way or in the bazars? If we busy ourselves with it here, the folk will say of us, These practise alchemy; and the magistrates will hear of us, and we shall lose our lives.[17] Wherefore, O my son, an thou desire to learn this mystery forthright, come thou with me to my house." So Hasan barred his shop and went with that Ajami; but by the way he remembered his mother's words and thinking in himself a thousand thoughts he stood still, with bowed head. The Persian turned and seeing him thus standing laughed and said to him, "Art thou mad? What! I in my heart purpose thee good and thou misdoubtest I will harm thee!" presently adding, "But, if thou fear to go with me to my house, I will go with thee to thine and teach thee there." Hasan replied, "'Tis well, O uncle," and

the Persian rejoined, “Go thou before me.” So Hasan led the way to his own house, and entering, told his mother of the Persian’s coming, for he had left him standing at the door. She ordered the house for them and when she had made an end of furnishing and adorning it, her son bade her go to one of the neighbours’ lodgings. So she left her home to them and wended her way, whereupon Hasan brought in the Persian, who entered after asking leave. Then he took in hand a dish and going to the market, returned with food, which he set before the Persian, saying, “Eat, O my lord, that between us there may be bread and salt and may Almighty Allah do vengeance upon the traitor to bread and salt!” The Persian replied with a smile, “True, O my son! Who knoweth the virtue 12 and worth of bread and salt?”[18] Then he came forward and ate with Hasan, till they were satisfied; after which the Ajami said, “O my son Hasan, bring us somewhat of sweetmeats.” So Hasan went to the market, rejoicing in his words, and returned with ten saucers[19] of sweetmeats, of which they both ate and the Persian said, “May Allah abundantly requite thee, O my son! It is the like of thee with whom folk company and to whom they discover their secrets and teach what may profit him!”[20] Then said he, “O Hasan bring the gear.” But hardly did Hasan hear these words than he went forth like a colt let out to grass in spring-tide, and hastening to the shop, fetched the apparatus and set it before the Persian, who pulled out a piece of paper and said, “O Hasan, by the bond of bread and salt, wert thou not dearer to me than my son, I would not let thee into the mysteries of this art, for I have none of the Elixir[21] left save what is in this paper; but by and by I will compound the simples whereof it is composed and will make it before thee. Know, O my son Hasan, that to every ten pounds of copper thou must set half a drachm of that which is in this paper, and the whole ten will presently become unalloyed virgin gold;” presently adding, “O my son, O Hasan, there are in this paper three ounces,[22] Egyptian measure, and when it is spent, I will make thee other and more.” Hasan took the packet and finding therein a yellow powder, finer than the first, said to the Persian, “O my lord, what is the name of this substance and where is it found and how is it made?” But he laughed, longing to get hold of the youth, and replied, “Of what dost thou question? Indeed thou art a froward boy! Do thy work and hold thy peace.” So Hasan arose and fetching a brass platter from the house, shore it in shreds and threw it into the melting-pot; then 13 he scattered on it a little of the powder from the paper and it became a lump of pure gold. When he saw this, he joyed with exceeding joy and was filled with amazement and could think of nothing save the gold; but, whilst he was occupied with taking up the lumps of metal from the melting-pot, the Persian pulled out of his turband in haste a packet of Cretan Bhang, which if an elephant smelt, he would sleep from night to night, and cutting off a little thereof, put it in a piece of the sweetmeat. Then said he, “O Hasan, thou art become my very son and dearer to me than soul and wealth, and I have a daughter whose like never have eyes beheld for beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace. Now I see that thou befittest none but her and

she none but thee; wherefore, if it be Allah's will, I will marry thee to her." Replied Hasan, "I am thy servant and whatso good thou dost with me will be a deposit with the Almighty!" and the Persian rejoined, "O my son, have fair patience and fair shall betide thee." Therewith he gave him the piece of sweetmeat and he took it and kissing his hand, put it in his mouth, knowing not what was hidden for him in the after time for only the Lord of Futurity knoweth the Future. But hardly had he swallowed it, when he fell down, head foregoing heels, and was lost to the world; whereupon the Persian, seeing him in such calamitous case, rejoiced exceedingly and cried, "Thou has fallen into my snares, O gallows-carrion, O dog of the Arabs! This many a year have I sought thee and now I have found thee, O Hasan!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan the goldsmith ate the bit of sweetmeat given to him by the Ajami and fell fainting to the ground, the Persian rejoiced exceedingly and cried, "This many a year have I sought thee and now I have found thee!" Then he girt himself and pinioned Hasan's arms and binding his feet to his hands laid him in a chest, which he emptied to that end and locked it upon him. Moreover, he cleared another chest and laying therein all Hasan's valuables, together with the piece of the first gold-lump and the second ingot which he had made locked it with a padlock. Then he ran to the market and fetching a porter, took up the two chests and made off with them to a place within sight of the city, where he set them 14down on the sea-shore, hard by a vessel at anchor there. Now this craft had been freighted and fitted out by the Persian and her master was awaiting him; so, when the crew saw him, they came to him and bore the two chests on board. Then the Persian called out to the Rais or Captain, saying, "Up and let us be off, for I have done my desire and won my wish." So the skipper sang out to the sailors, saying, "Weigh anchor and set sail!" And the ship put out to sea with a fair wind. So far concerning the Persian; but as regards Hasan's mother, she awaited him till supper-time but heard neither sound nor news of him; so she went to the house and finding it thrown open, entered and saw none therein and missed the two chests and their valuables; wherefore she knew that her son was lost and that doom had overtaken him; and she buffeted her face and rent her raiment crying out and wailing and saying, "Alas, my son, ah! Alas, the fruit of my vitals, ah!" And she recited these couplets:—

My patience fails me and grows anxiety; ✿ And with your absence growth of grief I see.

By Allah, Patience went what time ye went! ✿ Loss of all Hope how suffer patiently?

When lost my loved one how can' joy I sleep? ✿ Who shall enjoy such life of low degree?

Thou'rt gone and, desolating house and home, ✿ Hast fouled the fount erst flowed from foulness free:

Thou wast my fame, my grace 'mid folk, my stay; ✿ Mine aid wast thou in all adversity!

Perish the day, when from mine eyes they bore ✿ My friend, till sight I thy return to me!

And she ceased not to weep and wail till the dawn, when the neighbours came in to her and asked her of her son, and she told them what had befallen him with the Persian, assured that she should never, never see him again. Then she went round about the house, weeping, and wending she espied two lines written upon the wall; so she sent for a scholar, who read them to her; and they were these:—

Leyla's phantom came by night, when drowsiness had overcome me, towards morning while my companions were sleeping in the desert,

But when we awoke to behold the nightly phantom, I saw the air vacant and the place of visitation was distant.[23]

15 When Hasan's mother heard these lines, she shrieked and said, "Yes, O my son! Indeed, the house is desolate and the visitation-place is distant!" Then the neighbours took leave of her and after they had prayed that she might be vouchsafed patience and speedy reunion with her son went away; but she ceased not to weep all watches of the night and tides of the day and she built amiddlemost the house a tomb whereon she let write Hasan's name and the date of his loss, and thenceforward she quitted it not, but made a habit of incessantly biding thereby night and day. Such was her case; but touching her son Hasan and the Ajami, this Persian was a Magian, who hated Moslems with exceeding hatred and destroyed all who fell into his power. He was a lewd and filthy villain, a hankerer after alchemy, an astrologer and a hunter of hidden hoards, such an one as he of whom quoth the poet:—

A dog, dog-fathered, by dog-grandsire bred; ✿ No good in dog from dog race issued:

E'en for a gnat no resting-place gives he ✿ Who is composed of seed by all men shed.[24]

The name of this accursed was Bahrám the Guebre, and he was wont, every year, to take a Moslem and cut his throat for his own purposes. So, when he had carried out his plot against Hasan the goldsmith, they sailed on from dawn till dark, when the ship made fast to the shore for the night, and at sunrise, when they set sail again, Bahram bade his black slaves and white servants bring him the chest wherein were Hasan. They did so, and he opened it and taking out the young man, made him sniff up vinegar and blew a powder into his nostrils. Hasan sneezed and vomited the Bhang; then, opening his eyes, he looked about him right and left and found himself amiddleward the sea on aboard a ship in full sail, and saw the Persian sitting by him; wherefore he knew that the accursed Magian had put a cheat on him and that he had fallen into the very peril against which his mother had warned him. So he spake the saying which shall never shame the sayer, to wit, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily, we are Allah's and unto Him we are returning! O my God, be Thou gracious to me in Thine appointment and give me patience to endure this Thine 16 affliction, O Lord of the three Worlds!" Then he turned to the Persian and bespoke him softly, saying, "O my father, what fashion is this and where is the covenant of bread and salt and the oath thou swarest to me?" But Bahram stared at him and replied, "O dog, knoweth the like of me bond of bread and

salt? I have slain of youths like thee a thousand, save one, and thou shalt make up the thousand." And he cried out at him and Hasan was silent, knowing that the Fate-shaft had shot him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan beheld himself fallen into the hands of the damned Persian he bespoke him softly but gained naught thereby for the Ajami cried out at him in wrath, so he was silent, knowing that the Fate-shaft had shot him. Then the accursed bade loose his pinion-bonds and they gave him a little water to drink, whilst the Magian laughed and said, "By the virtue of the Fire and the Light and the Shade and the Heat, methought not thou wouldst fall into my nets! But the Fire empowered me over thee and helped me to lay hold upon thee, that I might win my wish and return and make thee a sacrifice[25], to her[26] so she may accept of me." Quoth Hasan, "Thou hast foully betrayed bread and salt"; whereupon the Magus raised his hand and dealt him such a buffet that he fell and, biting the deck with his fore-teeth, swooned away, whilst the tears trickled down his cheeks. Then the Guebre bade his servants light him a fire and Hasan said, "What wilt thou do with it?" Replied the Magian, "This is the Fire, lady of light and sparkles bright! This it is I worship, and if thou wilt worship her even as I, verily I will give thee half my monies and marry thee to my maiden daughter." Thereupon Hasan cried angrily at him, "Woe to thee! Thou art a miscreant Magian who to Fire dost pray in lieu of the King of Omnipotent sway, Creator of Night and Day; 17 and this is naught but a calamity among creeds!" At this the Magian was wroth and said to him, "Wilt thou not then conform with me, O dog of the Arabs, and enter my faith?" But Hasan consented not to this: so the accursed Guebre arose and prostrating himself to the fire, bade his pages throw him flat on his face. They did so, and he beat him with a hide whip of plaited thongs[27] till his flanks were laid open, whilst he cried aloud for aid but none aided him, and besought protection, but none protected him. Then he raised his eyes to the All-powerful King and sought of Him succour in the name of the Chosen Prophet. And indeed patience failed him; his tears ran down his cheeks, like rain, and he repeated these couplets twain:—

In patience, O my God, Thy doom forecast ✿ I'll bear, an thereby come Thy grace at last:
They've dealt us wrong, transgressed and ordered ill; ✿ Haply Thy Grace shall pardon what is past.

Then the Magian bade his negro-slaves raise him to a sitting posture and bring him somewhat of meat and drink. So they sat food before him; but he consented not to eat or drink; and Bahram ceased not to torment him day and night during the whole voyage, whilst Hasan took patience and humbled himself in supplication before Almighty Allah to whom belong Honour and Glory; whereby the Guebre's heart was

hardened against him. They ceased not to sail the sea three months, during which time Hasan was continually tortured till Allah Almighty sent forth upon them a foul wind and the sea grew black and rose against the ship, by reason of the fierce gale; whereupon quoth the captain and crew,[28] "By Allah, this is all on account of yonder youth, who hath been these three months in torture with this Magian. Indeed, this is not allowed of God the Most High." Then they rose against the Magian and slew his servants and all who were with him; which when he saw, he made sure of death and feared for himself. So he loosed Hasan from his bonds and pulling off the ragged clothes the youth had on, clad him in others; and made excuses to him and promised to teach him the craft and restore 18 him to his native land, saying, "O my son, return me not evil for that I have done with thee." Quoth Hasan, "How can I ever rely upon thee again?"; and quoth Bahram, "O my son, but for sin, there were no pardon. Indeed, I did all these doings with thee, but to try thy patience, and thou knowest that the case is altogether in the hands of Allah." So the crew and captain rejoiced in Hasan's release, and he called down blessings on them and praised the Almighty and thanked Him. With this the wind was stilled and the sky cleared and with a fair breeze they continued their voyage. Then said Hasan to Bahram, "O Master,[29] whither wendest thou?" Replied the Magian, "O my son, I am bound for the Mountain of Clouds, where is the Elixir which we use in alchemy." And the Guebre swore to him by the Fire and the Light that he had no longer any cause to fear him. So Hasan's heart was set at ease and rejoicing at the Persian's words, he continued to eat and drink and sleep with the Magian, who clad him in his own raiment. They ceased not sailing on other three months, when the ship came to anchor off a long shoreline of many-coloured pebbles, white and yellow and sky-blue and black and every other hue, and the Magian sprang up and said, "O Hasan, come, let us go ashore for we have reached the place of our wish and will." So Hasan rose and landed with Bahram, after the Persian had commended his goods to the captain's care. They walked on inland, till they were far enough from the ship to be out of sight, when Bahram sat down and taking from his pocket a kettle-drum[30] of copper and a silken strap, worked in gold with charcts, beat the drum with the strap, until there arose a cloud of dust from the further side of the waste. Hasan marvelled at the Magian's doings and was afraid of him: he repented of having come ashore with him and his colour changed. But Bahram looked at him and said, "What aileth thee, O my son? By the truth of the Fire and the Light, thou hast naught to fear from me; and, were it not that my wish may never be won save by thy means, I had not brought thee ashore. So rejoice in all good; for yonder cloud of dust is the dust of somewhat we 19 will mount and which will aid us to cut across this wold and make easy to us the hardships thereof."—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Persian said to Hasan, "In very sooth yonder dust-cloud is the cloud of something we will mount and which will aid us to cut across this wold and will make easy to us the hardships thereof." Presently the dust lifted off three she-dromedaries, one of which Bahram mounted and Hasan another. Then they loaded their victual on the third and fared on seven days, till they came to a wide champaign and, descending into its midst, they saw a dome vaulted upon four pilasters of red gold; so they alighted and entering thereunder, ate and drank and took their rest. Anon Hasan chanced to glance aside and seeing from afar a something lofty said to the Magian, "What is that, O nuncle?" Bahram replied, "'Tis a palace," and quoth Hasan, "Wilt thou not go thither, that we may enter and there repose ourselves and solace ourselves with inspecting it?" But the Persian was wroth and said, "Name not to me yonder palace; for therein dwelleth a foe, with whom there befel me somewhat whereof this is no time to tell thee." Then he beat the kettle-drum and up came the dromedaries, and they mounted and fared on other seven days. On the eighth day, the Magian said, "O Hasan, what seest thou?" Hasan replied, "I see clouds and mists twixt east and west." Quoth Bahram, "That is neither clouds nor mists, but a vast mountain and a lofty whereon the clouds split,[31] and there are no clouds above it, for its exceeding height and surpassing elevation. Yon mount is my goal and thereon is the need we seek. 'Tis for that I brought thee hither, for my wish may not be won save at thy hands." Hasan hearing this gave his life up for lost and said to the Magian, "By the right of that thou worshippest and by the faith wherein thou believest, I conjure thee to tell me what is the object wherefor thou hast brought me!" Bahram replied, "The art of alchemy may not be accomplished save by means of a herb which groweth 20 in the place where the clouds pass and whereon they split. Such a site is yonder mountain upon whose head the herb groweth and I purpose to send thee up thither to fetch it; and when we have it, I will show thee the secret of this craft which thou desirest to learn." Hasan answered, in his fear, "'Tis well, O my master;" and indeed he despaired of life and wept for his parting from his parent and people and patrial stead repenting him of having gainsaid his mother and reciting these two couplets:—

Consider but thy Lord, His work shall bring ✿ Comfort to thee, with quick relief and near:

Despair not when thou sufferest sorest bane: ✿ In bane how many blessed boons appear!

They ceased not faring on till they came to the foot-hills of that mountain where they halted; and Hasan saw thereon a palace and asked Bahram, "What be yonder palace?"; whereto he answered, "'Tis the abode of the Jann and Ghuls and Satans." Then the Magian alighted and making Hasan also dismount from his dromedary kissed his head and said to him, "Bear me no ill will anent that I did with thee, for I will keep guard over thee in thine ascent to the palace; and I conjure thee not to trick and cheat me of aught thou shalt bring therefrom; and I and thou will share equally therein." And Hasan replied, "To hear is to obey." Then Bahram opened a bag and

taking out a handmill and a sufficiency of wheat, ground the grain and kneaded three round cakes of the flour; after which he lighted a fire and baked the bannocks. Then he took out the copper kettle-drum and beat it with the broidered strap, whereupon up came the dromedaries. He chose out one and said, "Hearken, O my son, O Hasan, to what I am about to enjoin on thee;" and Hasan replied, "'Tis well." Bahram continued, "Lie down on this skin and I will sew thee up therein and lay thee on the ground; whereupon the Rakham birds[32] will come to thee and carry thee up to the mountain-top. Take this knife with thee; and, when thou feelest that the birds have done flying and have set thee down, slit open therewith the skin and come forth. The vultures will then take fright at thee and fly away; whereupon do thou look down from the mountain head and speak to me, and I will tell thee what to 21 do." So he sewed him up in the skin, placing therein three cakes and a leathern bottle full of water, and withdrew to a distance. Presently a vulture pounced upon him and taking him up, flew away with him to the mountain-top and there set him down. As soon as Hasan felt himself on the ground, he slit the skin and coming forth, called out to the Magian, who hearing his speech rejoiced and danced for excess of joy, saying to him, "Look behind thee and tell me what thou seest." Hasan looked and seeing many rotten bones and much wood, told Bahram, who said to him, "This be what we need and seek. Make six bundles of the wood and throw them down to me, for this is wherewithal we do alchemy." So he threw him the six bundles and when he had gotten them into his power he said to Hasan, "O gallows bird, I have won my wish of thee; and now, if thou wilt, thou mayst abide on this mountain, or cast thyself down to the earth and perish." So saying, he left him[33] and went away, and Hasan exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! This hound hath played the traitor with me." And he sat bemoaning himself and reciting these couplets:—

When God upon a man possessed of reasoning, Hearing and sight His will in aught to pass would bring,
He stops his ears and blinds his eyes and draws his wit, From him, as one draws out the hairs to paste that cling;
Till, His decrees fulfilled, He gives him back His wit, That therewithal he may receive admonishing.
So say thou not of aught that haps, "How happened it?" For Fate and fortune fixed do order everything.[34]

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Magian sent Hasan to the mountain-top and made him throw 22 down all he required he presently reviled him and left him and wended his ways and the youth exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! This damned hound hath played the traitor." Then he rose to his feet and looked right and left, after which he walked on along the mountain top, in mind making certain of death. He fared on thus

till he came to the counterslope of the mountain, along which he saw a dark-blue sea, dashing with billows clashing and yeasting waves each as it were a lofty mount. So he sat down and repeated what he might of the Koran and besought Allah the Most High to ease him of his troubles, or by death or by deliverance from such strait. Then he recited for himself the funeral-prayer[35] and cast himself down into the main; but, the waves bore him up by Allah's grace, so that he reached the water unhurt, and the angel in whose charge is the sea watched over him, so that the billows bore him safe to land, by the decree of the Most High. Thereupon he rejoiced and praised Almighty Allah and thanked Him; after which he walked on in quest of something to eat, for stress of hunger, and came presently to the place where he had halted with the Magian, Bahram. Then he fared on awhile, till behold, he caught sight of a great palace, rising high in air, and knew it for that of which he had questioned the Persian and he had replied, "Therein dwelleth a foe of mine." Hasan said to himself, "By Allah, needs must I enter yonder palace; perchance relief awaiteth me there." So coming to it and finding the gate open, he entered the vestibule, where he saw seated on a bench two girls like twin moons with a chess-cloth before them and they were at play. One of them raised her head to him and cried out for joy saying, "By Allah, here is a son of Adam, and methinks 'tis he whom Bahram the Magian brought hither this year!" So Hasan hearing her words cast himself at their feet and wept with sore weeping and said, "Yes, O my ladies, by Allah, I am indeed that unhappy." Then said the younger damsel to her elder sister, "Bear witness against me,[36] O my sister, that this is my brother by covenant of Allah and that I will die for his death and live for his life and joy for his joy and mourn for his mourning." So 23 saying, she rose and embraced him and kissed him and presently taking him by the hand and her sister with her, led him into the palace, where she did off his ragged clothes and brought him a suit of Kings' raiment wherewith she arrayed him. Moreover, she made ready all manner viands[37] and set them before him, and sat and ate with him, she and her sister. Then said they to him, "Tell us thy tale with yonder dog, the wicked, the wizard, from the time of thy falling into his hands to that of thy freeing thee from him; and after we will tell thee all that hath passed between us and him, so thou mayst be on thy guard against him an thou see him again." Hearing these words and finding himself thus kindly received, Hasan took heart of grace and reason returned to him and he related to them all that had befallen him with the Magian from first to last. Then they asked, "Didst thou ask him of this palace?"; and he answered, "Yes, but he said:—Name it not to me; for it belongeth to Ghuls and Satans." At this, the two damsels waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and said, "Did that Miscreant style us Ghuls and Satans?" And Hasan answered, "Yes." Cried the younger sister, "By Allah, I will assuredly do him die with the foulest death and make him to lack the wind of the world!" Quoth Hasan, "And how wilt thou get at him, to kill him, for he is a crafty magician?"; and quoth she, "He is in a garden by name Al-Mushayyad,[38] and there is no help but that I slay him before long." Then said her sister, "Sooth spake Hasan in

everything he hath recounted to us of this cur; but now tell him our tale, that all of it may abide in his memory." So the younger said to him, "Know, O my brother, that we are the daughters of a King of the mightiest Kings of the Jann, having Marids for troops and guards and servants, and Almighty Allah blessed him with seven daughters by one wife; but of his folly such jealousy and stiff-neckedness and pride beyond compare gat hold upon him that he would not 24 give us in marriage to any one and, summoning his Wazirs and Emirs, he said to them:—Can ye tell me of any place untrodden by the tread of men and Jinn and abounding in trees and fruits and rills? And quoth they, What wilt thou therewith, O King of the Age? And quoth he, I desire there to lodge my seven daughters. Answered they, O King, the place for them is the Castle of the Mountain of Clouds, built by an Ifrit of the rebellious Jinn, who revolted from the covenant of our lord Solomon, on whom be the Peace! Since his destruction, none hath dwelt there, nor man nor Jinni, for 'tis cut off[39] and none may win to it. And the Castle is girt about with trees and fruits and rills, and the water running around it is sweeter than honey and colder than snow: none who is afflicted with leprosy or elephantiasis[40] or what not else drinketh thereof but he is healed forthright. Hearing this our father sent us hither, with an escort of his troops and guards and provided us with all that we need here. When he is minded to ride to us he beateth a kettle-drum, whereupon all his hosts present themselves before him and he chooseth whom he shall ride and dismisseth the rest; but, when he desireth that we shall visit him, he commandeth his followers, the enchanters, to fetch us and carry us to the presence; so he may solace himself with our society and we accomplish our desire of him; after which they again carry us back hither. Our five other sisters are gone a-hunting in our desert, wherein are wild beasts past compt or calculation and, it being our turn to do this we two abode at home, to make ready for them food. Indeed, we had besought Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) to vouchsafe us a son of Adam to cheer us with his company and praised be He 25 who hath brought thee to us! So be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for no harm shall befal thee." Hasan rejoiced and said, "Alhamdolillah, laud to the Lord who guideth us into the path of deliverance and inclineth hearts to us!" Then his sister[41] rose and taking him by the hand, led him into a private chamber, where she brought out to him linen and furniture that no mortal can avail unto. Presently, the other damsels returned from hunting and birding and their sisters acquainted them with Hasan's case; whereupon they rejoiced in him and going into him in his chamber, saluted him with the salam and gave him joy of his safety. Then he abode with them in all the solace of life and its joyance, riding out with them to the chase and taking his pleasure with them whilst they entreated him courteously and cheered him with converse, till his sadness ceased from him and he recovered health and strength and his body waxed stout and fat, by dint of fair treatment and pleasant time among the seven moons in that fair palace with its gardens and flowers; for indeed he led the delightsomest of lives with the damsels

who delighted in him and he yet more in them. And they used to give him drink of the honey-dew of their lips,[42] these beauties with the high bosoms, adorned with grace and loveliness, the perfection of brilliancy and in shape very symmetry. Moreover the youngest Princess told her sisters how Bahram the Magian had made them of the Ghuls and Demons and Satans,[43] and they sware that they would surely slay him. Next year the accursed Guebre again made his appearance, having with him a handsome young Moslem, as he were the moon, bound hand and foot and tormented with grievous tortures, and alighted with him below the palace-walls. Now Hasan was sitting under the trees by the side of the stream; and when he espied Bahram, his heart fluttered,[44] his hue changed 26 and he smote hand upon hand.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan the goldsmith saw the Magian, his heart fluttered, his hue changed and he smote hand upon hand. Then he said to the Princesses, "O my sisters, help me to the slaughter of this accursed, for here he is come back and in your grasp, and he leadeth with him captive a young Moslem of the sons of the notables, whom he is torturing with all manner grievous torments. Lief would I kill him and console my heart of him; and, by delivering the young Moslem from his mischief and restoring him to his country and kith and kin and friends, fain would I lay up merit for the world to come, by taking my wreak of him.[45] This will be an almsdeed from you and ye will reap the reward thereof from Almighty Allah." "We hear and we obey Allah and thee, O our brother, O Hasan," replied they and binding chin-veils, armed themselves and slung on their swords: after which they brought Hasan a steed of the best and equipped him in panoply and weaponed him with goodly weapons. Then they all sallied out and found the Magian who had slaughtered and skinned a camel ill-using the young Moslem, and saying to him, "Sit thee in this hide." So Hasan came behind him, without his knowledge, and cried out at him till he was dazed and amazed. Then he came up to him, saying, "Hold thy hand, O accursed! O enemy of Allah and foe of the Moslems! O dog! O traitor! O thou that flame dost obey! O thou that walkest in the wicked ones' ways, worshipping the fire and the light and swearing by the shade and the heat!" Herewith the Magian turned and seeing Hasan, thought to wheedle him and said to him, "O my son, how diddest thou escape and who brought thee down to earth?" Hasan replied, "He delivered me, who hath appointed the taking of thy life to be at my hand, and I will torture thee even as thou 27 torturest me the whole way long. O miscreant, O atheist,[46] thou hast fallen into the twist and the way thou hast missed; and neither mother shall avail thee nor brother, nor friend nor solemn covenant shall assist thee; for thou saidst, O accursed, Whoso betrayeth bread and salt, may Allah do vengeance upon him! And thou hast broken the bond of bread and salt; wherefore the Almighty hath thrown thee into my grasp, and far is thy chance of escape from me."

Rejoined Bahram, “By Allah, O my son, O Hasan, thou art dearer to me than my sprite and the light of mine eyes!” But Hasan stepped up to him and hastily smote him between the shoulders, that the sword issued gleaming from his throat-tendons and Allah hurried his soul to the fire, and abiding-place dire. Then Hasan took the Magian’s bag and opened it, then having taken out the kettle-drum he struck it with the strap, whereupon up came the dromedaries like lightning. So he unbound the youth from his bonds and setting him on one of the camels, loaded him another with victual and water,[47] saying, “Wend whither thou wilt.” So he departed, after Almighty Allah had thus delivered him from his strait at the hands of Hasan. When the damsels saw their brother slay the Magian they joyed in him with exceeding joy and gat round him, marvelling at his valour and prowess;[48] and thanked him for his deed and gave him joy of his safety, saying, “O Hasan thou hast done a deed, whereby thou hast healed the burning of him that thirsteth for vengeance and pleased the King of Omnipotence!” Then they returned to the palace, and he abode with them, eating and drinking and laughing and making merry; and indeed his sojourn with them was joyous to him and he forgot his mother;[49] but while he led with them this goodly life one day, behold, there arose from the further side of the desert a great cloud of dust that darkened the welkin and made towards them. When the Princesses saw this, they said to him, “Rise, O Hasan, run to thy chamber and conceal thyself; or an thou wilt, go down into the garden and hide thyself among the 28 trees and vines; but fear not, for no harm shall befal thee.” So he arose and entering his chamber, locked the door upon himself, and lay lurking in the palace. Presently the dust opened out and showed beneath it a great and conquering host, as it were a surging sea, coming from the King, the father of the damsels. Now when the troops reached the castle, the Princesses received them with all honour and hospitably entertained them three days; after which they questioned them of their case and tidings and they replied saying, “We come from the King in quest of you.” They asked, “And what would the King with us?”; and the officers answered, “One of the Kings maketh a marriage festival, and your father would have you be present thereat and take your pleasure therewith.” The damsels enquired, “And how long shall we be absent from our place?”; and they rejoined, “The time to come and go, and to sojourn may be two months.” So the Princesses arose and going in to the palace sought Hasan, acquainted him with the case and said to him, “Verily this place is thy place and our house is thy house; so be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear and feel nor grief nor fear, for none can come at thee here; but keep a good heart and a glad mind, till we return to thee. The keys of our chambers we leave with thee; but, O our brother, we beseech thee, by the bond of brotherhood, in very deed not to open such a door, for thou hast no need thereto.” Then they farewelled him and fared forth with the troops, leaving Hasan alone in the palace. It was not long before his breast grew straitened and his patience shortened: solitude and sadness were heavy on him and he sorrowed for his severance from them with passing chagrin. The palace for all its vastness, waxed small to him

and finding himself sad and solitary, he bethought him of the damsels and their pleasant converse and recited these couplets:—

The wide plain is narrowed before these eyes ✿ And the landscape troubles this heart of mine.
Since my friends went forth, by the loss of them ✿ Joy fled and these eyelids rail floods of brine:
Sleep shunned these eyeballs for parting woe ✿ And my mind is worn with sore pain and pine:
Would I wot an Time shall rejoin our lots ✿ And the joys of love with night-talk combine.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

29

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after the departure of the damsels, Hasan sat in the palace sad and solitary and his breast was straitened by severance. He used to ride forth a-hunting by himself in the wold and bring back the game and slaughter it and eat thereof alone: but melancholy and disquiet redoubled on him, by reason of his loneliness. So he arose and went round about the palace and explored its every part; he opened the Princesses' apartments and found therein riches and treasures fit to ravish the beholder's reason; but he delighted not in aught thereof, by reason of their absence. His heart was fired by thinking of the door they had charged him not to approach or open on any account and he said in himself, "My sister had never enjoined me not to open this door, except there were behind it somewhat whereof she would have none to know; but, by Allah, I will arise and open it and see what is within, though within it were sudden death!" Then he took the key and, opening the door,[50] saw therein no treasure but he espied a vaulted and winding staircase of Yamani onyx at the upper end of the chamber. So he mounted the stair, which brought him out upon the terrace-roof of the palace, whence he looked down upon the gardens and vergiers, full of trees and fruits and beasts and birds warbling praises of Allah, the One, the All-powerful; and said in himself "This is that they forbade to me." He gazed upon these pleasaunces and saw beyond a surging sea, dashing with clashing billows, and he ceased not to explore the palace right and left, till he ended at a pavilion builded with alternate courses, two bricks of gold and one of silver and jacinth and emerald and supported by four columns. And in the centre he saw a sitting-room paved and lined with a mosaic of all manner precious stones such as rubies and emeralds and balasses and other jewels of sorts; and in its midst stood a basin[51] brimful of water, over 30 which was a trellis-work of sandal-wood and aloes-wood reticulated with rods of red gold and wands of emerald and set with various kinds of jewels and fine pearls, each sized as a pigeon's egg. The trellis was covered with a climbing vine, bearing grapes like rubies, and beside the basin stood a throne of lign-aloes latticed with red gold, inlaid with great pearls and comprising vari-coloured gems of every sort and precious minerals, each kind fronting each and symmetrically disposed. About it the birds warbled with sweet tongues and various

voices celebrating the praises of Allah the Most High: brief, it was a palace such as nor Cæsar nor Chosroës ever owned; but Hasan saw therein none of the creatures of Allah, whereat he marvelled and said in himself, "I wonder to which of the Kings this place pertaineth, or is it Many-Columned Iram whereof they tell, for who among mortals can avail to the like of this?" And indeed he was amazed at the spectacle and sat down in the pavilion and cast glances around him marvelling at the beauty of its ordinance and at the lustre of the pearls and jewels and the curious works which therein were, no less than at the gardens and orchards aforesaid and at the birds that hymned the praises of Allah, the One, the Almighty; and he abode pondering the traces of him whom the Most High had enabled to rear that structure, for indeed He is muchel of might.[52] And presently, behold, he espied ten birds[53] 31 flying towards the pavilion from the heart of the desert and knew that they were making the palace and bound for the basin, to drink of its waters: so he hid himself, for fear they should see him and take flight. They lighted on a great tree and a goodly and circled round about it; and he saw amongst them a bird of marvel-beauty, the goodliest of them all, and the nine stood around it and did it service; and Hasan marvelled to see it peck them with its bill and lord it over them while they fled from it. He stood gazing at them from afar as they entered the pavilion and perched on the couch; after which each bird rent open its neck-skin with its claws and issued out of it; and lo! it was but a garment of feathers, and there came forth therefrom ten virgins, maids whose beauty shamed the brilliancy of the moon. They all doffed their clothes and plunging into the basin, washed and fell to playing and sporting one with other; whilst the chief bird of them lifted up the rest and ducked them down, and they fled from her and dared not put forth their hands to her. When Hasan beheld her thus he took leave of his right reason and his sense was enslaved, so he knew that the Princesses had not forbidden him to open the door save because of this; for he fell passionately in love with her, for what he saw of her beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace, as she played and sported and splashed the others with the water. He stood looking upon them whilst they saw him not, with eye gazing and heart burning and soul[54] to evil prompting; and he sighed to be with them and wept for longing, because of the beauty and loveliness of the chief damsel. His mind was amazed at her charms and his heart taken in the net of her love; lowe was loosed in his heart for her sake and there waxed on him a flame, whose sparks might not be quenched, and desire, whose signs might not be hidden. Presently, they came up out of that basin, whilst Hasan marvelled at their beauty and loveliness and the tokens of inner gifts in the elegance of their movements. Then he cast a glance at the chief damsel who stood mother-naked and there was manifest to him what was between her thighs 32 a goodly rounded dome on pillars borne, like a bowl of silver or crystal, which recalled to him the saying of the poet:[55]—

When I took up her shift and discovered the terrace-roof of her kaze, I found it as strait as my humour or eke my worldly ways:

So I thrust it, incontinent, in, halfway, and she heaved a sigh. “For what dost thou sigh?” quoth I. “For the rest of it sure,” she says.

Then coming out of the water they all put on their dresses and ornaments, and the chief maiden donned a green dress,[56] wherein she surpassed for loveliness all the fair ones of the world and the lustre of her face outshone the resplendent full moons: she excelled the branches with the grace of her bending gait and confounded the wit with apprehension of disdain; and indeed she was as saith the poet:[57]—

A maiden ’twas, the dresser’s art had decked with cunning sleight;
The sun thou ’d’st say had robbed her cheek and shone with borrowed light.
She came to us apparelled fair in under vest of green,
Like as the ripe pomegranate hides beneath its leafy screen;
And when we asked her what might be the name of what she wore,
She answered in a quaint reply that double meaning bore:
The desert’s heart we penetrate in such apparel dressed,
And *Pierce-heart* therefore is the name by which we call the vest.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan saw the damsels issue forth the basin, the chief maiden robbed his reason with her beauty and loveliness compelling him to recite the couplets forequoted. And after dressing they sat talking and laughing, whilst he stood gazing on them, drowned in the sea of his love, burning in the flames of passion and wandering in the Wady of his melancholy thought. And he said to himself, 33“By Allah, my sister forbade me not to open the door, but for cause of these maidens and for fear lest I should fall in love with one of them! How, O Hasan shalt thou woo and win them? How bring down a bird flying in the vasty firmament? By Allah thou hast cast thyself into a bottomless sea and snared thyself in a net whence there is no escape! I shall die desolate and none shall wot of my death.” And he continued to gaze on the charms of the chief damsel, who was the lovliest creature Allah had made in her day, and indeed she outdid in beauty all human beings. She had a mouth magical as Solomon’s seal and hair blacker than the night of estrangement to the love-despairing man; her brow was bright as the crescent moon of the Feast of Ramazán[58] and her eyes were like eyes wherewith gazelles scan; she had a polished nose straight as a cane and cheeks like blood-red anemones of Nu’uman, lips like coralline and teeth like strung pearls in carcanets of gold virgin to man, and a neck like an ingot of silver, above a shape like a wand of Bán: her middle was full of folds, a dimpled plain such as enforceth the distracted lover to magnify Allah and extol His might and main, and her navel[59] an ounce of musk, sweetest of savour could contain: she had thighs great and plump, like marble columns twain or bolsters stuffed with down from ostrich ta’en, and between them a somewhat, as it

were a hummock great of span or a hare with ears back lain while terrace-roof and pilasters completed the plan; and indeed she surpassed the bough of the myrobalan with her beauty and symmetry, and the Indian rattan, for she was even as saith of them the poet whom love did unman:[60]—

Her lip-dews rival honey-sweets, that sweet virginity; ✿ Keener than Hindí scymitar the glance she casts at thee:

She shames the bending bough of Bán with graceful movement slow ✿ And as she smiles her teeth appear with leven's brilliancy:

When I compared with rose a-bloom the tintage of her cheeks, ✿ She laughed in scorn and cried, "Whoso compares with rosery

My hue and breasts granados terms, is there no shame in him? ✿ How should pomegranates bear on bough such fruit in form or blee?

Now by my beauty and mine eyes and heart and eke by Heaven ✿ Of favours mine and by the Hell of my un-clemency,

They say 'She is a garden-rose in very pride of bloom'; ✿ And yet no rose can ape my cheek nor branch my symmetry!

If any garden own a thing which unto me is like, ✿ What then is that he comes to crave of me and only me?"

They ceased not to laugh and play, whilst Hasan stood still a-watching them, forgetting meat and drink, till near the hour of mid-afternoon prayer, when the beauty, the chief damsel, said to her mates, "O Kings' daughters, it waxeth late and our land is afar and we are weary of this stead. Come, therefore, let us depart to our own place." So they all arose and donned their feather vests, and becoming birds as they were before, flew away all together, with the chief lady in their midst. Then, Hasan, despairing of their return, would have arisen and gone down into the palace but could not move or even stand; wherefore the tears ran down his cheeks and passion was sore on him and he recited these couplets:—

May God deny me boon of troth if I ✿ After your absence sweets of slumber know:

Yea; since that sev'rance never close mine eyes, ✿ Nor rest repose me since departed you!

'Twould seem as though you saw me in your sleep; ✿ Would Heaven the dreams of sleep were real-true!

Indeed I dote on sleep though needed not, ✿ For sleep may bring me that dear form to view.

Then Hasan walked on, little by little, heeding not the way he went, till he reached the foot of the stairs, whence he dragged himself to his own chamber; then he entered and shutting the door, lay sick eating not nor drinking and drowned in the sea of his solitude. He spent the night thus, weeping and bemoaning himself, till the morning, and when it morrowed he repeated these couplets:—

The birds took flight at eve and winged their way; ✿ And sinless he who died of Love's death-blow.

I'll keep my love-tale secret while I can ✿ But, an desire prevail, its needs must show:

Night brought me nightly vision, bright as dawn; ✿ While nights of my desire lack morning-glow.

I mourn for them[61] while they heart-freest sleep ✿ And winds of love on me their plaything blow:

Free I bestow my tears, my wealth, my heart ✿ My wit, my sprite:—most gain who most bestow!

The worst of woes and banes is enmity ✿ Beautiful maidens deal us to our woe.

Favour they say's forbidden to the fair ✿ And shedding lovers' blood their laws allow;

That naught can love-sicks do but lavish soul, ✿ And stake in love-play life on single throw:[62]

I cry in longing ardour for my love: ✿ Lover can only weep and wail Love-lowe.

When the sun rose he opened the door, went forth of the chamber and mounted to the stead where he was before: then he sat down facing the pavilion and awaited the return of the birds till nightfall; but they returned not; wherefore he wept till he fell to the ground in a fainting-fit. When he came to after his swoon, he dragged himself down the stairs to his chamber; and indeed, the darkness was come and straitened upon him was the whole world and he ceased not to weep and wail himself through the livelong night, till the day broke and the sun rained over hill and dale its rays serene. He ate not nor drank nor slept, nor was there any rest for him; but by day he was distracted and by night distressed, with sleeplessness delirious and drunken with melancholy thought and excess of love-longing. And he repeated the verses of the love-distraught poet:—

O thou who shamest sun in morning sheen ✿ The branch confounding, yet with nescience blest;

Would Heaven I wot an Time shall bring return ✿ And quench the fires which flame unmanifest,—

Bring us together in a close embrace, ✿ Thy cheek upon my cheek, thy breast abreast!

Who saith, In Love dwells sweetness? when in Love ✿ Are bitterer days than Aloë's[63] bitterest.

36 ——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan the goldsmith felt love redouble upon him, he recited those lines; and, as he abode thus in the stress of his love-distraction, alone and finding none to cheer him with company, behold, there arose a dust-cloud from the desert, wherefore he ran down and hid himself knowing that the Princesses who owned the castle had returned. Before long, the troops halted and dismounted round the palace and the seven damsels alighted and entering, put off their arms and armour of war. As for the youngest, she stayed not to doff her weapons and gear, but went straight to Hasan's chamber, where finding him not, she sought for him, till she lighted on him in one of the sleeping closets hidden, feeble and thin, with shrunken body and wasted bones and indeed his colour was changed and his eyes sunken in his face for lack of food and drink and for much weeping, by reason of his love and longing for the young lady. When she saw him in this plight, she was confounded and lost her wits; but presently she questioned him of his case and what had befallen him, saying, "Tell me what aileth thee, O my brother, that I may contrive to do away thine affliction, and I will be thy ransom!"[64] Whereupon he wept with sore weeping and by way of reply he began reciting:—

Lover, when parted from the thing he loves, ✿ Has naught save weary woe and bane to bear.
Inside is sickness, outside living lowe, ✿ His first is fancy and his last despair.

When his sister heard this, she marvelled at his eloquence and loquent speech and his readiness at answering her in verse and said to him, "O my brother, when didst thou fall into this thy case and what hath betided thee, that I find thee speaking in song and shedding tears that throng? Allah upon thee, O my brother, 37 and by the honest love which is between us, tell me what aileth thee and discover to me thy secret, nor conceal from me aught of that which hath befallen thee in our absence; for my breast is straitened and my life is troubled because of thee." He sighed and railed tears like rain, after which he said, "I fear, O my sister, if I tell thee, that thou wilt not aid me to win my wish but wilt leave me to die wretchedly in mine anguish." She replied, "No, by Allah, O my brother, I will not abandon thee, though it cost me my life!" So he told her all that had befallen him, and that the cause of his distress and affliction was the passion he had conceived for the young lady whom he had seen when he opened the forbidden door; and how he had not tasted meat nor drink for ten days past. Then he wept with sore weeping and recited these couplets:—

Restore my heart as 'twas within my breast, ✿ Let mine eyes sleep again, then fly fro' me.
Deem ye the nights have had the might to change ✿ Love's vow? Who changeth may he never be!

His sister wept for his weeping and was moved to ruth for his case and pitied his strangerhood; so she said to him, "O my brother, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for I will venture being and risk existence to content thee and devise thee a device wherewith, though it cost me my dear life and all I hold dear, thou mayst get possession of her and accomplish thy desire, if such be the will of Allah Almighty. But I charge thee, O my brother, keep the matter secret from my sisterhood and discover not thy case to any one of them, lest my life be lost with thy life. An they question thee of opening the forbidden door, reply to them:—I opened it not; no, never; but I was troubled at heart for your absence and by my loneliness here and yearning for you."[65] And he answered, "Yes: this is the right rede." So he kissed her head and his heart was comforted and his bosom broadened. He had been nigh upon death for excess of affright, for he had gone in fear of her by reason of his having opened the door; but now his life and soul returned to him. Then he sought of her somewhat of food and after serving it she left him, and went in to her sisters, weeping and mourning for 38 him. They questioned her of her case and she told them how she was heavy at heart for her brother, because he was sick and for ten days no food had found way into his stomach. So they asked the cause of his sickness and she answered, "The reason was our severance from him and our leaving him desolate; for these days we have been absent from him were longer to him than a thousand years and scant blame to him, seeing he is a stranger, and solitary and we left him alone, with none to company with him or hearten his heart; more by token that he is but a youth and may be he called to mind his family and his mother, who is a woman in

years, and bethought him that she weepeth for him all whiles of the day and watches of the night, ever mourning his loss; and we used to solace him with our society and divert him from thinking of her." When her sisters heard these words they wept in the stress of their distress for him and said, "Wa'lláhi—'fore Allah, he is not to blame!" Then they went out to the army and dismissed it, after which they went in to Hasan and saluted him with the salam. When they saw his charms changed with yellow colour and shrunken body, they wept for very pity and sat by his side and comforted him and cheered him with converse, relating to him all they had seen by the way of wonders and rarities and what had befallen the bridegroom with the bride. They abode with him thus a whole month, tendering him and caressing him with words sweeter than syrup; but every day sickness was added to his sickness, which when they saw, they bewept him with sore weeping, and the youngest wept even more than the rest. At the end of this time, the Princesses having made up their minds to ride forth a-hunting and a-birding invited their sister to accompany them but she said, "By Allah, O my sisters, I cannot go forth with you, whilst my brother is in this plight, nor indeed till he be restored to health and there cease from him that which is with him of affliction. Rather will I sit with him and comfort him." They thanked her for her kindness and said to her, "Allah will requite thee all thou dost with this stranger." Then they left her with him in the palace and rode forth taking with them twenty days' victual;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

39

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Princesses mounted and rode forth a-hunting and a-birding, after leaving in the palace their youngest sister sitting by Hasan's side; and as soon as the damsel knew that they had covered a long distance from home, she went in to him and said, "O my brother, come, show me the place where thou sawest the maidens." He rejoiced in her words, making sure of winning his wish, and replied, "Bismillah! On my head!" Then he essayed to rise and show her the place, but could not walk; so she took him up in her arms, holding him to her bosom between her breasts; and, opening the staircase-door, carried him to the top of the palace, and he showed her the pavilion where he had seen the girls and the basin of water, wherein they had bathed. Then she said to him, "Set forth to me, O my brother, their case and how they came." So he described to her whatso he had seen of them and especially the girl of whom he was enamoured; but hearing these words she knew her and her cheeks paled and her case changed. Quoth he, "O my sister, what aileth thee to wax wan and be troubled?"; and quoth she, "O my brother, know thou that this young lady is the daughter of a Sovran of the Jann, of one of the most puissant of their Kings and her father had dominion over men and Jinn and wizards

and cohens and tribal chiefs and guards and countries and cities and islands galore and hath immense wealth in store. Our father is a Viceroy and one of his vassals and none can avail against him, for the multitude of his many and the extent of his empire and the muchness of his monies. He hath assigned to his offspring, the daughters thou sawest, a tract of country, a whole year's journey in length and breadth, a region girt about with a great river and a deep; and thereto none may attain, nor man nor Jann. He hath an army of women, smiters with swords and lungers with lances, five-and-twenty thousand in number, each of whom, whenas she mounteth steed and donneth battle-gear, eveneth a thousand knights of the bravest. Moreover, he hath seven daughters, who in valour and prowess equal and even excel their sisters,[66] and he hath made the eldest of them, the 40 damsel whom thou sawest,[67] queen over the country aforesaid and who is the wisest of her sisters and in valour and horsemanship and craft and skill and magic excels all the folk of her dominions. The girls who companied with her are the ladies of her court and guards and grandees of her empire, and the plumed skins wherewith they fly are the handiwork of enchanters of the Jann. Now an thou wouldst get possession of this queen and wed this jewel seld-seen and enjoy her beauty and loveliness and grace, do thou pay heed to my words and keep them in thy memory. They resort to this place on the first day of every month; and thou must take seat here and watch for them; and when thou seest them coming hide thee near the pavilion sitting where thou mayst see them, without being seen of them, and beware, again beware lest thou show thyself, or we shall all lose our lives. When they doff their dress note which is the feather-suit of her whom thou lovest and take it, and it only, for this it is that carrieth her to her country, and when thou hast mastered it, thou hast mastered her. And beware lest she wile thee, saying:—O thou who hast robbed my raiment, restore it to me, because here am I in thine hands and at thy mercy! For, an thou give it her, she will kill thee and break down over us palace and pavilion and slay our sire: know, then, thy case and how thou shalt act. When her companions see that her feather-suit is stolen, they will take flight and leave her to thee, and beware lest thou show thyself to them, but wait till they have flown away and she despaireth of them: whereupon do thou go in to her and hale her by the hair of her head[68] and drag her to thee; which being done, she will be at thy mercy. And I rede thee discover not to her that thou hast taken the feather-suit, but keep it with care; for, so long as thou hast it in hold, she is thy prisoner and in thy power, seeing that she cannot fly to her country save with it. And lastly carry her down to thy chamber where she will be thine." When Hasan heard her words his heart became at ease, his trouble ceased and affliction left him; so he rose to his feet and kissing his sister's head, went down from the terrace with her into the palace, where they slept that night. He medicined 41 himself till morning morrowed; and when the sun rose, he sprang up and opened the staircase-door and ascending to the flat roof sat there till supper-tide when his sister brought him up somewhat of meat and drink and a change

of clothes and he slept. And thus they continued doing, day by day until the end of the month. When he saw the new moon, he rejoiced and began to watch for the birds, and while he was thus, behold, up they came, like lightning. As soon as he espied them, he hid himself where he could watch them, unwatched by them, and they lighted down one and all of them, and putting off their clothes, descended into the basin. All this took place near the stead where Hasan lay concealed, and as soon as he caught sight of the girl he loved, he arose and crept under cover, little by little, towards the dresses, and Allah veiled him so that none marked his approach for they were laughing and playing with one another, till he laid hand on the dress. Now when they had made an end of their diversion, they came forth of the basin and each of them slipped on her feather-suit. But the damsel he loved sought for her plumage that she might put it on, but found it not; whereupon she shrieked and beat her cheeks and rent her raiment. Her sisterhood[69] came to her and asked what ailed her, and she told them that her feather-suit was missing; wherefore they wept and shrieked and buffeted their faces: and they were confounded, wotting not the cause of this, and knew not what to do. Presently the night overtook them and they feared to abide with her lest that which had befallen her should befal them also; so they farewelled her and flying away left her alone upon the terrace-roof of the palace, by the pavilion basin.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.





Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan had carried off the girls plumery, she sought it but found it not and her sisterhood flew away leaving her alone. When they were out of sight, Hasan gave ear to her and heard her say, "O who hast taken my dress and stripped me, I beseech thee to restore it to me and cover my shame, so may Allah never make thee taste of my 42 tribulation!" But when Hasan heard her speak thus, with speech sweeter than syrup, his love for her redoubled, passion got the mastery of his reason and he had not patience to endure from her. So springing up from his hiding-place, he rushed upon her and laying hold of her by the hair dragged her to him and carried her down to the basement of the palace and set her in his own chamber, where he threw over her a silken cloak[170] and left her weeping and biting her hands. Then he shut the door upon her and going to his sister, informed her how he had made prize of his lover and carried her to his sleeping-closet, "And

there," quoth he, "she is now sitting, weeping and biting her hands." When his Sister heard this, she rose forthright and betook herself to the chamber, where she found the captive weeping and mourning. So she kissed ground before her and saluted her with the salam and the young lady said to her, "O King's daughter, do folk like you do such foul deed with the daughters of Kings? Thou knowest that my father is a mighty Sovran and that all the liege lords of the Jinn stand in awe of him and fear his majesty: for that there are with him magicians and sages and Cohens and Satans and Marids, such as none may cope withal, and under his hand are folk whose number none knoweth save Allah. How then doth it become you, O daughters of Kings, to harbour mortal men with you and disclose to them our case and yours? Else how should this man, a stranger, come at us?" Hasan's sister made reply, "O King's daughter, in very sooth this human is perfect in nobleness and purposeth thee no villainy; but he loveth thee, and women were not made save for men. Did he not love thee, he had not fallen sick for thy sake and well-nigh given up the ghost for desire of thee." And she told her the whole tale how Hasan had seen her bathing in the basin with her attendants, and fallen in love with her, and none had pleased him but she, for the rest were all her handmaids, and none had availed to put forth a hand to her. When the Princess heard this, she despaired of deliverance and presently Hasan's sister went forth and brought her a costly dress, wherein she robed her. Then she set before her somewhat of meat and drink and ate with her and heartened her heart and soothed her sorrows. And she ceased not to speak her fair with soft and pleasant words, saying, "Have pity on him who saw thee once and became as one slain by thy love;" and continued to 43 console her and caress her, quoting fair says and pleasant instances. But she wept till daybreak, when her trouble subsided and she left shedding tears, knowing that she had fallen into the net and that there was no deliverance for her. Then said she to Hasan's sister, "O King's daughter, with this my strangerhood and severance from my country and sisterhood which Allah wrote upon my brow, patience becometh me to support what my Lord hath foreordained." Therewith the youngest Princess assigned her a chamber in the palace, than which there was none goodlier and ceased not to sit with her and console her and solace her heart, till she was satisfied with her lot and her bosom was broadened and she laughed and there ceased from her what trouble and oppression possessed her, by reason of her separation from her people and country and sisterhood and parents. Thereupon Hasan's sister repaired to him, and said, "Arise, go in to her in her chamber and kiss her hands and feet.[71]" So he went in to her and did this and bussed her between the eyes, saying, "O Princess of fair ones and life of sprites and beholder's delight, be easy of heart, for I took thee only that I might be thy bondsman till the Day of Doom, and this my sister will be thy servant; for I, O my lady, desire naught but to take thee to wife, after the law of Allah and the practice of His Apostle, and whenas thou wilt, I will journey with thee to my country and carry thee to Baghdad-city and abide with thee there: moreover, I will buy thee handmaidens and negro chattels; and I have a

mother, of the best of women, who will do thee service. There is no goodlier land than our land; everything therein is better than elsewhere and its folk are a pleasant people and bright of face." Now as he bespake her thus and strave to comfort her, what while she answered him not a syllable, lo! there came a knocking at the palace-gate. So Hasan went out to see who was at the door and found there the six Princesses, who had returned from hunting and birding, whereat he rejoiced and went to meet them and welcomed them. They wished him safety and health and he wished them the like; after which they dismounted and going each to her chamber doffed their soiled clothes and donned fine linen. Then they came forth and demanded the game, for they had taken a store of gazelles and wild cows, hares and lions, hyænas, and others; so their suite brought out some thereof for 44 butchering, keeping the rest by them in the palace, and Hasan girt himself and fell to slaughtering for them in due form,[72] whilst they sported and made merry, joying with great joy to see him standing amongst them hale and hearty once more. When they had made an end of slaughtering, they sat down and addressed themselves to get ready somewhat for breaking their fast, and Hasan, coming up to the eldest Princess, kissed her head and on like wise did he with the rest, one after other. Whereupon said they to him, "Indeed, thou humblest thyself to us passing measure, O our brother, and we marvel at the excess of the affection thou showest us. But Allah forfend that thou shouldst do this thing, which it behoveth us rather to do with thee, seeing thou art a man and therefor worthier than we, who are of the Jinn.[73]" Thereupon his eyes brimmed with tears and he wept sore; so they said to him, "What causeth thee to weep? Indeed, thou troublest our pleasant lives with thy weeping this day. 'Twould seem thou longest after thy mother and native land. An things be so, we will equip thee and carry thee to thy home and thy friends." He replied, "By Allah, I desire not to part from you!" Then they asked, "Which of us hath vexed thee, that thou art thus troubled?" But he was ashamed to say, "Naught troubleth me save love of the damsel," lest they should deny and disavow him: so he was silent and would tell them nothing of his case. Then his sister came forward and said to them, "He hath caught a bird from the air and would have you help him to tame her." Whereupon they all turned to him and cried, "We are at thy service every one of us and whatsoever thou seekest that will we do: but tell us thy tale and conceal from us naught of thy case." So he said to his sister, "Do thou tell them, for I am ashamed before them nor can I face them with these words."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

45

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Hasan said to his sister, "Do thou tell them my tale, for before them I stand abashed nor can I face them with these words." So she said to them, "O my sisters, when we went away and left alone this unhappy one, the palace was straitened upon him and he feared lest some one should

come in to him, for ye know that the sons of Adam are light of wits. So, he opened the door of the staircase leading to the roof, of his loneliness and trouble, and sat there, looking upon the Wady and watching the gate, in his fear lest any should come thither. One day, as he sat thus, suddenly he saw ten birds approach him, making for the palace, and they lighted down on the brink of the basin which is in the pavilion-terrace. He watched these birds and saw, amongst them, one goodlier than the rest, which pecked the others and flouted them, whilst none of them dared not put out a claw to it. Presently, they set their nails to their neck-collars and, rending their feather-suits, came forth therefrom and became damsels, each and every, like the moon on fullest night. Then they doffed their dress and plunging into the water, fell to playing with one another, whilst the chief damsel ducked the others, who dared not lay a finger on her and she was fairest of favour and most famous of form and most feateous of finery. They ceased not to be in this case till near the hour of mid-afternoon prayer, when they came forth of the basin and, donning their feather-shifts, flew away home. Thereupon he waxed distracted, with a heart afire for love of the chief damsel and repenting him that he had not stolen her plumery. Wherefore he fell sick and abode on the palace-roof expecting her return and abstaining from meat and drink and sleep, and he ceased not to be so till the new moon showed, when behold, they again made their appearance according to custom and doffing their dresses went down into the basin. So he stole the chief damsel's feather-suit, knowing that she could not fly save therewith, hiding himself carefully lest they sight him and slay him. Then he waited till the rest had flown away, when he arose and seizing the damsel, carried her down from the terrace into the castle." Her sisters asked, "Where is she?"; and she answered, "She is with him in such a chamber." Quoth they, "Describe her to us, O 46our sister:" so quoth she, "She is fairer than the moon on the night of fullness and her face is sheenier than the sun; the dew of her lips is sweeter than honey and her shape is straighter and slenderer than the cane; one with eyes black as night and brow flower-white; a bosom jewel-bright, breasts like pomegranates twain and cheeks like apples twain, a waist with dimples overlain, a navel like a casket of ivory full of musk in grain, and legs like columns of alabastrine vein. She ravisheth all hearts with Nature-kohl'd eyne, and a waist slender-fine and hips of heaviest design and speech that heals all pain and pine: she is goodly of shape and sweet of smile, as she were the moon in fullest sheen and shine." When the Princesses heard these praises, they turned to Hasan and said to him, "Show her to us." So he arose with them, all love-distraught, and carrying them to the chamber wherein was the captive damsel, opened the door and entered, preceding the seven Princesses. Now when they saw her and noted her loveliness, they kissed the ground between her hands, marvelling at the fairness of her favour and the significance which showed her inner gifts, and said to her, "By Allah, O daughter of the Sovran Supreme, this is indeed a mighty matter: and haddest thou heard tell of this mortal among women thou haddest marvelled at him all thy days. Indeed, he loveth thee with passionate love; yet, O King's daughter,

he seeketh not lewdness, but desireth thee only in the way of lawful wedlock. Had we known that maids can do without men, we had impeached him from his intent, albeit he sent thee no messenger, but came to thee in person; and he telleth us he hath burnt the feather dress; else had we taken it from him." Then one of them agreed with the Princess and becoming her deputy in the matter of the wedding contract, performed the marriage ceremony between them, whilst Hasan clapped palms with her, laying his hand in hers, and she wedded him to the damsel by consent; after which they celebrated her bridal feast, as beseemeth Kings' daughters, and brought Hasan in to her. So he rose and rent the veil and oped the gate and pierced the forge[74] and brake the seal, whereupon affection for her waxed in him and he redoubled in love and longing for her. Then, since he had gotten that which he sought, he gave himself joy and improvised these couplets:—

47 Thy shape's temptation, eyes as Houri's fain ✿ And sheddeth Beauty's sheen[75] that radiance rare:

My glance portrayed thy glorious portraiture: ✿ Rubies one-half and gems the third part were:

Musk made a fifth: a sixth was ambergris ✿ The sixth a pearl but pearl without compare.

Eve never bare a daughter evening thee ✿ Nor breathes thy like in Khuld's[76] celestial air.

An thou would torture me 'tis wont of Love ✿ And if thou pardon 'tis thy choice I swear:

Then, O world bright'ner and O end of wish! ✿ Loss of thy charms who could in patience bear?

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan went in unto the King's daughter and did away her maidenhead, he enjoyed her with exceeding joy and affection for her waxed in him and he redoubled in love-longing for her; so he recited the lines aforesaid. Now the Princesses were standing at the door and when they heard his verses, they said to her, "O King's daughter, hearest thou the words of this mortal? How canst thou blame us, seeing that he maketh poetry for love of thee and indeed he hath so done a thousand times.[77]" When she heard this she rejoiced and was glad and felt happy and Hasan abode with her forty[78] days in all solace and delight, joyance and happiest plight, whilst the damsels renewed festivities for him every day and overwhelmed him with bounty and presents and rarities; and the King's daughter became reconciled to her sojourn amongst them and forgot her kith and kin. At the end of the forty days, Hasan saw in a dream, one night, his mother mourning for him and indeed her bones were wasted and her body had waxed shrunken and her complexion had yellowed and her favour had 48 changed the while he was in excellent case. When she saw him in this state, she said to him, "O my son, O Hasan, how is it that thou livest thy worldly life at thine ease and forgettest me? Look at my plight since thy loss! I do not forget thee, nor will my tongue cease to name thy name till I die; and I have made thee a tomb in my house, that I may never forget thee. Would

Heaven I knew[79] if I shall live, O my son, to see thee by my side and if we shall ever again foregather as we were." Thereupon Hasan awoke from sleep, weeping and wailing, the tears railed down his cheeks like rain and he became mournful and melancholy; his tears dried not nor did sleep visit him, but he had no rest, and no patience was left to him. When he arose, the Princesses came in to him and gave him good-morrow and made merry with him as was their wont; but he paid no heed to them; so they asked his wife concerning his case and she said, "I ken not." Quoth they, "Question him of his condition." So she went up to him and said, "What aileth thee, O my lord?" Whereupon he moaned and groaned and told her what he had seen in his dream and repeated these two couplets:—

Indeed afflicted sore are we and all distraught, ✿ Seeking for union; yet we find no way:

And Love's calamities upon us grow ✿ And Love though light with heaviest weight doth weigh.

His wife repeated to the Princesses what he said and they, hearing the verses, had pity on him and said to him, "In Allah's name, do as thou wilt, for we may not hinder thee from visiting thy mother; nay, we will help thee to thy wish by what means we may. But it behoveth that thou desert us not, but visit us, though it be only once a year." And he answered, "To hear is to obey: be your behest on my head and eyes!" Then they arose forthright and making him ready victual for the voyage, equipped the bride for him with raiment and ornaments and everything of price, such as defy description, and they bestowed on him gifts and presents 49 which pens of ready writers lack power to set forth. Then they beat the magical kettle-drum and up came the dromedaries from all sides. They chose of them such as could carry all the gear they had prepared; amongst the rest five-and-twenty chests of gold and fifty of silver; and, mounting Hasan and his bride on others, rode with them three days, wherein they accomplished a march of three months. Then they bade them farewell and addressed themselves to return; whereupon his sister, the youngest damsel, threw herself on Hasan's neck and wept till she fainted. When she came to herself, she repeated these two couplets:—

Ne'er dawn the severance-day on any wise ✿ That robs of sleep these heavy-lidded eyes.

From us and thee it hath fair union torn ✿ It wastes our force and makes our forms its prize.

Her verses finished she farewelled him, straitly charging him, whenas he should have come to his native land and have foregathered with his mother and set his heart at ease, to fail not of visiting her once in every six months and saying, "If aught grieve thee or thou fear aught of vexation, beat the Magian's kettle-drum, whereupon the dromedaries shall come to thee; and do thou mount and return to us and persist not in staying away." He swore thus to do and conjured them to go home. So they returned to the palace, mourning for their separation from him, especially the youngest, with whom no rest would stay nor would Patience her call obey, but she wept night and day. Thus it was with them; but as regards Hasan and his wife, they fared on by day and night over plain and desert site and valley and stony heights through noon-tide

glare and dawn's soft light; and Allah decreed them safety, so that they reached Bassorah-city without hindrance and made their camels kneel at the door of his house. Hasan then dismissed the dromedaries and, going up to the door to open it, heard his mother weeping and in a faint strain, from a heart worn with parting-pain and on fire with consuming bane, reciting these couplets:—

How shall he taste of sleep who lacks repose ✿ Who wakes a-night when all in slumber wone?
He ownèd wealth and family and fame ✿ Yet fared from house and home an exile lone:
Live coal beneath his[80] ribs he bears for bane, ✿ And mighty longing, mightier ne'er was known:
Passion hath seized him, Passion mastered him; ✿ Yet is he constant while he maketh moan;
His case for Love proclaimed aye that he, ✿ (As prove his tears) is wretched, woe-begone.

When Hasan heard his mother weeping and wailing he wept also and knocked at the door a loud knock. Quoth she, "Who is at the door?"; and quoth he, "Open!" Whereupon she opened the door and knowing him at first sight fell down in a fainting fit; but he ceased not to tend her till she came to herself, when he embraced her and she embraced him and kissed him, whilst his wife looked on mother and son. Then he carried his goods and gear into the house, whilst his mother, for that her heart was comforted and Allah had reunited her with her son versified with these couplets:—

Fortune had ruth upon my plight ✿ Pitied my long long bane and blight;
Gave me what I would liefest sight; ✿ And set me free from all affright.
So pardon I the sin that sin ✿ nèd she in days evanisht quite;
E'en to the sin she sinned when she ✿ Bleached my hair-parting silvern white.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Hasan with his mother then sat talking and she asked him, "How faredst thou, O my son, with the Persian?" whereto he answered, "O my mother, he was no Persian, but a Magian, who worshipped the fire, not the All-powerful Sire." Then he told her how he dealt with him, in that he had journeyed with him to the Mountain of Clouds and sewed him up in the camel's skin, and how the vultures had taken him up and set him down on the summit and what he had seen there of dead folk, whom the Magian had deluded and left to die on the crest after they had done his desire. And he told her how he had cast himself from the mountain-top 51 into the sea and Allah the Most High had preserved him and brought him to the palace of the seven Princesses and how the youngest of them had taken him to brother and he had sojourned with them, till the Almighty brought the Magian to the place where he was and he slew him. Moreover, he told her of his passion for the King's daughter and how he had made prize of her and of his seeing her[81] in sleep and all else that had befallen him up to the time when Allah

vouchsafed them reunion. She wondered at his story and praised the Lord who had restored him to her in health and safety. Then she arose and examined the baggage and loads and questioned him of them. So he told her what was in them, whereat she joyed with exceeding joy. Then she went up to the King's daughter, to talk with her and bear her company; but, when her eyes fell on her, her wits were confounded at her brilliancy and she rejoiced and marvelled at her beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace: and she sat down beside her, cheering her and comforting her heart while she never ceased to repeat "Alhamdolillah, O my son, for thy return to me safe and sound!" Next morning early she went down into the market and bought mighty fine furniture and ten suits of the richest raiment in the city, and clad the young wife and adorned her with everything seemly. Then said she to Hasan, "O my son, we cannot tarry in this town with all this wealth; for thou knowest that we are poor folk and the people will suspect us of practising alchemy. So come, let us depart to Baghdad, the House[82] of Peace, where we may dwell in the Caliph's Sanctuary, and thou shalt sit in a shop to buy and sell, in the fear of Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) and He shall open to thee the door of blessings with this wealth." Hasan approved her counsel and going forth straightway, sold the house and summoned the dromedaries, which he loaded with all his goods and gear, together with his mother and wife. Then he went down to the Tigris, where he hired him a craft to carry them to Baghdad and embarked therein all his possessions and his mother and wife. 52 They sailed up the river with a fair wind for ten days till they drew in sight of Baghdad, at which they all rejoiced, and the ship landed them in the city, where without stay or delay Hasan hired a storehouse in one of the caravanserais and transported his goods thither. He lodged that night in the Khan and on the morrow, he changed his clothes and going down into the city, enquired for a broker. The folk directed him to one, and when the broker saw him, he asked him what he lacked. Quoth he, "I want a house, a handsome one and a spacious." So the broker showed him the houses at his disposal and he chose one that belonged to one of the Wazirs and buying it of him for an hundred thousand golden dinars, gave him the price. Then he returned to his caravanserai and removed all his goods and monies to the house; after which he went down to the market and bought all the mansion needed of vessels and carpets and other household stuff, besides servants and eunuchs, including a little black boy for the house. He abode with his wife in all solace and delight of life three years, during which time he was vouchsafed by her two sons, one of whom he named Násir and the other Mansúr: but, at the end of this time he bethought him of his sisters, the Princesses, and called to mind all their goodness to him and how they had helped him to his desire. So he longed after them and going out to the market-streets of the city, bought trinkets and costly stuffs and fruit-confections, such as they had never seen or known. His mother asked him the reason of his buying these rarities and he answered, "I purpose to visit my sisters, who showed me every kind of kindness, and all the wealth that I at present enjoy is due to their goodness and munificence:

wherefore I will journey to them and return soon, Inshallah!" Quoth she, "O my son, be not long absent from me;" and quoth he, "Know, O my mother, how thou shalt do with my wife. Here is her feather-dress in a chest, buried under ground in such a place; do thou watch over it, lest haply she hap on it and take it, for she would fly away, she and her children, and I should never hear of them again and should die of grieving for them; wherefore take heed, O my mother, while I warn thee that thou name this not to her. Thou must know that she is the daughter of a King of the Jinn, than whom there is not a greater among the Sovrans of the Jann nor a richer in troops and treasure, and she is mistress of her people and dearest to her father of all he hath. Moreover, she is passing high-spirited, so do thou serve her thyself and suffer her not to go forth the door 53 neither look out of window nor over the wall, for I fear the air for her when it bloweth,[83] and if aught befel her of the calamities of this world, I should slay myself for her sake." She replied, "O my son, I take refuge with Allah[84] from gainsaying thee! Am I mad that thou shouldst lay this charge on me and I disobey thee therein? Depart, O my son, with heart at ease, and please Allah, soon thou shalt return in safety and see her and she shall tell thee how I have dealt with her: but tarry not, O my son, beyond the time of travel."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan had determined to visit the Princesses, he gave his mother the orders we have mentioned.[85] Now, as Fate would have it, his wife heard what he said to his mother and neither of them knew it. Then Hasan went without the city and beat the kettle-drum, whereupon up came the dromedaries and he loaded twenty of them with rarities of Al-Irak; after which he returned to his mother and repeated his charge to her and took leave of her and his wife and children, one of whom was a yearling babe and the other two years old. Then he mounted and fared on, without stopping night or day, over hills and valleys and plains and wastes for a term of ten days till, on the eleventh, he reached the palace and went in to his sisters, with the gifts he had brought them. The Princesses rejoiced at his sight and gave him joy of his safety, whilst his sister decorated the palace within and without. Then they took the presents and, lodging him in a chamber as before, asked him of his mother and his wife, and he told them that she had borne him two sons. And the youngest Princess, seeing him well and in good case, joyed with exceeding joy and repeated this couplet:—

54 I ever ask for news of you from whatso breezes pass ✿ And never any but yourselves can pass across my mind.

Then he abode with them in all honour and hospitality, for three months, spending his time in feasting and merrymaking, joy and delight, hunting and sporting. So fared it

with him; but as regards his wife, she abode with his mother two days after her husband's departure, and on the third day, she said to her, "Glory be to God! Have I lived with him three years and shall I never go to the bath?" Then she wept and Hasan's mother had pity on her condition and said to her, "O my daughter, here we are strangers and thy husband is abroad. Were he at home, he would serve thee himself, but, as for me, I know no one. However, O my daughter, I will heat thee water and wash thy head in the Hammam-bath which is in the house." Answered the King's daughter, "O my lady, hadst thou spoken thus to one of the slave-girls, she had demanded to be sold in the Sultan's open market and had not abode with thee.[86] Men are excusable, because they are jealous and their reason telleth them that, if a woman go forth the house, haply she will do frowardness. But women, O my lady, are not all equal and alike and thou knowest that, if woman have a mind to aught, whether it be the Hammam or what not else, none hath power over her to guard her or keep her chaste or debar her from her desire; for she will do whatso she willeth and naught restraineth her but her reason and her religion.[87]" Then she wept and cursed fate and bemoaned herself and her strangerhood, till Hasan's mother was moved to ruth for her case and knew that all she said was but truth and that there was nothing for it but to let her have her way. So she committed the affair to Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) and making ready all that they needed for the bath, took her and went with her to the Hammam. She carried her two little sons with her, and when they entered, they put off their clothes and all the women fell to gazing on the Princess and glorifying God (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) for that He had created so fair a form. The women of the city, even those who were passing by, flocked to gaze upon her, and the report of her was noised abroad in Baghdad till the bath was crowded that there was no passing through it. Now it chanced there was present on that day and 55 on that rare occasion with the rest of the women in the Hammam, one of the slave-girls of the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, by name Tohfah[88] the Lutanist, and she, finding the Hammam over crowded and no passing for the throng of women and girls, asked what was to do; and they told her of the young lady. So she walked up to her and, considering her closely, was amazed at her grace and loveliness and glorified God (magnified be His majesty!) for the fair forms He hath created. The sight hindered her from her bath, so that she went not farther in nor washed, but sat staring at the Princess, till she had made an end of bathing and coming forth of the caldarium donned her raiment, whereupon beauty was added to her beauty. She sat down on the divan,[89] whilst the women gazed upon her; then she looked at them and veiling Herself, went out. Tohfah went out with her and followed her, till she saw where she dwelt, when she left her and returned to the Caliph's palace; and ceased not wending till she went in to the Lady Zubaydah and kissed ground between her hands; whereupon quoth her mistress, "O Tohfah, why hast thou tarried in the Hammam?" She replied, "O my lady, I have seen a marvel, never saw I its like amongst men or women, and this it was that distracted me and dazed my wit and amazed me, so that I

forgot even to wash my head." Asked Zubaydah, "And what was that?"; and Tohfah answered, "O my lady, I saw a damsel in the bath, having with her two little boys like moons, eye never espied her like, nor before her nor after her, neither is there the fellow of her form in the whole world nor her peer amongst Ajams or Turks or Arabs. By the munificence, O my lady, an thou toldest the Commander of the Faithful of her, he would slay her husband and take her from him, for her like is not to be found among women. I asked of her mate and they told me that he is a merchant Hasan of Bassorah hight. Moreover, I followed her from the bath to her own house and found it to be that of the Wazir, with the two gates, one opening on the river and the other on the land.[90] Indeed, O my lady, I fear lest the Prince of True Believers hear of her and break the law and slay her husband and take love-liesse with her."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Tohfah, after seeing the King's daughter, described her beauty to the Lady Zubaydah ending with, "Indeed, O my mistress, I fear lest the Prince of True Believers hear of her and break the law and slay her mate and take her to wife," Zubaydah cried, "Woe to thee, O Tohfah, say me, doth this damsel display such passing beauty and loveliness that the Commander of the Faithful should, on her account, barter his soul's good for his worldly lust and break the Holy Law! By Allah, needs must I look on her, and if she be not as thou sayest, I will bid strike off thy head! O strumpet, there are in the Caliph's Serraglio three hundred and three score slave girls, after the number of the days of the year, yet is there none amongst them so excellent as thou describest!" Tohfah replied, "No, by Allah, O my lady!: nor is there her like in all Baghdad; no, nor amongst the Arabs or the Daylamites nor hath Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) created the like of her!" Thereupon Zubaydah called for Masrur, the eunuch, who came and kissed the ground before her, and she said to him, "O Masrur, go to the Wazir's house, that with the two gates, one giving on the water and the other on the land, and bring me the damsel who dwelleth there, also her two children and the old woman who is with her, and haste thou and tarry not." Said Masrur, "I hear and I obey," and repairing to Hasan's house, knocked at the door. Quoth the old woman, "Who is at the door?" and quoth he, "Masrur, the eunuch of the Commander of the Faithful." So she opened the door and he entered and saluted her with the salam; whereupon she returned his salute and asked his need; and he replied, "The Lady Zubaydah, daughter of Al-Kasim[91] and queen-spouse of the Commander of the Faithful Harun al-Rashid sixth[92] of the sons of Al-Abbas, paternal uncle of the Prophet (whom Allah bless and keep!) summoneth thee to her, thee and thy son's wife and her children; for the women have 57told her anent her and her beauty." Rejoined the old woman, "O my lord Masrur, we are foreigner folk and the girl's husband (my

son) who is abroad and far from home hath strictly charged me not to go forth nor let her go forth in his absence, neither show her to any of the creatures of Allah Almighty; and I fear me, if aught befal her and he come back, he will slay himself; wherefore of thy favour I beseech thee, O Masrur, require us not of that whereof we are unable." Masrur retorted, "O my lady, if I knew aught to be feared for you in this, I would not require you to go; the Lady Zubaydah desireth but to see her and then she may return. So disobey not or thou wilt repent; and like as I take you, I will bring you both back in safety, Inshallah!" Hasan's mother could not gainsay him; so she went in and making the damsel ready, brought her and her children forth and they all followed Masrur to the palace of the Caliphate where he carried them in and seated them on the floor before the Lady Zubaydah. They kissed ground before her and called down blessings upon her; and Zubaydah said to the young lady (who was veiled), "Wilt thou not uncover thy face, that I may look on it?" So she kissed the ground between her hands and discovered a face which put to shame the full moon in the height of heaven. Zubaydah fixed her eyes on her and let their glances wander over her, whilst the palace was illumined by the light of her countenance; whereupon the Queen and the whole company were amazed at her beauty and all who looked on her became Jinn-mad and unable to bespeak one another. As for Zubaydah, she rose and making the damsel stand up, strained her to her bosom and seated her by herself on the couch. Moreover, she bade decorate the palace in her honour and calling for a suit of the richest raiment and a necklace of the rarest ornaments put them upon her. Then said she to her, "O liege lady of fair ones, verily thou astoundest me and fillest mine eyes.[93] What arts knowest thou?" She replied, "O my lady, I have a dress of feathers, and could I but put it on before thee, thou wouldst see one of the fairest of fashions and marvel thereat, and all who saw it would talk of its goodliness, generation after generation." Zubaydah asked, "And where is this dress of thine?"; and the damsel answered, "'Tis with my husband's mother. Do thou seek it for me of her." So Zubaydah said to 58 the old woman, "O my lady the pilgrimess, O my mother, go forth and fetch us her feather-dress, that we may solace ourselves by looking on what she will do, and after take it back again." Replied the old woman, "O my lady, this damsel is a liar. Hast thou ever seen any of womankind with a dress of feathers? Indeed, this belongeth only to birds." But the damsel said to the Lady Zubaydah, "As thou livest, O my lady, she hath a feather-dress of mine and it is in a chest, which is buried in such a store-closet in the house." So Zubaydah took off her neck a rivière of jewels, worth all the treasures of Chosroe and Cæsar, and gave it to the old woman, saying, "O my mother, I conjure thee by my life, take this necklace and go and fetch us this dress, that we may divert ourselves with the sight thereof, and after take it again!" But she sware to her that she had never seen any such dress and wist not what the damsel meant by her speech. Then the Lady Zubaydah cried out at her and taking the key from her, called Masrur and said to him as soon as he came, "Take this key and go to the house; then open it and enter a store-closet there whose door is such and

such and amiddlemost of it thou wilt find a chest buried. Take it out and break it open and bring me the feather-dress which is therein and set it before me."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Lady Zubaydah, having taken the key from Hasan's mother, handed it to Masrur, saying, "Take this key and open such a closet; then bring forth of it the chest; break it open; bring me the feather-dress which is therein and set it before me." "Hearkening and obedience," replied he and taking the key went forth, whereupon the old woman arose and followed him, weeping-eyed and repenting her of having given ear to the damsel and gone with her to the bath, for her desire to go thither was but a device. So she went with him to the house and opened the door of the closet, and he entered and brought out the chest. Then he took therefrom the feather-dress and wrapping it in a napkin, carried it to the Lady Zubaydah, who took it and turned it about, marvelling at the beauty of its make; after which she gave it to the damsel, saying, "Is this thy dress of feathers?" She replied, "Yes, O my 59 lady," and at once putting forth her hand, took it joyfully. Then she examined it and rejoiced to find it whole as it was, not a feather gone. So she rose and came down from beside the Lady Zubaydah and taking her sons in her bosom, wrapped herself in the feather-dress and became a bird, by the ordinance of Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!), whereat Zubaydah marvelled as did all who were present. Then she walked with a swaying and graceful gait and danced and sported and flapped her wings, whilst all eyes were fixed on her and all marvelled at what she did. Then said she with fluent tongue, "Is this goodly, O my ladies?"; and they replied, "Yes, O Princess of the fair! All thou dost is goodly." Said she, "And this, O my mistresses, that I am about to do is better yet." Then she spread her wings and flying up with her children to the dome of the palace, perched on the saloon-roof whilst they all looked at her, wide-eyed and said, "By Allah, this is indeed a rare and peregrine fashion! Never saw we its like." Then, as she was about to take flight for her own land, she bethought her of Hasan and said, "Hark ye, my mistresses!" and she improvised these couplets[94]:—

O who hast quitted these abodes and faredst lief and light ✿ To other objects of thy love with fain and fastest flight!

Deem'st thou that 'bided I with you in solace and in joy ✿ Or that my days amid you all were clear of bane and blight?

When I was captive ta'en of Love and snarèd in his snare, ✿ He made of Love my prison and he fared fro' me forthright:

So when my fear was hidden, he made sure that ne'er should I ✿ Pray to the One, th' Omnipotent to render me my right:

He charged his mother keep the secret with all the care she could, ✿ In closet shut and treated me with enemy's despight:

But I o'erheard their words and held them fast in memory ✿ And hoped for fortune fair and weal and blessings infinite:

My faring to the Hammam bath then proved to me the means ✿ Of making minds of folk to be confounded at my sight:

Wondered the Bride of Al-Rashíd to see my brilliancy ✿ When she beheld me right and left with all of beauty dight:

Then quoth I, "O our Caliph's wife, I once was wont to own ✿ A dress of feathers rich and rare that did the eyes delight:

An it were now on me thou shouldst indeed see wondrous things ✿ That would efface all sorrows and disperse all sores of sprite:"

Then deigned our Caliph's Bride to cry, "Where is that dress of thine?" ✿ And I replied, "In house of him kept darkling as the night."

60 So down upon it pounced Masrúr and brought it unto her, ✿ And when 'twas there each feather cast a ray of beaming light:

Therewith I took it from his hand and opened it straightway ✿ And saw its plumèd bosom and its buttons pleased my sight:

And so I clad myself therein and took with me my babes; ✿ And spread my wings and flew away with all my main and might;

Saying, "O husband's mother mine tell him when cometh he ✿ An ever wouldest meet her thou from house and home must flee."

When she had made an end of her verses, the Lady Zubaydah said to her, "Wilt thou not come down to us, that we may take our fill of thy beauty, O fairest of the fair? Glory be to Him who hath given thee eloquence and brilliance!" But she said, "Far be from me that the Past return should see!" Then said she to the mother of the hapless, wretched Hasan, "By Allah, O my lady, O mother of my husband, it irketh me to part from thee; but, whenas thy son cometh to thee and upon him the nights of severance longsome shall be and he craveth reunion and meeting to see and whenas breezes of love and longing shake him dolefully, let him come in the islands of Wák[951] to me." Then 61 she took flight with her children and sought her own country, whilst the old woman wept and beat her face and moaned and groaned till she swooned away. When she came to herself, she said to the Lady Zubaydah, "O my lady, what is this thou hast done?" And Zubaydah said to her, "O my lady the pilgrimess, I knew not that this would happen and hadst thou told me of the case and acquainted me with her condition, I had not gainsaid thee. Nor did I know until now that she was of the Flying Jinn; else had I not suffered her to don the dress nor permitted her to take her children: but now, O my lady, words profit nothing; so do thou acquit me of offence against thee." And the old woman could do no otherwise than shortly answer, "Thou art acquitted!" Then she went forth the palace of the Caliphate and returned to her own house, where she buffeted her face till she swooned away. When she came to herself, she pined for her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren and for the sight of her son and versified with these couplets:—

Your faring on the parting-day drew many a tear fro' me, ✿ Who must your flying from the home long mourn in misery:

And cried I for the parting pang in anguish likest fire ✿ And tear-floods chafed mine eyelids sore that ne'er of tears were free;

"Yes, this is Severance, Ah, shall we e'er joy return of you? ✿ For your departure hath deprived my power of privacy!"

Ah, would they had returned to me in covenant of faith ✿ An they return perhaps restore of past these eyne may see.

Then arising she dug in the house three graves and betook herself to them with weeping all whiles of the day and watches of the night; and when her son's absence was longsome upon her and grief and yearning and unquiet waxed upon her, she recited these couplets:—

Deep in mine eyeballs ever dwells the phantom-form of thee ✿ My heart when throbbing or at rest holds fast thy memory:

And love of thee doth never cease to course within my breast, ✿ As course the juices in the fruits which deck the branchy tree:

62 And every day I see thee not my bosom straightened is ✿ And even censurers excuse the woes in me they see:

O thou whose love hath gotten hold the foremost in the heart ✿ Of me whose fondness is excelled by mine insanity:

Fear the Compassionate in my case and some compassion show! ✿ Love of thee makes me taste of death in bitterest pungency.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Hasan's mother bewept through the watches of the night and the whiles of the day her separation from her son and his wife and children. On this wise it fared with her; but as regards Hasan, when he came to the Princesses, they conjured him to tarry with them three months, after which long sojourn they gave him five loads of gold and the like of silver and one load of victual and accompanied him on his homeward way till he conjured them to return, whereupon they farewelled him with an embrace; but the youngest came up to him, to bid him adieu and clasping his neck wept till she fainted. Then she recited these two couplets:—

When shall the severance-fire be quenched by union, love, with you? ✿ When shall I win my wish of you and days that were renew?

The parting-day affrighted me and wrought me dire dismay ✿ And doubleth woe, O master mine, by the sad word "Adieu."

Anon came forward the second Princess and embraced him and recited these two couplets:—

Farewelling thee indeed is like to bidding life farewell ✿ And like the loss of Zephyr[96] 'tis to lose thee far our sight:

Thine absence is a flaming fire which burneth up my heart ✿ And in thy presence I enjoy the Gardens of Delight.[97]

Presently came forward the third and embraced him and recited these two couplets:—

63 We left not taking leave of thee (when bound to other goal) ✿ From aught of ill intention or from weariness and dole:

Thou art my soul, my very soul, the only soul of me: ✿ And how shall I farewell myself and say, "Adieu my Soul?"[98]

After her came forward the fourth and embraced him and recited these two couplets:—

Nought garred me weep save where and when of severance spake he ✿ Persisting in his cruel will with sore persistency:

Look at this pearl-like ornament I've hung upon mine ear; ✿ 'Tis of the tears of me compact, this choicest jewelry!

In her turn came forward the fifth and embraced him and recited these two couplets:—

Ah, fare thee not; for I've no force thy faring to endure, ✿ Nor e'en to say the word farewell before my friend is sped:

Nor any patience to support the days of severance, ✿ Nor any tears on ruined house and wasted home to shed.

Next came the sixth and embraced him and recited these two couplets:—

I cried, as the camels went off with them, ✿ And Love pained my vitals with sorest pain:

Had I a King who would lend me rule ✿ I'd seize every ship that dares sail the Main.

Lastly came forward the seventh and embraced him and recited these couplets:—

When thou seest parting, be patient still, [Symbol: star] Nor let foreign parts deal thy soul affright:

But abide, expecting a swift return, [Symbol: star] For all hearts hold parting in sore despight.

And eke these two couplets:—

Indeed I'm heart-broken to see thee start, ✿ Nor can I farewell thee ere thou depart;

Allah wotteth I left not to say adieu ✿ Save for fear that saying would melt your heart.

Hasan also wept for parting from them, till he swooned, and repeated these couplets:—

64 Indeed, ran my tears on the severance-day ✿ Like pearls I threaded in necklace-way:

The cameleer drove his camels with song ✿ But I lost heart, patience and strength and stay:

I bade them farewell and retired in grief ✿ From tryst-place and camp where my dearlings lay:

I turned me unknowing the way nor joyed ✿ My soul, but in hopes to return some day.

Oh listen, my friend, to the words of love ✿ God forbid thy heart forget all I say!

O my soul when thou partest wi' them, part too ✿ With all joys of life nor for living pray!

Then he farewelled them and fared on diligently night and day, till he came to Baghdad, the House of Peace and Sanctuary of the Abbaside Caliphs unknowing what

had passed during his wayfare. At once entering his house he went in to his mother to salute her, but found her worn of body and wasted of bones, for excess of mourning and watching, weeping and wailing, till she was grown thin as a toothpick and could not answer him a word. So he dismissed the dromedaries then asked her of his wife and children and she wept till she fainted, and he seeing her in this state searched the house for them, but found no trace of them. Then he went to the store-closet and finding it open and the chest broken and the feather-dress missing, knew forthright that his wife had possessed herself thereof and flown away with her children. Then he returned to his mother and, finding her recovered from her fit, questioned her of his spouse and babes, whereupon she wept and said, "O my son, may Allah amply requite thee their loss! These are their three tombs."[99] When Hasan heard these words of his mother, he shrieked a loud shriek and fell down in a fainting-fit in which he lay from the first of the day till noon-tide; whereupon anguish was added to his mother's anguish and she despaired of his life. However, after awhile, he came to himself and wept and buffeted his face and rent his raiment and went about the house clean distraught, reciting these two couplets[100]:—

65 Folk have made moan of passion before me, of past years, ✿ And live and dead for absence have suffered pains and fears;

But that within my bosom I harbour, with mine eyes ✿ I've never seen the like of nor heard with mine ears.

Then finishing his verses he bared his brand and coming up to his mother, said to her, "Except thou tell me the truth of the case, I will strike off thy head and kill myself." She replied, "O my son, do not such deed: put up thy sword and sit down, till I tell thee what hath passed." So he sheathed his scymitar and sat by her side, whilst she recounted to him all that had happened in his absence from first to last, adding, "O my son, but that I saw her weep in her longing for the bath and feared that she would go and complain to thee on thy return, and thou wouldst be wroth with me, I had never carried her thither; and were it not that the Lady Zubaydah was wroth with me and took the key from me by force, I had never brought out the feather-dress, though I died for it. But thou knowest, O my son, that no hand may measure length with that of the Caliphate. When they brought her the dress, she took it and turned it over, fancying that somewhat might be lost thereof, but she found it uninjured; wherefore she rejoiced and making her children fast to her waist, donned the feather-vest, after the Lady Zubaydah had pulled off to her all that was upon herself and clad her therein, in honour of her and because of her beauty. No sooner had she donned the dress than she shook and becoming a bird, promenaded about the palace, whilst all who were present gazed at her and marvelled at her beauty and loveliness. Then she flew up to the palace roof and perching thereon, looked at me and said:—Whenas thy son cometh to thee and the nights of separation upon him longsome shall be and he craveth reunion and meeting to see and whenas the breezes of love and longing shake him dolefully let him leave his native land and journey to the Islands of Wak and seek

me. This, then, is her story and what befel in thine absence."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that as soon as Hasan's mother had made an end of her story, he gave a great 66 cry and fell down in a fainting fit which continued till the end of day, when he revived and fell to buffeting his face and writhing on the floor like a scotched snake. His mother sat weeping by his head until midnight, when he came to himself and wept sore and recited these couplets[101]:—

Pause ye and see his sorry state since when ye fain withdrew; ✿ Haply, when wrought your cruelty, you'll have the grace to rue:

For an ye look on him, you'll doubt of him by sickness-stress ✿ As though, by Allah, he were one before ye never knew.

He dies for nothing save for love of you, and he would be ✿ Numbered amid the dead did not he moan and groan for you.

And deem not pangs of severance sit all lightly on his soul; ✿ 'Tis heavy load on lover-wight; 'twere lighter an ye slew.

Then having ended his verse he rose and went round about the house, weeping and wailing, groaning and bemoaning himself, five days, during which he tasted nor meat nor drink. His mother came to him and conjured him, till he broke his fast, and besought him to leave weeping; but he hearkened not to her and continued to shed tears and lament, whilst she strove to comfort him and he heeded her not. Then he recited these couplets[102]:—

Beareth for love a burden sore this soul of me, ✿ Could break a mortal's back however strong that be;

I am distraught to see my case and languor grows ✿ Making my day and night indifferent in degree:

I own to having dreaded Death before this day: ✿ This day I hold my death mine only remedy.

And Hasan ceased not to do thus till daybreak, when his eyes closed and he saw in a dream his wife grief-full and repentant for that which she had done. So he started up from sleep crying out and reciting these two couplets:—

Their image bides with me, ne'er quits me, ne'er shall fly; ✿ but holds within my heart most honourable stead;

But for reunion-hope, I'd see me die forthright, ✿ And but for phantom-form of thee my sleep had fled.

67 And as morning morrowed he redoubled his lamentations. He abode weeping-eyed and heavy-hearted, wakeful by night and eating little, for a whole month at the end of which he bethought him to repair to his sisters and take counsel with them in the matter of his wife, so haply they might help him to regain her. Accordingly he summoned the dromedaries and loading fifty of them with rarities of Al-Irak, committed the house to his mother's care and deposited all his goods in safe keeping, except some few he left at home. Then he mounted one of the beasts and set out on his journey single handed, intent upon obtaining aidance from the Princesses, and he

stayed not till he reached the Palace of the Mountain of Clouds, when he went in to the damsels and gave them the presents, in which they rejoiced. Then they wished him joy of his safety and said to him, "O our brother, what can ail thee to come again so soon, seeing thou wast with us but two months since?" Whereupon he wept and improvised these couplets:—

My soul for loss of lover sped I sight; ✿ Nor life enjoying neither life's delight:

My case is one whose cure is all unknown; ✿ Can any cure the sick but doctor wight?

O who hast reft my sleep-joys, leaving me ✿ To ask the breeze that blew from that fair site,—

Blew from my lover's land (the land that owns ✿ Those charms so sore a grief in soul excite),

"O breeze, that visitest her land, perhaps ✿ Breathing her scent, thou mayst revive my sprite!"

And when he ended his verse he gave a great cry and fell down in a fainting-fit. The Princesses sat round him, weeping over him, till he recovered and repeated these two couplets:—

Haply and happily may Fortune bend her rein ✿ Bringing my love, for Time's a freke of jealous strain;[1031]

Fortune may prosper me, supply mine every want, ✿ And bring a blessing where before were ban and bane.

Then he wept till he fainted again, and presently coming to himself recited the two following couplets:—

68 My wish, mine illness, mine unease! by Allah, own ✿ Art thou content? then I in love contented wone!

Dost thou forsake me thus sans crime or sin ✿ Meet me in ruth, I pray, and be our parting gone.

Then he wept till he swooned away once more and when he revived he repeated these couplets:—

Sleep fled me, by my side wake ever shows ✿ And hoard of tear-drops from these eyne aye flows;

For love they weep with beads cornelian-like ✿ And growth of distance greater dolence grows:

Lit up my longing, O my love, in me ✿ Flames burning 'neath my ribs with fiery throes!

Remembering thee a tear I never shed ✿ But in it thunder roars and leven glows.

Then he wept till he fainted away a fourth time, and presently recovering, recited these couplets:—

Ah! for lowe of love and longing suffer ye as suffer we? ✿ Say, as pine we and as yearn we for you are pining ye?

Allah do the death of Love, what a bitter draught is his! ✿ Would I wot of Love what plans and what projects nurseth he!

Your faces radiant-fair though afar from me they shine, ✿ Are mirrored in our eyes whatsoe'er the distance be;

My heart must ever dwell on the memories of your tribe; ✿ And the turtledove reneweth all as oft as moaneth she:

Ho thou dove, who passest night-tide in calling on thy fere, ✿ Thou doublest my repine, bringing grief for company;

And leavest thou mine eyelids with weeping unfulfilled ✿ For the dearlings who departed, whom we never more may see:

I melt for the thought of you at every time and hour, ✿ And I long for you when Night showeth cheek of blackest blee.

Now when his sister heard these words and saw his condition and how he lay fainting on the floor, she screamed and beat her face and the other Princesses hearing her scream came out and learning his misfortune and the transport of love and longing and the passion and distraction that possessed him they questioned him of his case. He wept and told them what had befallen in his absence and how his wife had taken flight with her children, wherefore they grieved for him and asked him what she said at leave-taking. Answered he, "O my sisters, she said to my mother, Tell thy son, whenas he cometh to thee and the nights of severance upon him longsome shall be and he craveth reunion and 69 meeting to see, and whenas the winds of love and longing shake him dolefully, let him fare in the Islands of Wak to me." When they heard his words they signed one to other with their eyes and shook their heads, and each looked at her sister, whilst Hasan looked at them all. Then they bowed their heads groundwards and bethought themselves awhile; after which they raised their heads and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"; presently adding, "Put forth thy hand to heaven and when thou reach thither, then shalt thou win to thy wife."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Seven Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Princesses said to Hasan, "Put forth thy hand to Heaven and when thou reach thither, then shalt thou win to wife and children," thereat the tears ran down his cheeks like rain and wet his clothes, and he recited these couplets:—

Pink cheeks and eyes enpupil'd black have dealt me sore despight; ✿ And whenas wake overpowered sleep my patience fled in fright:

The fair and sleek-limbed maidens hard of heart withal laid waste ✿ My very bones till not a breath is left for man to sight:

Houris, who fare with gait of grace as roes o'er sandy-mound: ✿ Did Allah's saints behold their charms they'd doat thereon forthright;

Faring as fares the garden breeze that bloweth in the dawn, ✿ For love of them a sore unrest and troubles rack my sprite:

I hung my hopes upon a maid, a loveling fair of them, ✿ For whom my heart still burns with lowe in Lazá-hell they light;—

A dearling soft of sides and haught and graceful in her gait, ✿ Her grace is white as morning, but her hair is black as night:

She stirreth me! But ah, how many heroes have her cheeks ✿ Upstirred for love, and eke her eyes that mingle black and white.

Then he wept, whilst the Princesses wept for his weeping, and they were moved to compassion and jealousy for him. So they fell to comforting him and exhorting him to patience and offering up prayers for his reunion with his wife; whilst his sister said to him, "O my brother, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear and be patient; so shalt thou win thy will; for whoso hath patience and waiteth, that he seeketh attaineth. Patience holdeth the keys of relief and indeed the poet saith:—

70 Let destiny with slackened rein its course appointed fare! And lie thou down to sleep by night, with heart devoid of care;

For 'twixt the closing of an eye and th' opening thereof, God hath it in His power to change a case from foul to fair.[104]

So hearten thy heart and brace up thy resolve, for the son of ten years dieth not in the ninth.[105] Weeping and grief and mourning gender sickness and disease; wherefore do thou abide with us till thou be rested, and I will devise some device for thy winning to thy wife and children, Inshallah—so it please Allah the Most High!" And he wept sore and recited these verses:—

An I be healed of disease in frame, ✿ I'm unhealed of illness in heart and sprite:

There is no healing disease of love, ✿ Save lover and loved one to reunite.

Then he sat down beside her and she proceeded to talk with him and comfort him and question him of the cause and the manner of his wife's departure. So he told her and she said, "By Allah, O my brother, I was minded to bid thee burn the feather-dress, but Satan made me forget it." She ceased not to converse with him and caress him and company with him other ten days, whilst sleep visited him not and he delighted not in food; and when the case was longsome upon him and unrest waxed in him, he versified with these couplets:—

A beloved familiar o'erreigns my heart ✿ And Allah's ruling reigns evermore:

She hath all the Arabs' united charms ✿ This gazelle who feeds on my bosom's core.

Though my skill and patience for love of her fail, ✿ I weep whilst I wot that 'tis vain to deplore.

The dearling hath twice seven years, as though ✿ She were moon of five nights and of five plus four.[106]

When the youngest Princess saw him thus distracted for love and longing-for passion and the fever-heat of desire, she went in to her sisterhood weeping-eyed and woeful-hearted, and shedding copious tears threw herself upon them, kissed their feet and besought them to devise some device for bringing Hasan to 71 the Islands of Wak and effecting his reunion with his wife and wees. She ceased not to conjure them to further her brother in the accomplishment of his desire and to weep before them, till she made them weep and they said to her, "Hearten thy heart: we will do our best endeavour to bring about his reunion with his family, Inshallah!" And he abode with them a whole year, during which his eyes never could retain their tears. Now the sisterhood had an uncle, brother-german to their sire and his name was Abd al-Kaddús, or Slave of the Most Holy; and he loved the eldest with exceeding love and was wont to visit her once a year and do all she desired. They had told him of Hasan's

adventure with the Magian and how he had been able to slay him; whereat he rejoiced and gave the eldest Princess a pouch[107] which contained certain perfumes, saying, "O daughter of my brother, an thou be in concern for aught, or if aught irk thee, or thou stand in any need, cast of these perfumes upon fire naming my name and I will be with thee forthright and will do thy desire." This speech was spoken on the first of Moharram[108]; and the eldest Princess said to one of the sisterhood, "Lo, the year is wholly past and my uncle is not come. Rise, bring me the fire-sticks and the box of perfumes." So the damsel arose rejoicing and, fetching what she sought, laid it before her sister, who opened the box and taking thence a little of the perfume, cast it into the fire, naming her uncle's name; nor was it burnt out ere appeared a dust-cloud at the farther end of the Wady; and presently lifting, it discovered a Shaykh riding on an elephant, which moved at a swift and easy pace, and trumpeted under the rider. As soon as he came within sight of the Princesses, he began making signs to them with his hands and feet; nor was it long ere he reached the castle and, alighting from the elephant, came in to them, whereupon they embraced him and kissed his hands and saluted him with the salam. Then he sat down, whilst the girls talked with him and questioned him of his absence. Quoth he, "I was sitting but now with my wife, your aunt, when I smelt the perfumes and hastened to you on this elephant. What wouldst thou, O daughter of my brother?" Quoth she, "O uncle, indeed we longed for thee, as 72 the year is past and 'tis not thy wont to be absent from us more than a twelvemonth." Answered he, "I was busy, but I purposed to come to you to-morrow." Wherefore they thanked him and blessed him and sat talking with him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundredth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the girls sat down to chat with their uncle the eldest said to him, "O my uncle, we told thee the tale of Hasan of Bassorah, whom Bahram the Magian brought and how he slew the wizard and how, after enduring all manner of hardships and horrors, he made prize of the Supreme King's daughter and took her to wife and journeyed with her to his native land?" Replied he, "Yes, and what befel him after that?" Quoth the Princess, "She played him false after he was blest with two sons by her; for she took them in his absence and fled with them to her own country, saying to his mother:—Whenas thy son returneth to thee and asketh for me and upon him the nights of severance longsome shall be and he craveth reunion and meeting to see and whenas the breezes of love and longing shake him dolefully, let him come in the Islands of Wak to me." When Abd al-Kaddus heard this, he shook his head and bit his forefinger; then, bowing his brow groundwards he began to make marks on the earth with his finger-tips;[109] after which he again shook his head and looked right and left and shook his head a third time, whilst Hasan watched him from a place where he was hidden from him. Then said the Princesses to their uncle, "Return us some answer, for our hearts are rent in sunder."

But he shook his head at them, saying, “O my daughters, verily hath this man wearied himself in vain and cast himself into grievous predicament and sore peril; for he may not gain access to the Islands of Wak.” With this the Princesses called Hasan, who came forth and, advancing to Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus, kissed his hand and saluted him. The old man rejoiced in him and seated him by his side; whereupon quoth the damsels, [73]“O uncle, acquaint our brother Hasan with that thou hast told us.” So he said to Hasan, “O my son, put away from thee this *peine forte et dure*; for thou canst never gain access to the Islands of Wak, though the Flying Jinn and the Wandering Stars were with thee; for that betwixt thee and these islands are seven Wadys and seven seas and seven mighty mountains. How then canst thou come at this stead and who shall bring thee thither? Wherefore, Allah upon thee, O my son, do thou reckon thy spouse and sons as dead and turn back forthright and weary not thy sprite! Indeed, I give thee good counsel, an thou wilt but accept it.” Hearing these words from the Shaykh, Hasan wept till he fainted, and the Princesses sat round him, weeping for his weeping, whilst the youngest sister rent her raiment and buffeted her face, till she swooned away. When Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus saw them in this transport of grief and trouble and mourning, he was moved to ruth for them and cried, “Be ye silent!” Then said he to Hasan, “O my son, hearten thy heart and rejoice in the winning of thy wish, an it be the will of Allah the Most High;” presently adding, “Rise, O my son, take courage and follow me.” So Hasan arose forthright and after he had taken leave of the Princesses followed him, rejoicing in the fulfilment of his wish. Then the Shaykh called the elephant and mounting, took Hasan up behind him and fared on three days with their nights, like the blinding leven, till he came to a vast blue mountain, whose stones were all of azure hue and amiddlemost of which was a cavern, with a door of Chinese iron. Here he took Hasan’s hand and let him down and alighting dismissed the elephant. Then he went up to the door and knocked, whereupon it opened and there came out to him a black slave, hairless, as he were an Ifrit, with brand in right hand and targe of steel in left. When he saw Abd al-Kaddus, he threw sword and buckler from his grip and coming up to the Shaykh kissed his hand. Thereupon the old man took Hasan by the hand and entered with him, whilst the slave shut the door behind them; when Hasan found himself in a vast cavern and a spacious, through which ran an arched corridor and they ceased not faring on therein a mile or so, till it abutted upon a great open space and thence they made for an angle of the mountain wherein were two huge doors cast of solid brass. The old man opened one of them and said to Hasan, “Sit at the door, whilst I go within and come back to thee in haste, and beware lest thou open it and enter.” Then he fared inside and, shutting the door after him, [74]was absent during a full sidereal hour, after which he returned, leading a black stallion, thin of flank and short of nose, which was ready bridled and saddled, with velvet housings; and when it ran it flew, and when it flew, the very dust in vain would pursue; and brought it to Hasan, saying, “Mount!” So he mounted and Abd al-

Kaddus opened the second door, beyond which appeared a vast desert. Then the twain passed through the door into that desert and the old man said to him, "O my son, take this scroll and wend thou whither this steed will carry thee. When thou seest him stop at the door of a cavern like this, alight and throw the reins over the saddle-bow and let him go. He will enter the cavern, which do thou not enter with him, but tarry at the door five days, without being weary of waiting. On the sixth day there will come forth to thee a black Shaykh, clad all in sable, with a long white beard, flowing down to his navel. As soon as thou seest him kiss his hands and seize his skirt and lay it on thy head and weep before him, till he take pity on thee and he will ask thee what thou wouldst have. When he saith to thee, "What is thy want?" give him this scroll which he will take without speaking and go in and leave thee. Wait at the door other five days, without wearying, and on the sixth day expect him; and if he come out to thee himself, know that thy wish will be won, but, if one of his pages come forth to thee, know that he who cometh forth to thee, purposeth to kill thee; and—the Peace![110] For know, O my son, that whoso self imperilleth doeth himself to death;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and First Night,

She continued, "It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after handing the scroll to Hasan, Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus told him what would befal him and said, "Whoso self imperilleth doeth himself to death;" but also "who ventureth naught advantageth naught." However an thou fear for thy life, cast it not into danger of destruction; but, an thou fear not, up and do thy will, for I have expounded to thee the whole case. Yet shouldest thou 75 be minded to return to thy friends the elephant is still here and he will carry thee to my nieces, who will restore thee to thy country and return thee to thy home, and Allah will vouchsafe thee a better than this girl, of whom thou art enamoured." Hasan answered the Shaykh, saying, "And how shall life be sweet to me, except I win my wish? By Allah, I will never turn back, till I regain my beloved or my death overtake me!" And he wept and recited these couplets:—

For loss of lover mine and stress of love I dree, ✿ I stood bewailing self in deep despondency.
Longing for him, the Spring-camp's dust I kissed and kissed, ✿ But this bred more of grief and galling reverie.
God guard the gone, who in our hearts must e'er abide ✿ With nearing woes and joys which still the farther flee.
They say me, "Patience!" But they bore it all away: ✿ On parting-day, and left me naught save tormentry.
And naught affrighted me except the word he said, ✿ "Forget me not when gone nor drive from memory."
To whom shall turn I? hope in whom when you are lost? ✿ Who were my only hopes and joys and woes of me?
But ah, the pang of home-return when parting thus! ✿ How joyed at seeing me return mine enemy.
Then well-away! this 'twas I guarded me against! ✿ And ah, thou lowe of Love double thine ardency![111]
An fled for aye my friends I'll not survive the flight; ✿ Yet an they deign return, Oh joy! Oh ecstacy!
Never, by Allah tears and weeping I'll contain ✿ For loss of you, but tears on tears and tears will rain.

When Abd al-Kaddus heard his verse he knew that he would not turn back from his desire nor would words have effect on him, and was certified that naught would serve him but he must imperil himself, though it lose him his life. So he said to him, "Know, O my son, that the Islands of Wak are seven islands, wherein is a mighty host, all virgin girls, and the Inner Isles are peopled by Satans and Marids and warlocks and various tribesmen of the Jinn; and whoso entereth their land never returneth thence; at least none hath done so to this day. So, Allah upon thee, return presently to thy people, for know that she whom thou seekest is the King's daughter of all these islands; and how canst thou 76attain to her? Hearken to me, O my son, and haply Allah will vouchsafe thee in her stead a better than she." "O my lord," answered Hasan, "though for the love of her I were cut in pieces yet should I but redouble in love and transport! There is no help but that I enter the Wak Islands and come to the sight of my wife and children; and Inshallah, I will not return save with her and with them." Said the Shaykh, "Then nothing will serve thee but thou must make the journey?" Hasan replied, "Nothing! and I only ask of thee thy prayers for help and aidance; so haply Allah will reunite me with my wife and children right soon." Then he wept for stress of longing and recited these couplets:—

You are my wish, of creatures brightest-light ✿ I deem you lief as hearing, fain as sight:
You hold my heart which hath become your home ✿ And since you left me, lords, right sore's my plight:
Then think not I have yielded up your love, ✿ Your love which set this wretch in fierce affright:
You went and went my joy whenas you went; ✿ And waned and waxèd wan the brightest light:
You left me lone to watch the stars in woe: ✿ Railing tears likest rain-drops infinite.
Thou'rt longsome to the wight, who pining lies ✿ On wake, moon-gazing through the night, O Night!
Wind! an thou pass the tribe where they abide ✿ Give them my greeting, life is fain of flight.
And tell them somewhat of the pangs I bear: ✿ The loved one kenneth not my case aright

Then he wept with sore weeping till he fainted away; and when he came to himself, Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus said to him, "O my son, thou hast a mother; make her not taste the torment of thy loss." Hasan replied, "By Allah, O my lord, I will never return except with my wife, or my death shall overtake me." And he wept and wailed and recited these couplets:—

By Love's right! naught of farness thy slave can estrange ✿ Nor am *I* one to fail in my fealty:
I suffer such pains did I tell my case ✿ To folk, they'd cry, "Madness! clean witless is he!"
Then ecstasy, love-longing, transport and lowe! ✿ Whose case is such case how shall ever he be?

With this the old man knew that he would not turn from his 77purpose, though it cost him his life; so he handed him the scroll and prayed for him and charged him how he should do, saying "I have in this letter given a strict charge concerning thee to Abú al-Ruwaysh,[112] son of Bilkís, daughter of Mu'ín, for he is my Shaykh and my teacher, and all, men and Jinn, humble themselves to him and stand in awe of him. And now go with the blessing of God." Hasan forthright set out giving the horse the rein, and it

flew off with him swiftlier than lightning, and stayed not in its course ten days, when he saw before him a vast loom black as night, walling the world from East to West. As he neared it, the stallion neighed under him, whereupon there flocked to it horses in number as the drops of rain, none could tell their tale or against them prevail, and fell to rubbing themselves against it. Hasan was affrighted at them and fared forwards surrounded by the horses, without drawing rein till he came to the cavern which Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus had described to him. The steed stood still at the door and Hasan alighted and bridged the bridle over the saddle-bow[113]; whereupon the steed entered the cavern, whilst the rider abode without, as the old man had charged him, pondering the issue of his case in perplexity and distraction and unknowing what would befal him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Second Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Hasan, dismounting from the steed, stood at the cavern-mouth pondering the issue of his case and unknowing what might befal him. He abode standing on the same spot five days with their nights, sleepless, mournful, tearful-eyed; distracted, perplexed, pondering his severance from home and family, comrades and friends, with weeping eyelids and heavy heart. Then he bethought him of his mother and of what might yet happen to him and of his separation from his wife and children and of all that he had suffered, and he recited these couplets:—

78 With you is my heart-cure a heart that goes; ✿ And from hill-foot of eyelids the tear-rill flows:

And parting and sorrow and exile and dole ✿ And farness from country and throe that o’erthrows:

Naught am I save a lover distracted by love, ✿ Far parted from loved one and wilted by woes.

And ’tis Love that hath brought me such sorrow, say where ✿ Is the noble of soul who such sorrow unknows?

Hardly had Hasan made an end of his verses, when out came the Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh, a blackamoor and clad in black raiment, and at first sight he knew him by the description that Abd al-Kaddus had given him. He threw himself at his feet and rubbed his cheeks on them and seizing his skirt, laid it on his head and wept before him. Quoth the old man, “What wantest thou, O my son?” Whereupon he put out his hand to him with the letter, and Abu al-Ruwaysh took it and re-entered the cavern, without making him any answer. So Hasan sat down at the cave-mouth in his place other five days as he had been bidden, whilst concern grew upon him and terror redoubled on him and restlessness gat hold of him, and he fell to weeping and bemoaning himself for the anguish of estrangement and much watching. And he recited these couplets:—

Glory to Him who guides the skies! ✿ The lover sore in sorrow lies.

Who hath not tasted of Love’s food ✿ Knows not what mean its miseries.

Did I attempt to stem my tears ✿ Rivers of blood would fount and rise.

How many an intimate is hard ✿ Of heart, and pains in sorest wise!
An she with me her word would keep, ✿ Of tears and sighs I'd fain devise,
But I'm forgone, rejected quite ✿ Ruin on me hath cast her eyes.
At my fell pangs fell wildlings weep ✿ And not a bird for me but cries.

Hasan ceased not to weep till dawn of the sixth day, when Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh came forth to him, clad in white raiment, and with his hand signed[114] to him to enter. So he went in, rejoicing and assured of the winning of his wish, and the old man took him by the hand and leading him into the cavern, fared on with him half a day's journey, till they reached an arched doorway with a door of steel. The Shaykh opened the door and they two entered a vestibule vaulted with onyx stones and arabesqued 79 with gold, and they stayed not walking till they came to a great hall and a wide, paved and walled with marble. In its midst was a flower-garden containing all manner trees and flowers and fruits, with birds warbling on the boughs and singing the praises of Allah the Almighty Sovran; and there were four daïses, each facing other, and in each daïs a jetting fountain, at whose corners stood lions of red gold, spouting gerbes from their mouths into the basin. On each daïs stood a chair, whereon sat an elder, with exceeding store of books before him[115] and censers of gold, containing fire and perfumes, and before each elder were students, who read the books to him. Now when the twain entered, the elders rose to them and did them honour; whereupon Abu al-Ruwaysh signed to them to dismiss their scholars and they did so. Then the four arose and seating themselves before that Shaykh, asked him of the case of Hasan to whom he said, "Tell the company thy tale and all that hath betided thee from the beginning of thine adventure to the end." So Hasan wept with sore weeping and related to them his story with Bahram; whereupon all the Shaykhs cried out and said, "Is this indeed he whom the Magian caused to climb the Mountain of Clouds by means of the vultures, sewn up in the camel-hide?" And Hasan said, "Yes." So they turned to the Shaykh, Abu al-Ruwaysh and said to him, "O our Shaykh of a truth Bahram contrived his mounting to the mountain-top; but how came he down and what marvels saw he there?" And Abu al-Ruwaysh said, "O Hasan, tell them how thou camest down and acquaint them with what thou sawest of marvels." So he told them all that had befallen him, first and last; how he had gotten the Magian into his power and slain him, how he had delivered the youth from him and sent him back to his own country, and how he had captured the King's daughter of the Jinn and married her; yet had she played him false and taken the two boys she had borne him and flown away; brief, he related to them all the hardships and horrors he had undergone; whereat they marvelled, each and every, and said to Abu al-Ruwaysh, "O elder of elders, verily by Allah, this youth is to be pitied! But belike thou wilt aid him to recover his wife and wees."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Third Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan told his tale to the elders, they said to Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh, "This youth is to be pitied and haply thou wilt aid him to recover his wife and wees." He replied, "O my brothers, in very sooth this is a grave matter and a perilous; and never saw I any loathe his life save this youth. You know that the Islands of Wak are hard of access and that none may come to them but at risk of life; and ye know also the strength of their people and their guards. Moreover I have sworn an oath not to tread their soil nor transgress against them in aught; so how shall this man come at the daughter of the Great King, and who hath power to bring him to her or help him in this matter?" Replied the other, "O Shaykh of Shaykhs, verily this man is consumed with desire and he hath endangered himself to bring thee a scroll from thy brother Abd al-Kaddus; wherefore it behoveth thee to help him." And Hasan arose and kissed Abu al-Ruwaysh's feet and raising the hem of his garment laid it on his head, weeping and crying, "I beseech thee, by Allah, to reunite me with my wife and children, though it cost me my life and my soul!" The four elders all wept for his weeping and said to Abu al-Ruwaysh, "Deal generously with this unhappy and show him kindness for the sake of thy brother Abd al-Kaddus and profit by this occasion to earn reward from Allah for helping him." Quoth he, "This wilful youth weeteth not what he undertaketh; but Inshallah! we will help him after the measure of our means, nor leave aught feasible undone." When Hasan heard the Shaykh's words, he rejoiced and kissed the hands of the five elders, one after other, imploring their aidance. Thereupon Abd al-Ruwaysh took inkcase and a sheet of paper and wrote a letter, which he sealed and gave to Hasan, together with a pouch of perfumed leather,[116] containing incense and fire-sticks[117] and other needs, and said to him, "Take strictest care of this pouch, and whenas thou fallest into any strait, burn a little of the incense therein and name my name, whereupon I will be with thee forthright and save thee from thy stress." 81 Moreover, he bade one of those present fetch him an Ifrit of the Flying Jinn; and he did so incontinently; whereupon quoth Abu al-Ruwaysh to the fire-drake, "What is thy name!" Replied the Ifrit, "Thy thrall is hight Dahnash bin Faktash." And the Shaykh said "Draw near to me!" So Dahnash drew near to him and he put his mouth to his ear and said somewhat to him, whereat the Ifrit shook his head and answered, "I accept, O elder of elders!" Then said Abu al-Ruwaysh to Hasan, "Arise, O my son, mount the shoulders of this Ifrit, Dahnash the Flyer; but, when he heaveth thee heaven-wards and thou hearest the angels glorifying God a-welkin with 'Subhána 'lláh,' have a care lest thou do the like; else wilt thou perish and he too." Hasan replied, "I will not say a word; no, never;" and the old man continued, "O Hasan, after faring with thee all this day, to-morrow at peep of dawn he will set thee down in a land cleanly white, like unto camphor, whereupon do thou walk on ten days by thyself, till thou come to the gate of a city. Then enter and enquire for the King of the city; and when thou comest to his presence, salute him

with the salam and kiss his hand: then give him this scroll and consider well whatso he shall counsel thee." Hasan replied, "Hearing and obeying," and rose up and mounted the Ifrit's shoulders, whilst the elders rose and offered up prayers for him and commended him to the care of Dahnash the Firedrake. And when he had perched on the Flyer's back the Ifrit soared with him to the very confines of the sky, till he heard the angels glorifying God in Heaven, and flew on with him a day and a night till at dawn of the next day he set him down in a land white as camphor, and went his way, leaving him there. When Hasan found himself in the land aforesaid with none by his side he fared on night and day for ten days, till he came to the gate of the city in question and entering, enquired for the King. They directed him to him and told him that his name was King Hassún,[118] Lord of the Land of Camphor, and that he had troops and soldiers enough to fill the earth in its length and breadth. So 82 he sought audience of him and, being admitted to his presence, found him a mighty King and kissed ground between his hands. Quoth the King, "What is thy want?" Whereupon Hasan kissed the letter and gave it to him. The King read it and shook his head awhile, then said to one of his officers, "Take this youth and lodge him in the house of hospitality." So he took him and stablished him in the guest-house, where he tarried three days, eating and drinking and seeing none but the eunuch who waited on him and who entertained him with discourse and cheered him with his company, questioning him of his case and how he came to that city; whereupon he told him his whole story, and the perilous condition wherein he was. On the fourth day, that eunuch carried him before the King, who said to him, "O Hasan, thou comest to me, seeking to enter the Islands of Wak, as the Shaykh of Shaykhs adviseth me. O my son, I would send thee thither this very day, but that by the way are many perils and thirsty wolds full of terrors; yet do thou have patience and naught save fair shall befal thee for needs must I devise to bring thee to thy desire, Inshallah! Know, O my son, that here is a mighty host,[119] equipped with arms and steeds and warlike gear, who long to enter the Wak Islands and lack power thereto. But, O my son, for the sake of the Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh, son of Bilkis,[120] the daughter of Mu'in, I may not send thee back to him unfulfilled of thine affair. Presently there will come to us ships from the Islands of Wak and the first that shall arrive I will send thee on board of her and give thee in charge to the sailors, so they may take care of thee and carry thee to the Islands. If any question thee of thy case and condition, answer him saying:—I am kinsman to King Hassun, Lord of the Land of Camphor; and when the ship shall make fast to the shore of the Islands of Wak and the master shall bid thee land, do thou land. Now as soon as thou comest ashore, thou wilt see a multitude of wooden settles all about the beach, of which do thou choose thee one and crouch under it and stir not. And when dark night sets in, thou wilt see an army of women appear and flock about the goods landed 83 from the ship, and one of them will sit down on the settle, under which thou hast hidden thyself, whereupon do thou put forth thy hand to her and take

hold of her and implore her protection. And know thou, O my son, that an she accord thee protection, thou wilt win thy wish and regain thy wife and children; but, if she refuse to protect thee, make thy mourning for thyself and give up all hope of life, and make sure of death for indeed thou art a dead man. Understand, O my son, that thou adventurest thy life and this is all I can do for thee, and—the peace!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Hassun spake these words to Hasan and charged him as we have related, ending with, "This is all I can do for thee and know that except the Lord of Heaven had aided thee, thou hadst not come hither!" The youth wept till he swooned away, and when he recovered, he recited these two couplets:—

A term decreed my lot I 'spy; ✿ And, when its days shall end, I die.

Though lions fought with me in lair ✿ If Time be mine I'd beat them, I!

Then having ended his verse he kissed the ground before the Sovran and said to him, "O mighty King, how many days remain till the coming of the ships?" Replied the other, "In a month's time they will come and will tarry here, selling their cargason, other two months, after which they will return to their own country; so hope not to set out save after three whole months." Then the King bade him return to the house of hospitality and bade supply him with all that he needed of meat and drink and raiment fit for Kings. Hasan abode in the guest-house a month, at the end of which the vessels arrived and the King and the merchants went forth to them, taking Hasan with them. Amongst them he saw a ship with much people therein, like the shingles for number; none knew their tale save He who created them. She was anchored in mid-harbour and had cocks which transported her lading to the shore. So Hasan abode till the crew had landed all the goods and sold and bought and to the time of departure there wanted but three days; whereupon the King sent for him and equipped him with all he required and 84 gave him great gifts; after which he summoned the captain of the great ship and said to him, "Take this youth with thee in the vessel, so none may know of him save thou, and carry him to the Islands of Wak and leave him there; and bring him not back." And the Rais said, "To hear is to obey: with love and gladness!" Then quoth the King to Hasan, "Look thou tell none of those who are with thee in the ship thine errand nor discover to them aught of thy case; else thou art a lost man;" and quoth he, "Hearing and obedience!" With this he farewelled the King, after he had wished him long life and victory over his enviers and his enemies; wherefore the King thanked him and wished him safety and the winning of his wish. Then he committed him to the captain, who laid him in a chest which he embarked in a dinghy, and bore him aboard, whilst the folk were busy in breaking bulk and no man doubted but the chest contained somewhat of merchandise. After this, the vessels set sail and fared on without ceasing ten days, and on the eleventh day they made the land. So the Rais set

Hasan ashore and, as he walked up the beach, he saw wooden settles[121] without number, none knew their count save Allah, even as the King had told him. He went on, till he came to one that had no fellow and hid under it till nightfall, when there came up a mighty many of women, as they were locusts over-swarming the land and they marched afoot and armed cap-à-pie in hauberks and strait-knit coats of mail hending drawn swords in their hands, who, seeing the merchandise landed from the ships, busied themselves therewith. Presently they sat down to rest themselves, and one of them seated herself on the settle under which Hasan had crouched: whereupon he took hold of the hem of her garment and laid it on his head and throwing himself before her, fell to kissing her hands and feet and weeping and crying, "Thy protection! thy good-will!" Quoth she, "Ho, thou! Arise and stand up, ere any see thee and slay thee." So he came forth and springing up kissed her hands and wept and said to her, "O my mistress, I am under thy protection!"; adding, "Have ruth on one who is parted from his people and wife and children, one who hath haste to rejoin them and one who adventureth life and soul for their sake! Take pity on me and be assured that therefor Paradise will be thy reward; or, an thou wilt not receive me, I beseech thee, by Allah 85 the Great, the Concealer, to conceal my case!" The merchants stared to see him talking with her; and she, hearing his words and beholding his humility, was moved to ruth for him; her heart inclined to him and she knew that he had not ventured himself and come to that place, save for a grave matter. So she said to him, "O my son, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, hearten thy heart and take courage and return to thy hiding-place till the coming night, and Allah shall do as He will." Then she took leave of him and Hasan crept under the wooden settle as before, whilst the troops lighted flambeaux of wax mixed with aloes-wood and Nadd-perfume and crude ambergris[122] and passed the night in sport and delight till the morning. At daybreak, the boats returned to the shore and the merchants busied themselves with buying and selling and the transport of the goods and gear till nightfall, whilst Hasan lay hidden beneath the settle, weeping-eyed and woeful-hearted, knowing not what was decreed to him in the secret preordainment of Allah. As he was thus, behold, the merchant-woman with whom he had taken refuge came up to him and giving him a habergeon and a helmet, a spear, a sword and a gilded girdle, bade him don them and seat himself on the settle after which she left him, for fear of the troops. So he arose and donned the mail-coat and helmet and clasped the girdle about his middle; then he slung the sword over his shoulder till it hung under his armpit, and taking the spear in his hand, sat down on that settle, whilst his tongue neglected not to name Allah Almighty and call on Him for protection.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan received the weapons which the merchant-woman had given to him, saying, "Sit thee upon the

settle and let none wot thy case," he armed himself and took his seat, whilst his tongue neglected not to name Allah Almighty and to call upon Him for protection. And behold, there appeared cressets and lanthorns and flambeaux and up came the army of women. So he arose and 86 mingling with them, became as one of them: A little before daybreak, they set out, and Hasan with them, and fared on till they came to their camp, where they dispersed each to her tent, and Hasan followed one of them and lo! it was her's for whose protection he had prayed. When she entered, she threw down her arms and doffed her hauberk and veil. So Hasan did the like and looking at his companion, saw her to be a grizzled old woman, blue-eyed and big-nosed, a calamity of calamities, the foulest of all created things, with face pock-marked and eyebrows bald, gap-toothed and chap-fallen, with hair hoary, nose running and mouth slavering;[123] even as saith the like of her the poet:—

In her cheek-corners nine calamities ✿ Wone, and when shown, each one Jehannam is:

Hideous the face and favour foulest foul ✿ As cheek of hog; yea, 'tis a cesspool phiz.

And indeed she was like, a pied snake or a scald she-wolf. Now when the old woman looked at Hasan, she marvelled and said, "How came this one to these lands and in which of the ships was he and how arrived he hither in safety?" And she fell to questioning him of his case and admiring at his arrival, whereupon he fell at her feet and rubbed his face on them and wept till he fainted; and, when he recovered himself, he recited these couplets:—

When will Time grant we meet, when shall we be ✿ Again united after severance stark?

And I shall win my choicest wish and view? ✿ Blame end and Love abide without remark?

Were Nile to flow as freely as my tears, ✿ Twould leave no region but with water-mark:

'Twould overthrow Hijaz and Egypt-land ✿ 'Twould deluge Syria and 'twould drown Irak.

This, O my love, is caused by thy disdain, ✿ Be kind and promise meeting fair and fain!

87 Then he took the crone's skirt and laid it on his head and fell to weeping and craving her protection. When she saw his ardency and transport and anguish and distress, her heart softened to him and she promised him her safeguard, saying, "Have no fear whatsoever." Then she questioned him of his case and he told her the manner of his coming thither and all that had befallen him from beginning to end, whereat she marvelled and said, "This that hath betide thee, methinks, never betided any save thyself and except thou hadst been vouchsafed the especial protection of Allah, thou hadst not been saved: but now, O my son, take comfort and be of good courage; thou hast nothing more to fear, for indeed thou hast won thy wish and attained thy desire, if it please the Most High!" Thereat Hasan rejoiced with joy exceeding and she sent to summon the captains of the army to her presence, and it was the last day of the month. So they presented themselves and the old woman said to them, "Go out and proclaim to all the troops that they come forth to-morrow at daybreak and let none tarry behind, for whoso tarryeth shall be slain." They replied, "We hear and we obey," and going

forth, made proclamation to all the host anent a review next morning, even as she bade them, after which they returned and told her of this; whereby Hasan knew that she was the Commander-in-chief of the army and the Vice-regent in authority over them; and her name was Shawahí the Fascinator, entituled Umm al-Dawáhi, or Mother of Calamities.[124] She ceased not to bid and forbid and Hasan doffed not off his arms from his body that day. Now when the morning broke, all the troops fared forth from their places, but the old woman came not out with them, and as soon as they were sped and the stead was clear of them, she said to Hasan, "Draw near unto me, O my son[125]." So he drew near unto her and stood between her hands. Quoth she, "Why and wherefore hast thou adventured thyself so boldly as to enter this land, and how came thy soul to consent to its own undoing? Tell me the truth and 88 the whole truth and fear aught of ill come of it, for thou hast my plighted word and I am moved to compassion for thy case and pity thee and have taken thee under my protection. So, if thou tell me the truth, I will help thee to win thy wish, though it involve the undoing of souls and the destruction of bodies; and since thou hast come to seek me, no hurt shall betide thee from me, nor will I suffer any to have at thee with harm of all who be in the Islands of Wak." So he told her his tale from first to last, acquainting her with the matter of his wife and of the birds; how he had captured her as his prize from amongst the ten and married her and abode with her, till she had borne him two sons, and how she had taken her children and flown away with them, whenas she knew the way to the feather-dress. Brief, he concealed from her no whit of his case, from the beginning to that day. But when Shawahi heard his relation, she shook her head and said to him, "Glory be to God who hath brought thee hither in safety and made thee hap upon me! For, hadst thou happened on any but myself, thou hadst lost thy life without winning thy wish; but the truth of thine intent and thy fond affection and the excess of thy love-longing for thy wife and yearning for thy children, these it was that have brought thee to the attainment of thine aim. Didst thou not love her and love her to distraction, thou hadst not thus imperilled thyself, and Alhamdolillah—Praised be Allah—for thy safety! Wherefore it behoveth us to do thy desire and conduce to thy quest, so thou mayst presently attain that thou seekest, if it be the will of Almighty Allah. But know, O my son, that thy wife is not here, but in the seventh of the Islands of Wak and between us and it is seven months' journey, night and day. From here we go to an island called the Land of Birds, wherein, for the loud crying of the birds and the flapping of their wings, one cannot hear other speak."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman said to Hasan, "Indeed thy wife is in the Seventh Island,[126] the greatest amongst the Islands of Wak and betwixt 89 us and it is a seven-months' journey. From here we fare for the Land of Birds, whereon for the force of their flying and the flapping of their wings,

we cannot hear one other speak. Over that country we journey night and day, eleven days, after which we come forth of it to another called the Land of Ferals where, for stress of roaring of lions and howling of wolves and laughing of hyænas and the crying of other beasts of prey we shall hear naught, and therein we travel twenty days' journey. Then we issue therefrom and come to a third country, called the Land of the Jánn, where, for stress of the crying of the Jinn and the flaming of fires and the flight of sparks and smoke from their mouths and the noise of their groaning and their arrogance in blocking up the road before us, our ears will be deafened and our eyes blinded, so that we shall neither hear nor see, nor dare any look behind him, or he perisheth: but there horseman boweth head on saddle-bow and raiseth it not for three days. After this, we abut upon a mighty mountain and a running river contiguous with the Isles of Wak, which are seven in number and the extent whereof is a whole year's journey for a well-girt horseman. And thou must know, O my son, that these troops are all virgin girls, and that the ruler over us is a woman of the Archipelago of Wak. On the bank of the river aforesaid is another mountain, called Mount Wak, and it is thus named by reason of a tree which beareth fruits like heads of the Sons of Adam.[127] When the sun riseth on them, the heads cry out all, saying in their cries:—Wak! Wak! Glory be to the Creating King, Al-Khallák! And when we hear their crying, we know that the sun is risen. In like manner, at sundown, the heads set up the same cry, Wak! Wak! Glory to Al-Khallak! and so we know that the sun hath set. No man may abide with us or reach to us or tread our earth; and betwixt us and the abiding-place of the Queen who ruleth over us is a month's journey from this shore, all the lieges 90 whereof are under her hand, as are also the tribes of the Jinn, Marids and Satans, while of the warlocks none kenneth the number save He who created them. Wherefore, an thou be afraid, I will send with thee one who will convey thee to the coast and there bring one who will embark thee on board a ship that bear thee to thine own land. But an thou be content to tarry with us, I will not forbid thee and thou shalt be with me in mine eye,[128] till thou win thy wish, Inshallah!" Quoth he, "O my lady, I will never quit thee till I foregather with my wife or lose my life!"; and quoth she, "This is a light matter; be of good heart, for soon shalt thou come to thy desire, Allah willing; and there is no help but that I let the Queen know of thee, that she may help thee to attain thine aim." Hasan blessed her and kissed her head and hands, thanking her for her good deed and exceeding kindness and firm will. Then he set out with her, pondering the issue of his case and the horrors of his strangerhood; wherefore he fell a-weeping and a-wailing and recited these couplets:—

A Zephyr bloweth from the lover's site; ✿ And thou canst view me in the saddest plight:

The Night of Union is as brilliant morn; ✿ And black the Severance-day as blackest night:

Farewelling friend is sorrow sorest sore ✿ Parting from lover's merest undelight.

I will not blame her harshness save to her, ✿ And 'mid mankind nor friend nor fere I sight:

How can I be consoled for loss of you? ✿ Base censor's blame shall not console my sprite!

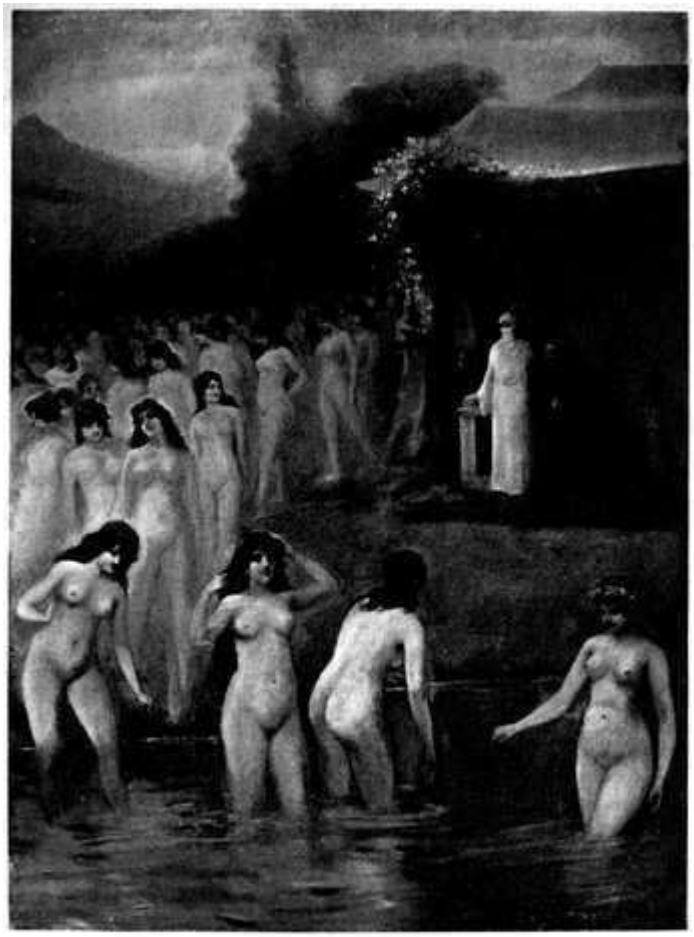
O thou in charms unique, unique's my love; ✿ O peerless thou, my heart hath peerless might!
Who maketh semblance that he loveth you ✿ And dreadeth blame is most blame-worthy wight.

Then the old woman bade beat the kettle-drums for departure and the army set out. Hasan fared with her, drowned in the sea of solicitude and reciting verses like those above, whilst she strave to comfort him and exhorted him to patience; but he awoke not from his tristesse and heeded not her exhortations. They journeyed thus till they came to the boundaries of the Land of Birds[129] and 91 when they entered it, it seemed to Hasan as if the world were turned topsy-turvy for the exceeding clamour. His head ached and his mind was dazed, his eyes were blinded and his ears deafened, and he feared with exceeding fear and made certain of death, saying to himself, "If this be the Land of Birds, how will be the Land of Beasts?" But, when the crone hight Shawahi saw him in this plight, she laughed at him, saying, "O my son, if this be thy case in the first island, how will it fare with thee, when thou comest to the others?" So he prayed to Allah and humbled himself before the Lord, beseeching Him to assist him against that wherewith He had afflicted him and bring him to his wishes; and they ceased not going till they passed out of the Land of Birds and, traversing the Land of Beasts, came to the Land of the Jann which when Hasan saw, he was sore affrighted and repented him of having entered it with them. But he sought aid of Allah the Most High and fared on with them, till they were quit of the Land of the Jann and came to the river and set down their loads at the foot of a vast mountain and a lofty, and pitched their tents by the stream-bank. Then they rested and ate and drank and slept in security, for they were come to their own country. On the morrow the old woman set Hasan a couch of alabaster, inlaid with pearls and jewels and nuggets of red gold, by the river-side, and he sat down thereon, having first bound his face with a chin-kerchief, that discovered naught of him but his eyes. Then she bade proclaim among the troops that they should all assemble before her tent and put off their clothes and go down into the stream and wash; and this she did that she might parade before him all the girls, so haply his wife should be amongst them and he know her. So the whole army mustered before her and putting off their clothes, went down into the stream, and Hasan seated on his couch watched them washing their white skins and frolicking and making merry, whilst they took no heed of his inspecting them, deeming him to be of the daughters of the Kings. When he beheld them stripped of their clothes, his chord stiffened for that looking at them mother-naked he saw what was between their thighs, and that of all kinds, soft and rounded, plump and cushioned; large-lipped, perfect, redundant and ample,[130] and their faces were as moons and their hair 92 as night upon day, for that they were of the daughters of the Kings. When they were clean, they came up out of the water, stark naked, as the moon on the night of fullness and the old woman questioned Hasan of them, company by company, if his wife were among them; but, as often as she asked him of a troop, he made answer, "She is not

among these, O my lady.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventh Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman questioned Hasan of the girls, company after company, if haply his wife were among them; but as often as she asked him of a troop, he made answer, “She is not among these, O my lady!” Last of all, there came up a damsel, attended by ten slave-girls and thirty waiting-women, all of them high-bosomed maidens. They put off their clothes and went down into the river, where the damsel fell to riding the high horse over her women, throwing them down and ducking them. On this wise she continued for a full hour, after which all came up out of the water and sat down; and they brought her napkins[131] of gold-purfled silk, with which she dried herself. Then they brought her clothes and jewels and ornaments of the handiwork of the Jinn, and she donned them and rose and walked with graceful pace among the troops, she and her maidens. When Hasan saw her, his heart was ready to fly from his breast and he said, “Verily this girl is the likest of all folk to the bird I saw in the basin atop of the palace of my sisters the Princesses, and she lorded it over her lieges even as doth this one.” The old woman asked, “O Hasan, is this thy wife?”; and he answered, “No, by thy life, O my lady; this is not my wife, nor ever in my life have I set eyes on her; neither among all the girls I have seen in these islands is there the like of my wife nor her match for symmetry and grace and beauty and loveliness!” Then said Shawaki, “Describe her to me and acquaint me with all her attributes, that I may have her in my mind; for I know every girl in the Islands of Wak, being 93 commander of the army of maids and governor over them; wherefore, an thou describe her to me, I shall know her and will contrive for thee to take her.” Quoth he, “My wife hath the fairest face and a form all grace; smooth is she of cheeks and high of breasts with eyes of liquid light, calves and thighs plump to sight, teeth snowy white, with dulcet speech dight; in speech soft and bland as she were a willow-wand; her gifts are a moral and lips are red as coral; her eyes wear natural Kohl-dye and her lower labia[132] in softness lie. On her right cheek is a mole and on her waist, under her navel, is a sign; her face shines as the rondure of the moon in sheen, her waist is slight, her hips a heavy weight, and the water of her mouth the sick doth heal, as it were Kausar or Salsabil.”[133] Said the old woman, “Give me an increased account of her, Allah increase thee of passion for her!” Quoth he, “My wife hath a face the fairest fair and oval cheeks the rarest rare; neck long and spare and eyes that Kohl wear; her side face shows the Anemones of Nu’uman, her mouth is like a seal of cornelian and flashing teeth that lure and stand one in stead of cup and ewer. She is cast in the mould of pleasantness and between her thighs is the throne of the Caliphate, there is no such sanctuary among the Holy Places; as saith in its praise the poet:—





The name of what drave me distraught ✿ Hath letters renowned among men:

A four into five multiplied ✿ And a multiplied six into ten."[134]

94 Then Hasan wept and chanted the following Mawwál[135]:—

O heart, an lover false thee, shun the parting bane ✿ Nor to forgetfulness thy thoughts constrain:

Be patient; thou shalt bury all thy foes; ✿ Allah ne'er falseth man of patience fain.

And this also:—

An wouldst be life-long safe, vaunt not delight; ✿ Never despair, nor wone o'erjoyed in sprite!

Forbear, rejoice not, mourn not o'er thy plight ✿ And in ill day "Have not we oped?"—recite.[136]

Thereupon the old woman bowed her head groundwards awhile, then, raising it, said, "Laud be to the Lord, the Mighty of Award! Indeed I am afflicted with thee, O Hasan! Would Heaven I had never known thee! This woman, whom thou describest to me as thy wife, I know by description and I know her to be none other than the eldest daughter of the Supreme King, she who ruleth over all the Islands of Wak. So open

both eyes and consider thy case; and if thou be asleep, awake; for, if this woman be indeed thy wife, it is impossible for thee ever to obtain her, and though thou come to her, yet couldst thou not avail to her possession, since between thee and her the distance is as that between earth and Heaven. Wherefore, O my son, return presently and cast not thyself into destruction nor cast me with thee; for meseemeth thou hast no lot in her; so return whence thou camest lest our lives be lost." And she feared for herself and for him. When Hasan heard her words, he wept till he fainted and she left not sprinkling water on his face, till he came to himself, when he continued to weep, so that he drenched his dress with tears, for the much cark and care and chagrin which 95 betided him by reason of her words. And indeed he despaired of life and said to the old woman, "O my lady, and how shall I go back, after having come hither? Verily, I thought not thou wouldst forsake me nor fail of the winning of my wish, especially as thou art the Commander-in-chief of the army of the girls." Answered Shawahi, "O my son, I doubted not but thy wife was a maid of the maids, and had I known she was the King's daughter, I had not suffered thee to come hither nor had I shown the troops to thee, for all the love I bear thee. But now, O my son, thou hast seen all the girls naked; so tell me which of them pleaseth thee and I will give her to thee, in lieu of thy wife, and do thou put it that thy wife and children are dead and take her and return to thine own country in safety, ere thou fall into the King's hand and I have no means of delivering thee. So, Allah upon thee, O my son, hearken unto me. Choose thyself one of these damsels, in the stead of yonder woman, and return presently to thy country in safety and cause me not quaff the cup of thine anguish! For, by Allah, thou hast cast thyself into affliction sore and peril galore, wherefrom none may avail to deliver thee evermore!" But Hasan hung down his head and wept with long weeping and recited these couplets:—

"Blame not!" said I to all who blamèd me; ✿ "Mine eyelids naught but tears were made to dree:"
The tears that brim these orbs have overflowed ✿ My cheeks, for lovers and love's cruelty.
Leave me to love though waste this form of me! ✿ For I of Love adore the insanity:
And, Oh my dearling, passion grows on me ✿ For you—and you, why grudge me clemency?
You wronged me after swearing troth and plight, ✿ Falsed my companionship and turned to flee:
And cup of humbling for your rigours sore ✿ Ye made me drain what day departed ye:
Then melt, O heart, with longing for their sight ✿ And, O mine eyes, with crowns of tears be dight.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman said to Hasan, "By Allah, O my son, hearken to 96 my words! Choose thee one of these girls in lieu of thy wife and presently return to thy country in safety," he hung down his head and recited the couplets quoted above. Then he wept till he swooned away and Shawahi sprinkled water on his face till he revived, when she addressed him, "O my

lord, I have no shift left; because if I carry thee to the city thy life is lost and mine also: for, when the Queen cometh to know of this, she will blame me for admitting thee into her lands and islands, whereto none of Adam's sons hath access, and will slay me for bringing thee with me and for suffering mortal to look upon the virgins seen by thee in the sea, whom ne'er touched male, neither approached mate." And Hasan sware that he had never looked on them with evil of eye. She resumed, "O my son, hearken to me and return to thy country and I will give thee wealth and treasures and things of price, such as shall suffice thee for all the women in the world. Moreover, I will give thee a girl of the best of them, so lend an ear to my words and return presently and imperil not thyself; indeed I counsel thee with good counsel." But he wept and rubbed both cheeks against her feet, saying, "O my lady and mistress and coolth of mine eyes, how can I turn back now that I have made my way hither, without the sight of those I desire, and now that I have come near the beloved's site, hoping for meeting forthright, so haply there may be a portion in reunion to my plight?" And he improvised these couplets:—

O Kings of beauty, grace to prisoner ta'en ✿ Of eyelids fit to rule the Chosroës' reign:

Ye pass the wafts of musk in perfumed breath; ✿ Your cheeks the charms of blooming rose disdain.

The softest Zephyr breathes where pitch ye camp ✿ And thence far-scattered sweetness fills the plain:

Censor of me, leave blame and stint advice! ✿ Thou bringest wearying words and wisdom vain:

Why heat my passion with this flame and up- ✿ braid me when naught thou knowest of its bane?

Captured me eyes with passion *maladifs*, ✿ And overthrew me with Love's might and main:

I scatter tears the while I scatter verse; ✿ You are my theme for rhyme and prosy strain.

Melted my vitals glow of rosy cheeks ✿ And in the Lazá-lowe my heart is lain:

Tell me, an I leave to discourse of you, ✿ What speech my breast shall broaden? Tell me deign!

Life-long I loved the lovelings fair, but ah, ✿ To grant my wish eke Allah must be fain!

97 Hearing his verses the old woman was moved to ruth for him and Allah planted the seed of affection for him in her heart; so coming up to him she consoled him, saying, "Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear and put away trouble from thy thought, for, by Allah, I will venture my life with thee, till thou attain thine aim or death undo me!" With this, Hasan's heart was comforted and his bosom broadened and he sat talking with the old woman till the end of the day, when all the girls dispersed, some entering their town-mansions and others nighting in the tents. Then the old woman carried him into the city and lodged him in a place apart, lest any should come to know of him and tell the Queen of him and she should slay him and slay her who had brought him thither. Moreover, she served him herself and strave to put him in fear of the awful majesty of the Supreme King, his wife's father; whilst he wept before her and said, "O my lady, I choose death for myself and loathe this worldly life, if I foregather not with my wife and children: I have set my existence on the venture and will either attain my aim or die." So the old woman fell to pondering

the means of bringing him and his wife together and casting about how to do in the case of this unhappy one, who had thrown himself into destruction and would not be diverted from his purpose by fear or aught else; for, indeed he recked not of his life and the sayer of bywords saith, “Lover in nowise hearkeneth he to the speech of the man who is fancy-free.” Now the name of the Queen of the island wherein they were was Núr al-Hudà,[137] eldest daughter of the Supreme King, and she had six virgin sisters, abiding with their father, whose capital and court were in the chief city of that region and who had made her ruler over all the lands and islands of Wak. So when the ancient dame saw Hasan on fire with yearning after his wife and children, she rose up and repaired to the palace and going in to Queen Nur al-Huda kissed ground before her; for she had a claim on her favour because she had reared the King’s daughters one and all and had authority over each and every of them and was high in honour and consideration with them and with the King. Nur al-Huda rose to her as she entered and embracing her, seated her by her side and asked her of her journey. She answered, “By Allah, O my lady ’twas a blessed journey and I have 98 brought thee a gift which I will presently present to thee,” adding, “O my daughter, O Queen of the Age and the time, I have a favour to crave of thee and I fain would discover it to thee, that thou mayst help me to accomplish it, and but for my confidence that thou wilt not gainsay me therein, I would not expose it to thee.” Asked the Queen, “And what is thy need? Expound it to me, and I will accomplish it to thee, for I and my kingdom and troops are all at thy commandment and disposition.” Therewithal the old woman quivered as quivereth the reed on a day when the storm-wind is abroad and saying in herself, “O[138] Protector, protect me from the Queen’s mischief[1391]!” fell down before her and acquainted her with Hasan’s case, saying, “O my lady, a man, who had hidden himself under my wooden settle on the sea-shore, sought my protection; so I took him under my safeguard and carried him with me among the army of girls armed and accoutred so that none might know him, and brought him into the city; and indeed I have striven to affright him with thy fierceness, giving him to know of thy power and prowess; but, as often as I threatened him, he weepeth and reciteth verses and sayeth:—Needs must I have my wife and children or die, and I will not return to my country without them. And indeed he hath adventured himself and come to the Islands of Wak, and never in all my days saw I mortal heartier of heart than he or doughtier of derring-do, save that love hath mastered him to the utmost of mastery.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman related to Queen Nur al-Huda the adventure of Hasan, ending with, “Never I saw any one heartier of heart than he save that love hath mastered him to the utmost of mastery,” the Queen, after lending an attentive ear and comprehending the case, waxed wroth at her with exceeding wrath and bowed her head awhile groundwards; then, raising it,

she looked at Shawahi 99 and said to her, “O ill-omened beldam, art thou come to such a pass of lewdness that thou carriest males, men, with thee into the Islands of Wak and bringest them into me, unfearing of my mischief? Who hath foregone thee with this fashion, that thou shouldst do thus? By the head of the King, but for thy claim on me for fosterage and service, I would forthwith do both him and thee to die the foulest of deaths, that travellers might take warning by thee, O accursed, lest any other do the like of this outrageous deed thou hast done, which none durst hitherto! But go and bring him hither forthright, that I may see him; or I will strike off thy head, O accursed.” So the old woman went out from her, confounded unknowing whither she went and saying, “All this calamity hath Allah driven upon me from this Queen because of Hasan!” and going in to him, said, “Rise, speak with the Queen, O wight whose last hour is at hand!” So he rose and went with her, whilst his tongue ceased not to call upon Almighty Allah and say, “O my God, be gracious to me in Thy decrees and deliver me from this Thine affliction[140]!” And Shawahi went with him charging him by the way how he should speak with the Queen. When he stood before Nur al-Huda, he found that she had donned the chin-veil[141]; so he kissed ground before her and saluted her with the salam, improvising these two couplets:—

“God make thy glory last in joy of life: ✿ Allah confirm the boons he deigned bestow:
Thy grace and grandeur may our Lord increase ✿ And aye Th’ Almighty aid thee o’er thy foe!”

When he ended his verse Nur al-Huda bade the old woman ask him questions before her, that she might hear his answers: so she said to him, “The Queen returneth thy salam-greeting and saith to thee, What is thy name and that of thy country, and what are the names of thy wife and children, on whose account thou art come hither?” Quoth he, and indeed he had made firm his heart and destiny aided him, “O Queen of the age and tide and peerless jewel of the epoch and the time, my name is Hasan the fulfilled 100 of sorrow, and my native city is Bassorah. I know not the name of my wife[142] but my children’s names are Násir and Mansúr.” When the Queen heard his reply and his provenance, she bespoke him herself and said, “And whence took she her children?” He replied, “O Queen, she took them from the city of Baghdad and the palace of the Caliphate.” Quoth Nur al-Huda, “And did she say naught to thee at the time she flew away?;” and quoth he, “Yes; she said to my mother:—Whenas thy son cometh to thee and the nights of severance upon him longsome shall be and he craveth meeting and reunion to see, and whenas the breezes of love and longing shake him dolefully let him come in the Islands of Wak to me.” Whereupon Queen Nur al-Huda shook her head and said to him. “Had she not desired thee she had not said to thy mother this say, and had she not yearned for reunion with thee, never had she bidden thee to her stead nor acquainted thee with her abiding-place.” Rejoined Hasan, “O mistress of Kings and asylum of prince and pauper, whatso happened I have told thee and have concealed naught thereof, and I take refuge from evil with Allah and with thee; wherefore oppress me not, but have compassion on me and earn

recompense and requital for me in the world to come, and aid me to regain my wife and children. Grant me my urgent need and cool mine eyes with my children and help me to the sight of them." Then he wept and wailed and lamenting his lot recited these two couplets:—

Yea, I will laud thee while the ring-dove moans, ✿ Though fail my wish of due and lawful scope:

Ne'er was I whirled in bliss and joys gone by ✿ Wherein I found thee not both root and rope.[143]

The Queen shook her head and bowed it in thought a long time; then, raising it, she said to Hasan (and indeed she was wroth), "I have ruth on thee and am resolved to show thee in review all the girls in the city and in the provinces of my island; and in case thou know thy wife, I will deliver her to thee; but, an thou know her not and know not her place, I will put thee to death and 101 crucify thee over the old woman's door." Replied Hasan, "I accept this from thee, O Queen of the Age, and am content to submit to this thy condition. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" And he recited these couplets:—

You've roused my desire and remain at rest,— ✿ Waked my wounded lids while you slept with zest.

And ye made me a vow ye would not hang back ✿ But your guile when you chained me waxt manifest.

I loved you in childhood unknowing Love; ✿ Then slay me not who am sore opprest.

Fear ye not from Allah when slaying a friend ✿ Who gazeth on stars when folk sleep their best?

By Allah, my kinsmen, indite on my tomb ✿ "This man was the slave of Love's harshest hest!"

Haps a noble youth, like me Love's own thrall, ✿ When he sees my grave on my name shall call.

Then Queen Nur al-Huda commanded that not a girl should abide in the city but should come up to the palace and pass in review before Hasan and moreover she bade Shawahi go down in person and bring them up herself. Accordingly all the maidens in the city presented themselves before the Queen, who caused them to go in to Hasan, hundred after hundred, till there was no girl left in the place, but she had shown her to him; yet he saw not his wife amongst them. Then said she to him, "Seest thou her amongst these?"; and he replied, "By thy life, O Queen, she is not amongst them." With this she was sore enraged against him and said to the old woman, "Go in and bring out all who are in the palace and show them to him." So she displayed to him every one of the palace-girls, but he saw not his wife among them and said to the Queen, "By the life of thy head, O Queen, she is not among these." Whereat the Queen was wroth and cried out at those around her, saying, "Take him and hale him along, face to earth, and cut off his head, least any adventure himself after him and intrude upon us in our country and spy out our estate by thus treading the soil of our islands." So they threw him down on his face and dragged him along; then, covering his eyes with his skirt, stood at his head with bared brands awaiting royal permission. Thereupon Shawahi came forward and kissing the ground before the Queen, took the hem of her garment and laid it on her head, saying, "O Queen, by my claim for fosterage, be not 102 hasty with him, more by token of thy knowledge that this poor

wretch is a stranger, who hath adventured himself and suffered what none ever suffered before him, and Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty,) preserved him from death, for that his life was ordained to be long. He heard of thine equity and entered thy city and guarded site;[144] wherefore, if thou put him to death, the report will dispread abroad of thee, by means of the travellers, that thou hatest strangers and slayest them. He is in any case at thy mercy and the slain of thy sword, if his wife be not found in thy dominions; and whensoever thou desireth his presence, I can bring him back to thee. Moreover, in very sooth I took him under my protection only of my trust in thy magnanimity through my claim on thee for fosterage, so that I engaged to him that thou wouldst bring him to his desire, for my knowledge of thy justice and quality of mercy. But for this, I had not brought him into thy kingdom; for I said to myself:—The Queen will take pleasure in looking upon him, and hearing him speak his verses and his sweet discourse and eloquent which is like unto pearls strung on string. Moreover, he hath entered our land and eaten of our meat; wherefore he hath a claim upon us."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Tenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Queen Nur al-Huda bade her pages seize Hasan and smite his neck, the old woman, Shawahi, began to reason with her and say, "Verily he hath entered our land and eaten of our meat, wherefore he hath a claim upon us, the more especially since I promised him to bring him in company with thee; and thou knowest that, parting is a grievous ill and severance hath power to kill, especially separation from children. Now he hath seen all our women, save only thyself; so do thou show him thy face?" The Queen smiled and said, "How can he be my husband and have had children by me, that I should show him my face?" Then she made them bring Hasan before her and when he stood in the presence, she 103unveiled her face, which when he saw, he cried out with a great cry and fell down fainting. The old woman ceased not to tend him, till he came to himself and as soon as he revived he recited these couplets:—

O breeze that blowest from the land Irak ✿ And from their corners whoso cry "Wak! Wak!"

Bear news of me to friends and say for me ✿ I've tasted passion-food of bitter smack.

O dearlings of my love, show grace and ruth ✿ My heart is melted for this severance-rack.

When he ended his verse he rose and looking on the Queen's face, cried out with a great cry, for stress whereof the palace was like to fall upon all therein. Then he swooned away again and the old woman ceased not to tend him till he revived, when she asked him what ailed him and he answered, "In very sooth this Queen is either my wife or else the likest of all folk to my wife."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old woman asked Hasan what ailed him, he answered, “In very sooth this Queen is either my wife or else the likest of all folk to my wife.” Quoth Nur al-Huda to the old woman, “Woe to thee, O nurse! This stranger is either Jinn-mad or out of his mind, for he stareth me in the face with wide eyes and saith I am his wife.” Quoth the old woman, “O Queen, indeed he is excusable; so blame him not, for the saying saith:—For the love-sick is no remedy and alike are the madman and he.” And Hasan wept with sore weeping and recited these two couplets:—

I sight their track and pine for longing love; ✿ And o’er their homesteads weep I and I yearn:

And I pray Heaven who willèd we should part, ✿ Will deign to grant us boon of safe return.

Then said Hasan to the Queen once more, “By Allah, thou art not my wife, but thou art the likest of all folk to her!” Hereupon Nur al-Huda laughed till she fell backwards and rolled round on her side.[145] Then she said to him, “O my friend, take thy time 104 and observe me attentively: answer me at thy leisure what I shall ask thee and put away from thee insanity and perplexity and inadvertency for relief is at hand.” Answered Hasan, “O mistress of Kings and asylum of all princes and paupers, when I looked upon thee, I was distracted, seeing thee to be either my wife or the likest of all folk to her; but now ask me whatso thou wilt.” Quoth she, “What is it in thy wife that resembleth me?”; and quoth he, “O my lady, all that is in thee of beauty and loveliness, elegance and amorous grace, such as the symmetry of thy shape and the sweetness of thy speech and the blushing of thy cheeks and the jutting of thy breasts and so forth, all resembleth her and thou art her very self in thy faculty of parlance and the fairness of thy favour and the brilliancy of thy brow.[146]” When the Queen heard this, she smiled and gloried in her beauty and loveliness and her cheeks reddened and her eyes wantoned; then she turned to Shawahi Umm Dawahi and said to her, “O my mother, carry him back to the place where he tarried with thee and tend him thyself, till I examine into his affair; for, an he be indeed a man of manliness and mindful of friendship and love and affection, it behoveth we help him to win his wish, more by token that he hath sojourned in our country and eaten of our victual, not to speak of the hardships of travel he hath suffered and the travail and horrors he hath undergone. But, when thou hast brought him to thy house, commend him to the care of thy dependents and return to me in all haste; and Allah Almighty willing![147] all shall be well.” Thereupon Shawahi carried him back to her lodging and charged her handmaids and servants and suite wait upon him and bring him all he needed nor fail in what was his due. Then she returned to Queen Nur al-Huda, who bade her don her arms and set out, taking with her a thousand doughty horsemen. So she obeyed and donned her war-gear and having collected the thousand riders reported them ready to the Queen, who bade her march upon the city of the Supreme King, her father, there to alight at the abode of her youngest sister, Manár al-Saná,[148] and say to her, “Clothe thy two sons in the coats of 105 mail which their aunt hath made them and send them

to her; for she longeth for them." Moreover the Queen charged her keep Hasan's affair secret and say to Manar al-Sana, after securing her children, "Thy sister inviteth thee to visit her." "Then," she continued, "bring the children to me in haste and let her follow at her leisure. Do thou come by a road other than her road and journey night and day and beware of discovering this matter to any. And I swear by all manner of oaths that, if my sister prove to be his wife and it appear that her children are his, I will not hinder him from taking her and them and departing with them to his own country."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She resumed, "It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Queen said, I swear by Allah and by all manner of oaths that if she prove to be his wife, I will not hinder him from taking her but will aid him thereto and eke to departing with them to his mother-land." And the old woman put faith in her words, knowing not what she purposed in her mind, for the wicked Jezebel had resolved that if she were not his wife she would slay him; but if the children resembled him, she would believe him. The Queen resumed, "O my mother, an my thought tell me true, my sister Manar al-Sana is his wife, but Allah alone is All-knowing! seeing that these traits of surpassing beauty and excelling grace, of which he spoke, are found in none except my sisters and especially in the youngest." The old woman kissed her hand and returning to Hasan, told him what the Queen had said, whereat he was like to fly for joy and coming up to her, kissed her head. Quoth she, "O my son, kiss not my head, but kiss me on the mouth and be this kiss by way of sweetmeat for thy salvation.[149] Be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear and grudge not to kiss my mouth, for I and only I was the means of thy foregathering with her. So take comfort 106 and hearten thy heart and broaden thy breast and gladden thy glance and console thy soul for, Allah willing, thy desire shall be accomplished at my hand." So saying, she bade him farewell and departed, whilst he recited these two couplets:—

Witnesses unto love of thee I've four; ✿ And wants each case two witnesses; no more!

A heart aye fluttering, limbs that ever quake, ✿ A wasted frame and tongue that speech forswore.

And also these two:—

Two things there be, an blood-tears thereover ✿ Wept eyes till not one trace thou couldst discover,

Eyes ne'er could pay the tithe to them is due ✿ The prime of youth and severance from lover.

Then the old woman armed herself and, taking with her a thousand weaponed horsemen, set out and journeyed till she came to the island and the city where dwelt the Lady Manar al-Sana and between which and that of her sister Queen Nur al-Huda was three days' journey. When Shawahi reached the city, she went in to the Princess and saluting her, gave her her sister's salam and acquainted her with the Queen's longing for her and her children and that she reproached her for not visiting her.

Quoth Manar al-Sana, “Verily, I am beholden to my sister and have failed of my duty to her in not visiting her, but I will do so forthright.” Then she bade pitch her tents without the city and took with her for her sister a suitable present of rare things. Presently, the King her father looked out of a window of his palace, and seeing the tents pitched by the road, asked of them, and they answered him, “The Princess Manar al-Sana hath pitched her tents by the way-side, being minded to visit her sister Queen Nur al-Huda.” When the King heard this, he equipped troops to escort her to her sister and brought out to her from his treasuries meat and drink and monies and jewels and rarities which beggar description. Now the King had seven daughters, all sisters-german by one mother and father except the youngest: the eldest was called Núr al-Hudà, the second Najm al-Sabáh, the third Shams al-Zuhà, the fourth Shajarat al-Durr, the fifth Kút al-Kulúb, the sixth Sharaf al-Banát and the youngest Manar al-Sana, Hasan’s wife, who was 107 their sister by the father’s side only.[150] Anon the old woman again presented herself and kissed ground before the Princess, who said to her, “Hast thou any need, O my mother?” Quoth Shawahi, “Thy sister, Queen Nur al-Huda, biddeth thee clothe thy sons in the two habergeons which she fashioned for them and send them to her by me, and I will take them and forego thee with them and be the harbinger of glad tidings and the announcer of thy coming to her.” When the Princess heard these words, her colour changed and she bowed her head a long while, after which she shook it and looking up, said to the old woman, “O my mother, my vitals tremble and my heart fluttereth when thou namest my children; for, from the time of their birth none hath looked on their faces either Jinn or man, male or female, and I am jealous for them of the zephyr when it breatheth in the night.” Exclaimed the old woman, “What words are these, O my lady? Dost thou fear for them from thy sister?”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman said to the Princess Manar al-Sana, “What words be these, O my lady? Dost thou fear for them from thy sister? Allah safeguard thy reason! Thou mayst not cross the Queen’s majesty in this matter, for she would be wroth with thee. However, O my lady, the children are young, and thou art excusable in fearing for them, for those that love well are wont to deem ill: but, O my daughter, thou knowest my tenderness and mine affection for thee and thy children, for indeed I reared thee before them. I will take them in my charge and make my cheek their pillow and open my heart and set them within, nor is it needful to charge me with care of them in the like of this case; so be of cheerful heart and tearless eye and send them to her, for, at the most, I shall but precede thee with them a day or at most two days.” And she ceased not to urge her, till she gave way, fearing 108 her sister’s fury and unknowing what lurked for her in the dark future, and consented to send them with the old woman. So she called them

and bathed them and equipped them and changed their apparel. Then she clad them in the two little coats of mail and delivered them to Shawahi, who took them and sped on with them like a bird, by another road than that by which their mother should travel, even as the Queen had charged her; nor did she cease to fare on with all diligence, being fearful for them, till she came in sight of Nur al-Huda's city, when she crossed the river and entering the town, carried them in to their aunt. The Queen rejoiced at their sight and embraced them, and pressed them to her breast; after which she seated them, one upon the right thigh and the other upon the left; and turning round said to the old woman, "Fetch me Hasan forthright, for I have granted him my safeguard and have spared him from my sabre and he hath sought asylum in my house and taken up his abode in my courts, after having endured hardships and horrors and passed through all manner mortal risks, each terribler than other; yet hitherto is he not safe from drinking the cup of death and from cutting off his breath."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Queen Nur al-Huda bade the old woman bring Hasan she said, "Verily he hath endured hardships and horrors and passed through all manner mortal risks each terribler than other; yet hitherto he is not safe from death and from the cutting off of his breath." Replied Shawahi, "An I bring him to thee, wilt thou reunite him with these his children? Or, if they prove not his, wilt thou pardon him and restore him to his own country?" Hearing these her words the Queen waxed exceeding wroth and cried to her, "Fie upon thee, O ill-omened old woman! How long wilt thou false us in the matter of this strange man who hath dared to intrude himself upon us and hath lifted our veil and pried into our conditions? Say me: thinkest thou that he shall come to our land and look upon our faces and betray our honour, and after return in safety to his own country and expose our affairs to his people, wherefore our report will be bruited abroad among all the [109]Kings of the quarters of the earth and the merchants will journey bearing tidings of us in all directions, saying:—A mortal entered the Isles of Wak and traversed the Land of the Jinn and the Lands of the Wild Beasts and the Islands of Birds and set foot in the country of the Warlocks and the Enchanters and returned in safety? This shall never be; no, never; and I swear by Him who made the Heavens and builded them; yea, by Him who dispread the earth and smoothed it, and who created all creatures and counted them, that, an they be not his children, I will assuredly slay him and strike his neck with mine own hand!" Then she cried out at the old woman, who fell down for fear; and set upon her the Chamberlain and twenty Mamelukes, saying, "Go with this crone and fetch me in haste the youth who is in her house." So they dragged Shawaki along, yellow with fright and with side-muscles quivering, till they came to her house, where she went in to Hasan, who rose to her and kissed her hands and saluted her. She returned not his salam, but said to him,

"Come; speak the Queen. Did I not say to thee:—Return presently to thine own country and I will give thee that to which no mortal may avail? And did I forbid thee from all this? But thou wouldst not obey me nor listen to my words; nay, thou rejectedst my counsel and chosest to bring destruction on me and on thyself. Up, then, and take that which thou hast chosen; for death is near hand. Arise: speak with yonder vile harlot[151] and tyrant that she is!" So Hasan arose, broken-spirited, heavy-hearted, and full of fear, and crying, "O Preserver, preserve Thou me! O my God, be gracious to me in that which Thou hast decreed to me of Thine affliction and protect me, O Thou the most Merciful of the Mercifuls!" Then, despairing of his life, he followed the twenty Mamelukes, the Chamberlain and the crone to the Queen's presence, where he found his two sons Nasir and Mansur sitting in her lap, whilst she played and made merry with them. As soon as his eyes fell on them, he knew them and crying a great cry fell down a-fainting for excess of joy at the sight of his children.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan's eyes fell upon his two sons, he knew them both and crying a great cry fell down a-fainting. They also knew him[152] and natural affection moved them, so that they freed themselves from the Queen's lap and fell upon Hasan, and Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty,) made them speak and say to him, "O our father!" Whereupon the old woman and all who were present wept for pity and tenderness over them and said, "Praised be Allah, who hath reunited you with your Sire!" Presently, Hasan came to himself and embracing his children, wept till again he swooned away, and when he revived, he recited these verses:—

By rights of you, this heart of mine could ne'er aby ✿ Severance from you albeit Union death imply!
Your phantom saith to me, "A-morrow we shall meet!" ✿ Shall I despite the foe the morrow-day espy?
By rights of you I swear, my lords, that since the day ✿ Of severance ne'er the sweets of lips enjoyèd I!
An Allah bade me perish for the love of you, ✿ Mid greatest martyrs for your love I lief will die.
Oft a gazelle doth make my heart her browsing stead ✿ The while her form of flesh like sleep eludes mine eye:
If in the lists of Law my bloodshed she deny, ✿ Prove it two witnesses those cheeks of ruddy dye.

When Nur al-Huda was assured that the little ones were indeed Hasan's children and that her sister, the Princess Manar al-Sana, was his wife, of whom he was come in quest, she was wroth against her with wrath beyond measure.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nur al-Huda was certified that the little ones were Hasan's 111children and that her sister Manar al-

Sana was his wife of whom he had come in quest, she raged with exceeding rage, too great to be assuaged and screamed in Hasan's face and reviled him and kicked him in the breast, so that he fell on his back in a swoon. Then she cried out at him, saying, "Arise! fly for thy life. But that I swore that no evil should betide thee from me, should thy tale prove true, I would slay thee with mine own hand forthright!" And she cried out at the old woman, who fell on her face for fear, and said to her, "By Allah, but that I am loath to break the oath that I swore, I would put both thee and him to death after the foulest fashion!"; presently adding, "Arise, go out from before me in safety and return to thine own country, for I swear by my fortune, if ever mine eye espy thee or if any bring thee in to me after this, I will smite off thy head and that of whoso bringeth thee!" Then she cried out to her officers, saying, "Put him out from before me!" So they thrust him out, and when he came to himself, he recited these couplets:—

You're far, yet to my heart you're nearest near; ✿ Absent yet present in my sprite you appear:
By Allah, ne'er to other I've inclined ✿ But tyranny of Time in patience bear!
Nights pass while still I love you and they end, ✿ And burns my breast with flames of fell Sa'ír[153];
I was a youth who parting for an hour ✿ Bore not, then what of months that make a year?
Jealous am I of breeze-breath fanning thee; ✿ Yea jealous-mad of fair soft-sided fere!

Then he once more fell down in a swoon, and when he came to himself, he found himself without the palace whither they had dragged him on his face; so he rose, stumbling over his skirts 112 and hardly crediting his escape from Nur al-Huda. Now this was grievous to Shawahi; but she dared not remonstrate with the Queen by reason of the violence of her wrath. And forthright Hasan went forth, distracted and knowing not whence to come or whither to go; the world, for all its wideness, was straitened upon him and he found none to speak a kind word with him and comfort him, nor any to whom he might resort for counsel or to apply for refuge; wherefore he made sure of death for that he could not journey to his own country and knew none to travel with him, neither wist he the way thither nor might he pass through the Wady of the Jann and the Land of Beasts and the Islands of Birds. So giving himself up for lost he bewept himself, till he fainted, and when he revived, he bethought him of his children and his wife and of that might befal her with her sister, repenting him of having come to those countries and of having hearkened to none, and recited these couplets:—

Suffer mine eye-babes weep lost of love and tears express: ✿ Rare is my solace and increases my distress:
The cup of Severance-chances to the dregs I've drained; ✿ Who is the man to bear love-loss with manliness?
Ye spread the Carpet of Disgrace[154] betwixt us twain; ✿ Ah, when shalt be uprolled, O Carpet of Disgrace?
I watched the while you slept; and if you deemed that I ✿ Forgot your love I but forget forgetfulness:
Woe's me! indeed my heart is pining for the love ✿ Of you, the only leaches who can cure my case:
See ye not what befel me from your fell disdain? ✿ Debased am I before the low and high no less.
I hid my love of you but longing laid it bare, ✿ And burns my heart wi' fire of passion's sorest stress:

Ah! deign have pity on my piteous case, for I ✿ Have kept our troth in secresy and patent place!

Would Heaven I wot shall Time e'er deign us twain rejoin! ✿ You are my heart's desire, my sprite's sole happiness:

My vitals bear the Severance-wound: would Heaven that you ✿ With tidings from your camp would deign my soul to bless!

Then he went on, till he came without the city, where he found the river, and walked along its bank, knowing not whither he went. Such was Hasan's case; but as regards his wife Manar 113 al-Sana, as she was about to carry out her purpose and to set out, on the second day after the departure of the old woman with her children, behold, there came in to her one of the chamberlains of the King her sire, and kissed ground between his hands,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventeenth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Manar al-Sana was about to set out upon the journey, behold, a chamberlain of the King, her sire, came in to her and kissing the ground before her, said, "O Princess, the Supreme King, thy father saluteth thee and biddeth thee to him." So she rose and accompanied the chamberlain to learn what was required by her father, who seated her by his side on the couch, and said to her, "O my daughter, know that I have this night had a dream which maketh me fear for thee and that long sorrow will betide thee from this thy journey." Quoth she, "How so, O my father, and what didst thou see in thy dream?" and quoth he, "I dreamt that I entered a hidden hoard, wherein was great store of monies, of jewels, of jacinths and of other riches; but 'twas as if naught pleased me of all this treasure and jewelry save seven bezels, which were the finest things there. I chose out one of the seven jewels, for it was the smallest, finest and most lustrous of them and its water pleased me; so I took it in my hand-palm and fared forth of the treasury. When I came without the door, I opened my hand, rejoicing, and turned over the jewel, when, behold, there swooped down on me out of the welkin a strange bird from a far land (for it was not of the birds of our country) and, snatching it from my hand, returned with it whence it came.[155] Whereupon sorrow and concern and sore vexation overcame me and my exceeding chagrin so troubled me that I awoke, mourning and lamenting for the loss of the jewel. At once on awaking I summoned the interpreters and expounders of dreams and declared to them my dream,[156] and they said to me:—Thou hast seven 114 daughters, the youngest of whom thou wilt lose, and she will be taken from thee perforce, without thy will. Now thou, O my girl, art the youngest and dearest of my daughters and the most affectionate of them to me, and look'ye thou art about to journey to thy sister, and I know not what may befal thee from her; so go thou not; but return to thy palace." But when the Princess heard her father's words, her heart fluttered and she feared for her children and bent earthwards her head awhile: then she raised it and said to her sire, "O King, Queen Nur al-Huda

hath made ready for me an entertainment and awaiteth my coming to her, hour by hour. These four years she hath not seen me and if I delay to visit her, she will be wroth with me. The utmost of my stay with her shall be a month and then I will return to thee. Besides, who is the mortal who can travel our land and make his way to the Islands of Wak? Who can gain access to the White Country and the Black Mountain and come to the Land of Camphor and the Castle of Crystal, and how shall he traverse the Island of Birds and the Wady of Wild Beasts and the Valley of the Jann and enter our Islands? If any stranger came hither, he would be drowned in the seas of destruction: so be of good cheer and eyes without a tear anent my journey; for none may avail to tread our earth." And she ceased not to persuade him, till he deigned give her leave to depart.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Princess ceased not to persuade him till he deigned give her leave to depart, and bade a thousand horse escort her to the river and abide there, till she entered her sister's city and palace and returned to them, when they should take her and carry her back to him. Moreover, he charged her tarry with her sister but two days and return to him in haste; and she answered, "Hearing and obedience." Then rising up she went forth and he with her and farewelled her. Now his words had sunken deep into her heart and she feared for her children; but it availeth not to fortify herself by any device against the onset of Destiny. So she set out and fared on diligently three days, till she came to the river and pitched her tents on its bank. Then she crossed the stream, 115 with some of her counsellors, pages and suite and, going up to the city and the palace, went in to Queen Nur al-Huda, with whom she found her children who ran to her weeping and crying out, "O our father!" At this, the tears railed from her eyes and she wept; then she strained them to her bosom, saying, "What! Have you seen your sire at this time? Would the hour had never been, in which I left him! If I knew him to be in the house of the world, I would carry you to him." Then she bemoaned herself and her husband and her children weeping and reciting these couplets:—

My friends, despite this distance and this cruelty, ✿ I pine for you, incline to you where'er you be.

My glance for ever turns towards your hearth and home ✿ And mourns my heart the bygone days you woned with me,

How many a night foregathered we withouten fear ✿ One loving, other faithful ever fain and free!

When her sister saw her fold her children to her bosom, saying, "'Tis I who have done thus with myself and my children and have ruined my own house!" she saluted her not, but said to her, "O whore, whence haddest thou these children? Say, hast thou married unbeknown to thy sire or hast thou committed fornication?[157] An thou have played the piece, it behoveth thou be exemplarily punished; and if thou have married sans our knowledge, why didst thou abandon thy husband and separate thy sons from

thy sire and bring them hither?”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth Nur al-Huda, the Queen, to her sister Manar al-Sana, the Princess, “An thou have married sans our knowledge, why didst thou abandon thy husband and separate thy sons from their sire and bring them to our land? Thou hast hidden thy children from us. Thinkest thou we know not of this? Allah Almighty, He who is cognisant of the concealed, hath made known to us thy case and revealed thy condition and bared thy nakedness.” Then she bade her guards seize her and pinion her elbows and shackle her with shackles of iron. So they did as she commanded and she beat her with a grievous beating, so that her skin was torn, and hanged her up by the hair; after which she cast her in prison and wrote the King her father a writ acquainting him with her case and saying, “There hath appeared in our land a man, a mortal, by name Hasan, and our sister Manar al-Sana avoucheth that she is lawfully married to him and bare him two sons, whom she hath hidden from us and thee; nor did she discover aught of herself till there came to us this man and informed us that he wedded her and she tarried with him a long while; after which she took her children and departed, without his knowledge, bidding as she went his mother tell her son, whenas longing began to rack to come to her in the Islands of Wak. So we laid hands on the man and sent the old woman Shawahi to fetch her and her offspring, enjoining her to bring us the children in advance of her. And she did so, whilst Manar al-Sana equipped herself and set out to visit me. When the boys were brought to me and ere the mother came, I sent for Hasan the mortal who claimeth her to wife, and he on entering and at first sight knew them and they knew him; whereby was I certified that the children were indeed his children and that she was his wife and I learned that the man’s story was true and he was not to blame, but that the reproach and the infamy rested with my sister. Now I feared the rending of our honour-veil before the folk of our Isles; so, when this wanton, this traitress, came in to me, I was incensed against her and cast her into prison and bastinado’d her grievously and hanged her up by the hair. Behold, I have acquainted thee with her case and it is thine to command, and whatso thou orderest us that we will do. Thou knowest that in this affair is 117dishonour and disgrace to our name and to thine, and haply the islanders will hear of it, and we shall become amongst them a byword; wherefore it besitteth thou return us an answer with all speed.” Then she delivered the letter to a courier and he carried it to the King who, when he read it, was wroth with exceeding wrath with his daughter Manar al-Sana and wrote to Nur al-Huda, saying, “I commit her case to thee and give thee command over her life; so, if the matter be as thou sayest, kill her without consulting me.” When the Queen had received and read her father’s letter, she sent for Manar al-Sana and they set before her the prisoner

drowned in her blood and pinioned with her hair, shackled with heavy iron shackles and clad in hair-cloth; and they made her stand in the presence abject and abashed. When she saw herself in this condition of passing humiliation and exceeding abjection, she called to mind her former high estate and wept with sore weeping and recited these two couplets[1]:—

O Lord my foes are fain to slay me in despight ✿ Nor deem I anywise to find escape by flight:

I have recourse to Thee t' annul what they have done; ✿ Thou art th' asylum, Lord, of fearful suppliant wight.

Then wept she grievously, till she fell down in a swoon, and presently coming to herself, repeated these two couplets[158]:—

Troubles familiar with my heart are grown and I with them, ✿ erst shunning; for the generous are sociable still.

Not one mere kind alone of woe doth lieger with me lie; ✿ Praised be God! There are with me thousands of kinds of ill.

And also these:—

Oft times Mischance shall straiten noble breast ✿ With grief, whence issue is for Him to shape:

But when the meshes straitest, tightest, seem ✿ They loose, though deemed I ne'er to find escape.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Queen Nur al-Huda ordered into the presence her sister Princess Manar al-Sana, they set her between her hands and she, pinioned as she was recited the verses aforesaid. Then the Queen[159] sent for a ladder of wood and made the eunuchs lay her on her back, with her arms spread out and bind her with cords thereto; after which she bared her head and wound her hair about the ladder-rungs and indeed all pity for her was rooted out from her heart. When Manar al-Sana saw herself in this state of abjection and humiliation, she cried out and wept; but none succoured her. Then said she to the Queen, "O my sister, how is thy heart hardened against me? Has thou no mercy on me nor pity on these little children?" But her words only hardened her sister's heart and she insulted her, saying, "O Wanton! O harlot! Allah have no ruth on whoso sueth for thee! How should I have compassion on thee, O traitress?" Replied Manar al-Sana who lay stretched on the ladder, "I appeal from thee to the Lord of the Heavens, concerning that wherewith thou revilest me and whereof I am innocent! By Allah, I have done no whoredom, but am lawfully married to him, and my Lord knoweth an I speak sooth or not! Indeed, my heart is wroth with thee, by reason of thine excessive hardheartedness against me! How canst thou cast at me the charge of harlotry, without knowledge? But my Lord will deliver me from thee and if that whoredom whereof thou accusest me be true, may He presently punish me for it!" Quoth Nur al-Huda after a few moments of reflection "How durst thou bespeak me thus?" and rose and beat her till she fainted away[160]; whereupon they sprinkled water on her face till she revived; and

in truth her charms were wasted for excess of beating and the straitness of her bonds and 119the sore insults she had suffered. Then she recited these two couplets:—

If aught I've sinned in sinful way, ✿ Or done ill deed and gone astray,

The past repent I and I come ✿ To you and for your pardon pray!

When Nur al-Huda heard these lines, her wrath redoubled and she said to her, "Wilt speak before me in verse, O whore, and seek to excuse thyself for the mortal sins thou hast sinned? 'Twas my desire that thou shouldst return to thy husband, that I might witness thy wickedness and matchless brazen-facedness; for thou gloriest in thy lewdness and wantonness and mortal heinousness." Then she called for a palm-stick and, whenas they brought the Jaríd, she arose and baring arms to elbows, beat her sister from head to foot; after which she called for a whip of plaited thongs, wherewith if one smote an elephant, he would start off at full speed, and came down therewith on her back and her stomach and every part of her body, till she fainted. When the old woman Shawahi saw this, she fled forth from the Queen's presence, weeping and cursing her; but Nur al-Huda cried out to her eunuchs, saying, "Fetch her to me!" So they ran after her and seizing her, brought her back to the Queen, who bade throw her on the ground and making them lay hold of her, rose and took the whip, with which she beat her, till she swooned away, when she said to her waiting-women, "Drag this ill-omened beldam forth on her face and put her out." And they did as she bade them. So far concerning them; but as regards Hasan, he walked on beside the river, in the direction of the desert, distracted, troubled, and despairing of life; and indeed he was dazed and knew not night from day for stress of affliction. He ceased not faring on thus, till he came to a tree whereto he saw a scroll hanging: so he took it and found written thereon these couplets:—

When in thy mother's womb thou wast, ✿ I cast thy case the bestest best;

And turned her heart to thee, so she ✿ Fosterèd thee on fondest breast.

We will suffice thee in whate'er ✿ Shall cause thee trouble or unrest;

We'll aid thee in thine enterprise ✿ So rise and bow to our behest.

When he had ended reading this scroll, he made sure of deliverance from trouble and of winning reunion with those he loved. Then he walked forward a few steps and found himself alone in a wild and perilous wold wherein there was none to 120company with him; upon which his heart sank within him for horror and loneliness and his side-muscles trembled, for that fearsome place, and he recited these couplets:—

O Zephyr of Morn, an thou pass where the dear ones dwell, ✿ Bear greeting of lover who ever in love-longing wones!

And tell them I'm pledged to yearning and pawned to pine ✿ And the might of my passion all passion of lovers unthrones.

Their sympathies haply shall breathe in a Breeze like thee ✿ And quicken forthright this framework of rotting bones.[161]

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan read the scroll he was certified of deliverance from his trouble and made sure of winning reunion with those he loved. Then he walked forward a couple of steps and stopped finding himself alone in a wild and perilous wold wherein was none to company with him, so he wept sore and recited the verses before mentioned. Then he walked on a few steps farther beside the river, till he came upon two little boys of the sons of the sorcerers, before whom lay a rod of copper graven with talismans, and beside it a skull-cap[162] of leather, made of three gores and wroughten in steel with names and charcts. The cap and rod were upon the ground and the boys were disputing and beating each other, till the blood ran down between them; whilst each cried, "None shall take the wand but I." So Hasan interposed and parted them, saying, "What is the cause of your contention?" and they replied, "O uncle, be thou judge of our case, for Allah the Most High hath surely sent thee to do justice between us." Quoth Hasan, "Tell me your case, and I will judge between you;" and quoth one of them, "We twain are brothers-german and our sire 121 was a mighty magician, who dwelt in a cave on yonder mountain. He died and left us this cap and rod; and my brother saith:—None shall have the rod but I, whilst I say the like; so be thou judge between us and deliver us each from other." Hasan asked, "What is the difference between the rod and the cap and what is their value? The rod appears to be worth six coppers[163] and the cap three;" whereto they answered, "Thou knowest not their properties." "And what are their properties?" "Each of them hath a wonderful secret virtue, wherefore the rod is worth the revenue of all the Islands of Wak and their provinces and dependencies, and the cap the like!" "By Allah, O my sons, discover to me their secret virtues." So they said, "O uncle, they are extraordinary; for our father wrought an hundred and thirty and five years at their contrivance, till he brought them to perfection and ingrafted them with secret attributes which might serve him extraordinary services and engraved them after the likeness of the revolving sphere, and by their aid he dissolved all spells; and when he had made an end of their fashion, Death, which all needs must suffer, overtook him. Now the hidden virtue of the cap is, that whoso setteth it on his head is concealed from all folk's eyes, nor can any see him, whilst it remaineth on his head; and that of the rod is that whoso owneth it hath authority over seven tribes of the Jinn, who all serve the order and ordinance of the rod; and whenever he who possesseth it smiteth therewith on the ground, their Kings come to do him homage, and all the Jinn are at his service." Now when Hasan heard these words, he bowed his head groundwards awhile, then said in himself, "By Allah, I shall conquer every foe by means of this rod and cap, Inshallah! and I am worthier of them both than these two boys. So I will go about forthright to get them from the twain by craft, that I may use them to free myself and my wife and children from yonder tyrannical Queen, and

then we will depart from this dismal stead, whence there is no deliverance for mortal man nor flight. Doubtless, Allah caused me not to fall in with these two lads, but that I might get the rod and cap from them." Then he raised his head and said to the two boys, "If ye would have me decide the case, I will make trial of you and see what each of you deserveth. He who overcometh his brother shall have the rod and he who 122faileth shall have the cap." They replied, "O uncle, we depute thee to make trial of us and do thou decide between us as thou deems fit." Hasan asked, "Will ye hearken to me and have regard to my words?"; and they answered, "Yes." Then said he, "I will take a stone and throw it and he who out-runneth his brother thereto and picketh it up shall take the rod, and the other who is outraced shall take the cap." And they said, "We accept and consent to this thy proposal." Then Hasan took a stone and threw it with his might, so that it disappeared from sight. The two boys ran under and after it and when they were at a distance, he donned the cap and hending the rod in hand, removed from his place that he might prove the truth of that which the boys had said, with regard to their scant properties. The younger outran the elder and coming first to the stone, took it and returned with it to the place where they had left Hasan, but found no signs of him. So he called to his brother, saying, "Where is the man who was to be umpire between us?" Quoth the other, "I espy him not neither wot I whether he hath flown up to heaven above or sunk into earth beneath." Then they sought for him, but saw him not, though all the while he was standing in his stead hard by them. So they abused each other, saying, "Rod and Cap are both gone; they are neither mine nor thine: and indeed our father warned us of this very thing; but we forgot whatso he said." Then they retraced their steps and Hasan also entered the city, wearing the cap and bearing the rod; and none saw him. Now when he was thus certified of the truth of their speech, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and making the palace, went up into the lodging of Shawahi, who saw him not, because of the cap. Then he walked up to a shelf[164] over her head upon which were vessels of glass and chinaware, and shook it with his hand, so that what was thereon fell to the ground. The old woman cried out and beat her face; then she rose and restored the fallen things, to their places,[165] saying in herself, "By Allah, methinks Queen Nur al-Huda hath sent a Satan to torment me, and he hath tricked me 123this trick! I beg Allah Almighty deliver me from her and preserve me from her wrath, for, O Lord, if she deal thus abominably with her half-sister, beating and hanging her, dear as she is to her sire, how will she do with a stranger like myself, against whom she is incensed?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the ancient Lady of Calamities cried, "When Queen Nur al-Huda doeth such misdeed to her sister, what will she do

to a stranger like myself, against whom she is incensed?" Then said she, "I conjure thee, O devil, by the Most Compassionate, the Bountiful-great, the High of Estate, of Dominion Elate who man and Jinn did create, and by the writing upon the seal of Solomon David-son (on both be the Peace!) speak to me and answer me;" Quoth Hasan, "I am no devil; I am Hasan, the afflicted, the distraught." Then he raised the cap from his head and appeared to the old woman, who knew him and taking him apart, said to him, "What is come to thy reason, that thou returnest hither? Go hide thee; for, if this wicked woman have tormented thy wife with such torments, and she her sister, what will she do, an she light on thee?" Then she told him all that had befallen his spouse and that wherein she was of travail and torment and tribulation, and straitly described all the pains she endured adding, "And indeed the Queen repenteth her of having let thee go and hath sent one after thee, promising him an hundred-weight of gold and my rank in her service; and she hath sworn that, if he bring thee back, she will do thee and thy wife and children dead." And she shed tears and discovered to Hasan what the Queen had done with herself, whereat he wept and said, "O my lady, how shall I do to escape from this land and deliver myself and my wife and children from this tyrannical Queen and how devise to return with them in safety to my own country?" Replied the old woman, "Woe to thee! Save thyself." Quoth he, "There is no help but I deliver her and my children from the Queen perforce and in her despite;" and quoth Shawahi, "How canst thou forcibly rescue them from her? Go and hide thyself, O my son, till Allah Almighty empower thee." Then Hasan showed her the rod and the cap, whereat she rejoiced with joy exceeding and cried, "Glory be to Him who quickeneth the bones, 124 though they be rotten! By Allah, O my son, thou and thy wife were but of lost folk; now, however, thou art saved, thou and thy wife and children! For I know the rod and I know its maker, who was my Shaykh in the science of Gramarye. He was a mighty magician and spent an hundred and thirty and five years working at this rod and cap, till he brought them to perfection, when Death the Inevitable overtook him. And I have heard him say to his two boys:—O my sons, these two things are not of your lot, for there will come a stranger from a far country, who will take them from you by force, and ye shall not know how he taketh them. Said they:—O our father, tell us how he will avail to take them. But he answered:—I wot not." "And O my son," added she, "how availedst thou to take them?" So he told her how he had taken them from the two boys, whereat she rejoiced and said, "O my son, since thou hast gotten the whereby to free thy wife and children, give ear to what I shall say to thee. For me there is no woning with this wicked woman, after the foul fashion in which she durst use me; so I am minded to depart from her to the caves of the Magicians and there abide with them until I die. But do thou, O my son, don the cap and bend the rod in hand and enter the place where thy wife and children are. Unbind her bonds and smite the earth with the rod saying:—Be ye present, O servants of these names! whereupon the servants of the rod will appear; and if there present himself one of the Chiefs of the Tribes, command

him whatso thou shalt wish and will." So he farewelled her and went forth donning the cap and hending the rod and entered the place where his wife was. He found her well-nigh lifeless bound to the ladder by her hair, tearful-eyed and woeful-hearted, in the sorriest of plights, knowing no way to deliver herself. Her children were playing under the ladder, whilst she looked at them and wept for them and herself, because of the barbarities and sore treatings and bitter penalties which had befallen her; and he heard her repeat these couplets[166]:—

There remaineth not aught save a fluttering, breath and an eye whose owner is confounded.
And a desirous lover whose bowels are burned with fire notwithstanding which she is silent.
The exulting foe pitieth her at the sight of her. Alas for her whom the exulting foe pitieth!

125 When Hasan saw her in this state of torment and misery and ignominy and infamy, he wept till he fainted; and when he recovered, he saw his children playing and their mother a-swoon for excess of pain; so he took the cap from his head and the children saw him and cried out, "O our father!" Then he covered his head again and the Princess came to herself, hearing their cry, but saw only her children weeping and shrieking, "O our father!" When she heard them name their sire and weep, her heart was broken and her vitals rent asunder and she said to them, "What maketh you in mind of your father at this time?" And she wept sore and cried out, from a bursten liver and an aching bosom, "Where are ye and where is your father?" Then she recalled the days of her union with Hasan and what had befallen her since her desertion of him and wept with sore weeping till her cheeks were seared and furrowed and her face was drowned in a briny flood. Her tears ran down and wetted the ground and she had not a hand loose to wipe them from her cheeks, whilst the flies fed their fill on her skin, and she found no helper but weeping and no solace but improvising verses. Then she repeated these couplets:—

I call to mind the parting-day that rent our loves in twain, When, as I turned away, the tears in very streams did rain.
The cameleer urged on his beasts with them, what while I found Nor strength nor fortitude, nor did my heart with me remain.
Yea, back I turned, unknowing of the road nor might shake off The trance of grief and longing love that numbed my heart and brain;
And worst of all betided me, on my return, was one Who came to me, in lowly guise, to glory in my pain.
Since the belovéd's gone, O soul, forswear the sweet of life Nor covet its continuance, for, wanting him, 'twere vain.
List, O my friend, unto the tale of love, and God forbid That I should speak and that thy heart to hearken should not deign!
As 'twere El Asmaï himself, of passion I discourse Fancies rare and marvellous, linked in an endless chain.[167]

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She continued, When Hasan went in to his wife he saw his children and heard her repeating the verses afore mentioned.[168] Then she turned right and left, seeking the cause of her children's crying out, "O our father!" but saw no one and marvelled that her sons should name their sire at that time and call upon him. But when Hasan heard her verses, he wept till he swooned away and the tears railed down his cheeks like rain. Then he drew near the children and raised the cap from his head unseen of his wife, whereupon they saw him and they knew him and cried out, saying, "O our father!" Their mother fell a-weeping again, when she heard them name their sire's name and said, "There is no avoiding the doom which Almighty Allah hath decreed!" adding, "O Strange! What garreth them think of their father at this time and call upon him, albeit it is not of their wont?" Then she wept and recited these couplets:—

The land of lamping moon is bare and drear; ✿ O eyne of me pour forth the brimming tear!

They marched: how shall I now be patient? ✿ That I nor heart nor patience own I swear!

O ye, who marched yet bide in heart of me, ✿ Will you, O lords of me, return to that we were?

What harm if they return and I enjoy ✿ Meeting, and they had ruth on tears of care?

Upon the parting-day they dimmed these eyne, ✿ For sad surprise, and lit the flames that flare.

Sore longed I for their stay, but Fortune stayed ✿ Longings and turned my hope to mere despair.

Return to us (O love!) by Allah, deign! ✿ Enow of tears have flowed for absence-bane.

Then Hasan could no longer contain himself, but took the cap from his head; whereupon his wife saw him and recognising him screamed a scream which startled all in the palace, and said to him, "How camest thou hither? From the sky hast thou dropped or through the earth hast thou come up?" And her eyes brimmed with tears and Hasan also wept. Quoth she, "O man, this be no 127 time for tears or blame. Fate hath had its course and the sight was blinded and the Pen hath run with what was ordained of Allah when Time was begun: so, Allah upon thee, whencesoever thou comest, go hide, lest any espy thee and tell my sister and she do thee and me die!" Answered he, "O my lady and lady of all Queens, I have adventured myself and come hither, and either I will die or I will deliver thee from this strait and travel with thee and my children to my country, despite the nose of this thy wickedest sister." But as she heard his words she smiled and for awhile fell to shaking her head and said, "Far, O my life, far is it from the power of any except Allah Almighty to deliver me from this my strait! Save thyself by flight and wend thy ways and cast not thyself into destruction; for she hath conquering hosts none may withstand. Given that thou tookest me and wentest forth, how canst thou make thy country and escape from these islands and the perils of these awesome places? Verily, thou hast seen on thy way hither, the wonders, the marvels, the dangers and the terrors of the road, such as none may escape, not even one of the rebel Jinns. Depart, therefore, forthright and add not cark to my cark and care to my care, neither do thou pretend to rescue me from this my plight; for who shall carry me to thy country through all these vales and thirsty wolds and fatal steads?" Rejoined Hasan, "By thy life, O light of mine eyes, I will not

depart this place nor fare but with thee!" Quoth she, "O man! How canst thou avail unto this thing and what manner of man art thou? Thou knowest not what thou sayest! None can escape from these realms, even had he command over Jinns, Ifrits, magicians, chiefs of tribes and Marids. Save thyself and leave me; perchance Allah will bring about good after ill." Answered Hasan, "O lady of fair ones, I came not save to deliver thee with this rod and with this cap." And he told her what had befallen him with the two boys; but, whilst he was speaking, behold, up came the Queen and heard their speech. Now when he was ware of her, he donned the cap and was hidden from sight, and she entered and said to the Princess, "O wanton, who is he with whom thou wast talking?" Answered Manar al-Sanar, "Who is with me that should talk with me, except these children?" Then the Queen took the whip and beat her, whilst Hasan stood by and looked on, nor did she leave beating her till she fainted; whereupon she bade transport her to another place. So they 128 loosed her and carried her to another chamber whilst Hasan followed unseen. There they cast her down, senseless, and stood gazing upon her, till she revived and recited these couplets:[169]—

I have sorrowed on account of our disunion with a sorrow that made the tears to overflow from my eyelids;
And I vowed that if Fortune reunite us, I would never again mention our separation;
And I would say to the envious, Die ye with regret; By Allah I have now attained my desire!
Joy hath overwhelmed me to such a degree that by its excess it hath made me weep.
O eye, how hath weeping become thy habit? Thou weepest in joy as well as in sorrows.

When she ceased her verse the slave-girls went out from her and Hasan took off the cap; whereupon his wife said to him, "See, O man, all this befel me not save by reason of my having rebelled against thee and transgressed thy commandment and gone forth without thy leave.[170] So, Allah upon thee blame me not for my sins and know that women never wot a man's worth till they have lost him. Indeed, I have offended and done evil; but I crave pardon of Allah Almighty for whatso I did, and if He reunite us, I will never again gainsay thee in aught, no, never!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Hasan's wife besought pardon of him saying, "Blame me not for my sin; and indeed I crave mercy of Allah Almighty." Quoth Hasan (and indeed his heart ached for her), "'Twas not thou that wast in fault; nay, the fault was mine and mine only, for I fared forth and left thee with one who knew not thy rank, neither thy worth nor thy degree. But know, O beloved of my heart and fruit of my vitals and light of mine eyes, that Allah (blessed be He!) hath ordained to me power of releasing thee; so, say me, wouldst 129 thou have me carry thee to thy father's home, there to accomplish what Allah decreeth unto

thee, or wilt thou forthright depart with me to mine own country, now that relief is come to thee?" Quoth she, "Who can deliver me save the Lord of the Heavens? Go to thy mother-land and put away from thee false hope; for thou knowest not the perils of these parts which, an thou obey me not, soon shalt thou sight." And she improvised these couplets:—

On me and with me bides thy volunty; ✿ Why then such anger such despite to me?

Whate'er befel us Heaven forbid that love ✿ Fade for long time or e'er forgotten be!

Ceased not the spy to haunt our sides, till seen ✿ Our love estranged and then estranged was he:

In truth I trusted to fair thoughts of thine ✿ Though spake the wicked spy maliciously.

We'll keep the secret 'twixt us twain and hold ✿ Although the brand of blame unsheathed we see.

The livelong day in longing love I spend ✿ Hoping acceptance-message from my friend.

Then wept she and her children, and the handmaidens heard them: so they came in to them and found them weeping, but saw not Hasan with them; wherefore they wept for ruth of them and damned Queen Nur al-Huda. Then Hasan took patience till night came on and her guards had gone to their sleeping-places, when he arose and girded his waist; then went up to her and loosing her kissed her on the head and between the eyes and pressed her to his bosom, saying, "How long have we wearied for our mother-land and for reunion there! Is this our meeting in sleep, or on wake?" Then he took up the elder boy and she took up the younger and they went forth the palace; and Allah veiled them with the veil of His protection, so that they came safe to the outer gate which closed the entrance to the Queen's Serraglio. But finding it locked from without, Hasan said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Verily we are Allah's and unto Him shall we return!" With this they despaired of escape and Hasan beat hand upon hand, saying, "O Dispeller of dolours! Indeed, I had bethought me of every thing and considered its conclusion but this; and now, when it is daybreak, they will take us, and what device 130 have we in this case?" And he recited the following two couplets:[171]—

Thou madest fair thy thought of Fate, whenas the days were fair, And fearedst not the unknown ills that they to thee might bring.

The nights were fair and calm to thee; thou wast deceived by them, For in the peace of night is born full many a troublous thing.

Then Hasan wept and his wife wept for his weeping and for the abasement she had suffered and the cruelties of Time and Fortune:—

Baulks me my Fate as tho' she were my foe; ✿ Each day she showeth me new cark and care:

Fate, when I aim at good, brings clear reverse, ✿ And lets foul morrow wait on day that's fair.

And also these:—

Irks me my Fate and clean unknows that I ✿ Of my high worth her shifts and shafts despise.

She nights parading what ill-will she works: ✿ I night parading Patience to her eyes.

Then his wife said to him, “By Allah, there is no relief for us but to kill ourselves and be at rest from this great and weary travail; else we shall suffer grievous torment on the morrow.” At this moment, behold, they heard a voice from without the door say, “By Allah, O my lady Manar al-Sana, I will not open to thee and thy husband Hasan, except ye obey me in whatso I shall say to you!” When they heard these words they were silent for excess of fright and would have returned whence they came; when lo! the voice spake again saying, “What aileth you both to be silent and answer me not?” Therewith they knew the speaker for the old woman Shawahi, Lady of Calamities, and said to her, “Whatsoever thou biddest us, that will we do; but first open the door to us; this being no time for talk.” Replied she, “By Allah, I will not open to you until ye both swear to me that you will take me with you and not leave me with yonder whore: so, whatever befalleth you shall befal me and if ye escape, I shall escape, and if ye perish, I shall perish: for yonder abominable woman, tribade[172] 131 that she is! entreateth me with indignity and still tormenteth me on your account; and thou, O my daughter, knowest my worth.” Now recognising her they trusted in her and sware to her an oath such as contented her, whereupon she opened the door to them and they fared forth and found her riding on a Greek jar of red earthenware with a rope of palm-fibres about its neck,[173] which rolled under her and ran faster than a Najdi colt, and she came up to them, and said, “Follow me and fear naught, for I know forty modes of magic by the least of which I could make this city a dashing sea, swollen with clashing billows, and ensorcel each damsel therein to a fish, and all before dawn. But I was not able to work aught of my mischief, for fear of the King her father and of regard to her sisters, for that they are formidable, by reason of their many guards and tribesmen and servants. However, soon will I show you wonders of my skill in witchcraft; and now let us on, relying upon the blessing of Allah and His good aid.” Now Hasan and his wife rejoiced in this, making sure of escape,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan and his wife, accompanied by the ancient dame Shawahi, fared forth from the palace, they made sure of deliverance and they walked on till they came without the city, when he fortified his heart and, smiting the earth with the rod, cried, “Ho, ye servants of these names, appear to me and acquaint me with your conditions!” Thereupon the earth clave asunder and out came ten[174] Ifrits, with their feet in the bowels of the earth and their heads in the clouds. They kissed the earth three times before Hasan and said as with one voice, “Adsumus! Here are we at thy service, O our lord and ruler over us! What dost thou bid us do? For we hear and obey thy commandment. An thou wilt, we will dry thee up seas and remove mountains from their places.” So Hasan rejoiced in their words and at their speedy answer to his 132 evocation; then taking courage and bracing up his resolution, he said to them, “Who are ye and what be your names and

your races, and to what tribes and clans and companies appertain ye?" They kissed the earth once more and answered as with one voice, saying, "We are seven Kings, each ruling over seven tribes of the Jinn of all conditions, and Satans and Marids, flyers and divers, dwellers in mountains and wastes and wolds and haunters of the seas: so bid us do whatso thou wilt; for we are thy servants and thy slaves, and whoso possesseth this rod hath dominion over all our necks and we owe him obedience." Now when Hasan heard this, he rejoiced with joy exceeding, as did his wife and the old woman, and presently he said to the Kings of the Jinn, "I desire of you that ye show me your tribes and hosts and guards." "O our lord," answered they, "if we show thee our tribes, we fear for thee and these who are with thee, for their name is legion and they are various in form and fashion, figure and favour. Some of us are heads sans bodies and others bodies sans heads, and others again are in the likeness of wild beasts and ravening lions. However, if this be thy will, there is no help but we first show thee those of us who are like unto wild beasts. But, O our lord, what wouldst thou of us at this present?" Quoth Hasan, "I would have you carry me forthwith to the city of Baghdad, me and my wife and this honest woman." But, hearing his words they hung down their heads and were silent, whereupon Hasan asked them, "Why do ye not reply?" And they answered as with one voice, "O our lord and ruler over us, we are of the covenant of Solomon son of David (on the twain be Peace!) and he sware us in that we would bear none of the sons of Adam on our backs; since which time we have borne no mortal on back or shoulder: but we will straightway harness thee horses of the Jinn, that shall carry thee and thy company to thy country." Hasan enquired, "How far are we from Baghdad?" and they, "Seven years' journey for a diligent horseman." Hasan marvelled at this and said to them, "Then how came I hither in less than a year?"; and they said "Allah softened to thee the hearts of His pious servants else hadst thou never come to this country nor hadst thou set eyes on these regions; no, never! For the Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus, who mounted thee on the elephant and the magical horse, traversed with thee, in ten days, three years' journey for a well-girt rider, and the Ifrit Dahnash, to whom the Shaykh committed thee, carried thee a three years' march in a day and a night; all which 133 was of the blessing of Allah Almighty, for that the Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh is of the seed of Ásaf bin Barkhiyá[175] and knoweth the Most Great name of Allah.[176] Moreover, from Baghdad to the palace of the damsels is a year's journey, and this maketh up the seven years." When Hasan heard this, he marvelled with exceeding marvel and cried, "Glory be to God, Facilitator of the hard, Fortifier of the weak heart, Approximator of the far and Humbler of every froward tyrant, Who hath eased us of every accident and carried me to these countries and subjected to me these creatures and reunited me with my wife and children! I know not whether I am asleep or awake or if I be sober or drunken!" Then he turned to the Jinn and asked, "When ye have mounted me upon your steeds, in how many days will they bring us to Baghdad?"; and they answered, "They will carry you thither under the year, but not till after ye have endured terrible

perils and hardships and horrors and ye have traversed thirsty Wadys and frightful wastes and horrible steads without number; and we cannot promise thee safety, O our lord, from the people of these islands,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

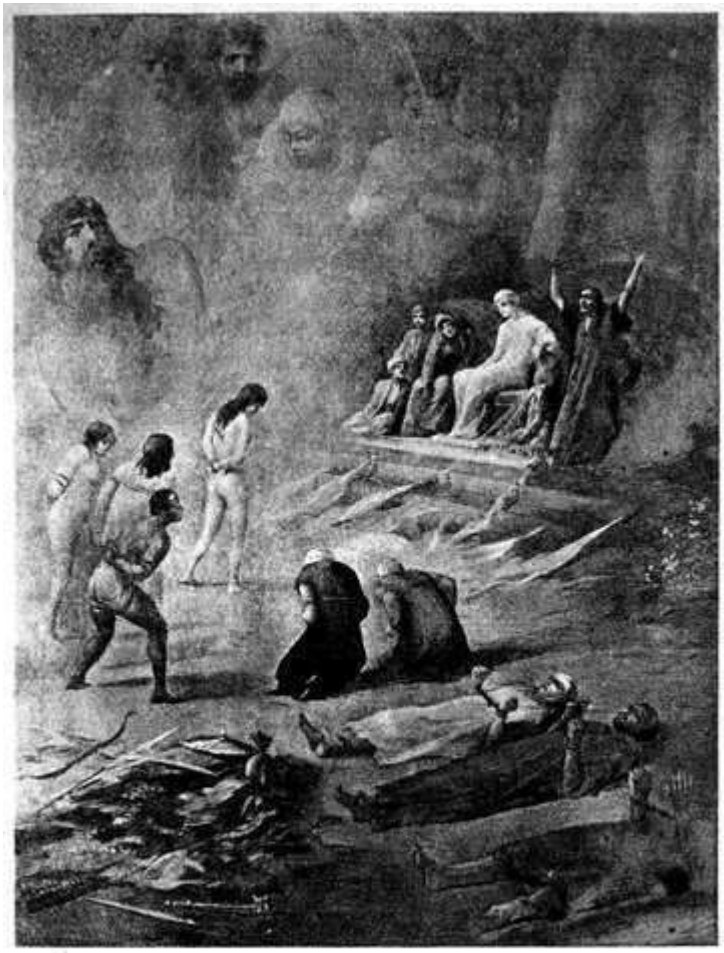
She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Jann said to Hasan, "We cannot promise thee safety, O our lord, from this Islandry, nor from the mischief of the Supreme King and his enchanters and warlocks. It may be they will overcome us and take you from us and we fall into affliction with them, and all to whom the tidings shall come after this will say to us:—Ye are wrong-doers! How could ye go against the Supreme King and carry a mortal out of his dominions, and eke the King's daughter with him?" adding, "Wert thou alone with us the thing were light; but He who conveyed thee hither is capable to carry thee back to thy country and reunite thee with thine own people forthright and in readiest plight. So take heart and put thy trust in Allah and fear not; for we are at thy service, to convey thee to thy 134country." Hasan thanked them therefor and said, "Allah requite you with good! but now make haste with the horses;" they replied, "We hear and we obey," and struck the ground with their feet, whereupon it opened and they disappeared within it and were absent awhile, after which they suddenly reappeared with three horses, saddled and bridled, and on each saddle-bow a pair of saddle-bags, with a leathern bottle of water in one pocket and the other full of provaunt. So Hasan mounted one steed and took a child before him, whilst his wife mounted a second and took the other child before her. Then the old woman alighted from the jar and bestrode the third horse and they rode on, without ceasing, all night. At break of day, they turned aside from the road and made for the mountain, whilst their tongues ceased not to name Allah. Then they fared on under the highland all that day, till Hasan caught sight of a black object afar as it were a tall column of smoke a-twisting skywards; so he recited somewhat of the Koran and Holy Writ, and sought refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned. The black thing grew plainer as they drew near, and when hard by it, they saw that it was an Ifrit, with a head like a huge dome and tusks like grapnels and jaws like a lane and nostrils like ewers and ears like leathern targes and mouth like a cave and teeth like pillars of stone and hands like winnowing forks and legs like masts: his head was in the cloud and his feet in the bowels of the earth had plowed. Whenas Hasan gazed upon him he bowed himself and kissed the ground before him, saying, "O Hasan, have no fear of me; for I am the chief of the dwellers in this land, which is the first of the Isles of Wak, and I am a Moslem and an adorer of the One God. I have heard of you and your coming and when I knew of your case, I desired to depart from the land of the magicians to another land, void of inhabitants and far from men and Jinn, that I might dwell there alone and worship Allah till my fated end came upon me. So I wish

to accompany you and be your guide, till ye fare forth of the Wak Islands; and I will not appear save at night; and do ye hearten your hearts on my account; for I am a Moslem, even as ye are Moslems." When Hasan heard the Ifrit's words, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and made sure of deliverance; and he said to him, "Allah requite thee weal! Go with us relying upon the blessing of Allah!" So the Ifrit forewent them and they followed, talking and making merry, for their hearts were pleased and their breasts were eased and Hasan fell to telling his wife all that had befallen 135 him and all the hardships he had undergone, whilst she excused herself to him and told him, in turn, all she had seen and suffered. They ceased not faring all that night——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that they ceased not faring all that night and the horses bore them like the blinding leven, and when the day rose all put their hands to the saddle-bags and took forth provaunt which they ate and water which they drank. Then they sped diligently on their way, preceded by the Ifrit, who turned aside with them from the beaten track into another road, till then untrodden, along the sea-shore, and they ceased not faring on, without stopping, across Wadys and wolds a whole month, till on the thirty-first day there arose before them a dust-cloud, that walled the world and darkened the day; and when Hasan saw this, he was confused and turned pale; and more so when a frightful crying and clamour struck their ears. Thereupon the old woman said to him, "O my son, this is the army of the Wak Islands, that hath overtaken us; and presently they will lay violent hands on us." Hasan asked, "What shall I do, O my mother?"; and she answered, "Strike the earth with the rod." He did so whereupon the Seven Kings presented themselves and saluted him with the salam, kissing ground before him and saying, "Fear not neither grieve." Hasan rejoiced at these words and answered them, saying, "Well said, O Princes of the Jinn and the Ifrits! This is your time!" Quoth they, "Get ye up to the mountain-top, thou and thy wife and children and she who is with thee and leave us to deal with them, for we know that you all are in the right and they in the wrong and Allah will aid us against them." So Hasan and his wife and children and the old woman dismounted and dismissing the horses, ascended the flank of the mountain.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,



She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Hasan with his wife, his children and the ancient dame ascended the 136mountain-flank after they had dismissed the coursers. Presently, up came Queen Nur al-Huda, with the troops right and left, and the captains went round about among the host and ranged them rank by rank in battle array. Then the hosts charged down upon each other and clashed together the twain with a mighty strain, the brave pressed on amain and the coward to fly was fain and the Jinn cast flames of fire from their mouths, whilst the smoke of them rose up to the confines of the sky and the two armies appeared and disappeared. The champions fought and heads flew from trunks and the blood ran in rills; nor did brand leave to play and blood to flow and battle fire to flow, till the murk o' night came, when the two hosts drew apart and, alighting from their steeds rested upon the field by the fires they had kindled. Therewith the Seven Kings went up to Hasan and kissed the earth before him. He pressed forwards to meet them and thanked them and prayed Allah to give them the victory and asked them how they had fared with the

Queen's troops. Quoth they, "They will not withstand us more then three days, for we had the better of them to-day, taking some two thousand of them prisoners and slaying of them much folk whose compt may not be told. So be of good cheer and broad of breast." Then they farewelled him and went down to look after the safety of their troops; and they ceased not to keep up the fires till the morning rose with its sheen and shone, when the fighting-men mounted their horses of noble strain and smote one another with thin-edged skean and with brown of bill they thrust amain nor did they cease that day battle to darraign. Moreover, they passed the night on horseback clashing together like dashing seas; raged among them the fires of war and they stinted not from battle and jar, till the armies of Wak were defeated and their power broken and their courage quelled; their feet slipped and whither they fled soever defeat was before them; wherefore they turned tail and of flight began to avail; but the most part of them were slain and their Queen and her chief officers and the grandees of her realm were captive ta'en. When the morning morrowed, the Seven Kings presented themselves before Hasan and set for him a throne of alabaster inlaid with pearls and jewels, and he sat down thereon. They also set thereby a throne of ivory, plated with glittering gold, for the Princess Manar al Sana and another for the ancient dame Shawahi Zat al-Dawahi. Then they brought before them the prisoners and among the rest, Queen Nur al-Huda with elbows 137pinioned and feet fettered, whom when Shawahi saw, she said to her, "Thy recompense, O harlot, O tyrant, shall be that two bitches be starved and two mares stinted of water, till they be athirst: then shalt thou be bound to the mares' tails and these driven to the river, with the bitches following thee that they may rend thy skin; and after, thy flesh shall be cut off and given them to eat. How couldst thou do with thy sister such deed, O strumpet, seeing that she was lawfully married, after the ordinance of Allah and of His Apostle? For there is no monkery in Al-Islam and marriage is one of the institutions of the Apostles (on whom be the Peace!)[177] nor were women created but for men." Then Hasan commanded to put all the captives to the sword and the old woman cried out, saying, "Slay them all and spare none[178]!" But, when Princess Manar al-Sana saw her sister in this plight, a bondswoman and in fetters, she wept over her and said, "O my sister, who is this hath conquered us and made us captives in our own country?" Quoth Nur al-Huda, "Verily, this is a mighty matter. Indeed this man Hasan hath gotten the mastery over us and Allah hath given him dominion over us and over all our realm and he hath overcome us, us and the Kings of the Jinn." And quoth her sister, "Indeed, Allah aided him not against you nor did he overcome you nor capture you save by means of this cap and rod." So Nur al-Huda was certified and assured that he had conquered her by means thereof and humbled herself to her sister, till she was moved to ruth for her and said to her husband, "What wilt thou do with my sister? Behold, she is in thy hands and she hath done thee no misdeed that thou shouldest punish her." Replied Hasan, "Her torturing of thee was misdeed enow." But she answered, saying, "She hath excuse for all she did with me. As for thee, thou hast set

my father's heart on fire for the loss of me, and what will be his case, if he lose my sister also?" And he said to her, "'Tis thine to decide; do whatso thou wilt." So she bade loose her sister and the rest of the captives, and they [138]did her bidding. Then she went up to Queen Nur al-Huda and embraced her, and they wept together a long while; after which quoth the Queen, "O my sister, bear me not malice for that I did with thee;" and quoth Manar al-Sana, "O my sister, this was foreordained to me by Fate." Then they sat on the couch talking and Manar al-Sana made peace between the old woman and her sister, after the goodliest fashion, and their hearts were set at ease. Thereupon Hasan dismissed the servants of the rod, thanking them for the succour which they had afforded him against his foes, and Manar al-Sana related to her sister all that had befallen her with Hasan her husband and every thing he had suffered for her sake, saying, "O my sister, since he hath done these deeds and is possessed of this might and Allah Almighty hath gifted him with such exceeding prowess, that he hath entered our country and beaten thine army and taken thee prisoner and defied our father, the Supreme King, who hath dominion over all the Princes of the Jinn, it behoveth us to fail not of what is due to him." Replied Nur al-Huda, "By Allah, O my sister, thou sayest sooth in whatso thou tellest me of the marvels which this man hath seen and suffered; and none may fail of respect to him. But was all this on thine account, O my sister?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Princess Manar al-Sana repeated to her sister these praises of Hasan, the other replied, "By Allah, this man can claim all respect more by token of his generosity. But was all this on thine account?" "Yes," answered Manar al-Sana, and they passed the night in converse till the morning morrowed and the sun rose and they were minded to depart. So they farewelled one another and Manar al-Sana gave God-speed to the ancient dame after the reconciling her with Queen Nur al-Huda. Thereupon Hasan smote the earth with the rod and its servants the Jinn appeared and saluted him, saying, "Praised be Allah, who hath set thy soul at rest! Command us what thou wilt, and we will do it for thee in less than the twinkling of an eye." He thanked them for their saying and said to them, "Allah requite you with [139]good! Saddle me two steeds of the best." So they brought him forthwith two saddled coursers, one of which he mounted, taking his elder son before him, and his wife rode the other, taking the younger son in front of her. Then the Queen and the old woman also backed horse and departed, Hasan and his wife following the right and Nur al-Huda and Shawahi the left hand road. The spouses fared on with their children, without stopping, for a whole month, till they drew in sight of a city, which they found compassed about with trees and streams and

making the trees dismounted beneath them thinking to rest there. As they sat talking, behold, they saw many horsemen coming towards them, whereupon Hasan rose and going to meet them, saw that it was King Hassun, lord of the Land of Camphor and Castle of Crystal, with his attendants. So Hasan went up to the King and kissed his hands and saluted him; and when Hassun saw him, he dismounted and seating himself with Hasan upon carpets under the trees returned his salam and gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced in him with exceeding joy, saying to him, "O Hasan, tell me all that hath befallen thee, first and last." So he told him all of that, whereupon the King marvelled and said to him, "O my son, none ever reached the Islands of Wak and returned thence but thou, and indeed thy case is wondrous; but Alhamdolillah—praised be God—for safety!" Then he mounted and bade Hasan ride with his wife and children into the city, where he lodged them in the guest-house of his palace; and they abode with him three days, eating and drinking in mirth and merriment, after which Hasan sought Hassun's leave to depart to his own country and the King granted it. Accordingly they took horse and the King rode with them ten days, after which he farewelled them and turned back, whilst Hasan and his wife and children fared on a whole month, at the end of which time they came to a great cavern, whose floor was of brass. Quoth Hasan to his wife, "Kennest thou yonder cave?"; and quoth she, "No." Said he, "Therein dwelleth a Shaykh, Abu al-Ruwaysh hight, to whom I am greatly beholden, for that he was the means of my becoming acquainted with King Hassun." Then he went on to tell her all that had passed between him and Abu al-Ruwaysh, and as he was thus engaged, behold, the Shaykh himself issued from the cavern-mouth. When Hasan saw him, he dismounted from his steed and kissed his hands, and the old man saluted him and gave him joy of his safety and rejoiced in him. Then he carried him into the 140antre and sat down with him, whilst Hasan related to him what had befallen him in the Islands of Wak; whereat the Elder marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, "O Hasan, how didst thou deliver thy wife and children?" So he told them the tale of the cap and the rod, hearing which he wondered and said, "O Hasan, O my son, but for this rod and the cap, thou hadst never delivered thy wife and children." And he replied, "Even so, O my lord." As they were talking, there came a knocking at the door and Abu al-Ruwaysh went out and found Abd al-Kaddus mounted on his elephant. So he saluted him and brought him into the cavern, where he embraced Hasan and congratulated him on his safety, rejoicing greatly in his return. Then said Abu al-Ruwaysh to Hasan, "Tell the Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus all that hath befallen thee, O Hasan." He repeated to him every thing that had passed, first and last, till he came to the tale of the rod and cap,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Hasan began relating to Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus and Shaykh Abd al-Ruwaysh (who sat chatting in the cave) all

that had passed, first and last, till he came to the tale of the rod and cap; whereupon quoth Abd al-Kaddus, "O my son, thou hast delivered thy wife and thy children and hast no further need of the two. Now we were the means of thy winning to the Islands of Wak, and I have done thee kindness for the sake of my nieces, the daughters of my brother; wherefore I beg thee, of thy bounty and favour, to give me the rod and the Shaykh Abu al-Ruwaysh the cap." When Hasan heard this, he hung down his head, being ashamed to reply, "I will not give them to you," and said in his mind, "Indeed these two Shaykhs have done me great kindness and were the means of my winning to the Islands of Wak, and but for them I had never made the place, nor delivered my children, nor had I gotten me this rod and cap." So he raised his head and answered, "Yes, I will give them to you: but, O my lords, I fear lest the Supreme King, my wife's father, come upon me with his commando and combat with me in my own country, and I be unable to repel them, for want of the rod and the cap." Replied 141 Abd al-Kaddus, "Fear not, O my son; we will continually succour thee and keep watch and ward for thee in this place; and whosoever shall come against thee from thy wife's father or any other, him we will fend off from thee; wherefore be thou of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool of tear, and hearten thy heart and broaden thy breast and feel naught whatsoever of fear, for no harm shall come to thee." When Hasan heard this he was abashed and gave the cap to Abu al-Ruwaysh, saying to Abd al-Kaddus, "Accompany me to my own country and I will give thee the rod." At this the two elders rejoiced with exceeding joy and made him ready riches and treasures which beggar all description. He abode with them three days, at the end of which he set out again and the Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus made ready to depart with him. So he and his wife mounted their beasts and Abd al-Kaddus whistled when, behold, a mighty big elephant trotted up with fore hand and feet on amble from the heart of the desert and he took it and mounted it. Then they farewelled Abu al-Ruwaysh who disappeared within his cavern; and they fared on across country traversing the land in its length and breadth wherever Abd al-Kaddus guided them by a short cut and an easy way, till they drew near the land of the Princesses; whereupon Hasan rejoiced at finding himself once more near his mother, and praised Allah for his safe return and reunion with his wife and children after so many hardships and perils; and thanked Him for His favours and bounties, reciting these couplets:—

Haply shall Allah deign us twain unite ✿ And lockt in strict embrace we'll hail the light:
And wonders that befel me I'll recount, ✿ And all I suffered from the Severance-blight;
And fain I'll cure mine eyes by viewing you ✿ For ever yearned my heart to see your sight:
I hid a tale for you my heart within ✿ Which when we meet o' morn I'll fain recite:
I'll blame you for the deeds by you were done ✿ But while blame endeth love shall stay in site.

Hardly had he made an end of these verses, when he looked and behold, there rose to view the Green Dome[1791] and the Jetting Fount and the Emerald Palace, and the Mountain of Clouds 142 showed to them from afar; whereupon quoth Abd al-Kaddus,

"Rejoice, O Hasan, in good tidings: to-night shalt thou be the guest of my nieces!" At this he joyed with exceeding joy and as also did his wife, and they alighted at the domed pavilion, where they took their rest[180] and ate and drank; after which they mounted horse again and rode on till they came upon the palace. As they drew near, the Princesses who were daughters of the King, brother to Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus, came forth to meet them and saluted them and their uncle who said to them, "O daughters of my brother, behold, I have accomplished the need of this your brother Hasan and have helped him to regain his wife and children." So they embraced him and gave him joy of his return in safety and health and of his reunion with his wife and children, and it was a day of festival[181] with them. Then came forward Hasan's sister, the youngest Princess, and embraced him, weeping with sore weeping, whilst he also wept for his long desolation: after which she complained to him of that which she had suffered for the pangs of separation and weariness of spirit in his absence and recited these two couplets:—

After thy faring never chanced I'spy ✿ A shape, but did thy form therein descry:

Nor closed mine eyes in sleep but thee I saw, ✿ E'en as though dwelling 'twixt the lid and eye.

When she had made an end of her verses, she rejoiced with joy exceeding and Hasan said to her, "O my sister, I thank none in this matter save thyself over all thy sisters, and may Allah Almighty vouchsafe thee aidance and countenance!" Then he related to her all that had past in his journey, from first to last, and all that he had undergone, telling her what had betided him with his wife's sister and how he had delivered his wife and wees and he also described to her all that he had seen of marvels and grievous perils, even to how Queen Nur al-Huda would have slain him and his spouse and children and none saved them from her but the Lord the Most High. Moreover, he related to her the 143 adventure of the cap and the rod and how Abd al-Kaddus and Abu al-Ruwaysh had asked for them and he had not agreed to give them to the twain save for her sake; wherefore she thanked him and blessed him wishing him long life; and he cried, "By Allah, I shall never forget all the kindness thou hast done me from incept to conclusion."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Hasan foregathered with the Princesses, he related to his sister all that he had endured and said to her, "Never will I forget what thou hast done for me from incept to conclusion." Then she turned to his wife Manar al-Sana and embraced her and pressed her children to her breast, saying to her, "O daughter of the Supreme King, was there no pity in thy bosom, that thou partedst him and his children and settedst his heart on fire for them? Say me, didst thou desire by this deed that he should die?" The Princess laughed and answered, "Thus was it ordained of Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) and whoso beguileth folk, him shall Allah beguile."[182] Then they set on somewhat of meat and

drink, and they all ate and drank and made merry. They abode thus ten days in feast and festival, mirth and merrymaking, at the end of which time Hasan prepared to continue his journey. So his sister rose and made him ready riches and rarities, such as defy description. Then she strained him to her bosom, because of leave-taking, and threw her arms round his neck whilst he recited on her account these couplets:—

The solace of lovers is naught but far, ✿ And parting is naught save grief singular:

And ill-will and absence are naught but woe, ✿ And the victims of Love naught but martyrs are;

And how tedious is night to the loving wight ✿ From his true love parted 'neath evening star!

His tears course over his cheeks and so ✿ He cries, "O tears be there more to flow?"

With this Hasan gave the rod to Shaykh Abd al-Kaddus, who 144joyed therein with exceeding joy and thanking him and securing it mounted and returned to his own place. Then Hasan took horse with his wife and children and departed from the Palace of the Princesses, who went forth[183] with him, to farewell him. Then they turned back and Hasan fared on, over wild and wold, two months and ten days, till he came to the city of Baghdad, the House of Peace, and repairing to his home by the private postern which gave upon the open country, knocked at the door. Now his mother, for long absence, had forsworn sleep and given herself to mourning and weeping and wailing, till she fell sick and ate no meat, neither took delight in slumber but shed tears night and day. She ceased not to call upon her son's name albeit she despaired of his returning to her; and as he stood at the door, he heard her weeping and reciting these couplets:—

By Allah, heal, O my lords, the unwhole ✿ Of wasted frame and heart worn with dole:

An you grant her a meeting 'tis but your grace ✿ Shall whelm in the boons of the friend her soul:

I despair not of Union the Lord can grant ✿ And to weal of meeting our woes control!

When she had ended her verses, she heard her son's voice at the door, calling out, "O mother, mother ah! fortune hath been kind and hath vouchsafed our reunion!" Hearing his cry she knew his voice and went to the door, between belief and misbelief; but, when she opened it she saw him standing there and with him his wife and children; so she shrieked aloud, for excess of joy, and fell to the earth in a fainting-fit. Hasan ceased not soothing her, till she recovered and embraced him; then she wept with joy, and presently she called his slaves and servants and bade them carry all his baggage into the house.[184] So they brought in every one of the loads, and his wife and children entered also, whereupon Hasan's mother went up to the Princess and kissed her head and bussed her feet, saying, "O daughter of the Supreme King, if I have failed of thy due, behold, I crave pardon of Almighty Allah." Then she turned to Hasan and said to him, "O my son, what was the cause of this long strangerhood?" He related to her all his adventures from beginning to end; and when she heard tell of 145all that had befallen him, she cried a great cry and fell down a-fainting at the very mention of his mishaps. He solaced her, till she came to herself and said, "By Allah, O my son, thou

hast done unwisely in parting with the rod and the cap for, hadst thou kept them with the care due to them, thou wert master of the whole earth, in its breadth and length; but praised be Allah, for thy safety, O my son, and that of thy wife and children!" They passed the night in all pleasance and happiness, and on the morrow Hasan changed his clothes and donning a suit of the richest apparel, went down into the bazar and bought black slaves and slave-girls and the richest stuffs and ornaments and furniture such as carpets and costly vessels and all manner other precious things, whose like is not found with Kings. Moreover, he purchased houses and gardens and estates and so forth and abode with his wife and his children and his mother, eating and drinking and pleasuring: nor did they cease from all joy of life and its solace till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies. And Glory be to Him who hath dominion over the Seen and the Unseen,[185] who is the Living, the Eternal, Who dieth not at all! And men also recount the adventures of

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nur al-Din heard the voice singing these verses he said in himself, "Verily this be the Lady Miriam chanting without hesitation or doubt or suspicion of one from without.[1] Would Heaven I knew an my thought be true and if it be indeed she herself or other self!" And regrets redoubled upon him and he bemoaned himself and recited these couplets:—

When my blamer saw me beside my love ✿ Whom I met in a site that lay open wide,
I spake not at meeting a word of reproach ✿ Though oft it comfort sad heart to chide;
Quoth the blamer, "What means this silence that bars ✿ Thy making answer that hits his pride?"
And quoth I, "O thou who as fool dost wake, ✿ To misdoubt of lovers and Love deride;
The sign of lover whose love is true ✿ When he meets his belovèd is mum to bide."

When he had made an end of these verses, the Lady Miriam fetched inkcase and paper and wrote therein:—"After honour due to the Basmalah,[2] may the peace of Allah be upon thee and His mercy and blessings be! I would have thee know that thy slave-girl Miriam saluteth thee, who longeth sore for thee; and this is her message to thee. As soon as this letter shall fall into thy hands, do thou arise without stay and delay and apply thyself to that she would have of thee with all diligence and beware with all wariness of transgressing her commandment and of sleeping. When the first third of the night is past, (for that hour is of the most favourable of times) apply thee only to saddling the two stallions and fare forth with them both to the Sultan's Gate.[3] If any ask thee whither thou wend, answer, I am going to exercise the steeds, and none will hinder thee; for the folk of this city trust to the locking of the gates." Then she folded the letter in a 2silken kerchief and threw it out of the latticed window to Nur al-Din, who took it and reading it, knew it for the handwriting of the Lady Miriam and comprehended all its contents. So he kissed the letter and laid it between his eyes;

then, calling to mind that which had betided him with her of the sweets of love-liesse, he poured forth his tears whilst he recited these couplets:—

Came your writ to me in the dead of the night ✿ And desire for you stirrèd heart and sprite;
And, remembered joys we in union joyed, ✿ Praised the Lord who placed us in parting plight.

As soon as it was dark Nur al-Din busied himself with making ready the stallions and patiented till the first watch of the night was past; when, without a moment delay, Nur al-Din the lover full of teen, saddled them with saddles of the goodliest, and leading them forth of the stable, locked the door after him and repaired with them to the city-gate, where he sat down to await the coming of the Princess. Meanwhile, Miriam returned forthright to her private apartment, where she found the one-eyed Wazir seated, elbow-propt upon a cushion stuffed with ostrich-down; but he was ashamed to put forth his hand to her or to bespeak her. When she saw him, she appealed to her Lord in heart, saying, "Allahumma—O my God—bring him not to his will of me nor to me defilement decree after purity!" Then she went up to him and made a show of fondness for him and sat down by his side and coaxed him, saying, "O my lord, what is this aversion thou displayest to me? Is it pride or coquetry on thy part? But the current byword saith:—An the salam-salutation be little in demand, the sitters salute those who stand.[4] So if, O my lord, thou come not to me neither accost me, I will go to thee and accost thee." Said he, "To thee belong favour and kindness, O Queen of the earth in its length and breadth; and what am I but one of thy slaves and the least of thy servants. Indeed, I was ashamed to intrude upon thine illustrious presence, O unique pearl, and my face is on the earth at thy feet." She rejoined, "Leave this talk and bring us to eat and drink." Accordingly he shouted to his eunuchs and women an order to serve food, and they set before 3 them a tray containing birds of every kind that walk and fly and in nests increase and multiply, such as sand-grouse and quails and pigeon-poults and lambs and fatted geese and fried poultry and other dishes of all sorts and colours. The Princess put out her hand to the tray and began to eat and feed the Wazir with her fair finger-tips and kiss him on the mouth. They ate till they had enough and washed their hands, after which the handmaidens removed the table of food and set on the service of wine. So Princess Miriam filled the cup and drank and gave the Wazir to drink and served him with assiduous service, so that he was like to fly for joy and his breast broadened and he was of the gladdest. When she saw that the wine had gotten the better of his senses, she thrust her hand into her bosom and brought out a pastile of virgin Cretan-Bhang, which she had provided against such an hour, whereof if an elephant smelt a dirham's weight, he would sleep from year to year. She distracted his attention and crumbled the drug into the cup: then, filling it up, handed it to the Wazir, who could hardly credit his senses for delight. So he took it and kissing her hand, drank it off, but hardly had it settled in his stomach when he fell head foremost to the ground. Then she rose and filling two great pairs of saddle-bags with what was light of weight and weighty of worth of jewels and jacinths and

precious stones, together with somewhat of meat and drink, donned harness of war and armed herself for fight. She also took with her for Nur al-Din what should rejoice him of rich and royal apparel and splendid arms and armour, and shouldering the bags (for indeed her strength equalled her valiancy), hastened forth from the new palace to join her lover. On this wise fared it with the Lady Miriam; but as regards Nur al-Din,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Lady Miriam left the new palace, she went straightways to meet her lover for indeed she was as valiant as she was strong; but Nur al-Din the distracted, the full of teen, sat at the city-gate hending the horses' halters in hand, till Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might) sent a sleep upon him and he slept—glory be to Him who sleepeth not! Now at that time the Kings of the [4]Islands had spent much treasure in bribing folk to steal the two steeds or one of them; and in those days there was a black slave, who had been reared in the islands skilled in horse-lifting; wherefore the Kings of the Franks seduced him with wealth galore to steal one of the stallions and promised him, if he could avail to lift the two, that they would give him a whole island and endue him with a splendid robe of honour. He had long gone about the city of France in disguise, but succeeded not in taking the horses, whilst they were with the King; but, when he gave them in free gift to the Wazir and the monocular one carried them to his own stable, the blackamoor thief rejoiced with joy exceeding and made sure of success, saying in himself, "By the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, I will certainly steal the twain of them!" Now he had gone out that very night, intending for the stable, to lift them; but, as he walked along, behold, he caught sight of Nur al-Din lying asleep, with the halters in his hands. So he went up to the horses and loosing the halters from their heads, was about to mount one of them and drive the other before him, when suddenly up came the Princess Miriam, carrying on her shoulders the couple of saddle-bags. She mistook the black for Nur al-Din and handed him one pair of bags, which he laid on one of the stallions: after which she gave him the other and he set it on the second steed, without word said to discover that it was not her lover. Then they mounted and rode out of the gate[5] in silence till presently she asked, "O my lord Nur al-Din, what aileth thee to be silent?" Whereupon the black turned to her and cried angrily, "What sayst thou, O damsel?" When she heard the slave's barbarous accents, she knew that the speech was not of Nur al-Din; so raising her eyes she looked at him and saw that he was a black chattel, snub-nosed and wide-mouthed, with nostrils like ewers; whereupon the light in her eyes became night and she asked him, "Who art thou, O Shaykh of the sons of Ham and what among men is thy name?" He answered, "O daughter of the base, my name is Mas'úd, the lifter of horses, when folk slumber and sleep." She made him no reply, but straightway baring

her blade, smote him on the nape and the blade came out 5 gleaming from his throat-tendons, whereupon he fell earthwards, weltering in his blood, and Allah hurried his soul to the Fire and abiding-place dire. Then she took the other horse by the bridle and retraced her steps in search of Nur al-Din, whom she found lying, asleep and snoring, in the place where she had appointed him to meet her, hending the halters in hand, yet knowing not his fingers from his feet. So she dismounted and gave him a cuff,[6] whereupon he awoke in affright and said to her, "O my lady, praised be Allah for thy safe coming!" Said she "Rise and back this steed and hold thy tongue!" So he rose and mounted one of the stallions, whilst she bestrode the other, and they went forth the city and rode on awhile in silence. Then said she to him, "Did I not bid thee beware of sleeping? Verily, he prospereth not who sleepeth." He rejoined, "O my lady, I slept not but because of the cooling of my heart by reason of thy promise. But what hath happened, O my lady?" So she told him her adventure with the black, first and last, and he said, "Praised be Allah for safety!" Then they fared on at full speed, committing their affair to the Subtle, the All-wise and conversing as they went, till they came to the place where the black lay prostrate in the dust, as he were an Ifrit, and Miriam said to Nur al-Din, "Dismount; strip him of his clothes and take his arms." He answered, "By Allah, O my lady, I dare not dismount nor approach him." And indeed he marvelled at the blackamoor's stature and praised the Princess for her deed, wondering the while at her valour and stout-heartedness. They fared on lustily and ceased not so doing all that night and halted not till the day 6 broke with its shine and sheen and the sun shone bright upon plain and height when they came to a wide riverino lea wherein the gazelles were frisking gracefully. Its surface was clothed with green and on all sides fruit trees of every kind were seen: its slopes for flowers like serpents' bellies showed, and birds sang on boughs aloud and its rills in manifold runnels flowed. And indeed it was as saith the poet and saith well and accomplisheth the hearer's desire:—

Rosy red Wady hot with summer-glow, ✿ Where twofold tale of common growth was piled.
In copse we halted wherein bent to us ✿ Branches, as bendeth nurse o'er weanling-child.
And pure cold water quenching thirst we sipped: ✿ To cup-mate sweeter than old wine and mild:
From every side it shut out sheen of sun ✿ Screen-like, but wooed the breeze to cool the wild:
And pebbles, sweet as maidens deckt and dight ✿ And soft as threaded pearls, the touch beguiled.

And as saith another:—

And when birdies o'er warble its lakelet, it gars ✿ Longing[7] lover to seek it where morning glows;
For likest to Paradise lie its banks ✿ With shade and fruitage and fount that flows.

Presently Princess Miriam and Nur al-Din alighted to rest in this Wady——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Princess Miriam and Nur al-Din alighted in that valley, they ate of its fruits and drank of its streams, after turning the stallions loose to pasture: then they sat talking and recalling their past and all that had befallen them and complaining one to other of the pangs of parting and of the hardships suffered for estrangement and love-longing. As they were thus engaged, behold, there 7arose in the distance a dust-cloud which spread till it walled the world, and they heard the neighing of horses and clank of arms and armour. Now the reason of this was, that after the Princess had been bestowed in wedlock upon the Wazir who had gone in to her that night, the King went forth at daybreak, to give the couple good morrow, taking with him, after the custom of Kings with their daughters, a gift of silken stuffs and scattering gold and silver among the eunuchs and tire-women, that they might snatch at and scramble for it. And he fared on escorted by one of his pages; but when he came to the new palace, he found the Wazir prostrate on the carpet, knowing not his head from his heels; so he searched the place right and left for his daughter, but found her not; whereat he was troubled sore with concern galore and his wits forlore. Then he bade bring hot water and virgin vinegar and frankincense[8] and mingling them together, blew the mixture into the Wazir's nostrils and shook him, whereupon he cast the Bhang forth of his stomach, as it were a bit of cheese. He repeated the process, whereupon the Minister came to himself and the King questioned him of his case and that of his daughter. He replied, "O mighty King, I have no knowledge of her save that she poured me out a cup of wine with her own hand; and from that tide to this I have no recollection of aught nor know I what is come of her." When the King heard this, the light in his eyes became night, and he drew his scymitar and smote the Wazir on the head, that the steel came out gleaming from between his grinder teeth. Then, without an instant delay, he called the grooms and syces and demanded of them the two stallions: but they said, "O King, the two steeds were lost in the night and together with them our chief, the Master of Horse; for, when we awoke in the morning, we found all the doors wide open." Cried the King, "By the faith of me and by all wherein my belief is stablished on certainty, none but my daughter hath taken the steeds, she and the Moslem captive which used to tend the Church and which took her aforetime! Indeed I knew him right well and none delivered him from my hand save this one-eyed Wazir; but now he is requited his deed." Then the King called his three sons, who were three doughty champions, each of whom could withstand a thousand horse in the field of strife and the stead 8where cut and thrust are rife; and bade them mount. So they took horse forthwith and the King and the flower of his knights and nobles and officers mounted with them and followed on the trail of the fugitives till Miriam saw them, when she mounted her charger and baldrick'd her blade and took her arms. Then she said to Nur al-Din, "How is it with thee and how is thy heart for fight and strife and fray?" Said he,

"Verily, my steadfastness in battle-van is as the steadfastness of the stake in bran.[9]" And he improvised and said:—

O Miriam thy chiding I pray, forego; ✿ Nor drive me to death or injurious blow:
How e'er can I hope to bear fray and fight ✿ Who quake at the croak of the corby-crow?
I who shiver for fear when I see the mouse ✿ And for very funk I bepiss my clo'!
I love no foin but the poke in bed, ✿ When coynte well knoweth my prickle's prow;
This is rightful rede, and none other shows ✿ Righteous as this in my sight, I trow.

Now when Miriam heard his speech and the verse he made, she laughed and smilingly said, "O my lord Nur al-Din, abide in thy place and I will keep thee from their ill grace, though they be as the sea-sands in number. But mount and ride in rear of me, and if we be defeated and put to flight, beware of falling, for none can overtake thy steed." So saying, she turned her lance-head towards foe in plain and gave her horse the rein, whereupon he darted off under her, like the stormy gale or like waters that from straitness of pipes out-rail. Now Miriam was the doughtiest of the folk of her time and the unique pearl of her age and tide; for her father had taught her, whilst she was yet little, on steeds to ride and dive deep during the darkness of the night in the battle tide. When the King saw her charging down upon them, he knew her but too well and turning to his eldest son, said, "O Bartaut,[10] thou who art surnamed Ras al-Killaut,[11] this is assuredly thy sister Miriam who chargeth upon us, and she seeketh to wage war and fight fray with 9 us. So go thou out to give her battle: and I enjoin thee by the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, an thou get the better of her, kill her not till thou have propounded to her the Nazarene faith. An she return to her old creed, bring her to me prisoner; but an she refuse, do her die by the foulest death and make of her the vilest of examples, as well as the accursed which is with her." Quoth Bartaut, "Hearkening and obedience"; and, rushing out forthright to meet his sister, said to her, "O Miriam, doth not what hath already befallen us on thine account suffice thee, but thou must leave the faith of thy fathers and forefathers and follow after the faith of the Vagrants in the lands, that is to say, the faith of Al-Islam? By the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, except thou return to the creed of the Kings thy Forebears and walk therein after the goodliest fashion, I will put thee to an ill death and make of thee the most shameful of ensamples!" But Miriam laughed at his speech and replied, "Well-away! Far be it that the past should present stay or that he who is dead should again see day! I will make thee drink the sourest of regrets! By Allah, I will not turn back upon the faith of Mohammed son of Abdullah, who made salvation general; for his is the True Faith; nor will I leave the right road though I drain the cup of ruin!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Miriam exclaimed to her brother, “Well-away! Heaven forfend that I turn back from the faith of Mohammed Abdullah-son who made salvation general; for his is the Right Road nor will I leave it although I drain the cup of ruin.” When the accursed Bartaut heard this, the light in his eyes became night, the matter was great and grievous to him and between them there befel a sore fight. The twain swayed to and fro battling throughout the length and breadth of the valley and manfully enduring the stress of combat singular, whilst all eyes upon them were fixed in admiring surprise: after which they wheeled about and foined and feinted for a long bout and as often as Bartaut opened on his sister Miriam a gate of war,[12] she closed it to and put it to naught, of the goodliness 10 of her skill and her art in the use of arms and her cunning of cavalarice. Nor ceased they so doing till the dust overhung their heads vault-wise and they were hidden from men’s eyes; and she ceased not to baffle Bartaut and stop the way upon him, till he was weary and his courage wavered and his resolution was worsted and his strength weakened; whereupon she smote him on the nape, that the sword came out gleaming from his throat tendons and Allah hurried his soul to the Fire and the abiding-place which is dire. Then Miriam wheeled about in the battle-plain and the stead where cut and thrust are fain; and championed it and offered battle, crying out and saying, “Who is for fighting? Who is for jousting? Let come forth to me to-day no weakling or nidering; ay, let none come forth to me but the champions who the enemies of The Faith represent, that I may give them to drink the cup of ignominious punishment. O worshippers of idols, O miscreants, O rebellious folk, this day verily shall the faces of the people of the True Faith be whitened and theirs who deny the Compassionate be blackened!” Now when the King saw his eldest son slain, he smote his face and rent his dress and cried out to his second son, saying, “O Bartús, thou who art surnamed Khara al-Sús,[13] go forth, O my son, in haste and do battle with thy sister Miriam; avenge me the death of thy brother Bartaut and bring her to me a prisoner, abject and humiliated!” He answered, “Hearkening and obedience, O my sire,” and charging down drave at his sister, who met him in mid-career, and they fought, he and she, a sore fight, yet sorer than the first. Bartus right soon found himself unable to cope with her might and would have sought safety in flight, but of the greatness of her prowess could not avail unto this sleight; for, as often as he turned to flee, she drave after him and still clave to him and pressed him hard, till presently she smote him with the sword in his throat, that it issued gleaming from his nape, and sent him after his brother. Then she wheeled about in the mid-field and plain where cut and thrust are dealed, crying out and saying, “Where be the Knights? Where be the Braves? Where is the one-eyed Wazir, the lameter, of the crooked 11 faith[14] the worthy believer?” Thereupon the King her father cried out with heart in bleeding guise and tear-ulcerated eyes, saying, “She hath slain my second son, by the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar!” And he called aloud to his youngest son, saying, “O

Fasyán, surnamed Salh al-Subyán,[15] go forth, O my son, to do battle with thy sister and take of her the blood-wreak for thy brothers and fall on her, come what may; and whether thou gain or thou lose the day[16]; and if thou conquer her, slay her with foulest slaughter!" So he drave out to Miriam, who ran at him with the best of her skill and charged him with the goodliness of her cleverness and her courage and her cunning in fence and cavalarice, crying to him, "O accursed, O enemy of Allah and the Moslems, I will assuredly send thee after thy brothers and woeful is the abiding-place of the Miscreants!" So saying, she unsheathed her sword and smote him and cut off his head and arms and sent him after his brothers and Allah hurried his soul to the Fire and the abiding-place dire. Now when the Knights and the riders who rode with her sire saw his three sons slain, who were the doughtiest of the folk of their day, there fell on their hearts terror of the Princess Miriam, awe of her overpowered them; they bowed their heads earthwards and they made sure of ruin and confusion, disgrace and destruction. So with the flames of hate blazing in heart they turned their backs forthright and addressed themselves to flight. When the King saw his sons slain and on his flying troops cast sight, there fell on him bewilderment and affright, whilst his heart also was afire for despight. Then quoth he to himself, "In very sooth Princess Miriam hath belittled us; and if I venture myself and go out against her alone, haply she will gar me succumb and slay me without ruth, even as she slew her brothers, and make of me the foulest of examples, for she hath no longer any desire for us nor have we of her return any hope. Wherefore it were the better rede that I guard mine honour and return to my capital." So he gave reins to his 12charger and rode back to his city. But when he found himself in his palace, fire was loosed in his heart for rage and chagrin at the death of his three gallant sons and the defeat of his troops and the disgrace to his honour; nor did he abide half an hour ere he summoned his Grandees and Officers of state and complained to them of that his daughter Miriam had done with him of the slaughter of her brothers and all he suffered therefrom of passion and chagrin, and sought advice of them. They all counselled him to write to the Vicar of Allah in His earth, the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, and acquaint him with his circumstance. So he wrote a letter to the Caliph, containing, after the usual salutations, the following words. "We have a daughter, Miriam the Girdle-girl hight, who hath been seduced and debauched from us by a Moslem captive, named Nur al-Din Ali, son of the merchant Taj al-Din of Cairo, and he hath taken her by night and went forth with her to his own country; wherefore I beg of the favour of our lord the Commander of the Faithful that he write to all the lands of the Moslems to seize her and send her back to us by a trusty messenger."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King of France wrote to the Caliph and Prince of True Believers, Harun al-Rashid, a writ humbling himself by

asking for his daughter Miriam and begging of his favour that he write to all the Moslems, enjoining her seizure and sending back to him by a trusty messenger of the servants of his Highness the Commander of the Faithful; adding, “And in requital of your help and aidance in this matter, we will appoint to you half of the city of Rome the Great, that thou mayst build therein mosques for the Moslems, and the tribute thereof shall be forwarded to you.” And after writing this writ, by rede of his Grandees and Lords of the land, he folded the scroll and calling his Wazir, whom he had appointed in the stead of the monocular Minister, bade him seal it with the seal of the kingdom, and the Officers of state also set hands and seals thereto; after which the King bade the Wazir 13 bear the letter to Baghdad,[17] the Palace of Peace, and hand it into the Caliph’s own hand, saying, “An thou bring her back, thou shalt have of me the fiefs of two Emirs and I will bestow on thee a robe of honour with twofold fringes of gold.” The Wazir set out with the letter and fared on over hill and dale, till he came to the city of Baghdad, where he abode three days, till he was rested from the way, when he sought the Palace of the Commander of the Faithful and when guided thereto he entered it and craved audience. The Caliph bade admit him; so he went in and kissing ground before him, handed to him the letter of the King of France, together with rich gifts and rare presents beseeming the Commander of the Faithful. When the Caliph read the writ and apprehended its significance, he commanded his Wazir to write, without stay or delay, despatches to all the lands of the Moslems, setting out the name and favour of Princess Miriam and of Nur al-Din, stating how they had eloped and bidding all who found them lay hands on them and send them to the Commander of the Faithful, and warning them on no wise in that matter to use delay or indifference. So the Wazir wrote the letters and sealing them, despatched them by couriers to the different Governors, who hastened to obey the Caliph’s commandment and addressed themselves to make search in all the lands for persons of such name and favour. On this wise it fared with the Governors and their subjects; but as regards Nur al-Din and Miriam the Girdle-girl, they fared on without delay after defeating the King of France and his force and the Protector protected them, till they came to the land of Syria and entered Damascus-city. Now the couriers of the Caliph had foregone them thither by a day and the Emir of Damascus knew that he was commanded to arrest the twain as soon as found, that he might send them to the Caliph. Accordingly, when they entered the city, the secret police[18] accosted them and asked them their names. They told them the truth and acquainted them with their adventure and all that had betided them; whereupon they knew them for those of 14 whom they were in search and seizing them, carried them before the Governor of the city. He despatched them to the city of Baghdad under escort of his officers who, when they came thither, craved audience of the Caliph which he graciously granted; so they came into the presence; and, kissing ground before him, said, “O Commander of the Faithful, this is Miriam the Girdle-girl, daughter of the King of France, and this is the captive Nur al-

Din, son of the merchant Taj al-Din of Cairo, who debauched her from her sire and stealing her from his kingdom and country fled with her to Damascus, where we found the twain as they entered the city, and questioned them. They told us the truth of their case: so we laid hands on them and brought them before thee." The Caliph looked at Miriam and saw that she was slender and shapely of form and stature, the handsomest of the folk of her tide and the unique pearl of her age and her time; sweet of speech[19] and fluent of tongue, stable of soul and hearty of heart. Thereupon she kissed the ground between his hands and wished him permanence of glory and prosperity and surcease of evil and enmity. He admired the beauty of her figure and the sweetness of her voice and the readiness of her replies and said to her, "Art thou Miriam the Girdle-girl, daughter of the King of France?" Answered she, "Yes, O Prince of True Believers and Priest of those who the Unity of Allah receive and Defender of the Faith and cousin of the Primate of the Apostles!" Then the Caliph turned to Nur al-Din Ali and seeing him to be a shapely youth, as he were the shining full moon on fourteenth night, said to him, "And thou, art thou Ali Nur al-Din, son of the merchant Taj al-Din of Cairo?" Said he, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful and stay of those who for righteousness are care-full!" The Caliph asked, "How cometh it that thou hast taken this damsel and fled forth with her of her father's kingdom?" So Nur al-Din proceeded to relate to the Commander of the Faithful all his past, first and last; whereat the Caliph was astonied with extreme astonishment and diverted and exclaimed, "How manifold are the 15 sufferings that men suffer!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph Harun al-Rashid asked Nur al-Din of his adventure and was told of all that had passed, first and last, he was astonied with extreme astonishment and exclaimed, "How manifold are the sufferings that men suffer!" Then he turned to the Princess and said to her, "Know, O Miriam, that thy father, the King of France, hath written to me anent thee. What sayst thou?" She replied, "O Vicar of Allah on His earth and Executor of the precepts of His prophet and commands to man's unworth,[20] may He vouchsafe thee eternal prosperity and ward thee from evil and enmity! Thou art Viceregent of Allah in His earth and I have entered thy Faith, for that it is the creed which Truth and Righteousness inspire; and I have left the religion of the Miscreants who make the Messiah a liar,[21] and I am become a True Believer in Allah the Bountiful and in the revelation of His compassionate Apostle. I worship Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) and acknowledge Him to be the One God and prostrate myself humbly before Him and glorify Him; and I say before the Caliph:—Verily, I testify that there is no god but *the* God and I testify that Mohammed is the Messenger of God, whom He sent with the Guidance and the True Faith, that He might make it victorious over

every other religion, albeit they who assign partners to God be averse from it.[22] Is it therefore in thy competence, O Commander of the Faithful, to comply with the letter of the King of the heretics and send me back to the land of the schismatics who deny The Faith and give partners to the All-wise King, who magnify the Cross and bow down before idols and believe in the divinity of Jesus, for all he was only a creature? 16 An thou deal with me thus, O Viceregent of Allah, I will lay hold upon thy skirts on the Day of Muster before the Lord and make my complaint of thee to thy cousin the Apostle of Allah (whom God assain and preserve!) on the Day when wealth availeth not neither children save one come unto Allah wholehearted[23]!" Answered the Caliph, "O Miriam, Allah forfend that I should do this ever! How can I send back a Moslemah believer in the one God and in His Apostle to that which Allah hath forbidden and eke His Messenger hath forbidden?" Quoth she, "I testify that there is no God but *the* God and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!" Rejoined the Caliph, "O Miriam, Allah bless and direct thee in the way of righteousness! Since thou art a Moslemah and a believer in Allah the One, I owe thee a duty of obligation and it is that I should never transgress against thee nor forsake thee, though be lavished unto me on thine account the world full of gold and gems. So be of good cheer and eyes clear of tear; and be thy breast broadened and thy case naught save easy. Art thou willing that this youth Ali of Cairo be to thee man and thou to him wife?" Replied Miriam, "O Prince of True Believers, how should I be other than willing to take him to husband, seeing that he bought me with his money and hath entreated me with the utmost kindness and, for crown of his good offices, he hath ventured his life for my sake many times?" So the Caliph summoned the Kazi and the witnesses and married her to him assigning her a dowry and causing the Grandees of his realm be present and the marriage day was a notable. Then he turned to the Wazir of the French King, who was present, and said to him, "Hast thou heard her words? How can I her send back to her father the Infidel, seeing that she is a Moslemah and a believer in the Unity? Belike he will evil entreat her and deal harshly with her, more by token that she hath slain his sons, and I shall bear blame for her on Resurrection-day. And indeed quoth the Almighty 'Allah will by no means make a way for the Infidels over the True Believers.[24]' So return to thy King and say to him:—Turn from this thing and hope not to come at thy desire thereof." Now this Wazir was a Zany: so he said to the Caliph, "O 17 Commander of the Faithful, by the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, were Miriam forty times a Moslemah and forty times thereto, I may not depart from thee without that same Miriam! And if thou send her not back with me of free will, I will hie me to her sire and cause him despatch thee an host, wherewith I will come upon you from the landward and the seaward; and the van whereof shall be at your capital city whilst the rear is yet on the Euphrates[25] and they shall lay waste thy realms." When the Caliph heard these words from the accursed Wazir of the King of France, the light in his face became night and he was

wroth at his speech with exceeding wrath and said to him, “O damned one, O dog of the Nazarenes, art thou come to such power that thou durst assail me with the King of the Franks?” Then quoth he to his guards, “Take this accursed and do him die”; and he repeated this couplet[26]:—

This be his recompense who will ✿ Oppose and thwart his betters’ will.

Then he commanded to cut off the Wazir’s head and burn his body; but Princess Miriam cried, “O Commander of the Faithful, soil not thy sword with the blood of this accursed.” So saying, she bared her brand and smote him and made his head fly from his corpse, and he went to the house of ungrace; his abode was Gehenna, and evil is the abiding-place. The Caliph marvelled at the force of her fore-arm and the strength of her mind, and they carried the dead Wazir forth of the pavilion and burnt him. Then the Commander of the Faithful bestowed upon Nur al-Din a splendid robe of honour and assigned to him and her a lodging in his palace. Moreover, he appointed them solde and rations, and commanded to transport to their quarters all they needed of raiment and furniture and vessels of price. They sojourned awhile in Baghdad in all delight of life and solace thereof till Nur al-Din longed for his mother and father. So he 18 submitted the matter to the Caliph and sought his leave to revisit his native land and visit his kinsfolk, and he granted him the permission he sought and calling Miriam, commended them each to other. He also loaded them with costly presents and rarities and bade write letters to the Emirs and Olema and notables of Cairo the God-guarded, commending Nur al-Din and his wife and parents to their care and charging them honour them with the highmost honour. When the news reached Cairo, the merchant Taj al-Din joyed at the return of his son and Nur al-Din’s mother likewise rejoiced therein with passing joy. The Emirs and the notables of the city went forth to meet him, in obedience to the Caliph’s injunctions, and indeed it was for them a right note-worthy day, wherein foregathered the lover and the beloved and the seeker attained the sought. Moreover, all the Emirs made them bride-feasts, each on his own day, and joyed in them with joy exceeding and vied in doing them honour, one the other succeeding. When Nur al-Din foregathered with his mother and father, they were gladdened in each other with the utmost gladness and care and affliction ceased from them, whilst his parents joyed no less in the Princess Miriam and honoured her with the highmost honour. Every day, there came to them presents from all the Emirs and great merchants, and they were in new delight and gladness exceeding the gladness of festival. Then they ceased not abiding in solace and pleasance and good cheer and abounding prosperity, eating and drinking with mirth and merriment, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Sunderer of societies, Waster of houses and palace-domes and Peopler of the bellies of the tombs. So they were removed from worldly stead and became of the number of the dead; and glory be to the Living One, who dieth not and in whose hand are the keys of the Seen

and the Unseen! And a tale was also told by the Emir Shujá' al-Din,[27] Prefect of Cairo anent

33- KHALIFAH THE FISHERMAN OF BAGHDAD.

There was once in tides of yore and in ages and times long gone before in the city of Baghdad a fisherman, Khalífah hight, a pauper wight, who had never once been married in all his days.[1861] It chanced one morning, that he took his net and went with it to the river, as was his wont with the view of fishing before the others came. When he reached the bank, he girt himself and tucked up his skirts; then stepping into the water, he spread his net and cast it a first cast and a second but it brought up naught. He ceased not to throw it, till he had made ten casts, and still naught came up therein; wherefore his breast was straitened and his mind perplexed concerning his case and he said, "I crave 146 pardon of God the Great, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal, and unto Him I repent. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Whatso He willeth is and whatso He nilleth is not! Upon Allah (to whom belong Honour and Glory!) dependeth daily bread! Whenas He giveth to His servant, none denieth him; and whenas He denieth a servant, none giveth to him." And of the excess of his distress, he recited these two couplets:—

An Fate afflict thee, with grief manifest, ✿ Prepare thy patience and make broad thy breast;

For of His grace the Lord of all the worlds ✿ Shall send to wait upon unrest sweet Rest.

Then he sat awhile pondering his case, and with his head bowed down recited also these couplets:—

Patience, with sweet and with bitter Fate! ✿ And weet that His will He shall consummate:

Night oft upon woe as on abscess acts ✿ And brings it up to the bursting state:

And Chance and Change shall pass o'er the youth ✿ And fleet from his thoughts and no more shall bait.

Then he said in his mind, "I will make this one more cast, trusting in Allah, so haply He may not disappoint my hope;" and he rose and casting into the river the net as far as his arm availed, gathered the cords in his hands and waited a full hour, after which he pulled at it and, finding it heavy,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Khalifah the Fisherman had cast his net sundry times into the stream, yet had it brought up naught, he pondered his case and improvised the verses afore quoted. Then he said in his mind, "I will make this one more cast, trusting in Allah who haply will not disappoint my hope." So he rose and threw the net and waited a full hour, after which time he pulled at it and, finding it heavy, handled it gently and drew it in, little by little, till he got it ashore, when lo and behold! he saw in it a one-eyed, lame-legged ape. Seeing this quoth Khalifah, "There is no Majesty and there is no 147Might save in Allah! Verily, we are Allah's and to Him we are returning! What meaneth this heart-breaking, miserable ill-luck and hapless fortune? What is come to me this blessed day? But all this is of the destinies of Almighty Allah!" Then he took the ape and tied him with a cord to a tree which grew on the river-bank, and grasping a whip he had with him, raised his arm in the air, thinking to bring down the scourge upon the quarry, when Allah made the ape speak with a fluent tongue, saying, "O Khalifah, hold thy hand and beat me not, but leave me bounden to this tree and go down to the river and cast thy net, confiding in Allah; for He will give thee thy daily bread." Hearing this Khalifah went down to the river and casting his net, let the cords run out. Then he pulled it in and found it heavier than before; so he ceased not to tug at it, till he brought it to land, when, behold, there was another ape in it, with front teeth wide apart,[187] Kohl-darkened eyes and hands stained with Henna-dyes; and he was laughing and wore a tattered waistcloth about his middle. Quoth Khalifah, "Praised be Allah who hath changed the fish of the river into apes[188]!" Then, going up to the first ape, who was still tied to the tree, he said to him, "See, O unlucky, how fulsome was the counsel thou gavest me! None but thou made me light on this second ape: and for that thou gavest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness,[189] I am become distressed and weary, without dirham or dinar." So saying, he hent in hand a stick[190] and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it upon the lame ape, when the creature cried out for mercy and said to him, "I conjure thee, by Allah, spare me for the sake of this my fellow and seek of him thy need; for he will guide thee to thy desire!" So he held his hand from him and throwing down the stick, went up to and stood by the second ape, who said to him, "O Khalifah, this my speech[191] will profit thee 148naught, except thou hearken to what I say to thee; but, an thou do my bidding and cross me not, I will be the cause of thine enrichment." Asked Khalifah, "And what hast thou to say to me that I may obey thee therein?" The Ape answered, "Leave me bound on the bank and hie thee down to the river; then cast thy net a third time, and after I will tell thee what to do." So he took his net and going down to the river, cast it once more and waited awhile. Then he drew it in and finding it heavy, laboured at it and ceased not his travail till he got it ashore, when he found in it yet another ape; but this one was red, with a blue waistcloth about his middle; his hands and feet were stained with Henna and his eyes blackened with Kohl. When

Khalifah saw this, he exclaimed, "Glory to God the Great! Extolled be the perfection of the Lord of Dominion! Verily, this is a blessed day from first to last: its ascendant was fortunate in the countenance of the first ape, and the scroll[192] is known by its superscription! Verily, to-day is a day of apes: there is not a single fish left in the river, and we are come out to-day but to catch monkeys!" Then he turned to the third ape and said, "And what thing art thou also, O unlucky?" Quoth the ape, "Dost thou not know me, O Khalifah!"; and quoth he, "Not I!" The ape cried, "I am the ape of Abu al-Sa'ádát[193] the Jew, the shroff." Asked Khalifah, "And what dost thou for him?"; and the ape answered, "I give him good-morrow at the first of the day, and he gaineth five ducats; and again at the end of the day, I give him good-even and he gaineth other five ducats." Whereupon Khalifah turned to the first ape and said to him, "See, O unlucky, what fine apes other folk have! As for thee, thou givest me good-morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness and thy ill-omened phiz and I become poor and bankrupt and hungry!" So saying, he took the cattle-stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it on the first ape, when Abu al-Sa'adat's ape said to him, "Let him be, O Khalifah, hold thy hand and come hither to me, that I may tell thee what to do." So Khalifah threw down the stick and walking up to him cried, "And what hast thou to say to me, O monarch of all monkeys?" Replied the ape, "Leave me and the other two apes here, and take thy net and cast it into the 149 river; and whatever cometh up, bring it to me, and I will tell thee what shall gladden thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat said to Khalifah, "Take thy net and cast it into the river; and whatever cometh up bring it to me and I will tell thee what shall gladden thee." He replied, "I hear and obey," and took the net and gathered it on his shoulder, reciting these couplets:—

When straitened is my breast I will of my Creator pray, ✿ Who may and can the heaviest weight lighten in easiest way;

For ere man's glance can turn or close his eye by God His grace ✿ Waxeth the broken whole and yieldeth jail its prison-prey.

Therefore with Allah one and all of thy concerns commit ✿ Whose grace and favour men of wit shall nevermore gainsay.

And also these twain:—

Thou art the cause that castest men in ban and bane; ✿ Sorrow e'en so and sorrow's cause Thou canst assain:

Make me not covet aught that lies beyond my reach; ✿ How many a greedy wight his wish hath failed to gain!

Now when Khalifah had made an end of his verse, he went down to the river and casting his net, waited awhile; after which he drew it up and found therein a fine young fish,[194] with a big head, a tail like a ladle and eyes like two gold pieces. When Khalifah saw this fish, he rejoiced, for he had never in his life caught its like, so he

took it, marvelling, and carried it to the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, as 'twere he had gotten possession of the universal world. Quoth the ape, "O Khalifah, what wilt thou do with this and with thine ape?"; and quoth the Fisherman, "I will tell thee, O monarch of monkeys all I am about to do. Know then that first, I will cast about to make away with yonder accursed, my ape, and take thee in his stead and give thee every day to eat of whatso thou wilt." Rejoined the ape, "Since thou hast made 150 choice of me, I will tell thee how thou shalt do wherein, if it please Allah Almighty, shall be the mending of thy fortune. Lend thy mind, then, to what I say to thee and 'tis this! Take another cord and tie me also to a tree, where leave me and go to the midst of The Dyke[195] and cast thy net into the Tigris.[196] Then after waiting awhile, draw it up and thou shalt find therein a fish, than which thou never sawest a finer in thy whole life. Bring it to me and I will tell thee how thou shalt do after this." So Khalifah rose forthright and casting his net into the Tigris, drew up a great cat-fish[197] the bigness of a lamb; never had he set eyes on its like, for it was larger than the first fish. He carried it to the ape, who said to him, "Gather thee some green grass and set half of it in a basket; lay the fish therein and cover it with the other moiety. Then, leaving us here tied, shoulder the basket and betake thee to Baghdad. If any bespeak thee or question thee by the way, answer him not, but fare on till thou comest to the market-street of the money-changers, at the upper end whereof thou wilt find the shop of Master[198] Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, Shaykh of the shroffs, and wilt see him sitting on a mattress, with a cushion behind him and two coffers, one for gold and one for silver, before him, while around him stand his Mamelukes and negro-slaves and servant-lads. Go up to him and set the basket before him, saying,:—O Abu al-Sa'adat, verily I went out to-day to fish and cast my net in thy name, and Allah Almighty sent me this fish. He will ask, Hast thou shown it to any but me?; and do thou answer, No, by Allah! Then will he take it of thee and give thee a dinar. Give it him back and he will give thee two dinars; but do thou return them also and so do with everything he may offer thee; and take naught from him, though he give thee the fish's weight in gold. Then will he say to thee, Tell me what thou wouldst have; and do thou reply, 151 By Allah, I will not sell the fish save for two words! He will ask, What are they? And do thou answer, Stand up and say, Bear witness, O ye who are present in the market, that I give Khalifah the fisherman my ape in exchange for his ape, and that I barter for his lot my lot and luck for his luck. This is the price of the fish, and I have no need of gold. If he do this, I will every day give thee good-morrow and good-even, and every day thou shalt gain ten dinars of good gold; whilst this one-eyed, lame-legged ape shall daily give the Jew good-morrow, and Allah shall afflict him every day with an avanie[199] which he must needs pay, nor will he cease to be thus afflicted till he is reduced to beggary and hath naught. Hearken then to my words; so shalt thou prosper and be guided aright." Quoth Khalifah, "I accept thy counsel, O monarch of all the monkeys! But, as for this unlucky, may Allah never bless him! I know not what to do

with him." Quoth the ape, "Let him go[200] into the water, and let me go also." "I hear and obey," answered Khalifah and unbound the three apes, and they went down into the river. Then he took up the cat-fish[201] which he washed then laid it in the basket upon some green grass, and covered it with other; and lastly shouldering his load, set out chanting the following Mawwál[202]:—

Thy case commit to a Heavenly Lord and thou shalt safety see; ✿ Act kindly through thy worldly life and live repentance-free.

Mate not with folk suspected, lest eke thou shouldst suspected be ✿ And from reviling keep thy tongue lest men revile at thee!





——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Khalifah the Fisherman, after ending his song, set out with the basket upon 152 his shoulder and ceased not faring till he entered the city of Baghdad. And as he threaded the streets the folk knew him and cried out to him, saying, "What hast thou there, O Khalifah?" But he paid no heed to them and passed on till he came to the market-street of the money-changers and fared between the shops, as the ape had charged him, till he found the Jew seated at the upper end, with his servants in attendance upon him, as he were a King of the Kings of Khorasan. He knew him at first sight; so he went up to him and stood before him, whereupon Abu al-Sa'adat raised his eyes and recognising him, said, "Welcome, O Khalifah! What wantest thou and what is thy need? If any have missaid thee or spited thee, tell me and I will go with thee to the Chief of Police, who shall do thee justice on him." Replied Khalifah, "Nay, as thy head liveth, O chief of the Jews, none hath missaid me. But I went forth this morning to the river and, casting my net into the Tigris on thy luck, brought up this fish." Therewith he opened the basket and threw the fish before the Jew who admired it and said, "By the Pentateuch and the Ten Commandments,[203] I dreamt last night that the Virgin came to me and said:—Know, O Abu al-Sa'adat, that I have sent thee a pretty present! And doubtless 'tis this fish." Then he turned to Khalifah and said to him, "By thy faith, hath any seen it but I?" Khalifah replied, "No, by Allah, and by Abu Bakr the Viridical,[204] none hath seen it save thou, O chief of the Jews!" Whereupon the Jew turned to one of his lads and said to him, "Come, carry this fish to my house and bid Sa'ádah[205] dress it and fry and broil it, against I make an end of my business and hie me home." And Khalifah said, "Go, O my lad; let the master's wife fry some of it and broil the rest." Answered the boy, "I hear and I obey, O my lord" and, taking the fish, went away with it to the house. Then the Jew put out his hand and gave Khalifah the fisherman a dinar, saying, "Take this for thyself, O Khalifah, and spend it on thy family." When Khalifah saw the dinar on his palm, he took it, saying, "Laud to the Lord of Dominion!" as if he had never 153 seen aught of gold in his life, and went somewhat away; but, before he had gone far, he was minded of the ape's charge and turning back threw down the ducat, saying, "Take thy gold and give folk back their fish! Dost thou make a laughing stock of folk?" The Jew hearing this thought he was jesting and offered him two dinars upon the other, but Khalifah said, "Give me the fish and no nonsense. How knewest thou I would sell it at this price?" Whereupon the Jew gave him two more dinars and said, "Take these five ducats for thy fish, and leave greed." So Khalifah hent the five dinars in hand and went away, rejoicing, and gazing and marvelling at the gold and saying, "Glory be to God! There is not with the Caliph of Baghdad what is with me this day!" Then he ceased not faring on till he came to the end of the market-street, when he remembered the words of the ape and his charge and returning to the Jew, threw him back the gold. Quoth he, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah? Dost thou want silver in exchange for gold?" Khalifah replied, "I want nor dirhams nor dinars. I only

want thee to give me back folk's fish." With this the Jew waxed wroth and shouted out at him, saying, "O fisherman, thou bringest me a fish not worth a sequin and I give thee five for it; yet art thou not content! Art thou Jinn-mad? Tell me for how much thou wilt sell it." Answered Khalifah, "I will not sell it for silver nor for gold, only for two sayings[206] thou shalt say me." When the Jew heard speak of the "Two Sayings," his eyes sank into his head, he breathed hard and ground his teeth for rage and said to him, "O nail-paring of the Moslems, wilt thou have me throw off my faith for the sake of thy fish, and wilt thou debauch me from my religion and stultify my belief and my conviction which I inherited of old from my forbears?" Then he cried out to the servants who were in waiting and said, "Out on you! Bash me this unlucky rogue's neck and bastinado him soundly!" So they came down upon him with blows and ceased 154 not beating him till he fell beneath the shop, and the Jew said to them, "Leave him and let him rise." Whereupon Khalifah jumped up, as if naught ailed him, and the Jew said to him, "Tell me what price thou asketh for this fish and I will give it thee: for thou hast gotten but scant good of us this day." Answered the Fisherman, "Have no fear for me, O master, because of the beating; for I can eat ten donkeys' rations of stick." The Jew laughed at his words and said, "Allah upon thee, tell me what thou wilt have and by the right of my Faith, I will give it thee!" The Fisherman replied, "Naught from thee will remunerate me for this fish save the two words whereof I spake." And the Jew said, "Meseemeth thou wouldst have me become a Moslem?"[207] Khalifah rejoined, "By Allah, O Jew, an thou islamise 'twill nor advantage the Moslems nor damage the Jews; and in like manner, an thou hold to thy misbelief 'twill nor damage the Moslems nor advantage the Jews. But what I desire of thee is that thou rise to thy feet and say:—Bear witness against me, O people of the market, that I barter my ape for the ape of Khalifah the Fisherman and my lot in the world for his lot and my luck for his luck." Quoth the Jew, "If this be all thou desirest 'twill sit lightly upon me."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Jew said to Khalifah the Fisherman, "If this be all thou desirest, 'twill sit lightly upon me." So he rose without stay or delay and standing on his feet, repeated the required words; after which he turned to the Fisherman and asked him, "Hast thou aught else to ask of me?" "No," answered he, and the Jew said, "Go in peace!" Hearing this Khalifah sprung to his feet forthright; took up his basket and net and returned straight to the Tigris, where he threw his net and pulled it in. He found it heavy and brought it not ashore but with travail, when he found it full of fish of all kinds. Presently, up came a woman with a dish, who gave 155 him a dinar, and he gave her fish for it; and after her an eunuch, who also bought a dinar's worth of fish, and so forth till he had sold ten dinars' worth. And he continued to sell ten dinars' worth of fish daily for ten days, till he had gotten

an hundred dinars. Now Khalifah the Fisherman had quarters in the Passage of the Merchants,[208] and, as he lay one night in his lodging much bemused with Hashísh, he said to himself, "O Khalifah, the folk all know thee for a poor fisherman, and now thou hast gotten an hundred golden dinars. Needs must the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, hear of this from some one, and haply he will be wanting money and will send for thee and say to thee:——I need a sum of money and it hath reached me that thou hast an hundred dinars: so do thou lend them to me those same." I shall answer, "O Commander of the Faithful, I am a poor man, and whoso told thee that I had an hundred dinars lied against me; for I have naught of this." Thereupon he will commit me to the Chief of Police, saying:—"Strip him of his clothes and torment him with the bastinado till he confess and give up the hundred dinars in his possession. Wherefore, meseemeth to provide against this predicament, the best thing I can do, is to rise forthright and bash myself with the whip, so to use myself to beating." And his Hashish[209] said to him, "Rise, doff thy dress." So he stood up and putting off his clothes, took a whip he had by him and set handy a leathern pillow; then he fell to lashing himself, laying every other blow upon the pillow and roaring out the while, "Alas! Alas! By Allah, 'tis a false saying, O my lord, and they have lied against me; for I am a poor fisherman and have naught of the goods of the world!" The noise of the whip falling on the pillow and on his person resounded in the still of night and the folk heard it, and amongst others the merchants, and they said, "Whatever can ail the poor fellow, that he crieth and we hear the noise of blows falling on him? 'Twould seem robbers have broken in upon him and are tormenting him." Presently they all came forth of their lodgings, at the noise of the 156 blows and the crying, and repaired to Khalifah's room, but they found the door locked and said one to other, "Belike the robbers have come in upon him from the back of the adjoining saloon. It behoveth us to climb over by the roofs." So they clomb over the roofs and coming down through the sky-light,[210] saw him naked and flogging himself and asked him, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" He answered, "Know, O folk, that I have gained some dinars and fear lest my case be carried up to the Prince of True Believers, Harun al-Rashid, and he send for me and demand of me those same gold pieces; whereupon I should deny, and I fear that, if I deny, he will torture me, so I am torturing myself, by way of accustoming me to what may come." The merchants laughed at him and said, "Leave this fooling, may Allah not bless thee and the dinars thou hast gotten! Verily thou hast disturbed us this night and hast troubled our hearts." So Khalifah left flogging himself and slept till the morning, when he rose and would have gone about his business, but bethought him of his hundred dinars and said in his mind, "An I leave them at home, thieves will steal them, and if I put them in a belt[211] about my waist, peradventure some one will see me and lay in wait for me till he come upon me in some lonely place and slay me and take the money: but I have a device that should serve me well, right well." So he jumped up forthright and made him a pocket in the collar of his gaberdine and tying the hundred dinars up in a purse,

laid them in the collar-pocket. Then he took his net and basket and staff and went down to the Tigris——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Khalifah the Fisherman, having set his hundred dinars in the collar-pocket 157 took basket, staff and net and went down to the Tigris, where he made a cast but brought up naught. So he removed from that place to another and threw again, but once more the net came up empty; and he went on removing from place to place till he had gone half a day's journey from the city, ever casting the net which kept bringing up naught. So he said to himself, "By Allah, I will throw my net a-stream but this once more, whether ill come of it or weal[212]!" Then he hurled the net with all his force, of the excess of his wrath and the purse with the hundred dinars flew out of his collar-pocket and, lighting in mid-stream, was carried away by the strong current; whereupon he threw down the net and doffing his clothes, left them on the bank and plunged into the water after the purse. He dived for it nigh a hundred times, till his strength was exhausted and he came up for sheer fatigue without chancing on it. When he despaired of finding the purse, he returned to the shore, where he saw nothing but staff, net and basket and sought for his clothes, but could light on no trace of them: so he said in himself, "O vilest of those wherefor was made the byword:—The pilgrimage is not perfected save by copulation with the camel[213]!" Then he wrapped the net about him and taking staff in one hand and basket in other, went trotting about like, a camel in rut, running right and left and backwards and forwards, dishevelled and dusty, as he were a rebel Marid let loose from Solomon's prison.[214] So far for what concerns the Fisherman Khalifah; but as regards the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, he had a friend, a jeweller called Ibn al-Kirnás,[215] and all the traders, brokers and middle-men knew him for the Caliph's merchant; wherefore there was naught sold in Baghdad, by way of rarities and things of price or Mamelukes or handmaidens, but was first shown to him. As he sat one day in his shop, behold, 158 there came up to him the Shaykh of the brokers, with a slave-girl, whose like seers never saw, for she was of passing beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace, and among her gifts was that she knew all arts and sciences and could make verses and play upon all manner musical instruments. So Ibn al-Kirnas bought her for five thousand golden dinars and clothed her with other thousand; after which he carried her to the Prince of True Believers, with whom she lay the night and who made trial of her in every kind of knowledge and accomplishment and found her versed in all sorts of arts and sciences, having no equal in her time. Her name was Kút al-Kulúb[216] and she was even as saith the poet:—

I fix my glance on her, whene'er she wends; ✿ And non-acceptance of my glance breeds pain:
She favours graceful-necked gazelle at gaze; ✿ And "Graceful as gazelle" to say we're fain.

And where is this[217] beside the saying of another?—

Give me brunettes; the Syrian spears, so limber and so straight, Tell of the slender dusky maids, so lithe and proud of gait.

Languid of eyelids, with a down like silk upon her cheek, Within her wasting lover's heart she queens it still in state.

On the morrow the Caliph sent for Ibn al-Kirnas the Jeweller, and bade him receive ten thousand dinars to her price. And his heart was taken up with the slave-girl Kut al-Kulub and he forsook the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, for all she was the daughter of his father's brother[218] and he abandoned all his favourite concubines and abode a whole month without stirring from Kut al-Kulub's side save to go to the Friday prayers and return to her all in haste. This was grievous to the Lords of the Realm and they complained thereof to the Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide, who bore with the Commander of the Faithful and waited till the next Friday, when he entered the cathedral-mosque and, foregathering 159 with the Caliph, related to him all that occurred to him of extraordinary stories anent seld-seen love and lovers with intent to draw out what was in his mind. Quoth the Caliph, "By Allah, O Ja'afar, this is not of my choice; but my heart is caught in the snare of love and wot I not what is to be done!" The Wazir Ja'afar replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou knowest how this girl Kut al-Kulub is become at thy disposal and of the number of thy servants, and that which hand possesseth soul coveteth not. Moreover, I will tell thee another thing which is that the highest boast of Kings and Princes is in hunting and the pursuit of sport and victory; and if thou apply thyself to this, perchance it will divert thee from her, and it may be thou wilt forget her." Rejoined the Caliph, "Thou sayest well, O Ja'afar; come let us go a-hunting forthright, without stay or delay." So soon as Friday prayers were prayed, they left the mosque and at once mounting their she-mules rode forth to the chase.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the Wazir Ja'afar would go forth a-hunting and a-chasing, they mounted two she-mules and fared on into the open country, occupied with talk, and their attendants outwent them. Presently the heat became over-hot and Al-Rashid said to his Wazir, "O Ja'afar, I am sore athirst." Then he looked around and espying a figure in the distance on a high mound, asked Ja'afar, "Seest thou what I see?" Answered the Wazir, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful; I see a dim figure on a high mound; belike he is the keeper of a garden or of a cucumber-plot, and in whatso wise water will not be lacking in his neighbourhood;" presently adding, "I will go to him and fetch thee some." But Al-Rashid said, "My mule is swifter than thy mule; so do thou abide here, on account of the troops, whilst I go myself to him and get of this

person[219] drink and return." So saying, he urged his she-mule, which started off like racing wind or railing-water and, in the twinkling of an eye, made the mound, where he 160 found the figure he had seen to be none other than Khalifah the Fisherman, naked and wrapped in the net; and indeed he was horrible to behold, as to and fro he rolled with eyes for very redness like cresset-gleam and dusty hair in dishevelled trim, as he were an Ifrit or a lion grim. Al-Rashid saluted him and he returned his salutation; but he was wroth and fires might have been lit at his breath. Quoth the Caliph, "O man, hast thou any water?"; and quoth Khalifah, "Ho thou, art thou blind, or Jinn-mad? Get thee to the river Tigris, for 'tis behind this mound." So Al-Rashid went around the mound and going down to the river, drank and watered his mule: then without a moment's delay he returned to Khalifah and said to him, "What aileth thee, O man, to stand here, and what is thy calling?" The Fisherman cried, "This is a stranger and sillier question than that about the water! Seest thou not the gear of my craft on my shoulder?" Said the Caliph, "Belike thou art a fisherman?"; and he replied, "Yes." Asked Al-Rashid, "Where is thy gaberdine,[220] and where are thy waistcloth and girdle and where be the rest of thy raiment?" Now these were the very things which had been taken from Khalifah, like for like; so, when he heard the Caliph name them, he got into his head that it was he who had stolen his clothes from the river-bank and coming down from the top of the mound, swiftlier than the blinding leven, laid hold of the mule's bridle, saying, "Harkye, man, bring me back my things and leave jesting and joking." Al-Rashid replied, "By Allah, I have not seen thy clothes, nor know aught of them!" Now the Caliph had large cheeks and a small mouth;[221] so Khalifah said to him, "Belike, thou art by trade a singer or a piper on pipes? But bring me back my clothes fairly and without more ado, or I will bash thee with this my staff till thou bepiss thyself and befoul thy clothes." When Al-Rashid saw the staff in the Fisherman's hand and that he had the vantage of him, he said to himself, "By Allah, I cannot brook from this mad beggar half a blow of that staff!" Now he had on a satin gown; so he pulled it off and gave it to Khalifah, saying, "O man, take this in place of thy clothes." The Fisherman took it and turned it about and said, "My clothes are worth ten of this 161 painted 'Abá-cloak;" and rejoined the Caliph, "Put it on till I bring thee thy gear." So Khalifah donned the gown, but finding it too long for him, took a knife he had with him, tied to the handle of his basket,[222] and cut off nigh a third of the skirt, so that it fell only beneath his knees. Then he turned to Al-Rashid and said to him, "Allah upon thee, O piper, tell me what wage thou gettest every month from thy master, for thy craft of piping." Replied the Caliph, "My wage is ten dinars a month," and Khalifah continued, "By Allah, my poor fellow, thou makest me sorry for thee! Why, I make thy ten dinars every day! Hast thou a mind to take service with me and I will teach thee the art of fishing and share my gain with thee? So shalt thou make five dinars a day and be my slavey and I will protect thee against thy master with this staff." Quoth Al-Rashid, "I will well";

and quoth Khalifah, “Then get off thy she-ass and tie her up, so she may serve us to carry the fish hereafter, and come hither, that I may teach thee to fish forthright.” So Al-Rashid alighted and hobbling his mule, tucked his skirts into his girdle, and Khalifah said to him, “O piper, lay hold of the net thus and put it over thy forearm thus and cast it into the Tigris thus.” Accordingly, the Caliph took heart of grace and, doing as the fisherman showed him, threw the net and pulled at it, but could not draw it up. So Khalifah came to his aid and tugged at it with him; but the two together could not hale it up: whereupon said the fisherman, “O piper of ill-omen, for the first time I took thy gown in place of my clothes; but this second time I will have thine ass and will beat thee to boot, till thou bepiss and beskite thyself! An I find my net torn.” Quoth Al-Rashid, “Let the twain of us pull at once.” So they both pulled together and succeeded with difficulty in hauling that net ashore, when they found it full of fish of all kinds and colours;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Khalifah the Fisherman and the Caliph hauled that net ashore, 162 they found it full of fish of all kinds; and Khalifah said to Al-Rashid, “By Allah, O piper, thou art foul of favour but, an thou apply thyself to fishing, thou wilt make a mighty fine fisherman. But now ’twere best thou bestraddle thine ass and make for the market and fetch me a pair of frails,[223] and I will look after the fish till thou return, when I and thou will load it on thine ass’s back. I have scales and weights and all we want, so we can take them with us and thou wilt have nothing to do but to hold the scales and pouch the price; for here we have fish worth twenty dinars. So be fast with the frails and loiter not.” Answered the Caliph, “I hear and obey” and mounting, left him with his fish, and spurred his mule, in high good humour, and ceased not laughing over his adventure with the Fisherman, till he came up to Ja’afar, who said to him, “O Commander of the Faithful, belike, when thou wentest down to drink, thou foundest a pleasant flower-garden and enteredst and tookest thy pleasure therein alone?” At this Al-Rashid fell a laughing again and all the Barmecides rose and kissed the ground before him, saying, “O Commander of the Faithful, Allah make joy to endure for thee and do away annoy from thee! What was the cause of thy delaying when thou faredst to drink and what hath befallen thee?” Quoth the Caliph, “Verily, a right wondrous tale and a joyous adventure and a wondrous hath befallen me.” And he repeated to them what had passed between himself and the Fisherman and his words, “Thou stolest my clothes!” and how he had given him his gown and how he had cut off a part of it, finding it too long for him. Said Ja’afar, “By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, I had it in mind to beg the gown of thee: but now I will go straight to the Fisherman and buy it of him.” The Caliph replied, “By Allah, he hath cut off a third part of the skirt and spoilt

it! But, O Ja'afar, I am tired with fishing in the river, for I have caught great store of fish which I left on the bank with my master Khalifah, and he is watching them and waiting for me to return to him with a couple of frails and a matchet.[224] Then we are to go, I 163 and he, to the market and sell the fish and share the price." Ja'afar rejoined, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will bring you a purchaser for your fish." And Al-Rashid retorted, "O Ja'afar, by the virtue of my holy forefathers, whoso bringeth me one of the fish that are before Khalifah, who taught me angling, I will give him for it a gold dinar!" So the crier proclaimed among the troops that they should go forth and buy fish for the Caliph, and they all arose and made for the river-side. Now, while Khalifah was expecting the Caliph's return with the two frails, behold, the Mamelukes swooped down upon him like vultures and took the fish and wrapped them in gold-embroidered kerchiefs, beating one another in their eagerness to get at the Fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khalifah, "Doubtless these are of the fish of Paradise[225]!" and hending two fish in right hand and left, plunged into the water up to his neck and fell a-saying, "O Allah, by the virtue of these fish, let Thy servant the piper, my partner, come to me at this very moment." And suddenly up to him came a black slave which was the chief of the Caliph's negro eunuchs. He had tarried behind the rest, by reason of his horse having stopped to make water by the way, and finding that naught remained of the fish, little or much, looked right and left, till he espied Khalifah standing in the stream, with a fish in either hand, and said to him, "Come hither, O Fisherman!" But Khalifah replied, "Begone and none of your impudence[226]!" So the eunuch went up to him and said, "Give me the fish and I will pay thee their price." Replied the Fisherman, "Art thou little of wit? I will not sell them." Therewith the eunuch drew his mace upon him, and Khalifah cried out, saying, "Strike not, O loon! Better largesse than the mace.[227]" So saying, he threw the two fishes to the eunuch, who took them and laid them in his kerchief. Then he put hand in pouch, but found not a single dirham and said to Khalifah, "O Fisherman, verily thou art out of luck for, by Allah, I have not a silver about me! But come to-morrow to the Palace of the Caliphate and ask for the eunuch Sandal; whereupon the castratos will direct thee to me and by coming thither thou shalt get what falleth to thy lot and therewith wend thy ways." Quoth Khalifah, "Indeed, this is a blessed day and its blessedness was 164 manifest from the first of it[228]!" Then he shouldered his net and returned to Baghdad; and as he passed through the streets, the folk saw the Caliph's gown on him and stared at him till he came to the gate of his quarter, by which was the shop of the Caliph's tailor. When the man saw him wearing a dress of the apparel of the Caliph, worth a thousand dinars, he said to him, "O Khalifah, whence hadst thou that gown?" Replied the Fisherman, "What aileth thee to be impudent? I had it of one whom I taught to fish and who is become my apprentice. I forgave him the cutting off of his hand[229] for that he stole my clothes and gave me this cape in their place." So the tailor knew that the Caliph had come upon him as he was fishing and jested with him and

given him the gown;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph came upon Khalifah the Fisherman and gave him his own gown in jest wherewith the man fared home. Such was his case; but as regards Harun al-Rashid, he had gone out a-hunting and a-fishing only to divert his thoughts from the damsel, Kut al-Kulub. But when Zubaydah heard of her and of the Caliph's devotion to her, the Lady was fired with the jealousy which the more especially fireth women, so that she refused meat and drink and rejected the delights of sleep and awaited the Caliph's going forth on a journey or what not, that she might set a snare for the damsel. So when she learnt that he was gone hunting and fishing, she bade her women furnish the Palace fairly and decorate it splendidly and serve up viands and confections; and amongst the rest she made a China dish of the daintiest sweetmeats that can be made wherein she had put Bhang. Then she ordered one of her eunuchs go to the damsel Kut al-Kulub and bid her to the banquet, saying, "The Lady Zubaydah bint Al-Kasim, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, hath drunken medicine to-day and, having heard tell of the sweetness of thy singing, longeth to 165 divert herself with somewhat of thine art." Kut al-Kulub replied, "Hearing and obedience are due to Allah and the Lady Zubaydah," and rose without stay or delay, unknowing what was hidden for her in the Secret Purpose. Then she took with her what instruments she needed and, accompanying the eunuch, ceased not faring till she stood in the presence of the Princess. When she entered she kissed ground before her again and again, then rising to her feet, said, "Peace be on the Lady of the exalted seat and the presence whereto none may avail, daughter of the house Abbásí and scion of the Prophet's family! May Allah fulfil thee of peace and prosperity in the days and the years[230]!" Then she stood with the rest of the women and eunuchs, and presently the Lady Zubaydah raised her eyes and considered her beauty and loveliness. She saw a damsel with cheeks smooth as rose and breasts like granado, a face moon-bright, a brow flower-white and great eyes black as night; her eyelids were langour-dight and her face beamed with light, as if the sun from her forehead arose and the murks of the night from the locks of her brow; and the fragrance of musk from her breath strayed and flowers bloomed in her lovely face inlaid; the moon beamed from her forehead and in her slender shape the branches swayed. She was like the full moon shining in the nightly shade; her eyes wantoned, her eyebrows were like a bow arched and her lips of coral moulded. Her beauty amazed all who espied her and her glances amated all who eyed her. Glory be to Him who formed her and fashioned her and perfected her! Brief, she was even as saith the poet of one who favoured her:—

When she's incensed thou seest folk lie slain, ✿ And when she's pleased, their souls are quick again:
Her eyne are armed with glances magical ✿ Wherewith she kills and quickens as she's fain.

The Worlds she leadeth captive with her eyes ✿ As tho' the Worlds were all her slavish train.

Quoth the Lady Zubaydah, "Well come, and welcome and fair cheer to thee, O Kut al-Kulub! Sit and divert us with thine art and the goodliness of thine accomplishments." Quoth the damsel, "I hear and I obey"; and, putting out her hand, took 166 the tambourine, whereof one of its praisers speaketh in the following verses:—

Ho thou o' the tabret, my heart takes flight ✿ And love-smit cries while thy fingers smite!

Thou takest naught but a wounded heart, ✿ The while for acceptance longs the wight:

So say thou word or heavy or light; ✿ Play whate'er thou please it will charm the sprite.

Sois bonne, unveil thy cheek, *ma belle* ✿ Rise, deftly dance and all hearts delight.

Then she smote the tambourine briskly and so sang thereto, that she stopped the birds in the sky and the place danced with them blithely; after which she laid down the tambourine and took the pipe[231] whereof it is said:—

She hath eyes whose babes wi' their fingers sign ✿ To sweet tunes without a discordant line.

And as the poet also said in this couplet:—

And, when she announceth the will to sing, ✿ For Union-joy 'tis a time divine!

Then she laid down the pipe, after she had charmed therewith all who were present, and took up the lute, whereof saith the poet:—

How many a blooming bough in glee-girl's hand is fain ✿ As lute to 'witch great souls by charm of cunning strain!

She sweeps tormenting lute strings by her artful touch ✿ Wi' finger-tips that surely chain with endless chain.

Then she tightened its pegs and tuned its strings and laying it in her lap, bended over it as mother bendeth over child; and it seemed as it were of her and her lute that the poet spoke in these couplets:—

Sweetly discourses she on Persian string ✿ And Unintelligence makes understand.

And teaches she that Love's a murtherer, ✿ Who oft the reasoning Moslem hath unmann'd.

167 A maid, by Allah, in whose palm a thing ✿ Of painted wood like mouth can speech command.

With lute she stauncheth flow of Love; and so ✿ Stops flow of blood the cunning leach's hand.

Then she preluded in fourteen different modes and sang to the lute an entire piece, so as to confound the gazers and delight her hearers. After which she recited these two couplets:—

The coming unto thee is blest: ✿ Therein new joys for aye attend:

Its blisses are continuous ✿ Its blessings never, never end.

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the maiden, Kut al-Kulub, after singing these songs and sweeping the strings in presence of the Lady Zubaydah, rose and exhibited tricks of sleight of hand and legerdemain and all manner pleasing arts, till the Princess came near to fall in love with her and said to herself, "Verily, my

cousin Al-Rashid is not to blame for loving her!" Then the damsel kissed ground before Zubaydah and sat down, whereupon they set food before her. Presently they brought her the drugged dish of sweetmeats and she ate thereof; and hardly had it settled in her stomach when her head fell backward and she sank on the ground sleeping. With this, the Lady said to her women, "Carry her up to one of the chambers, till I summon her"; and they replied, "We hear and we obey." Then said she to one of her eunuchs, "Fashion me a chest and bring it hitherto to me!", and shortly afterwards she bade make the semblance of a tomb and spread the report that Kut al-Kulub had choked and died, threatening her familiars that she would smite the neck of whoever should say, "She is alive." Now, behold, the Caliph suddenly returned from the chase, and the first enquiry he made was for the damsel. So there came to him one of his eunuchs, whom the Lady Zubaydah had charged to declare she was dead, if the Caliph should ask for her and, kissing ground before him, said, "May thy head live, O my lord! Be certified that Kut al-Kulub choked in eating and is dead." Whereupon cried Al-Rashid, "God never gladden thee with good news, O thou bad 168slave!" and entered the Palace, where he heard of her death from every one and asked, "Where is her tomb?" So they brought him to the sepulchre and showed him the pretended tomb, saying, "This is her burial-place." When he saw it, he cried out and wept and embraced it, quoting these two couplets[232]:—

By Allah, O tomb, have her beauties ceased and disappeared from sight And is the countenance changed and wan, that shone so wonder-bright?

O tomb, O tomb, thou art neither heaven nor garden, verily: How comes it then that swaying branch and moon in thee unite?

The Caliph, weeping sore for her, abode by the tomb a full hour, after which he arose and went away, in the utmost distress and the deepest melancholy. So the Lady Zubaydah saw that her plot had succeeded and forthright sent for the eunuch and said, "Hither with the chest!" He set it before her when she bade bring the damsel and locking her up therein, said to the Eunuch, "Take all pains to sell this chest and make it a condition with the purchaser that he buy it locked; then give alms with its price.[233]" So he took it and went forth, to do her bidding. Thus fared it with these; but as for Khalifah the Fisherman, when morning morrowed and shone with its light and sheen, he said to himself, "I cannot do aught better to-day than visit the Eunuch who bought the fish of me, for he appointed me to come to him in the Palace of the Caliphate." So he went forth of his lodging, intending for the palace, and when he came thither, he found Mamelukes, negro-slaves and eunuchs standing and sitting; and looking at them, behold, seated amongst them was the Eunuch who had taken the fish of him, with the white slaves waiting on him. Presently, one of the Mameluke-lads called out to him; whereupon the Eunuch turned to see who he was an lo! it was the Fisherman. Now when Khalifah was ware that he saw him and recognised him, he said to him, "I have not failed thee, O my little Tulip[234]! On this wise are men of their word." Hearing his 169address Sandal the Eunuch[235] laughed and replied, "By Allah,

thou art right, O Fisherman," and put his hand to his pouch, to give him somewhat; but at that moment there arose a great clamour. So he raised his head to see what was to do and finding that it was the Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide coming forth from the Caliph's presence, he rose to him and forewent him, and they walked about, conversing for a longsome time. Khalifah the Fisherman waited awhile; then, growing weary of standing and finding that the Eunuch took no heed of him, he set himself in his way and beckoned to him from afar, saying, "O my lord Tulip, give me my due and let me go!" The Eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him because of the Minister's presence; so he went on talking with Ja'afar and took no notice whatever of the Fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khalifah, "O Slow o' Pay![236] May Allah put to shame all churls and all who take folks's goods and are niggardly with them! I put myself under thy protection, O my lord Bran-belly,[237] to give me my due and let me go!" The Eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him before Ja'afar; and the Minister saw the Fisherman beckoning and talking to him, though he knew not what he was saying; so he said to Sandal, misliking his behaviour, "O Eunuch, what would yonder beggar with thee?" Sandal replied, "Dost thou not know him, O my lord the Wazir?"; and Ja'afar answered, "By Allah, I know him not! How should I know a man I have never seen but at this moment?" Rejoined the Eunuch, "O my lord, this is the Fisherman whose fish we seized on the banks of the Tigris. I came too late to get any and was ashamed to return to the Prince of True Believers, empty-handed, when all the Mamelukes had some. Presently I espied the Fisherman standing in mid-stream, calling on Allah, with four fishes in his hands, and said to him:—Give me what thou hast there and take their worth. He handed me the fish and I put my hand into my pocket, purposing to gift him with somewhat, but found naught therein and said:—Come to me in the Palace, and I will give thee wherewithal to aid thee in thy 170 poverty. So he came to me to-day and I was putting hand to pouch, that I might give him somewhat, when thou camest forth and I rose to wait on thee and was diverted with thee from him, till he grew tired of waiting; and this is the whole story, how he cometh to be standing here."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Sandal the Eunuch related to Ja'afar the Barmecide the tale of Khalifah the Fisherman, ending with, "This is the whole story and how he cometh to be standing here!" the Wazir, hearing this account, smiled and said, "O Eunuch, how is it that this Fisherman cometh in his hour of need and thou satisfiest him not? Dost thou not know him, O Chief of the Eunuchs?" "No," answered Sandal and Ja'afar said, "This is the Master of the Commander of the Faithful, and his partner and our lord the Caliph hath arisen this morning, strait of breast, heavy of heart and troubled in thought, nor is there aught will broaden his breast save this fisherman. So let him not go, till I crave the Caliph's

pleasure concerning him and bring him before him; perchance Allah will relieve him of his oppression and console him for the loss of Kut al-Kulub, by means of the Fisherman's presence, and he will give him wherewithal to better himself; and thou wilt be the cause of this." Replied Sandal, "O my lord, do as thou wilt and may Allah Almighty long continue thee a pillar of the dynasty of the Commander of the Faithful, whose shadow Allah perpetuate[238] and prosper it, root and branch!" Then the Wazir Ja'afar rose up and went in to the Caliph and Sandal ordered the Mamelukes not to leave the Fisherman; whereupon Khalifah cried, "How goodly is thy bounty, O Tulip! The seeker is become the sought. I come to seek my due, and they imprison me for debts in arrears[239]!" When Ja'afar came in to the presence of the Caliph, he found 171 him sitting with his head bowed earthwards, breast straitened and mind melancholy, humming the verses of the poet:—

My blamers instant bid that I for her become consoled; ✿ But I, what can I do, whose heart declines to be controlled?

And how can I in patience bear the loss of lovely maid, ✿ When fails me patience for a love that holds with firmest hold!

Ne'er I'll forget her nor the bowl that 'twixt us both went round ✿ And wine of glances maddened me with drunkenness ensoul'd.

Whenas Ja'afar stood in the presence, he said, "Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful, Defender of the honour of the Faith and descendant of the uncle of the Prince of the Apostles, Allah assain him and save him and his family one and all!" The Caliph raised his head and answered, "And on thee be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessings!" Quoth Ja'afar, "With leave of the Prince of True Believers, his servant would speak without restraint." Asked the Caliph, "And when was restraint put upon thee in speech and thou the Prince of Wazirs? Say what thou wilt." Answered Ja'afar, "When I went out, O my lord, from before thee, intending for my house, I saw standing at the door thy master and teacher and partner, Khalifah the Fisherman, who was aggrieved at thee and complained of thee saying:—Glory be to God! I taught him to fish and he went away to fetch me a pair of frails, but never came back: and this is not the way of a good partner or of a good apprentice. So, if thou hast a mind to partnership, well and good; and if not, tell him, that he may take to partner another." Now when the Caliph heard these words he smiled and his straitness of breast was done away with and he said, "My life on thee, is this the truth thou sayest, that the Fisherman standeth at the door?" and Ja'afar replied, "By thy life, O Commander of the Faithful, he standeth at the door." Quoth the Caliph, "O Ja'afar, by Allah, I will assuredly do my best to give him his due! If Allah at my hands send him misery, he shall have it; and if prosperity he shall have it." Then he took a piece of paper and cutting it in pieces, said to the Wazir, "O Ja'afar, write down with thine own hand twenty sums of money, from one dinar to a thousand, and the names of all kinds of offices and dignities from the least appointment to the Caliphate; also twenty kinds of punishment from the lightest beating to death.[240]" 172 "I hear and I obey, O

Commander of the Faithful," answered Ja'afar and did as he was bidden. Then said the Caliph, "O Ja'afar, I swear by my holy forefathers and by my kinship to Hamzah[241] and Akíl,[242] that I mean to summon the fisherman and bid him take one of these papers, whose contents none knoweth save thou and I; and whatsoever is written in the paper which he shall choose, I will give it to him; though it be the Caliphate I will divest myself thereof and invest him therewith and grudge it not to him; and, on the other hand, if there be written therein hanging or mutilation or death, I will execute it upon him. Now go and fetch him to me." When Ja'afar heard this, he said to himself, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! It may be somewhat will fall to this poor wretch's lot that will bring about his destruction, and I shall be the cause. But the Caliph hath sworn; so nothing remains now but to bring him in, and naught will happen save whatso Allah willeth." Accordingly he went out to Khalifah the Fisherman and laid hold of his hand, to carry him in to the Caliph, whereupon his reason fled and he said in himself, "What a stupid I was to come after yonder ill-omened slave, Tulip, whereby he hath brought me in company with Bran-belly!" Ja'afar fared on with him, with Mamelukes before and behind, whilst he said, "Doth not arrest suffice, but these must go behind and before me, to hinder my making off?" till they had traversed seven vestibules, when the Wazir said to him, "Mark my words, O Fisherman! Thou standest before the Commander of the Faithful and Defender of the Faith!" Then he raised the great curtain and Khalifah's eyes fell on the Caliph, who was seated on his couch, with the Lords of the realm standing in attendance upon him. As soon as he knew him, he went up to him and said, "Well come, and welcome to thee, O piper! 'Twas not right of thee to make thyself a Fisherman and go away, leaving me sitting to guard the fish, and never to return! For, before I was aware, there came up Mamelukes on beasts of all manner colours, and snatched away the fish from me, I standing alone, and this was all of thy fault; for, hadst thou returned with the frails forthright, we had sold an hundred dinars' worth of fish. 173 And now I come to seek my due, and they have arrested me. But thou, who hath imprisoned thee also in this place?" The Caliph smiled and raising a corner of the curtain, put forth his head and said to the Fisherman, "Come hither and take thee one of these papers." Quoth Khalifah the Fisherman, "Yesterday thou wast a fisherman, and to-day thou hast become an astrologer; but the more trades a man hath, the poorer he waxeth." Thereupon Ja'afar, said, "Take the paper at once, and do as the Commander of the Faithful biddeth thee without prating." So he came forward and put forth his hand saying, "Far be it from me that this piper should ever again be my knave and fish with me!" Then taking the paper he handed it to the Caliph, saying, "O piper, what hath come out for me therein? Hide naught thereof."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Khalifah the Fisherman took up one of the papers and handed it to the Caliph he said, "O piper, what have come out to me therein? Hide naught thereof." So Al-Rashid received it and passed it on to Ja'afar and said to him, "Read what is therein." He looked at it and said, "There is no Majesty there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Said the Caliph, "Good news,[243] O Ja'afar? What seest thou therein?" Answered the Wazir, "O Commander of the Faithful, there came up from the paper:—Let the Fisherman receive an hundred blows with a stick." So the Caliph commanded to beat the Fisherman and they gave him an hundred sticks: after which he rose, saying, "Allah damn this, O Bran-belly! Are jail and sticks part of the game?" Then said Ja'afar, "O Commander of the Faithful, this poor devil is come to the river, and how shall he go away thirsting? We hope that among the alms-deeds of the Commander of the Faithful, he may have leave to take another paper, so haply somewhat may come out wherewithal he may succour his poverty." Said the Caliph, "By Allah, O Ja'afar, if he take another paper and death be written therein, I will assuredly kill him, and thou wilt be the 174 cause." Answered Ja'afar, "If he die he will be at rest." But Khalifah the Fisherman said to him, "Allah ne'er gladden thee with good news! Have I made Baghdad strait upon you, that ye seek to slay me?" Quoth Ja'afar, "Take thee a paper and crave the blessing of Allah Almighty!" So he put out his hand and taking a paper, gave it to Ja'afar, who read it and was silent. The Caliph asked, "Why art thou silent, O son of Yahya?"; and he answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, there hath come out on this paper:—Naught shall be given to the Fisherman." Then said the Caliph, "His daily bread will not come from us: bid him fare forth from before our face." Quoth Ja'afar, "By the claims of thy pious forefathers, let him take a third paper, it may be it will bring him alimony;" and quoth the Caliph, "Let him take one and no more." So he put out his hand and took a third paper, and behold, therein was written, "Let the Fisherman be given one dinar." Ja'afar cried to him, "I sought good fortune for thee, but Allah willed not to thee aught save this dinar." And Khalifah answered, "Verily, a dinar for every hundred sticks were rare good luck, may Allah not send thy body health!" The Caliph laughed at him and Ja'afar took him by the hand and led him out. When he reached the door, Sandal the eunuch saw him and said to him, "Hither, O Fisherman! Give us portion of that which the Commander of the Faithful hath bestowed on thee, whilst jesting with thee." Replied Khalifah, "By Allah, O Tulip, thou art right! Wilt thou share with me, O nigger? Indeed, I have eaten stick to the tune of an hundred blows and have earned one dinar, and thou art but too welcome to it." So saying, he threw him the dinar and went out, with the tears flowing down the plain of his cheeks. When the Eunuch saw him in this plight, he knew that he had spoken sooth and called to the lads to fetch him back: so they

brought him back and Sandal, putting his hand to his pouch, pulled out a red purse, whence he emptied an hundred golden dinars into the Fisherman's hand, saying, "Take this gold in payment of thy fish and wend thy ways." So Khalifah, in high good humour, took the hundred ducats and the Caliph's one dinar and went his way, and forgot the beating. Now, as Allah willed it for the furthering of that which He had decreed, he passed by the mart of the handmaidens and seeing there a mighty ring where many folks were forgathering, said to himself, "What is this crowd?" So he brake through the merchants and others, who said, "Make wide the way for Skipper 175 Rapscallion,[244] and let him pass." Then he looked and behold, he saw a chest, with an eunuch seated thereon and an old man standing by it, and the Shaykh was crying, "O merchants, O men of money, who will hasten and hazard his coin for this chest of unknown contents from the Palace of the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, wife of the Commander of the Faithful? How much shall I say for you, Allah bless you all!" Quoth one of the merchants, "By Allah, this is a risk! But I will say one word and no blame to me. Be it mine for twenty dinars." Quoth another, "Fifty," and they went on bidding, one against other, till the price reached an hundred ducats. Then said the crier, "Will any of you bid more, O merchants?" And Khalifah the Fisherman said, "Be it mine for an hundred dinars and one dinar." The merchants, hearing these words, thought he was jesting and laughed at him, saying, "O eunuch sell it to Khalifah for an hundred dinars and one dinar!" Quoth the eunuch, "By Allah, I will sell it to none but him! Take it, O Fisherman, the Lord bless thee in it, and here with thy gold." So Khalifah pulled out the ducats and gave them to the eunuch, who, the bargain being duly made, delivered to him the chest and bestowed the price in alms on the spot; after which he returned to the Palace and acquainted the Lady Zubaydah with what he had done, whereat she rejoiced. Meanwhile the Fisherman hove the chest on shoulder, but could not carry it on this wise for the excess of its weight; so he lifted it on to his head and thus bore it to the quarter where he lived. Here he set it down and being weary, sat awhile, bemusing what had befallen him and saying in himself, "Would Heaven I knew what is in this chest!" Then he opened the door of his lodging and haled the chest till he got it into his closet; after which he strove to open it, but failed. Quoth he, "What folly possessed me to buy this chest? There is no help for it but to break it open and see what is herein." So he applied himself to the lock, but could not open it, and said to himself, "I will leave it till to-morrow." Then he would have stretched him out to sleep, but could find no room; for the chest filled the whole closet. So he got upon it and lay him down; but, when he had lain awhile, behold, he felt something stir under him whereat sleep 176 forsook him and his reason fled.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Khalifah the Fisherman lay down upon the chest and thus tarried awhile, behold, something stirred beneath him; whereat he was affrighted and his reason fled. So he arose and cried, "Meseems there be Jinns in the chest. Praise to Allah who suffered me not to open it! For, had I done so, they had risen against me in the dark and slain me, and from them would have befallen me naught of good." Then he lay down again when, lo! the chest moved a second time, more than before; whereupon he sprang to his feet and said, "There it goes again: but this is terrible!" And he hastened to look for the lamp, but could not find it and had not the wherewithal to buy another. So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the most part of the folk were asleep; but they awoke at his crying and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" He answered, "Bring me a lamp, for the Jinn are upon me." They laughed at him and gave him a lamp, wherewith he returned to his closet. Then he smote the lock of the chest with a stone and broke it and opening it, saw a damsel like a Houri lying asleep within. Now she had been drugged with Bhang, but at that moment she threw up the stuff and awoke; then she opened her eyes and feeling herself confined and cramped, moved. At this sight quoth Khalifah, "By Allah, O my lady, whence art thou?"; and quoth she, "Bring me Jessamine, and Narcissus.[245]" And Khalifah answered, "There is naught here but Henna-flowers.[246]" Thereupon she came to herself and considering Khalifah, said to him, "What art thou?" presently adding, "And where am I?" He said, "Thou art in my lodging." Asked she, "Am I not in the Palace of the Caliph Harun al-Rashid?" And quoth he, "What manner of thing is Al-Rashid?[247] O madwoman, Thou are naught but my slave-girl: I bought thee this very day 177 for an hundred dinars and one dinar, and brought thee home, and thou wast asleep in this here chest." When she heard these words she said to him, "What is thy name?" Said he, "My name is Khalifah. How comes my star to have grown propitious, when I know my ascendant to have been otherwise?" She laughed and cried, "Spare me this talk! Hast thou anything to eat?" Replied he, "No, by Allah, nor yet to drink! I have not eaten these two days and am now in want of a morsel." She asked, "Hast thou no money?"; and he said, "Allah keep this chest which hath beggared me: I gave all I had for it and am become bankrupt." The damsel laughed at him and said, "Up with thee and seek of thy neighbours somewhat for me to eat, for I am hungry." So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the folk were asleep; but they awoke and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" Answered He, "O my neighbours, I am hungry and have nothing to eat." So one came down to him with a bannock and another with broken meats and a third with a bittock of cheese and a fourth with a cucumber; and so on till his lap was full and he returned to his closet and laid the whole between her hands, saying, "Eat." But she laughed at him, saying, "How can I eat of this, when I have not a mug of water whereof to drink? I fear to choke with a mouthful and die." Quoth he, "I will fill thee this pitcher.[248]" So he took the pitcher and going forth, stood in the midst of the street and cried out, saying, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Quoth

they, “What calamity is upon thee to-night,[249] O Khalifah!” And he said, “Ye gave me food and I ate; but now I am athirst; so give me to drink.” Thereupon one came down to him with a mug and another with an ewer and a third with a gugglet; and he filled his pitcher and, bearing it back, said to the damsel, “O my lady, thou lackest nothing now.” Answered she, “True, I want nothing more at this present.” Quoth he, “Speak to me and say me thy story.” And quoth she, “Fie upon thee! An thou knowest me not, I will tell thee who I am. I am Kut al-Kulub, the Caliph’s handmaiden, and the Lady Zubaydah was jealous of me; so she drugged me with Bhang and set me in this chest,” presently adding “Alhamdolillah—praised 178 be God—for that the matter hath come to easy issue and no worse! But this befel me not save for thy good luck, for thou wilt certainly get of the Caliph Al-Rashid money galore, that will be the means of thine enrichment.” Quoth Khalifah, “Is not Al-Rashid he in whose Palace I was imprisoned?” “Yes,” answered she; and he said, “By Allah, never saw I more niggardly wight than he, that piper little of good and wit! He gave me an hundred blows with a stick yesterday and but one dinar, for all I taught him to fish and made him my partner; but he played me false.” Replied she, “Leave this unseemly talk, and open thine eyes and look thou bear thyself respectfully, whenas thou seest him after this, and thou shalt win thy wish.” When he heard her words, it was if he had been asleep and awoke; and Allah removed the veil from his judgment, because of his good luck,[250] and he answered, “On my head and eyes!” Then said he to her, “Sleep, in the name of Allah.[251]” So she lay down and fell asleep (and he afar from her) till the morning, when she sought of him inkcase[252] and paper and, when they were brought wrote to Ibn al-Kirnas, the Caliph’s friend, acquainting him with her case and how at the end of all that had befallen her she was with Khalifah the Fisherman, who had bought her. Then she gave him the scroll, saying, “Take this and hie thee to the jewel-market and ask for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas the Jeweller and give him this paper and speak not.” “I hear and I obey,” answered Khalifah and going with the scroll to the market, enquired for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas. They directed him thither and on entering it he saluted the merchant, who returned his salam with contempt and said to him, “What dost thou want?” Thereupon he gave him the letter and he took it, but read it not, thinking the Fisherman a beggar, who sought an alms of him, and said to one of his lads, “Give him half a dirham.” Quoth Khalifah, “I 179 want no alms; read the paper.” So Ibn al-Kirnas took the letter and read it; and no sooner knew its import than he kissed it and laying it on his head——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ibn al-Kirnas read the letter and knew its import, he kissed it and laid it on his head; then he arose and said to Khalifah, “O my brother, where is thy house?” Asked Khalifah, “What wantest thou with my house? Wilt thou go thither and steal my slave-girl?” Then Ibn al-

Kirnas answered, “Not so: on the contrary, I will buy thee somewhat whereof you may eat, thou and she.” So he said, “My house is in such a quarter;” and the merchant rejoined, “Thou hast done well. May Allah not give thee health, O unlucky one[253]!” Then he called out to two of his slaves and said to them, “Carry this man to the shop of Mohsin the Shroff and say to him, “O Mohsin, give this man a thousand dinars of gold;” then bring him back to me in haste.” So they carried him to the money-changer, who paid him the money, and returned with him to their master, whom they found mounted on a dapple she-mule worth a thousand dinars, with Mamelukes and pages about him, and by his side another mule like his own, saddled and bridled. Quoth the jeweller to Khalifah, “Bismillah, mount this mule.” Replied he, “I won’t; for by Allah, I fear she throw me;” and quoth Ibn al-Kirnas, “By God, needs must thou mount.” So he came up and mounting her, face to crupper, caught hold of her tail and cried out; whereupon she threw him on the ground and they laughed at him; but he rose and said, “Did I not tell thee I would not mount this great jenny-ass?” Thereupon Ibn al-Kirnas left him in the market and repairing to the Caliph, told him of the damsel; after which he returned and removed her to his own house. Meanwhile Khalifah went home to look after the handmaid and found the people of the quarter foregathering and saying, “Verily, Khalifah is to-day in a terrible 180 pickle[254]! Would we knew whence he can have gotten this damsel?” Quoth one of them, “He is a mad pimp: haply he found her lying on the road drunken, and carried her to his own house, and his absence showeth that he knoweth his offence.” As they were talking, behold, up came Khalifah, and they said to him, “What a plight is thine, O unhappy! knowest thou not what is come to thee?” He replied, “No, by Allah!” and they said, “But just now there came Mamelukes and took away thy slave-girl whom thou stolest, and sought for thee, but found thee not.” Asked Khalifah, “And how came they to take my slave-girl?” and quoth one, “Had he fallen in their way, they had slain him.” But he, so far from heeding them, returned running to the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas, whom he met riding, and said to him, “By Allah, ’twas not right of thee to wheedle me and meanwhile send thy Mamelukes to take my slave-girl!” Replied the jeweller, “O idiot, come with me and hold thy tongue.” So he took him and carried him into a house handsomely builded, where he found the damsel seated on a couch of gold, with ten slave-girls like moons round her. Sighting her Ibn al-Kirnas kissed ground before her and she said, “What hast thou done with my new master, who bought me with all he owned?” He replied, “O my lady, I gave him a thousand golden dinars;” and related to her Khalifah’s history from first to last, whereat she laughed and said, “Blame him not; for he is but a common wight. These other thousand dinars are a gift from me to him and Almighty Allah willing, he shall win of the Caliph what shall enrich him.” As they were talking, there came an eunuch from the Commander of the Faithful, in quest of Kut al-Kulub for, when he knew that she was in the house of Ibn al-Kirnas, he could not endure the severance, but bade bring her forthwith. So she repaired to the Palace, taking Khalifah with her, and going into the presence, kissed ground before

the Caliph, who rose to her, saluting and welcoming her, and asked her how she had fared with him who had bought her. She replied, "He is a man, Khalifah the Fisherman hight, and there he standeth at the door. He telleth me that he hath an account to settle with the Commander of the Faithful, by reason of a partnership between him and the Caliph in fishing." Asked Al-Rashid, "Is he at the 181 door?" and she answered, "Yes." So the Caliph sent for him and he kissed ground before him and wished him endurance of glory and prosperity. The Caliph marvelled at him and laughed at him and said to him, "O Fisherman, wast thou in very deed my partner[255] yesterday?" Khalifah took his meaning and heartening his heart and summoning spirit replied, "By Him who bestowed upon thee the succession to thy cousin,[256] I know her not in anywise and have had no commerce with her save by way of sight and speech!" Then he repeated to him all that had befallen him, since he last saw him,[257] whereat the Caliph laughed and his breast broadened and he said to Khalifah, "Ask of us what thou wilt, O thou who bringest to owners their own!" But he was silent; so the Caliph ordered him fifty thousand dinars of gold and a costly dress of honour such as great Sovrans don, and a she-mule, and gave him black slaves of the Súdán to serve him, so that he became as he were one of the Kings of that time. The Caliph was rejoiced at the recovery of his favourite and knew that all this was the doing of his cousin-wife, the Lady Zubaydah,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph rejoiced at the recovery of Kut al-Kulub and knew that all this was the doing of the Lady Zubaydah, his cousin-wife; wherefore he was sore enraged against her and held aloof from her a great while, visiting her not neither inclining to pardon her. When she was certified of this, she was sore concerned for his wrath and her face, that was wont to be rosy, waxed pale and wan till, when her patience was exhausted, she sent a letter to her cousin, the Commander of the Faithful making her excuses to him and confessing her offences, and ending with these verses:—

I long once more the love that was between us to regain, ✿ That I may quench the fire of grief and bate the force of bane.

182 O lords of me, have ruth upon the stress my passion deals ✿ Enough to me is what you doled of sorrow and of pain.

'Tis life to me an deign you keep the troth you deigned to plight ✿ 'Tis death to me an troth you break and fondest vows profane:

Given I've sinned a sorry sin, yet grant me ruth, for naught ✿ By Allah, sweeter is than friend who is of pardon fain.

When the Lady Zubaydah's letter reached the Caliph, and reading it he saw that she confessed her offence and sent her excuses to him therefor, he said to himself, "Verily, all sins doth Allah forgive; aye, Gracious, Merciful is He!"[258] And he

returned her an answer, expressing satisfaction and pardon and forgiveness for what was past, whereat she rejoiced greatly. As for Khalifah, the Fisherman, the Caliph assigned him a monthly solde of fifty dinars, and took him into especial favour, which would lead to rank and dignity, honour and worship. Then he kissed ground before the Commander of the Faithful and went forth with stately gait. When he came to the door, the Eunuch Sandal, who had given him the hundred dinars, saw him and knowing him, said to him, "O Fisherman, whence all this?" So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, whereat Sandal rejoiced, because he had been the cause of his enrichment, and said to him, "Wilt thou not give me largesse of this wealth which is now become thine?" So Khalifah put hand to pouch and taking out a purse containing a thousand dinars, gave it to the Eunuch, who said, "Keep thy coins and Allah bless thee therein!" and marvelled at his manliness and at the liberality of his soul, for all his late poverty.[259] Then leaving the eunuch, Khalifah mounted his she-mule and rode, with the slaves' hands on her crupper, till he came to his lodging at the Khan, whilst the folk stared at him in surprise for that which had betided him of advancement. When he alighted from his beast they accosted him and enquired the cause of his change from poverty to prosperity, and he told them all that had happened to him from incept to conclusion. Then he bought a fine mansion and laid out thereon much money, till it was perfect in all points. And he took up his abode therein and was wont to recite thereon these two couplets:—

183 Behold a house that's like the Dwelling of Delight;[260] ✿ Its aspect heals the sick and banishes despite.

Its sojourn for the great and wise appointed is, ✿ And Fortune fair therein abideth day and night.

Then, as soon as he was settled in his house, he sought him in marriage the daughter of one of the chief men of the city, a handsome girl, and went in unto her and led a life of solace and satisfaction, joyaunce and enjoyment; and he rose to passing affluence and exceeding prosperity. So, when he found himself in this fortunate condition, he offered up thanks to Allah (extolled and excelled be He!) for what He had bestowed on him of wealth exceeding and of favours ever succeeding, praising his Lord with the praise of the grateful and chanting the words of the poet:—

To Thee be praise, O Thou who showest unremitting grace; ✿ O Thou whose universal bounties high and low embrace!

To Thee be praise from me! Then deign accept my praise for I ✿ Accept Thy boons and gifts with grateful soul in every case.

Thou hast with favours overwhelmed me, benefits and largesse ✿ And gracious doles my memory ne'er ceaseth to retrace.

All men from mighty main, Thy grace and goodness, drain and drink; ✿ And in their need Thou, only Thou, to them art refuge-place!

Thou heapest up, O Lord, Thy mercy-signs on mortal men; ✿ Thou pardonest man's every sin though he be high or base:

So for the sake of him who came to teach mankind in ruth ✿ Prophet, pure, truthful-worded scion of the noblest race;

Ever be Allah's blessing and His peace on him and all ✿ His aids[261] and kin while pilgrims fare his noble tomb to face!

And on his helpmeets[262] one and all, Companions great and good, ✿ Through time Eternal while the bird shall sing in shady wood!

And thereafter Khalifah continued to pay frequent visits to the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, with whom he found acceptance and 184 who ceased not to overwhelm him with boons and bounty: and he abode in the enjoyment of the utmost honour and happiness and joy and gladness and in riches more than sufficing and in rank ever rising; brief, a sweet life and a savoury, pure as pleasurable, till there came to him the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies; and extolled be the perfection of Him to whom belong glory and permanence and He is the Living, the Eternal, who shall never die!

NOTE. I have followed the example of Mr. Payne and have translated in its entirety the Tale of Khalifah the Fisherman from the Breslau Edit. (Vol. iv. pp. 315–365, Night cccxxi-cccxxxii.) in preference to the unsatisfactory process of amalgamating it with that of the Mac. Edit. given above.

KHALIF THE FISHERMAN OF BAGHDAD.

There was once, in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, in the city of Baghdad, a fisherman, by name Khalíf, a man of muckle talk and little luck. One day, as he sat in his cell,[263] he bethought himself and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Would Heaven I knew what is my offence in the sight of my Lord and what caused the blackness of my fortune and my littleness of luck among the fishermen, albeit (and I say it who should not) in the city of Baghdad there is never a fisherman like myself." Now he lodged in a ruined place called a Khan, to wit, an inn,[264] without a door, and when he went forth to fish, he would shoulder the net, without basket or fish-slicers,[265] and when the folk would stare at him and say to him, "O Khalif, why not take with thee a basket, to hold the fish thou catchest?"; he would reply, "Even as I carry it forth empty, so would it come back, for I never manage to catch aught." One night he arose, in the darkness before dawn, and taking his net on his shoulder, raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Allah mine, O Thou who subjectedst the sea to Moses son of 185 *Imrán, give me this day my daily bread, for Thou art the best of bread-givers!" Then he went down to the Tigris and spreading his net, cast it into the river and waited till it had settled down, when he haled it in and drew it ashore, but behold, it held naught save a dead dog. So he cast away the carcase, saying, "O morning of ill doom! What a handsel is this dead hound, after I had rejoiced in its weight[266]!" Then he mended the rents in the net, saying, "Needs must there after this carrion be fish in plenty, attracted by the smell,"*

and made a second cast. After awhile, he drew up and found in the net the hough[267] *of a camel, that had caught in the meshes and rent them right and left. When Khalif saw his net in this state, he wept and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I wonder what is my offence and the cause of the blackness of my fortune and the littleness of my luck, of all folk, so that I catch neither cat-fish nor sprat,*[268] *that I may broil on the embers and eat, for all I dare say there is not in the city of Baghdad a fisherman like me." Then with a Bismillah he cast his net a third time, and presently drawing it ashore found therein an ape scurvy and one-eyed, mangy, and limping hending an ivory rod in forehand. When Khalif saw this, he said, "This is indeed a blessed opening! What art thou, O ape?" "Dost thou not know me?" "No, by Allah, I have no knowledge of thee!" "I am thine ape!" "What use is there in thee, O my ape?" "Every day I give thee good-morrow, so Allah may not open to thee the door of daily bread." "Thou failest not of this, O one-eye*[269] *of ill-omen! May* 186 *Allah never bless thee! Needs must I pluck out thy sound eye and cut off thy whole leg, so thou mayst become a blind cripple and I be quit of thee! But what is the use of that rod thou hendest in hand?" "O Khalif, I scare the fish therewith, so they may not enter thy net." "Is it so?: then this very day will I punish thee with a grievous punishment and devise thee all manner torments and strip thy flesh from thy bones and be at rest from thee, sorry bit of goods that thou art!" So saying, Khalif the Fisherman unwound from his middle a strand of rope and binding him to a tree by his side, said, "Lookee, O dog of an ape! I mean to cast the net again and if aught come up therein, well and good; but, if it come up empty, I will verily and assuredly make an end of thee, with the cruellest tortures and be quit of thee, thou stinking lot." So he cast the net and drawing it ashore, found in it another ape and said, "Glory be to God the Great! I was wont to pull naught but fish out of this Tigris, but now it yieldeth nothing but apes." Then he looked at the second ape and saw him fair of form and round of face with pendants of gold in his ears and a blue waistcloth about his middle, and he was like unto a lighted taper. So he asked him, "What art thou, thou also, O ape?"; and he answered, saying, "O Khalif, I am the ape of Abú al-Sa'ádát the Jew, the Caliph's shroff. Every day, I give Him good-morrow, and he maketh a profit of ten gold pieces." Cried the Fisherman, "By Allah, thou art a fine ape, not like this ill-omened monkey o' mine!" So saying, he took a stick*[270] *and came down upon the sides of the ape, till he broke his ribs and he jumped up and down. And the other ape, the handsome one, answered him, saying, "O Khalif, what will it profit thee to beat him, though thou belabour him till he die?" Khalif replied, "How shall I do? Shall I let him wend his ways that he may scare me the fish with his hang-dog face and give me good-even and good-morrow every day, so Allah may not open to me the door of daily bread? Nay, I will kill him and be quit of him and I will take thee in his stead; so shalt thou give me good-morrow and I shall gain ten golden dinars a day." Thereupon the comely ape made answer, "I will tell thee a better way than that, and if thou hearken to me, thou shalt be at rest and I will become thine ape in lieu of*

him." Asked the Fisherman, "And what dost thou counsel me?"; and the ape answered, saying, "Cast thy net 187 *and thou shalt bring up a noble fish, never saw any its like, and I will tell thee how thou shalt do with it." Replied Khalif, "Lookee, thou too! An I throw my net and there come up therein a third ape, be assured that I will cut the three of you into six bits." And the second ape rejoined, "So be it, O Khalif. I agree to this thy condition." Then Khalif spread the net and cast it and drew it up, when behold, in it was a fine young barbel*[271] *with a round head, as it were a milking-pail, which when he saw, his wits fled for joy and he said, "Glory be to God! What is this noble creature? Were yonder apes in the river, I had not brought up this fish." Quoth the seemly ape, "O Khalif, an thou give ear to my rede, 'twill bring thee good fortune"; and quoth the Fisherman, "May God damn him who would gainsay thee henceforth!" Thereupon the ape said, "O Khalif, take some grass and lay the fish thereon in the basket*[272] *and cover it with more grass and take also somewhat of basil*[273] *from the greengrocer's and set it in the fish's mouth. Cover it with a kerchief and push thee through the bazar of Baghdad. Whoever bespeaketh thee of selling it, sell it not but fare on, till thou come to the market street of the jewellers and money-changers. Then count five shops on the right-hand side and the sixth shop is that of Abu al-Sa'adat the Jew, the Caliph's Shroff. When thou standest before him, he will say to thee, What seekest thou?; and do thou make answer, I am a fisher-wight, I threw my net in thy name and took this noble barbel, which I have brought thee as a present. If he give thee aught of silver, take it not, be it little or mickle, for it will spoil that which thou wouldst do, but say to him, I want of thee naught save one word, that thou say to me, I sell thee my ape for thine ape and my luck for thy luck. An the Jew say this, give him the fish and I shall become thine ape and this crippled, mangy and one-eyed ape will be his ape." Khalif replied, "Well said, O ape," nor did he cease faring Baghdad-wards and observing that which the ape had said to him, till he came to the Jew's shop and saw the Shroff seated, with eunuchs and pages about him, bidding and forbidding* 188 *and giving and taking. So he set down his basket, saying, "O Sultan of the Jews, I am a fisher-wight and went forth to-day to the Tigris and casting my net in thy name, cried:—This is for the luck of Abu al-Sa'adat; and there came up to me this Banni which I have brought thee by way of present." Then he lifted the grass and discovered the fish to the Jew, who marvelled at its make and said, "Extolled be the perfection of the Most Excellent Creator!" Then he gave the fisherman a dinar, but he refused it and he gave him two. This also he refused and the Jew stayed not adding to his offer, till he made it ten dinars; but he still refused and Abu al-Sa'adat said to him, "By Allah, thou art a greedy one. Tell me what thou wouldst have, O Moslem!" Quoth Khalif, "I would have of thee but a single word.*[274] *" When the Jew heard this, he changed colour and said, "Wouldst thou oust me from my faith? Wend thy ways;" and Khalif said to him, "By Allah, O Jew, naught mattereth an thou become a Moslem or a Nazarene!" Asked the Jew, "Then what*

wouldst thou have me say?"; and the fisherman answered, "Say, I sell thee my ape for thy ape and my luck for thy luck." The Jew laughed, deeming him little of wit, and said by way of jest, "I sell thee my ape for thy ape and my luck for thy luck. Bear witness against him, O merchants! By Allah, O unhappy, thou art debarred from further claim on me!" So Khalif turned back, blaming himself and saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Alas that I did not take the gold!" and fared on blaming himself in the matter of the money till he came to the Tigris, but found not the two apes, whereupon he wept and slapped his face and strewed dust on his head, saying, "But that the second ape wheedled me and put a cheat on me, the one-eyed ape had not escaped." And he gave not over wailing and weeping, till heat and hunger grew sore on him: so he took the net, saying, "Come, let us make a cast, trusting in Allah's blessing; belike I may catch a cat-fish or a barbel which I may boil and eat." So he threw the net and waiting till it had settled, drew it ashore and found it full of fish, whereat he was consoled and rejoiced and busied himself with unmeshing the fish and casting them on the earth. Presently, up came a woman seeking 189 *fish and crying out, "Fish is not to be found in the town." She caught sight of Khalif, and said to him, "Wilt thou sell this fish, O Master?" Answered Khalif, "I am going to turn it into clothes, 'tis all for sale, even to my beard.*[275] *Take what thou wilt." So she gave him a dinar and he filled her basket. Then she went away and behold, up came another servant, seeking a dinar's worth of fish; nor did the folk cease till it was the hour of mid-afternoon prayer and Khalif had sold ten golden dinars' worth of fish. Then, being faint and famisht, he folded and shouldered his net and, repairing to the market, bought himself a woollen gown, a calotte with a plaited boarder and a honey-coloured turband for a dinar, receiving two dirhams by way of change, wherewith he purchased fried cheese and a fat sheep's tail and honey and setting them in the oilman's platter, ate till he was full and his ribs felt cold*[276] *from the mighty stuffing. Then he marched off to his lodgings in the magazine, clad in the gown and the honey-coloured turband and with the nine golden dinars in his mouth, rejoicing in what he had never in his life seen. He entered and lay down, but could not sleep for anxious thoughts and abode playing with the money half the night. Then said he in himself, "Haply the Caliph may hear that I have gold and say to Ja'afar:—Go to Khalif the Fisherman and borrow us some money of him. If I give it him, it will be no light matter to me, and if I give it not, he will torment me; but torture is easier to me than the giving up of the cash.*[277] *However, I will arise and make trial of myself if I have a skin proof against stick or not." So he put off his clothes and taking a sailor's plaited whip, of an hundred and sixty strands, ceased not beating himself, till his sides and body were all bloody, crying out at every stroke he dealt himself and saying "O Moslems! I am a poor man! O Moslems, I am a poor man!* 190 *O Moslems, whence should I have gold, whence should I have coin?" till the neighbours, who dwelt with him in that place, hearing him crying and saying, "Go to*

men of wealth and take of them," thought that thieves were torturing him, to get money from him, and that he was praying for aidance. Accordingly they flocked to him each armed with some weapon and finding the door of his lodging locked and hearing him roaring out for help, deemed that the thieves had come down upon him from the terrace-roof; so they fell upon the door and burst it open. Then they entered and found him mother-naked and bareheaded with body dripping blood, and altogether in a sad pickle; so they asked him, "What is this case in which we find thee? Hast thou lost thy wits and hath Jinn-madness betided thee this night?" And he answered them, "Nay; but I have gold with me and I feared lest the Caliph send to borrow of me and it were no light matter to give him aught; yet, an I gave not to him 'tis only too sure that he would put me to the torture; wherefore I arose to see if my skin were stick-proof or not." When they heard these words they said to him, "May Allah not assain thy body, unlucky madman that thou art! Of a surety thou art fallen mad to-night! Lie down to sleep, may Allah never bless thee! How many thousand dinars hast thou, that the Caliph should come and borrow of thee?" He replied, "By Allah, I have naught but nine dinars." And they all said, "By Allah, he is not otherwise than passing rich!" Then they left him wondering at his want of wit, and Khalif took his cash and wrapped it in a rag, saying to himself, "Where shall I hide all this gold? An I bury it, they will take it, and if I put it out on deposit, they will deny that I did so, and if I carry it on my head,[278] *they will snatch it, and if I tie it to my sleeve, they will cut it away." Presently, he espied a little breast-pocket in the gown and said, "By Allah, this is fine! 'Tis under my throat and hard by my mouth: if any put out his hand to hend it, I can come down on it with my mouth and hide it in my throttle." So he set the rag containing the gold in the pocket and lay down, but slept not that night for suspicion and trouble and anxious thought. On the morrow, he fared forth of his lodging on fishing* 191 *intent and, betaking himself to the river, went down into the water, up to his knees. Then he threw the net and shook it with might and main; whereupon the purse fell down into the stream. So he tore off gown and turband and plunged in after it, saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Nor did he give over diving and searching the stream-bed, till the day was half spent, but found not the purse. Now one saw him from afar diving and plunging and his gown and turband lying in the sun at a distance from him, with no one by them; so he watched him, till he dived again when he dashed at the clothes and made off with them. Presently, Khalif came ashore and, missing his gown and turband, was chagrined for their loss with passing cark and care and ascended a mound, to look for some passer-by, of whom he might enquire concerning them, but found none. Now the Caliph Harun al-Rashid had gone a-hunting and chasing that day; and, returning at the time of the noon heat, was oppressed thereby and thirsted; so he looked for water from afar and seeing a naked man standing on the mound said to Ja'afar, "Seest thou what I see?" Replied the Wazir, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful; I see a man standing on a hillock." Al-*

Rashid asked, "What is he?"; and Ja'afar answered, "Haply he is the guardian of a cucumber-plot." Quoth the Caliph, "Perhaps he is a pious man[279]; I would fain go to him, alone, and desire of him his prayers; and abide ye where you are." So he went up to Khalif and saluting him with the salam said to him, "What art thou, O man?" Replied the fisherman, "Dost thou not know me? I am Khalif the Fisherman;" and the Caliph rejoined, "What? The fisherman with the woollen gown and the honey-coloured turband[280]?" When Khalif heard him name the clothes he had lost, he said in himself, "This is he who took my duds: belike he did but jest with me." So he came down from the knoll and said, "Can I not take a noon-tide nap[281] but thou must trick me this trick? I saw thee take my gear and knew that thou wast joking with me." At this, laughter got the better 192 *of the Caliph and he said, "What clothes hast thou lost? I know nothing of that whereof thou speakest, O Khalif." Cried the Fisherman, "By God the Great, except thou bring me back the gear, I will smash thy ribs with this staff!" (For he always carried a quarterstaff.) Quoth the Caliph, "By Allah, I have not seen the things whereof thou speakest!"; and quoth Khalif, "I will go with thee and take note of thy dwelling-place and complain of thee to the Chief of Police, so thou mayst not trick me this trick again. By Allah, none took my gown and turband but thou, and except thou give them back to me at once, I will throw thee off the back of that she-ass thou ridest and come down on thy pate with this quarterstaff, till thou canst not stir!" Thereupon he tugged at the bridle of the mule so that she reared up on her hind legs and the Caliph said to himself, "What calamity is this I have fallen into with this madman?" Then he pulled off a gown he had on, worth an hundred dinars, and said to Khalif, "Take this gown in lieu of thine own." He took it and donning it saw it was too long; so he cut it short at the knees and turbanded his head with the cut-off piece; then said to the Caliph, "What art thou and what is thy craft? But why ask? Thou art none other than a trumpeter." Al-Rashid asked, "What showed thee that I was a trumpeter by trade?"; and Khalif answered, "Thy big nostrils and little mouth." Cried the Caliph, "Well guessed! Yes, I am of that craft." Then said Khalif, "An thou wilt hearken to me, I will teach thee the art of fishing: 'twill be better for thee than trumpeting and thou wilt eat lawfully[282]." Replied the Caliph, "Teach it me so that I may see whether I am capable of learning it." And Khalif said, "Come with me, O trumpeter." So the Caliph followed him down to the river and took the net from him, whilst he taught him how to throw it. Then he cast it and drew it up, when, behold, it was heavy, and the fisherman said, "O trumpeter, an the net be caught on one of the rocks, drag it not too hard, or 'twill break and by Allah, I will take thy she-ass in payment thereof!" The Caliph laughed at his words and drew up the net, little by little, till he brought it ashore and found it full of fish; which when Khalif saw, his reason fled for joy and presently he* 193 *cried, "By Allah, O trumpeter, thy luck is good in fishing! Never in my life will I part with thee! But now I mean to send thee to the fish-bazar, where do thou enquire for the shop of Humayd the*

fisherman and say to him:—My master Khalif saluteth thee and biddeth thee send him a pair of frails and a knife, so he may bring thee more fish than yesterday. Run and return to me forthright!" The Caliph replied (and indeed he was laughing), "On my head, O master!" and, mounting his mule, rode back to Ja'afar, who said to him, "Tell me what hath betided thee." So the Caliph told him all that had passed between Khalif the Fisherman and himself, from first to last, adding, "I left him awaiting my return to him with the baskets and I am resolved that he shall teach me how to scale fish and clean them." Quoth Ja'afar, "And I will go with thee to sweep up the scales and clean out the shop." And the affair abode thus, till presently the Caliph cried, "O Ja'afar, I desire of thee that thou despatch the young Mamelukes, saying to them:—Whoso bringeth me a fish from before yonder fisherman, I will give him a dinar; for I love to eat of my own fishing." Accordingly Ja'afar repeated to the young white slaves what the Caliph had said and directed them where to find the man. They came down upon Khalif and snatched the fish from him; and when he saw them and noted their goodliness, he doubted not but that they were of the black-eyed Houris of Paradise: so he caught up a couple of fish and ran into the river, saying, "O Allah mine, by the secret virtue of these fish, forgive me!" Suddenly, up came the chief eunuch, questing fish, but he found none; so seeing Khalif ducking and rising in the water, with the two fish in his hands, called out to him, saying, "O Khalif, what hast thou there?" Replied the fisherman, "Two fish," and the eunuch said, "Give them to me and take an hundred dinars for them." Now when Khalif heard speak of an hundred dinars, he came up out of the water and cried, "Hand over the hundred dinars." Said the eunuch, "Follow me to the house of Al-Rashid and receive thy gold, O Khalif;" and, taking the fish, made off to the Palace of the Caliphate. Meanwhile Khalif betook himself to Baghdad, clad as he was in the Caliph's gown, which reached only to above his knees,[283] turbanded with the piece he had cut off therefrom and 194 *girt about his middle with a rope, and he pushed through the centre of the city. The folk fell a-laughing and marvelling at him and saying, "Whence hadst thou that robe of honour?" But he went on, asking, "Where is the house of Al-Rashád[284]?;" and they answered, "Say, 'The house of Al-Rashíd';" and he rejoined, "'Tis all the same," and fared on, till he came to the Palace of the Caliphate. Now he was seen by the tailor, who had made the gown and who was standing at the door, and when he noticed it upon the Fisherman, he said to him, "For how many years hast thou had admission to the palace?" Khalif replied, "Ever since I was a little one;" and the tailor asked, "Whence hadest thou that gown thou hast spoilt on this wise?" Khalif answered, "I had it of my apprentice the trumpeter." Then he went up to the door, where he found the Chief Eunuch sitting with the two fishes by his side: and seeing him sable-black of hue, said to him, "Wilt thou not bring the hundred dinars, O uncle Tulip?" Quoth he, "On my head, O Khalif," when, behold, out came Ja'afar from the presence of the Caliph and seeing the fisherman talking with the Eunuch and saying to him, "This is the reward of goodness, O nuncle Tulip," went in to Al-Rashid and*

said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, thy master the Fisherman is with the Chief Eunuch, dunning him for an hundred dinars." Cried the Caliph, "Bring him to me, O Ja'afar;" and the Minister answered, "Hearing and obeying." So he went out to the Fisherman and said to him, "O Khalif, thine apprentice the trumpeter biddeth thee to him;" then he walked on, followed by the other till they reached the presence-chamber, where he saw the Caliph seated, with a canopy over his head. When he entered, Al-Rashid wrote three scrolls and set them before him, and the Fisherman said to him, "So thou hast given up trumpeting and turned astrologer!" Quoth the Caliph to him, "Take thee a scroll." Now in the first he had written, "Let him be given a gold piece," in the second, "An hundred dinars," and in the third, "Let him be given an hundred blows with a whip." So Khalif put out his hand and by the decree of the Predestinator, it lighted on the scroll wherein was written, "Let him receive an hundred lashes," and Kings, whenas they ordain aught, go not back therefrom. So they threw him prone on the ground and beat him an hundred blows, whilst 195 *he wept and roared for succour, but none succoured him, and said, "By Allah, this is a good joke O trumpeter! I teach thee fishing and thou turnest astrologer and drawest me an unlucky lot. Fie upon thee,*[285] *in thee is naught of good!" When the Caliph heard his speech, he fell fainting in a fit of laughter and said, "O Khalif, no harm shall betide thee: fear not. Give him an hundred gold pieces." So they gave him an hundred dinars, and he went out, and ceased not faring forth till he came to the trunk-market, where he found the folk assembled in a ring about a broker, who was crying out and saying, "At an hundred dinars, less one dinar! A locked chest!" So he pressed on and pushed through the crowd and said to the broker, "Mine for an hundred dinars!" The broker closed with him and took his money, whereupon there was left him nor little nor much. The porters disputed awhile about who should carry the chest and presently all said, "By Allah, none shall carry this chest but Zurayk!"*[286] *And the folk said, "Blue-eyes hath the best right to it." So Zurayk shouldered the chest, after the goodliest fashion, and walked a-rear of Khalif. As they went along, the Fisherman said in himself, "I have nothing left to give the porter; how shall I rid myself of him? Now I will traverse the main streets with him and lead him about, till he be weary and set it down and leave it, when I will take it up and carry it to my lodging." Accordingly, he went round about the city with the porter from noon-tide to sundown, till the man began to grumble and said, "O my lord, where is thy house?" Quoth Khalif, "Yesterday I knew it, but to-day I have forgotten it." And the porter said, "Give me my hire and take thy chest." But Khalif said, "Go on at thy leisure, till I bethink me where my house is," presently adding, "O Zurayk, I have no money with me. 'Tis all in my house and I have forgotten where it is." As they were talking, there passed by them one who knew the Fisherman and said to him, "O Khalif, what bringeth thee hither?" Quoth the porter, "O uncle, where is Khalif's house?" and quoth he, "'Tis in the ruined Khan in the Rawásín Quarter."*[287] *Then said Zurayk to*

Khalif, "Go to; would Heaven thou hadst 196*never lived nor been!" And the Fisherman trudged on, followed by the porter, till they came to the place when the Hammal said, "O thou whose daily bread Allah cut off in this world, have we not passed this place a score of times? Hadst thou said to me, 'Tis in such a stead, thou hadst spared me this great toil; but now give me my wage and let me wend my way." Khalif replied, "Thou shalt have silver, if not gold. Stay here, till I bring thee the same." So he entered his lodging and taking a mallet he had there, studded with forty nails (wherewith an he smote a camel, he had made an end of it), rushed upon the porter and raised his forearm to strike him therewith; but Zurayk cried out at him, saying, "Hold thy hand! I have no claim on thee," and fled. Now having got rid of the Hammal, Khalif carried the chest into the Khan, whereupon the neighbours came down and flocked about him, saying, "O Khalif, whence hadst thou this robe and this chest?" Quoth he, "From my apprentice Al-Rashid who gave them to me," and they said, "The pimp is mad! Al-Rashid will assuredly hear of his talk and hang him over the door of his lodging and hang all in the Khan on account of the droll. This is a fine farce!" Then they helped him to carry the chest into his lodging and it filled the whole closet.*[288] *Thus far concerning Khalif; but as for the history of the chest, it was as follows: The Caliph had a Turkish slave-girl, by name Kut al-Kulúb, whom he loved with love exceeding and the Lady Zubaydah came to know of this from himself and was passing jealous of her and secretly plotted mischief against her. So, whilst the Commander of the Faithful was absent a-sporting and a-hunting, she sent for Kut al-Kulub and, inviting her to a banquet, set before her meat and wine, and she ate and drank. Now the wine was drugged with Bhang; so she slept and Zubaydah sent for her Chief Eunuch and putting her in a great chest, locked it and gave it to him, saying, "Take this chest and cast it into the river." Thereupon he took it up before him on a he-mule and set out with it for the sea, but found it unfit to carry; so, as he passed by the trunk-market, he saw the Shaykh of the brokers and salesmen and said to him, "Wilt thou sell me this chest, O uncle?" The broker replied, "Yes, we will do this much." "But," said the Eunuch, "look thou sell it not except locked;" and the other, "'Tis well;* 197*we will do that also."*[289] *So he set down the chest, and they cried it for sale, saying, "Who will buy this chest for an hundred dinars?"; and behold, up came Khalif the Fisherman and bought the chest after turning it over right and left; and there passed between him and the porter that which hath been before set out. Now as regards Khalif the Fisherman; he lay down on the chest to sleep, and presently Kut al-Kulub awoke from her Bhang and finding herself in the chest, cried out and said, "Alas!" Whereupon Khalif sprang off the chest-lid and cried out and said, "Ho, Moslems! Come to my help! There are Ifrits in the chest." So the neighbours awoke from sleep and said to him, "What mattereth thee, O madman?" Quoth he, "The chest is full of Ifrits;" and quoth they, "Go to sleep; thou hast troubled our rest this night, may Allah not bless thee! Go in and sleep, without madness." He ejaculated, "I*

cannot sleep;" but they abused him and he went in and lay down once more. And behold, Kut al-Kulub spoke and said, "Where am I?" Upon which Khalif fled forth the closet and said, "O neighbours of the hostelry, come to my aid!" Quoth they, "What hath befallen thee? Thou troublest the neighbours' rest." "O folk, there be Ifrits in the chest, moving and speaking." "Thou liest: what do they say?" "They say, Where am I?" "Would Heaven thou wert in Hell? Thou disturbest the neighbours and hinderest them of sleep. Go to sleep, would thou hadst never lived nor been!" So Khalif went in fearful because he had no place wherein to sleep save upon the chest-lid when lo! as he stood, with ears listening for speech, Kut al-Kulub spake again and said, "I'm hungry." So in sore affright he fled forth and cried out, "Ho neighbours! ho dwellers in the Khan, come aid me!" Said they, "What is thy calamity now?"[290] *And he answered, "The Ifrits in the chest say, We are hungry." Quoth the neighbours one to other, "'Twould seem Khalif is hungry; let us feed him and give him the supper-orts; else he will not let us sleep to-night." So they brought him bread and meat and broken victuals and radishes and gave him a basket full of all kinds of things, saying, "Eat till thou be full and go to sleep and talk not, else will we break thy ribs and beat thee to* 198 *death this very night." So he took the basket with the provaunt and entered his lodging. Now it was a moonlight night and the moon shone in full sheen upon the chest and lit up the closet with its light, seeing this he sat down on his purchase and fell to eating of the food with both hands. Presently Kut al-Kulub spake again and said, "Open to me and have mercy upon me, O Moslems!" So Khalif arose and taking a stone he had by him, broke the chest open and behold, therein lay a young lady as she were the sun's shining light with brow flower-white, face moon-bright, cheeks of rose-hue exquisite and speech sweeter than sugar-bite, and in dress worth a thousand dinars and more bedight. Seeing this his wits flew from his head for joy and he said, "By Allah, thou art of the fair!" She asked him, "What art thou, O fellow?" and he answered, "O my lady, I am Khalif the Fisherman." Quoth she, "Who brought me hither?"; and quoth he, "I bought thee, and thou art my slave-girl." Thereupon said she, "I see on thee a robe of the raiment of the Caliph." So he told her all that had betided him, from first to last, and how he had bought the chest; wherefore she knew that the Lady Zubaydah had played her false; and she ceased not talking with him till the morning, when she said to him, "O Khalif, seek me from some one inkcase and reed-pen and paper and bring them to me." So he found with one of the neighbours what she sought and brought it to her, whereupon she wrote a letter and folded it and gave it to him, saying, "O Khalif, take this paper and carry it to the jewel-market, where do thou enquire for the shop of Abu al-Hasan the jeweller and give it to him." Answered the Fisherman, "O my lady, this name is difficult to me; I cannot remember it." And she rejoined, "Then ask for the shop of Ibn al-'Ukáb."*[291] *Quoth he, "O my lady, what is an 'Ukab?"; and quoth she, "'Tis a bird which folk carry on fist with eyes hooded." And he exclaimed, "O my lady, I know it." Then he went forth from her and fared on, repeating the name, lest it fade from his*

memory; but, by the time he reached the jewel-market, he had forgotten it. So he accosted one of the merchants and said to him, "Is there any here named after a bird?" Replied the merchant, "Yes, thou meanest Ibn al-Ukab." Khalif cried, "That's the man I want," and making his way to him, gave him the letter, which when he read 199 *and knew the purport thereof, he fell to kissing it and laying it on his head; for it is said that Abu al-Hasan was the agent of the Lady Kut al-Kulub and her intendant over all her property in lands and houses. Now she had written to him, saying, "From Her Highness the Lady Kut al-Kulub to Sir Abu al-Hasan the jeweller. The instant this letter reacheth thee, set apart for us a saloon completely equipped with furniture and vessels and negro-slaves and slave-girls and what not else is needful for our residence and seemly, and take the bearer of the missive and carry him to the bath. Then clothe him in costly apparel and do with him thus and thus." So he said "Hearing and obeying," and locking up his shop, took the Fisherman and bore him to the bath, where he committed him to one of the bathmen, that he might serve him, according to custom. Then he went forth to carry out the Lady Kut al-Kulub's orders. As for Khalif, he concluded, of his lack of wit and stupidity, that the bath was a prison and said to the bathman, "What crime have I committed that ye should lay me in limbo?" They laughed at him and made him sit on the side of the tank, whilst the bathman took hold of his legs, that he might shampoo them. Khalif thought he meant to wrestle with him and said to himself, "This is a wrestling-place*[292] *and I knew naught of it." Then he arose and seizing the bathman's legs, lifted him up and threw him on the ground and broke his ribs. The man cried out for help, whereupon the other bathmen came in a crowd and fell upon Khalif and overcoming him by dint of numbers, delivered their comrade from his clutches and tunded him till he came to himself. Then they knew that the Fisherman was a simpleton and served him till Abu al-Hasan came back with a dress of rich stuff and clad him therein; after which he brought him a handsome she-mule, ready saddled, and taking him by the hand, carried him forth of the bath and said to him, "Mount." Quoth he, "How shall I mount? I fear lest she throw me and break my ribs into my belly." Nor would he back the mule, save after much travail and trouble, and they stinted not faring on, till they came to the place which Abu al-Hasan had set apart for the Lady Kut al-Kulub. Thereupon Khalif entered and found her sitting, with slaves and eunuchs about her and the porter at* 200 *the door, staff in hand, who when he saw the Fisherman sprang up and kissing his hand, went before him, till he brought him within the saloon. Here the Fisherman saw what amazed his wit, and his eye was dazzled by that which he beheld of riches past count and slaves and servants, who kissed his hand and said, "May the bath be a blessing to thee!"*[293] *When he entered the saloon and drew near unto Kut al-Kulub, she sprang up to him and taking him by the hand, seated him on a high-mattressed divan. Then she brought him a vase of sherbet of sugar, mingled with rose-water and willow-water, and he took it and drank it off and left not a single*

drop. Moreover, he ran his finger round the inside of the vessel[294] *and would have licked it, but she forbade him, saying, "That is foul." Quoth he, "Silence; this is naught but good honey;" and she laughed at him and set before him a tray of meats, whereof he ate his sufficiency. Then they brought an ewer and basin of gold, and he washed his right hand and abode in the gladdest of life and the most honourable. Now hear what befel the Commander of the Faithful. When he came back from his journey and found not Kut al-Kulub, he questioned the Lady Zubaydah of her and she said, "She is verily dead, may thy head live, O Prince of True Believers!" But she had bidden dig a grave amiddlemost the Palace and had built over it a mock tomb, for her knowledge of the love the Caliph bore to Kut al-Kulub: so she said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I made her a tomb amiddlemost the Palace and buried her there." Then she donned black,*[295] *a mere sham and pure pretence; and feigned mourning a great while. Now Kut al-Kulub knew that the Caliph was come back from his hunting excursion; so she turned to Khalif and said to him, "Arise; hie thee to the bath and come back." So he rose and went to the Hammam-bath, and when he returned, she clad him in a dress worth a thousand dinars and taught him manners and respectful bearing to superiors. Then said she to him, "Go hence to the Caliph and say to him:—O Commander of the Faithful, 'tis my desire that this night thou deign be my guest." So Khalif arose and mounting his she-mule, rode, with pages and black slaves before him, till he came to the Palace of the Caliphate.* 201 *Quoth the wise, "Dress up a stick and 'twill look chique."*[296] *And indeed his comeliness was manifest and his goodliness and the folk marvelled at this. Presently, the Chief Eunuch saw him, the same who had given him the hundred dinars that had been the cause of his good fortune; so he went in to the Caliph and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, Khalif the Fisherman is become a King, and on him is a robe of honour worth a thousand dinars." The Prince of True Believers bade admit him; so he entered and said, "Peace be with thee, O Commander of the Faithful and Vice-regent of the Lord of the three Worlds and Defender of the folk of the Faith! Allah Almighty prolong thy days and honour thy dominion and exalt thy degree to the highmost height!" The Caliph looked at him and marvelled at him and how fortune had come to him at unawares; then he said to him, "O Khalif, whence hadst thou that robe which is upon thee?" He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, it cometh from my house." Quoth the Caliph, "Hast thou then a house?"; and quoth Khalif, "Yea, verily! and thou, O Commander of the Faithful, art my guest this day." Al-Rashid said, "I alone, O Khalif, or I and those who are with me?"; and he replied, "Thou and whom thou wilt." So Ja'afar turned to him and said, "We will be thy guests this night;" whereupon he kissed ground again and withdrawing, mounted his mule and rode off, attended by his servants and suite of Mamelukes leaving the Caliph marvelling at this and saying to Ja'afar, "Sawest thou Khalif, with his mule and dress, his white slaves and his dignity? But yesterday I knew him for a buffoon and a jester." And they marvelled at this much. Then they mounted and rode, till they drew*

near Khalif's house, when the Fisherman alighted and, taking a bundle from one of his attendants, opened it and pulled out therefrom a piece of tabby silk[297] and spread it under the hoofs of the Caliph's she-mule; then he brought out a piece of velvet-Kimcob[298] and a third of fine satin 202 *and did with them likewise; and thus he spread well nigh twenty pieces of rich stuffs, till Al-Rashid and his suite had reached the house; when he came forward and said, "Bismillah,[299] O Commander of the Faithful!" Quoth Al-Rashid to Ja'afar, "I wonder to whom this house may belong," and quoth he, "It belongeth to a man hight Ibn al-Ukab, Syndic of the Jewellers." So the Caliph dismounted and entering, with his courtiers, saw a high-builded saloon, spacious and boon, with couches on dais and carpets and divans strown in place. So he went up to the couch that was set for himself on four legs of ivory, plated with glittering gold and covered with seven carpets. This pleased him and behold, up came Khalif, with eunuchs and little white slaves, bearing all manner sherbets, compounded with sugar and lemon and perfumed with rose and willow-water and the purest musk. The Fisherman advanced and drank and gave the Caliph to drink, and the cup-bearers came forward and served the rest of the company with the sherbets. Then Khalif brought a table spread with meats of various colours and geese and fowls and other birds, saying, "In the name of Allah!" So they ate their fill; after which he bade remove the tables and kissing the ground three times before the Caliph craved his royal leave to bring wine and music.[300] He granted him permission for this and turning to Ja'afar, said to him, "As my head liveth, the house and that which is therein is Khalif's; for that he is ruler over it and I am in admiration at him, whence there came to him this passing prosperity and exceeding felicity! However, this is no great matter to Him who saith to a thing, 'Be!' and it becometh; what I most wonder at is his understanding, how it hath increased, and whence he hath gotten this loftiness and this lordliness; but, when Allah willeth weal unto a man, He amendeth his intelligence before bringing him to worldly affluence." As they were talking, behold, up came Khalif, followed by cup-bearer lads like moons, belted with zones of gold, who spread a cloth of siglaton[301] and set thereon flagons of chinaware and tall flasks of glass and cups of crystal and bottles and hanaps[302] of all colours; and those flagons* 203 *they filled with pure clear and old wine, whose scent was as the fragrance of virgin musk and it was even as saith the poet:—*

Ply me and also my mate be plied ✿ With pure wine prest in the olden tide.[303]

Daughter of nobles[304] they lead her forth[305] ✿ In raiment of goblets beautified.

They belt her round with the brightest gems, ✿ And pearls and unions, the Ocean's pride;

So I by these signs and signets know ✿ Wherefore the Wine is entitled "Bride."[306]

And round about these vessels were confections and flowers, such as may not be surpassed. When Al-Rashid saw this from Khalif, he inclined to him and smiled upon him and invested him with an office; so Khalif wished him continuance of honour and endurance of days and said, "Will the Commander of the Faithful deign give me leave

to bring him a singer, a lute-player her like was never heard among mortals ever?" Quoth the Caliph, "Thou art permitted!" So he kissed ground before him and going to a secret closet, called Kut al-Kulub, who came after she had disguised and falsed and veiled herself, tripping in her robes and trinkets; and she kissed ground before the Commander of the Faithful. Then she sat down and tuning the lute, touched its strings and played upon it, till all present were like to faint for excess of delight; after which she improvised these verses:—

Would Heaven I wot, will ever Time bring our beloveds back again? ✿ And, ah! will Union and its bliss to bless two lovers deign?

Will Time assure to us united days and joinèd joy, ✿ While from the storms and stowres of life in safety we remain?

Then O Who bade this pleasure be, our parting past and gone, ✿ And made one house our meeting-stead throughout the Nights contain;

By him, draw near me, love, and closest cling to side of me ✿ Else were my wearied wasted life, a vanity, a bane.

When the Caliph heard this, he could not master himself, but rent his raiment and fell down a-swoon; whereupon all who were 204 *present hastened to doff their dress and throw it over him, whilst Kut al-Kulub signed to Khalif and said to him, "Hie to yonder chest and bring us what is therein;" for she had made ready therein a suit of the Caliph's wear against the like of such hour as this. So Khalif brought it to her and she threw it over the Commander of the Faithful, who came to himself and knowing her for Kut al-Kulub, said, "Is this the Day of Resurrection and hath Allah quickened those who are in the tombs; or am I asleep and is this an imbroglio of dreams?" Quoth Kut al-Kulub, "We are on wake, not on sleep, and I am alive, nor have I drained the cup of death." Then she told him all that had befallen her, and indeed, since he lost her, life had not been light to him nor had sleep been sweet, and he abode now wondering, then weeping and anon afire for longing. When she had made an end of her story, the Caliph rose and took her by the hand, intending for her palace, after he had kissed her inner lips, and had strained her to his bosom; whereupon Khalif rose and said, "By Allah, O Commander of the Faithful! Thou hast already wronged me once, and now thou wrongest me again." Quoth Al-Rashid, "Indeed thou speakest sooth, O Khalif," and bade the Wazir Ja'afar give him what should satisfy him. So he straightway gifted him with all for which he wished and assigned him a village, the yearly revenues whereof were twenty thousand dinars. Moreover Kut al-Kulub generously presented him the house and all that was therein of furniture and hangings and white slaves and slave-girls and eunuchs great and small. So Khalif became possessed of this passing affluence and exceeding wealth and took him a wife, and prosperity taught him gravity and dignity, and good fortune overwhelmed him. The Caliph enrolled him among his equerries and he abode in all solace of life and its delights till he deceased and was admitted to the mercy of Allah. Furthermore they relate a tale anent*

34- MASRUR AND ZAYN AL-MAWASIF.[307]

There was once in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before a man and a merchant Masrúr hight, who was of the comeliest of the folk of his tide, a wight of wealth galore and in easiest case; but he loved to take his pleasure in vergiers and flower-gardens and to divert himself with the love of the fair. Now it fortuned one night, as he lay asleep, he dreamt that he was in a garth of the loveliest, wherein were four birds, and amongst them a dove, white as polished silver. That dove pleased him and for her grew up in his heart an exceeding love. Presently, he beheld a great bird swoop down on him and snatch the dove from his hand, and this was grievous to him. After which he awoke and not finding the bird strave with his yearnings till morning, when he said in himself, "There is no help but that I go to-day to some one who will expound to me this vision."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the merchant awoke, he strave with his yearnings till morning when he said to himself, "There is no help but that I go this day to some one who will expound to me this vision." So he went forth and walked right and left, till he was far from his dwelling-place, but found none to interpret the dream to him. Then he would have returned, but on his way behold, the fancy took him to turn aside to the house of a certain trader, a man of the wealthiest, and when he drew near to it, suddenly he heard from within a plaintive voice from a sorrowful heart reciting these couplets:—

206 The breeze o' Morn blows uswards from her trace ✿ Fragrant, and heals the love-sick lover's case.

I stand like captive on the mounds and ask ✿ While tears make answer for the ruined place:

Quoth I, "By Allah, Breeze o' Morning, say ✿ Shall Time and Fortune aye this stead regrace?

Shall I enjoy a fawn whose form bewitched ✿ And languorous eyelids wasted frame and face?"

When Masrur heard this, he looked in through the doorway and saw a garden of the goodliest of gardens, and at its farther end a curtain of red brocade, purfled with pearls and gems, behind which sat four damsels, and amongst them a young lady over four feet and under five in height, as she were the rondure of the lune and the full moon shining boon: she had eyes Kohl'd with nature's dye and joined eyebrows, a mouth as it were Solomon's seal and lips and teeth bright with pearls and coral's light; and indeed she ravished all wits with her beauty and loveliness and symmetry

and perfect grace. When Masrur espied her, he entered the porch and went on entering till he came to the curtain: whereupon she raised her head and glanced at him. So he saluted her and she returned his salam with sweetest speech; and, when he considered her more straitly, his reason was dazed and his heart amazed. Then he looked at the garden and saw that it was full of jessamine and gilly flowers and violets and roses and orange blossoms and all manner sweet-scented blooms and herbs. Every tree was girt about with fruits and there coursed down water from four daises, which faced one another and occupied the four corners of the garden. He looked at the first Líwán and found written around it with vermilion these two couplets:—

Ho thou the House! Grief never home in thee; ✿ Nor Time work treason on thine owner's head:

All good betide the House which every guest ✿ Harbours, when sore distrest for way and stead!

Then he looked at the second daïs and found written thereon in red gold these couplets:—

Robe thee, O House, in richest raiment Time, ✿ Long as the birdies on the branchlets chime!

And sweetest perfumes breathe within thy walls ✿ And lover meet beloved in bliss sublime:

And dwell thy dwellers all in joy and pride ✿ Long as the wandering stars Heaven-hill shall climb.

207 Then he looked at the third, whereon he found written in ultramarine these two couplets:—

Ever thy pomp and pride, O House! display ✿ While starkeneth Night and shineth sheeny Day!

Boon Fortune bless all entering thy walls, ✿ And whomso dwell in thee, for ever and aye!

Then he looked at the fourth and saw painted in yellow characters this couplet:—

This garden and this lake in truth ✿ Are fair sitting-steads, by the Lord of Ruth!

Moreover, in that garden were birds of all breeds, ring-dove and cushat and nightingale and culver, each singing his several song, and amongst them the lady, swaying gracefully to and fro in her beauty and grace and symmetry and loveliness and ravishing all who saw her. Presently quoth she to Masrur, "Hola man! what bringeth thee into a house other than thy house and wherefore comest thou in unto women other than thy women, without leave of their owner?" Quoth he, "O my lady, I saw this garden, and the goodliness of its greenery pleased me and the fragrance of its flowers and the carolling of its birds; so I entered, thinking to gaze on it awhile and wend my way." Said she, "With love and gladness!"; and Masrur was amazed at the sweetness of her speech and the coquetry of her glances and the straightness of her shape, and transported by her beauty and seemlihead and the pleasantness of the garden and the birds. So in the disorder of his spirits he recited these couplets:—

As a crescent-moon in the garth her form ✿ 'Mid Basil and Jasmine and Rose I scan;

And Violet faced by the Myrtle-spray ✿ And Nu'umán's bloom and Myrobalan:

By her perfume the Zephyrs perfumèd breathe ✿ And with scented sighings the branches fan.

O Garden, thou perfect of beauty art ✿ All charms comprising in perfect plan;

And melodious birdies sing madrigals ✿ And the Full Moon[3081] shineth in branch-shade wan;

208 Its ring-dove, its culver, its mocking-bird ✿ And its Philomel sing my soul t' unman;

And the longing of love all my wits confuseth ✿ For her charms, As the man whom his wine bemuseth.

Now when Zayn al-Mawásif heard his verse, she glanced at him with eyes which bequeathed a thousand sighs and utterly ravished his wisdom and wits and replied to him in these lines:—

Hope not of our favours to make thy prey ✿ And of what thou wishest thy greed allay:

And cease thy longing; thou canst not win ✿ The love of the Fair thou'rt fain t' essay,

My glances to lovers are baleful and naught ✿ I reek of thy speech: I have said my say!

"Ho, thou! Begone about thy business, for we are none of the woman-tribe who are neither thine nor another's.[309]" And he answered, "O my lady, I said nothing ill." Quoth she, "Thou soughtest to divert thyself[310] and thou hast had thy diversion; so wend thy ways." Quoth he, "O my lady, belike thou wilt give me a draught of water, for I am athirst." Whereupon she cried, "How canst thou drink of a Jew's water, and thou a Nazarene?" But he replied, "O my lady, your water is not forbidden to us nor ours unlawful to you, for we are all as one creation." So she said to her slave-girl, "Give him to drink;" and she did as she was bidden. Then she called for the table of food, and there came four damsels, high-bosomed maids, bearing four trays of meats and four gilt flagons full of strong old-wine, as it were the tears of a slave of love for clearness, and a table around whose edge were graven these couplets:—

For eaters a table they brought and set ✿ In the banquet-hall and 'twas dight with gold:

Like th' Eternal Garden that gathers all ✿ Man wants of meat and wines manifold.

And when the high-breasted maids had set all this before him, quoth she, "Thou soughtest to drink of our drink; so up and at our meat and drink!" He could hardly credit what his ears had heard and sat down at the table forthright; whereupon she 209 bade her nurse[311] give him a cup, that he might drink. Now her slave-girls were called, one Hubúb, another Khutúb and the third Sukúb,[312] and she who gave him the cup was Hubub. So he took the cup and looking at the outside there saw written these couplets:—

Drain not the bowl but with lovely wight ✿ Who loves thee and wine makes brighter bright.

And 'ware her Scorpions[313] that o'er thee creep ✿ And guard thy tongue lest thou vex her sprite.

Then the cup went round and when he emptied it he looked inside and saw written:—

And 'ware her Scorpions when pressing them, ✿ And hide her secrets from foes' despight.

Whereupon Masrur laughed her-wards and she asked him, "What causeth thee to laugh?" "For the fulness of my joy," quoth he. Presently, the breeze blew on her and the scarf[314] fell from her head and discovered a fillet[315] of glittering gold, set with pearls and gems and jacinths; and on her breast was a necklace of all manner ring-jewels and precious stones, to the centre of which hung a sparrow of red gold, with feet of red coral and bill of white silver and body full of Nadd-powder and pure ambergris and odoriferous musk. And upon its back was engraved:—

The Nadd is my wine-scented powder, my bread; ✿ And the bosom's my bed and the breasts my stead:

And my neck-nape complains of the weight of love, ✿ Of my pain, of my pine, of my drearihead.

Then Masrur looked at the breast of her shift and behold, thereon lay wroughten in red gold this verse:—

The fragrance of musk from the breasts of the fair ✿ Zephyr borrows, to sweeten the morning air.

210 Masrur marvelled at this with exceeding wonder and was dazed by her charms and amazement gat hold upon him. Then said Zayn al-Mawásif to him, "Begone from us and go about thy business, lest the neighbours hear of us and even us with the lewd." He replied, "By Allah, O my lady, suffer my sight to enjoy the view of thy beauty and loveliness." With this she was wroth with him and leaving him, walked in the garden, and he looked at her shift-sleeve and saw upon it embroidered these lines:—

The weaver-wight wrote with gold-ore bright ✿ And her wrists on brocade rained a brighter light:

Her palms are adorned with a silvern sheen; ✿ And favour her fingers the ivory's white:

For their tips are rounded like priceless pearl; ✿ And her charms would enlighten the nightiest night.

And, as she paced the garth, Masrur gazed at her slippers and saw written upon them these pleasant lines:—

The slippers that carry these fair young feet ✿ Cause her form to bend in its gracious bloom:

When she paces and waves in the breeze she owns, ✿ She shines fullest moon in the murkiest gloom.

She was followed by her women leaving Hubub with Masrur by the curtain, upon whose edge were embroidered these couplets:—

Behind the veil a damsel sits with gracious beauty dight, ✿ Praise to the Lord who decked her with these inner gifts of sprite!

Guards her the garden and the bird fain bears her company; ✿ Gladden her wine-draughts and the bowl but makes her brighter-bright.

Apple and Cassia-blossom show their envy of her cheeks; ✿ And borrows Pearl resplendency from her resplendent light;

As though the sperm that gendered her were drop of marguerite[316] ✿ Happy who kisses her and spends in her embrace the night.

So Masrur entered into a long discourse with Hubub and presently said to her, "O Hubub, hath thy mistress a husband or not?" She replied, "My lady hath a husband; but he is actually abroad on a journey with merchandise of his." Now whenas he heard that her husband was abroad on a journey, his heart lusted after her and he said, "O Hubub, glorified be He who created this 211 damsel and fashioned her! How sweet is her beauty and her loveliness and her symmetry and perfect grace! Verily, into my heart is fallen sore travail for her. O Hubub, so do that I come to enjoy her, and thou shalt have of me what thou wilt of wealth and what not else." Replied Hubub, "O Nazarene, if she heard thee speak thus, she would slay thee, or else she would kill herself, for she is the daughter of a Zealot[317] of the Jews nor is there her like amongst them: she hath no need of money and she keepeth herself ever cloistered, discovering

not her case to any." Quoth Masrur, "O Hubub, an thou wilt but bring me to enjoy her, I will be to thee slave and foot page and will serve thee all my life and give thee whatsoever thou seekest of me." But quoth she, "O Masrur, in very sooth this woman hath no lust for money nor yet for men, because my lady Zayn al-Mawasif is of the cloistered, going not forth her house-door in fear lest folk see her; and but that she bore with thee by reason of thy strangerhood, she had not permitted thee to pass her threshold; no, not though thou wert her brother." He replied, "O Hubub, be thou our go-between and thou shalt have of me an hundred gold dinars and a dress worth as much more, for that the love of her hath gotten hold of my heart." Hearing this she said, "O man, let me go about with her in talk and I will return thee an answer and acquaint thee with what she saith. Indeed, she loveth those who berhyme her and she affecteth those who set forth her charms and beauty and loveliness in verse, and we may not prevail over her save by wiles and soft speech and beguilement." Thereupon Hubub rose and going up to her mistress, accosted her with privy talk of this and that and presently said to her, "O my lady, look at yonder young man, the Nazarene; how sweet is his speech and how shapely his shape!" When Zayn al-Mawasif heard this, she turned to her and said, "An thou like his comeliness love him thyself. Art thou not ashamed to address the like of me with these words? Go, bid him begone about his business; or I will make it the worse for him." So Hubub returned to Masrur, but acquainted him not with that which her mistress had said. Then the lady bade her hie to the door and look if she saw any of the folk, lest foul befal them. So she went and returning, said, "O my lady, without are folk in plenty and we cannot let him go forth this night." Quoth Zayn al-Mawasif, "I am in dole because of a dream I have seen 212 and am fearful therefrom." And Masrur said, "What sawest thou? Allah never trouble thy heart!" She replied, "I was asleep in the middle of the night, when suddenly an eagle swooped down upon me from the highest of the clouds and would have carried me off from behind the curtain, wherefore I was affrighted at him. Then I awoke from sleep and bade my women bring me meat and drink, so haply, when I had drunken, the dolour of the dream would cease from me." Hearing this, Masrur smiled and told her his dream from first to last and how he had caught the dove, whereat she marvelled with exceeding marvel. Then he went on to talk with her at great length and said, "I am now certified of the truth of my dream, for thou art the dove and I the eagle, and there is no hope but that this must be, for, the moment I set eyes on thee, thou tookest possession of my vitals and settest my heart afire for love of thee!" Thereupon Zayn al-Mawasif became wroth with exceeding wrath and said to him, "I take refuge with Allah from this! Allah upon thee, begone about thy business ere the neighbours espy thee and there betide us sore reproach," adding, "Harkye, man! Let not thy soul covet that it shall not obtain. Thou weariest thyself in vain; for I am a merchant's wife and a merchant's daughter and thou art a druggist; and when sawest thou a druggist and a merchant's daughter conjoined by such sentiment?" He replied, "O my lady, never lacked love-liesse between folk[318]; so cut thou not off from me

hope of this and whatsoever thou seekest of me of money and raiment and ornaments and what not else, I will give thee." Then he abode with her in discourse and mutual blaming whilst she still redoubled in anger, till it was black night, when he said to her, "O my lady, take this gold piece and fetch me a little wine, for I am athirst and heavy hearted." So she said to the slave-girl Hubub, "Fetch him wine and take naught from him, for we have no need of his dinar." So she went whilst Masrur held his peace and bespake not the lady, who suddenly improvised these lines:—

Leave this thy design and depart, O man! ✿ Nor tread paths where lewdness and crime trepan!
Love is a net shall enmesh thy sprite, ✿ Make thee rise a-morning sad, weary and wan:
For our spy thou shalt eke be the cause of talk; ✿ And for thee shall blame me my tribe and clan:
213 Yet scant I marvel thou lovest a Fair:— ✿ Gazelles hunting lions we aye shall scan!

And he answered her with these:—

Joy of boughs, bright branch of Myrobalan! ✿ Have ruth on the heart all thy charms unman:
Death-cup to the dregs thou garrest me drain ✿ And don weed of Love with its bane and ban:
How can soothe I a heart which for stress of pine ✿ Burns with living coals which my longings fan?

Hearing these lines she exclaimed, "Away from me! Quoth the saw 'Whoso looseth his sight wearieth his sprite.' By Allah, I am tired of discourse with thee and chiding, and indeed thy soul coveteth that shall never become thine; nay, though thou gave me my weight in gold, thou shouldst not get thy wicked will of me; for, I know naught of the things of the world, save pleasant life, by the boon of Allah Almighty!" He answered, "O my lady Zayn al-Mawasif, ask of me what thou wilt of the goods of the world." Quoth she, "What shall I ask of thee? For sure thou wilt fare forth and prate of me in the highway and I shall become a laughing-stock among the folk and they will make a byword of me in verse, me who am the daughter of the chief of the merchants and whose father is known of the notables of the tribe. I have no need of money or raiment and such love will not be hidden from the people and I shall be brought to shame, I and my kith and kin." With this Masrur was confounded and could make her no answer; but presently she said, "Indeed, the master-thief, if he steal, stealeth not but what is worth his neck, and every woman who doth lewdness with other than her husband is styled a thief; so, if it must be thus and no help[319], thou shalt give me whatsoever my heart desireth of money and raiment and ornaments and what not." Quoth he, "An thou sought of me the world and all its regions contain from its East to its West, 'twere but a little thing, compared with thy favour;" and quoth she, "I will have of thee three suits, each worth a thousand Egyptian dinars, and adorned with gold and fairly purfled with pearls and jewels and jacinths, 214 the best of their kind. Furthermore I require that thou swear to me thou wilt keep my secret nor discover it to any and that thou wilt company with none but me; and I in turn will swear to thee a true oath that I will never false thee in love." So he sware to her the oath she required and she sware to him, and they agreed upon this; after which she

said to her nurse Hubub, "To-morrow go thou with Masrur to his lodging and seek somewhat of musk and ambergris and Nadd and rose-water and see what he hath. If he be a man of condition, we will take him into favour; but an he be otherwise we will leave him." Then said she to him, "O Masrur, I desire somewhat of musk and ambergris and aloes-wood and Nadd; so do thou send it me by Hubub;" and he answered, "With love and gladness; my shop is at thy disposal!" Then the wine went round between them and their séance was sweet; but Masrur's heart was troubled for the passion and pining which possessed him; and when Zayn al-Mawasif saw him in this plight, she said to her slave-girl Sukub, "Arouse Masrur from his stupor; mayhap he will recover." Answered Sukub, "Hearkening and obedience," and sang these couplets:—

Bring gold and gear an a lover thou, ✿ And hymn thy love so success shalt row;
Joy the smiling fawn with the black-edged eyne ✿ And the bending lines of the Cassia-bough:
On her look, and a marvel therein shalt sight, ✿ And pour out thy life ere thy life-term show:
Love's affect be this, an thou weet the same; ✿ But, an gold deceive thee, leave gold and go!

Hereupon Masrur understood her and said, "I hear and apprehend. Never was grief but after came relief, and after affliction dealing He will order the healing." Then Zayn al-Mawasif recited these couplets:—

From Love-stupor awake, O Masrur, 'twere best; ✿ For this day I dread my love rend thy breast;
And to-morrow I fear me folks' marvel-tale ✿ Shall make us a byword from East to West:
Leave love of my like or thou'lt gain thee blame; ✿ Why turn thee uswards? Such love's unblest!
For one strange of lineage whose kin repel ✿ Thou shalt wake ill-famed, of friends dispossest:
I'm a Zealot's child and affright the folk; ✿ Would my life were ended and I at rest!

215 Then Masrur answered her improvisation and began to say these lines:—

To grief leave a heart that to love ne'er ceased; ✿ Nor blame, for your blame ever love increased:
You misrule my vitals in tyrant-guise; ✿ Morn and Eve I wend not or West or East;
Love's law forbids me to do me die; ✿ They say Love's victim is ne'er released:
Well-away! Could I find in Love's Court a judge ✿ I'd 'plain and win to my rights at least.

They ceased not from mutual chiding till morning morrowed, when Zayn al-Mawasif said, "O Masrur 'tis time for thee to depart, lest one of the folk see thee and foul befal us twain." So he arose and accompanied by nurse Hubub fared on, till they came to his lodging, where he talked with her and said to her, "All thou seekest of me is ready for thee, so but thou wilt bring me to enjoy her." Hubub replied, "Hearten thy heart;" whereupon he rose and gave her an hundred dinars, saying "O Hubub, I have by me a dress worth an hundred gold pieces." Answered she, "O Masrur, make haste with the trinkets and other things promised her, ere she change her mind, for we may not take her, save with wile and guile, and she loveth the saying of verse." Quoth he, "Hearing and obeying," and bringing her the musk and ambergris and lign-aloes and rose-water, returned with her to Zayn al-Mawasif and saluted her. She returned his salam

with the sweetest speech, and he was dazed by her beauty and improvised these lines:—

O thou sheeniest Sun who in night dost shine! ✿ O who stole my soul with those large black eyne!
O slim-shaped fair with the graceful neck! ✿ O who shamest Rose wi' those cheeks o' thine!
Blind not our sight wi' thy fell disdain, ✿ Disdain, that shall load us with pain and pine;
Passion homes in our inmost, nor will be quenched ✿ The fire of yearning in vitals li'en:
Your love has housèd in heart of me ✿ And of issue but you see I ne'er a sign:
Then haply you'll pity this hapless wight ✿ Thy sad lover and then—O the Morn divine!

When Zayn al-Mawasif heard his verses, she cast at him a glance of eyes, that bequeathed him a thousand regrets and sighs and his 216 wits and soul were ravished in such wise, and answered him with these couplets[320]:—

Think not from her, of whom thou art enamoured aye ✿ To win delight; so put desire from thee away.
Leave that thou hop'st, for 'gainst her rigours whom thou lov'st ✿ Among the fair, in vain is all thou canst essay.
My looks to lovers bring discomfiture and woe: ✿ Indeed, I make no count of that which thou dost say.

When Masrur heard this, he hardened his heart and took patience concealing his case and saying in himself, "There is nothing for it against calamity save long-suffering;" and after this fashion they abode till nightfall when Zayn al-Mawasif called for food and they set before her a tray, wherein were all manner of dishes, quails and pigeons and mutton and so forth, whereof they ate their sufficiency. Then she bade take away the tables and they did so and fetched the lavatory gear; and they washed their hands, after which she ordered her women to bring the candlesticks, and they set on candelabra and candles therein of camphorated wax. Thereupon quoth Zayn al-Mawasif, "By Allah, my breast is straitened this night and I am a-fevered;" and quoth Masrur "Allah broaden thy breast and banish thy bane!" Then she said, "O Masrur, I am used to play at chess: say me, knowest aught of the game?" He replied, "Yes; I am skilled therein;" whereupon she commanded her handmaid Hubub fetch her the chessboard. So she went away and presently returning with the board, set it before her, and behold, it was of ivory-marquetried ebony with squares marked in glittering gold, and its pieces of pearl and ruby.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif bade the chessboard be brought, they set it between her hands; and Masrur was amazed at this, when she turned to him and said, "Wilt have red or white?" He replied, "O Princess of the fair and adornment of morning air, do thou take 217 the red for they formous are and fitter for the like of thee to bear and leave the white to my care." Answered she, "So be it;" and, taking the red pieces, ranged them opposite the white, then put out her

hand to a piece purposing the first pass into the battle-plain. Masrur considered her fingers, which were white as paste, and was confounded at their beauty and shapely shape; whereupon she turned to him and said, "O Masrur, be not bedazed, but take patience and calm thyself." He rejoined, "O thou whose beauty shameth the moon, how shall a lover look on thee and have patience-boon?" And while this was doing she cried, "Checkmate[321]!" and beat him; wherefore she knew that he was Jinn-mad for love of her and said to him, "O Masrur, I will not play with thee save for a set stake." He replied, "I hear and obey," and she rejoined, "Swear to me and I will swear to thee that neither of us will cheat[322] the adversary." So both sware this and she said, "O Masrur, an I beat thee, I will have ten dinars of thee, but an thou beat me, I will give thee a mere nothing." He expected to win, so he said, "O my lady, be not false to thine oath, for I see thou art an overmatch for me at this game!" "Agreed," said she and they ranged their men and fell again to playing and pushing on their pawns and catching them up with the queens and aligning and matching them with the castles and solacing them with the onslaught of the knights. Now the "Adornment of Qualities" wore on head a kerchief of blue brocade so she loosed it off and tucking up her sleeve, showed a wrist like a shaft of light and passed her palm over the red pieces, saying to him, "Look to thyself." But he was dazzled at her beauty, and the sight of her graces bereft him of reason, so that he became dazed and amazed and put out his hand to the white men, but it alit upon the red. Said she, "O Masrur, where be thy wits? The red are mine and the white thine;" and he replied, "Whoso looketh at thee perforce loseth all his senses." Then, seeing how it was with him, she took the white from him and gave him the red, and they played and she beat him. He 218ceased not to play with her and she to beat him, whilst he paid her each time ten dinars, till, knowing him to be distraught for love of her, she said, "O Masrur, thou wilt never win to thy wish, except thou beat me, for such was our understanding; and henceforth, I will not play with thee save for a stake of an hundred dinars a game." "With love and gladness," answered he and she went on playing and ever beating him and he paid her an hundred dinars each time; and on this wise they abode till the morning, without his having won a single game, when he suddenly sprang to his feet. Quoth she, "What wilt thou do, O Masrur?"; and quoth he, "I mean to go to my lodging and fetch somewhat of money: it may be I shall come to my desire." "Do whatso seemeth good to thee," said she; so he went home and taking all the money he had, returned to her improvising these two couplets:—

In dream I saw a bird o'er speed (meseem'd), ✿ Love's garden decked with blooms that smiled and gleamed:
But I shall ken, when won my wish and will ✿ Of thee, the truthful sense of what I dreamed.

Now when Masrur returned to her with all his monies they fell a-playing again; but she still beat him and he could not beat her once; and in such case they abode three days, till she had gotten of him the whole of his coin; whereupon said she, "O Masrur, what wilt thou do now?"; and he replied, "I will stake thee a druggist's shop." "What

is its worth?" asked she; and he answered, "Five hundred dinars." So they played five bouts and she won the shop of him. Then he betted his slave-girls, lands, houses, gardens, and she won the whole of them, till she had gotten of him all he had; whereupon she turned to him and said, "Hast thou aught left to lay down?" Cried he, "By Him who made me fall into the snare of thy love, I have neither money to touch nor aught else left, little or much!" She rejoined, "O Masrur, the end of whatso began in content shall not drive man to repent; wherefore, an thou regret aught, take back thy good and begone from us about thy business and I will hold thee quit towards me." Masrur rejoined, "By Him who decreed these things to us, though thou sought to take my life 'twere a wee thing to stake for thine approof, because I love none but thee!" Then said she, "O Masrur, fare forthright and fetch the Kazi and the witnesses and make over to me by deed all thy lands and 219 possessions." "Willingly," replied he and, going forth without stay or delay, brought the Kazi and the witnesses and set them before her. When the judge saw her, his wits fled and his mind was amazed and his reason was dazed for the beauty of her fingers, and he said to her, "O my lady, I will not write out the writ of conveyance, save upon condition that thou buy the lands and mansions and slave-girls and that they all pass under thy control and into thy possession." She rejoined, "We're agreed upon that. Write me a deed, whereby all Masrur's houses and lands and slave-girls and whatso his right hand possesseth shall pass to Zayn al-Mawasif and become her property at such a price." So the Kazi wrote out the writ and the witnesses set hands thereto; whereupon she took it.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif took from the Kazi the deed which made over to her lover's property she said to him, "O Masrur, now gang thy gait." But her slave-girl Hubub turned to him and said, "Recite us some verses." So he improvised upon that game of chess these couplets:—

Of Time and what befel me I complain, ✿ Mourning my loss by chess and eyes of bane.
For love of gentlest, softest-sided fair ✿ Whose like is not of maids or mortal strain:
The shafts of glances from those eyne who shot ✿ And led her conquering host to battle-plain
Red men and white men and the clashing Knights ✿ And, crying "Look to thee!" came forth amain:
And, when down charging, finger-tips she showed ✿ That gloomed like blackest night for sable stain,
The Whites I could not rescue, could not save ✿ While ecstasy made tear-floods rail and rain:
The Pawns and Castles with their Queens fell low ✿ And fled the Whites nor could the brunt sustain:
Yea, with her shaft of glance at me she shot ✿ And soon that shaft had pierced my heart and brain:
She gave me choice between her hosts, and I ✿ The Whites like moonlight first to choose was fain,
Saying, "This argent folk best fitteth me ✿ I love them, but the Red by thee be ta'en!"
220 She playèd me for free accepted stake ✿ Yet amorous mercy I could ne'er obtain:
O fire of heart, O pine and woe of me, ✿ Wooing a fair like moon mid starry train:

Burns no my heart O no! nor aught regrets ✿ Of good or land, but ah! her eyes' disdain!
Amazed I'm grown and dazed for drearihead ✿ And blame I Time who brought such pine and pain.
Quoth she, "Why art thou so bedazed!" quoth I ✿ "Wine-drunken wight shall more of wine assain?"
That mortal stole my sense by silk-soft shape, ✿ Which doth for heart-core hardest rock contain.
I nervèd self and cried, "This day she's mine" ✿ By bet, nor fear I prove she unhumàne:
My heart ne'er ceased to seek possession, till ✿ Beggared I found me for conditions twain:
Will youth you loveth shun the Love-dealt blow, ✿ Tho' were he whelmed in Love's high-surging main?
So woke the slave sans e'en a coin to turn, ✿ Thralled to repine for what he ne'er shall gain!

Zayn al-Mawasif hearing these words marvelled at the eloquence of his tongue and said to him, "O Masrur, leave this madness and return to thy right reason and wend thy ways; for thou hast wasted all thy moveables and immoveables at the chess-game, yet hast not won thy wish, nor hast thou any resource or device whereby thou mayst attain to it." But he turned to her and said, "O my lady, ask of me whatso thou wilt and thou shalt have it; for I will bring it to thee and lay it at thy feet." Answered she, "O Masrur, thou hast no money left." "O goal of all hopes, if I have no money, the folk will help me." "Shall the giver turn asker?" "I have friends and kinsfolk, and whatsoever I seek of them, they will give me." "O Masrur, I will have of thee four pods of musk and four vases of civet[323] and four pounds of ambergris and four thousand dinars and four hundred pieces of royal brocade, purfled with gold. An thou bring me these things, O Masrur, I will grant thee my favours." "This is a light matter to me, O thou that puttest the moons to shame," replied he and went forth to fetch her what she sought. She sent her maid Hubub after him, to see what worth he had with the folk of whom he had 221 spoken to her; but, as he walked along the highways he turned and seeing her afar off, waited till she came up to him and said to her, "Whither away, O Hubub?" So she said to him, "My mistress sent me to follow for this and that," and he replied, "By Allah, O Hubub, I have nothing to hand!" She asked, "Then why didst thou promise her?"; and he answered, "How many a promise made is unkept of its maker! Fine words in love-matters needs must be." When she heard this from him, she said, "O Masrur, be of good cheer and eyes clear for, by Allah, most assuredly I will be the means of thy coming to enjoy her!" Then she left him nor ceased walking till she stood before her mistress weeping with sore weeping, and said, "O my lady, indeed he is a man of great consideration, and good repute among the folk." Quoth Zayn al-Mawasif, "There is no device against the destiny of Almighty Allah! Verily, this man found not in me a pitiful heart, for that I despoiled him of his substance and he got of me neither affection nor complaisance in granting him amorous joy; but, if I incline to his inclination, I fear lest the thing be bruited abroad." Quoth Hubub, "O my lady, verily, grievous upon us is his present plight and the loss of his good and thou hast with thee none save thyself and thy slave-girl Sukub; so which of us two would dare prate of thee, and we thy handmaids?" With this, she bowed her head for a while groundwards and the damsels said to her, "O my

lady, it is our rede that thou send after him and show him grace and suffer him not ask of the sordid; for how bitter is such begging!" So she accepted their counsel and calling for inkcase and paper, wrote him these couplets:—

Joy is nigh, O Masrúr, so rejoice in true rede; ✿ Whenas night shall fall thou shalt do kind-deed:
Crave not of the sordid a loan, fair youth, ✿ Wine stole my wits but they now take heed:
All thy good I reft shall return to thee, ✿ O Masrúr, and I'll add to them amorous meed;
For indeed th' art patient, and sweet of soul ✿ When wronged by thy lover's tyrannic greed.
So haste to enjoy us and luck to thee! ✿ Lest my folk come between us speed, love, all speed!
Hurry uswards thou, nor delay, and while ✿ My mate is far, on Love's fruit come feed.

Then she folded the paper and gave it to Hubub the handmaid, who carried it to Masrur and found him weeping and reciting in a transport of passion and love-longing these lines:—

222 A breeze of love on my soul did blow ✿ That consumed my liver for stress of lowe;
When my sweetheart went all my longings grew; ✿ And with tears in torrent mine eyelids flow:
Such my doubt and fears, did I tell their tale ✿ To deaf rocks and pebbles they'd melt for woe.
Would Heaven I wot shall I sight delight, ✿ And shall win my wish and my friend shall know!
Shall be folded up nights that doomed us part ✿ And I be healed of what harms my heart?

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that while Masrur, transported by passion and love-longing, was repeating his couplets in sing-song tone Hubub knocked at his door; so he rose and opened to her, and she entered and gave him the letter. He read it and said to her, "O Hubub, what is behind thee of thy lady's news[324]?" She answered, "O my lord, verily, in this letter is that dispenseth me from reply, for thou art of those who readily descry!" Thereat he rejoiced with joy exceeding and repeated these two couplets:—

Came the writ whose contents a new joy revealed, ✿ Which in vitals mine I would keep ensealed:
And my longings grew when I kissed that writ, ✿ As were pearl of passion therein concealed.

Then he wrote a letter answering hers and gave it to Hubub, who wrote it and returned with it to her mistress and forthright fell to extolling his charms to her and expiating on his good gifts and generosity; for she was become a helper to him, to bring about his union with her lady. Quoth Zayn al-Mawasif, "O Hubub, indeed he tarrieth to come to us;" and quoth Hubub, "He will certainly come soon." Hardly had she made an end of speaking when behold, he knocked at the door, and she opened to him and 223 brought him in to her mistress, who saluted him with the salam[325] and welcomed him and seated him by her side. Then she said to Hubub, "Bring me a suit of brocade;" so she brought a robe broidered with gold and Zayn al-Mawasif threw it over him, whilst she herself donned one of the richest dresses and crowned her head

with a net of pearls of the freshest water. About this she bound a fillet of brocade, purfled with pearls, jacinths and other jewels, from beneath which she let down two tresses[326] each looped with a pendant of ruby, charactered with glittering gold, and she loosed her hair, as it were the sombrest night; and lastly she incensed herself with aloes-wood and scented herself with musk and ambergris, and Hubub said to her, "Allah save thee from the evil eye!" Then she began to walk, swaying from side to side with gracefullest gait, whilst Hubub who excelled in verse-making, recited in her honour these couplets:—

Shamed is the bough of Bán by pace of her; ✿ And harmed are lovers by the gaze of her.

A moon she rose from murks, the hair of her, ✿ A sun from locks the brow encase of her:

Blest he she nights with by the grace of her, ✿ Who dies in her with oath by days of her!

So Zayn al-Mawasif thanked her and went up to Masrur, as she were full moon displayed. But when he saw her, he rose to his feet and exclaimed, "An my thought deceive me not, she is no human, but one of the brides of Heaven!" Then she called for food and they brought a table, about whose marge were written these couplets[327]:—

Dip thou with spoons in saucers four and gladden heart and eye With many a various kind of stew and fricassee and fry.

Thereon fat quails (ne'er shall I cease to love and tender them) And rails and fowls and dainty birds of all the kinds that fly.

Glory to God for the Kabobs, for redness all aglow, And potherbs, steeped in vinegar, in porringers thereby!

224 Fair fall the rice with sweet milk dressed, wherein the hands did plunge And eke the forearms of the fair were buried, bracelet-high!

How my heart yearneth with regret over two plates of fish That by two manchet-cakes of bread of Tewarij[328] did lie!

Then they ate and drank and made mirth and merriment, after which the servants removed the table of food and set on the wine service; so cup and tasse[329] passed round between them and they were gladdened in soul. Then Masrur filled the cup and saying, "O whose thrall am I and who is my mistress!"[330] chanted these improvised couplets:—

Mine eyes I admire that can feed their fill ✿ On charms of a girl rising worlds to light:

In her time she hath none to compare for gifts ✿ Of spirit and body a mere delight.

Her shape breeds envy in Cassia-tree ✿ When fares she forth in her symmetry dight:

With luminous brow shaming moon of dark ✿ And crown-like crescent the brightest bright.

When treads she earth' surface her fragrance scents ✿ The Zephyr that breathes over plain and height.

When he ended his extempore song she said, "O Masrur, whoso religiously keepeth his faith and hath eaten our bread and salt, it behoveth us to give him his due; so put away from thee all thought of what hath been and I will restore thee thy lands and houses and all we have taken from thee." He replied, "O my lady, I acquit thee of that whereof thou speakest, though thou hadst been false to the oath and covenant between

us; for I will go and become a Moslem." Zayn al-Mawasif protested that she would follow suit[331] when Hubub cried to her, "O my lady, thou 225 art young of years and knowest many things, and I claim the intercession of Almighty Allah with thee for, except thou do my bidding and heal my heart, I will not lie the night with thee in the house." And she replied, "O Hubub, it shall be as thou wilt. Rise and make us ready another sitting-room." So she sprang to her feet and gat ready a room and adorned and perfumed it after fairest fashion even as her lady loved and preferred; after which she again set on food and wine, and the cup went round between them and their hearts were glad.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif bade her maid Hubub make ready a private sitting-room she arose and did her bidding, after which she again set food and wine before them and cup and tasse went round gladdening their hearts. Presently quoth Zayn al-Mawasif, "O Masrur, come is the time of Union and favour; so, as thou studiest my love to savour recite us some verses surpassing of flavour." Upon this he recited the following ode[332]:—

I am taken: my heart burns with living flame
For Union shorn whenas Severance came,
In the love of a damsel who forced my soul
And with delicate cheeklet my reason stole.
She hath eyebrows united and eyes black-white
And her teeth are leven that smiles in light:
The tale of her years is but ten plus four;—
Tears like Dragon's blood[333] for her love I pour.
First I saw that face 'mid parterre and rill,
Outshining full Lune on horizon-hill;
And stood like a captive for awe, and cried,
"Allah's Peace, O who in demesne[334] doth hide!"
She returned my salam, gaily answering
With the sweetest speech likest pearls a-string.
But when heard my words, she right soon had known
My want and her heart waxed hard as stone,
And quoth she, "Be not this a word silly-bold?"
But quoth I, "Refrain thee nor flyte and scold!
An to-day thou consent such affair were light;
226 Thy like is the loved, mine the lover-wight!"
When she knew my mind she but smiled in mirth
And cried, "Now, by the Maker of Heaven and Earth!
"I'm a Jewess of Jewry's driest e'er seen

And thou art naught save a Nazarene.
“Why seek my favours? Thine’s other caste;
An this deed thou do thou’lt repent the past.
“Say, does Love allow with two Faiths to play?
Men shall blame thee like me, at each break of day!
“Wilt thou laugh at beliefs and deride their rite,
And in thine and mine prove thee sinful sprite?
“An thou lovedest me thou hadst turnèd Jew,
Losing worlds for love and my favours due;
“And by the Evangel strong oath hadst sworn
To keep our secret intact from scorn!”
So I took the Torah and sware strong oath
I would hold to the covenant made by both.
Then by law, religion and creed I sware,
And bound her by oaths that most binding were;
And asked her, “Thy name, O my dear delight?”
And she, “Zayn al-Mawásif at home I’m hight!”
“O Zayn al-Mawasif!” (cried I) “Hear my call:
Thy love hath made me thy veriest thrall!”
Then I peeped ’neath her chin-veil and ’spied such charms
That the longing of love filled my heart with qualms.
’Neath the curtain I ceased not to humble me,
And complain of my heart-felt misery;
But when she saw me by Love beguiled
She raised her face-veil and sweetly smiled:
And when breeze of Union our faces kiss’d
With musk-pod she scented fair neck and wrist;
And the house with her essences seemed to drip,
And I kissed pure wine from each smiling lip:
Then like branch of Bán ’neath her robe she swayed
And joys erst unlawful[335] she lawful made:
And joined, conjoined through our night we lay
With clip, kiss of inner lip, *langue fourrée*.
The world hath no grace but the one loved fere
In thine arms to clasp with possession sheer!
With the morn she rose and she bade Good-bye
While her brow shone brighter than moon a-sky;
Reciting at parting (while tear-drops hung
On her cheeks, these scattered and other strung),[336]
“Allah’s pact in mind all my life I’ll bear
And the lovely nights and strong oath I sware.”

227Zayn al-Mawasif was delighted and said to him, “O Masrur, how goodly are thy inner gifts! May he live not who would harm thy heart!” Then she entered her boudoir and called him: so he went in to her and taking her in his arms, embraced her and hugged her and kissed her and got of her that which he had deemed impossible and rejoiced in winning the sweet of amorous will. Then said she, “O Masrur, thy good is unlawful to me and is lawfully thine again now that we are become lovers.” So she returned to him all she had taken of him and asked him, “O Masrur, hast thou a flower-garden whither we may wend and take our pleasure?”; whereto he answered, “Yes, O my lady, I have a garden that hath not its like.” Then he returned to his lodgings and bade his slave-girls make ready a splendid banquet in a handsome room; after which he summoned Zayn al-Mawasif who came surrounded by her damsels, and they ate and drank and made mirth and merriment, whilst the cup passed round between them and their spirits rose high. Then lover withdrew with beloved and Zayn al-Mawasif said to Masrur, “I have bethought me of some dainty verses, which I would fain sing to the lute.” He replied, “Do sing them”; so she took the lute and tuning it, sang to a pleasant air these couplets:—

Joy from stroke of string doth to me incline, ✿ And sweet is a-morning our early wine;
Whenas Love unveileth the amourist’s heart, ✿ And by rending the veil he displays his sign,
With a draught so pure, so dear, so bright, ✿ As in hand of Moons[337] the Sun’s sheeny shine
O’ nights it cometh with joy to ’rase ✿ The hoar of sorrow by boon divine.

Then ending her verse, she said to him, “O Masrur, recite us somewhat of thy poetry and favour us with the fruit of thy thought.” So he recited these two couplets:—

We joy in full Moon who the wine bears round, ✿ And in concert of lutes that from gardens sound;
Where the dove moans at dawn and where bends the bough ✿ To Morn, and all pathways of pleasure are found.

When he had finished his recitation she said to him, “Make us some verses on that which hath passed between us an thou be 228occupied with love of me.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif said to Masrur, “An thou be occupied with love of me, make us some verses on that hath passed between us,” “With love and gladness,” he replied and improvised the following Kasídah[338]:—

Stand thou and hear what fell to me ✿ For love of you gazelle to dree!
Shot me a white doe with her shaft ✿ O’ glances wounding woundily.
Love was my ruin, for was I ✿ Straitened by longing ecstasy:
I loved and woo’d a young coquette ✿ Girded by strong artillery,
Whom in a garth I first beheld ✿ A form whose sight was symmetry.
I greeted her and when she deigned ✿ Greeting return, “Salám,” quoth she

“What be thy name?” said I, she said, ✿ My name declares my quality![339]
“Zayn al-Mawásif I am hight.” ✿ Cried I, “Oh deign I mercy see,
“Such is the longing in my heart ✿ No lover claimeth rivalry!”
Quoth she, “With me an thou ’rt in love ✿ And to enjoy me pleadest plea,
“I want of thee oh! muchel wealth; ✿ Beyond all compt my wants o’ thee!
“I want o’ thee full many a robe ✿ Of sendal, silk and damaskry;
“A quarter quintal eke of musk: ✿ These of one night shall pay the fee.
“Pearls, unions and carnelian[340]-stones ✿ The bestest best of jewelry!”
Of fairest patience showed I show ✿ In contrariety albe:
At last she favoured me one night ✿ When rose the moon a crescent wee;
An stranger blame me for her sake ✿ I say, “O blamers listen ye!
She showeth locks of goodly length ✿ And black as blackest night its blee;
While on her cheeks the roses glow ✿ Like Lazá-flame incendiary:
In every eyelash is a sword ✿ And every glance hath archery:
Her liplets twain old wine contain, ✿ And dews of fount-like purity:
Her teeth resemble strings o’ pearls, ✿ Arrayed in line and fresh from sea:
Her neck is like the neck of doe, ✿ Pretty and carven perfectly:
Her bosom is a marble slab ✿ Whence rise two breasts like towers on lea:
And on her stomach shows a crease ✿ Perfumed with rich perfumery;
Beneath which same there lurks a Thing ✿ Limit of mine expectancy.”
229 A something rounded, cushioned-high ✿ And plump, my lords, to high degree:
To me ’tis likest royal throne ✿ Whither my longings wander free;
There ’twixt two pillars man shall find ✿ Benches of high-built tracery.
It hath specific qualities ✿ Drive sanest men t’ insanity;
Full mouth it hath like mouth of neck ✿ Or well begirt by stony key;
Firm lips with camelry’s compare ✿ And shows it eye of cramoisie.
An draw thou nigh with doughty will ✿ To do thy doing lustily,
Thou’ll find it fain to face thy bout ✿ And strong and fierce in valiancy.
It bendeth backwards every brave ✿ Shorn of his battle-bravery.
At times imberbe, but full of spunk ✿ To battle with the Paynimry.
’Twill show thee liveliness galore ✿ And perfect in its raillery:
Zayn al-Mawasif it is like ✿ Complete in charms and courtesy.
To her dear arms one night I came ✿ And won meed given lawfully:
I passed with her that self-same night ✿ (Best of my nights!) in gladdest glee;
And when the morning rose, she rose ✿ And crescent like her visnomy:
Then swayed her supple form as sway ✿ The lances lopt from limber tree;
And when farewelling me she cried, ✿ “When shall such nights return to me?”

Then I replied, “O eyen-light, ✿ When He vouchsafeth His decree!”[341]

Zayn al-Mawasif was delighted with this Ode and the utmost gladness gat hold of her. Then said she, “O Masrur day-dawn draweth nigh and there is naught for it save to fly for fear of scandal and spy!” He replied, “I hear and obey,” and rising led her to her lodging, after which he returned to his quarters[342] and passed the rest of the night pondering on her charms. When the morning morrowed with its sheen and shone, he made ready a splendid present and carried it to her and sat by her side. And thus they abode awhile, in all solace of life and its delight, till one day there came to Zayn al-Mawasif a letter from her husband reporting to her his speedy return. Thereupon she said in herself, “May Allah not keep him nor quicken him! If he come hither, our life will be troubled: would Heaven I might despair of him!” Presently entered Masrur and sat with her at chat, as was his wont, whereupon she said to him, “O Masrur, I have received a missive from my mate, announcing his speedy return from his wayfaring. What is to be done, since neither of us without other 230 can live?” He replied, “I know not; but thou art better able to judge, being acquainted with the ways of thy man, more by token that thou art one of the sharpest-witted of women and past mistress of devices such as devise that whereof fail the wise.” Quoth she, “He is a hard man and jealous of his household: but, when he shall come home and thou hearest of his coming, do thou repair to him and salute him and sit down by his side, saying:—O my brother, I am a druggist. Then buy of him somewhat of drugs and spices of sorts and call upon him frequently and prolong thy talks with him and gainsay him not in whatsoever he shall bid thee; so haply that I would contrive may betide, as it were by chance.” “I hear and I obey,” quoth Masrur and fared forth from her, with heart afire for love. When her husband came home, she rejoiced in meeting him and after saluting him bade him welcome; but he looked in her face and seeing it pale and sallow (for she had washed it with saffron, using one of women’s arts), asked her of her case. She answered that she had been sick, she and her women, from the time of his wayfaring, adding, “Verily, our hearts have been engrossed with thoughts of thee because of the length of thine absence.” And she went on to complain to him of the misery of separation and to pour forth copious tears, saying, “Hadst thou but a companion with thee, my heart had not borne all this cark and care for thee. So, Allah upon thee, O my lord, travel not again without a comrade and cut me not off from news of thee, that my heart and mind may be at rest concerning thee!”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif said to her mate, “Travel not without comrade and cut me not off from news of thee, that my heart and mind may be at rest concerning thee,” he replied, “With love and gladness! By Allah thy bede is good indeed and right is thy rede! By thy life, it shall be as thou dost heed.” Then he unpacked some of his stock-in-trade and carrying the goods to his

shop, opened it and sat down to sell in the Soko.[343] No sooner had he 231 taken his place than lo and behold! up came Masrur and saluting him, sat down by his side and began talking and talked with him awhile. Then he pulled out a purse and taking forth gold, handed it to Zayn al-Mawasif's man and said, "Give me the worth of these dinars in drugs and spices of sorts, that I may sell them in my shop." The Jew replied, "I hear and I obey," and gave him what he sought. And Masrur continued to pay him frequent visits till, one day, the merchant said to him, "I have a mind to take me a man to partner in trade." Quoth Masrur, "And I also, desire to take a partner; for my father was a merchant in the land of Al-Yaman and left me great store of money and I fear lest it fare from me." Quoth the Jew, turning towards him, "Wilt thou be my partner, and I will be thy partner and a true friend and comrade to thee at home and abroad; and I will teach thee selling and buying, giving and taking." And Masrur rejoined, "With all my heart." So the merchant carried him to his place and seated him in the vestibule, whilst he went in to his wife and said to her, "I have provided me with a partner and have bidden him hither as a guest; so do thou get us ready good guest-cheer." Whenas she heard this, she rejoiced divining that it was Masrur, and made ready a magnificent banquet,[344] of her delight in the success of her device. Then, when the guest drew nigh, her husband said to her, "Come out with me to him and bid him welcome and say, Thou gladdenest us[345]!" But Zayn al-Mawasif made a show of anger, crying, "Wilt thou have me display myself before a strange man? I take refuge with Allah! Though thou cut me to bits, I will not appear before him!" Rejoined he, "Why shouldst thou be abashed at him, seeing that he is a Nazarene and we are Jews and, to boot, we are become chums, he and I?" Quoth she, "I am not minded to present myself before a strange man, on whom I have never once set eyes and whom I know not any wise." Her husband thought she spoke sooth and ceased not to importune her, till she rose and veiling herself, took 232 the food and went out to Masrur and welcomed him; whereupon he bowed his head groundwards, as he were ashamed, and the Jew, seeing such dejection said in himself, "Doubtless, this man is a devotee." They ate their fill and the table being removed, wine was set on. As for Zayn al-Mawasif, she sat over against Masrur and gazed on him and he gazed on her till ended day, when he went home, with a heart to fire a prey. But the Jew abode pondering the grace and the comeliness of him; and, as soon as it was night, his wife according to custom served him with supper and they seated themselves before it. Now he had a mocking-bird which was wont, whenever he sat down to meat, to come and eat with him and hover over his head; but in his absence the fowl was grown familiar with Masrur and used to flutter about him as he sat at meals. Now when Masrur disappeared and the master returned, it knew him not and would not draw near him, and this made him thoughtful concerning his case and the fowl's withdrawing from him. As for Zayn al-Mawasif, she could not sleep with her heart thinking of Masrur, and thus it was with her a second and even a third night, till the Jew became

aware of her condition and, watching her while she sat distraught, began to suspect somewhat wrong. On the fourth night, he awoke in the middle thereof and heard his wife babbling in her sleep and naming Masrur, what while she lay on her husband's bosom, wherefore he misdoubted her; but he dissembled his suspicions and when morning morrowed he repaired to his shop and sat therein. Presently, up came Masrur and saluted him. He returned his salam and said to him, "Welcome, O my brother!" adding anon, "I have wished for thee;" and he sat talking with him for an hour or so, after which he said to him, "Rise, O my brother, and hie with me to my house, that we may enter into the pact of brotherhood."[346] Replied Masrur, "With joy and goodly gree," and they repaired to the Jew's house, where the master went in and told his wife of Masrur's visit, for the purpose of conditioning their partnership, and said, "Make us ready a goodly entertainment, and needs must thou be present and witness our brotherhood." But she replied, "Allah upon thee, cause me not show myself to this strange man, for I have no mind to company with him." So he held his peace and forbore to press her and 233bade the waiting-women bring food and drink. Then he called the mocking-bird but it knew not its lord and settled upon Masrur's lap; and the Jew said to him, "O my master, what is thy name?" He answered, "My name is Masrur;" whereupon the Jew remembered that this was the name which his wife had repeated all night long in her sleep. Presently, he raised his head and saw her making signs[347] with her forefingers to Masrur and motioning to him with her eyes, wherefore he knew that he had been completely cozened and cuckolded and said, "O my lord, excuse me awhile, till I fetch my kinsmen, so they may be present at our swearing brotherhood." Quoth Masrur, "Do what seemeth good to thee;" whereupon the Jew went forth the house and returning privily by a back way——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Zayn al-Mawasif's husband said to Masrur, "Excuse me awhile, till I fetch my cousins to witness the brother-bond between me and thee." Then he went forth and, privily returning behind the sitting-room, there took his station hard by a window which gave upon the saloon and whence he could watch them without their seeing him. Suddenly quoth Zayn al-Mawasif to her maid Sukub, "Whither is thy master gone?"; and quoth she, "He is gone without the house." Cried the mistress, "Lock the door and bar it with iron and open thou not till he knock, after thou hast told me." Answered Sukub, "So shall it be done." Then, while her husband watched them, she rose and filling a cup with wine, flavoured with powdered musk and rose-water, went close to Masrur, who sprang up to meet her, saying, "By Allah, the water of thy mouth is sweeter than this wine!" "Here it is for thee," said she and filling her mouth with wine, gave him to drink thereof, whilst he gave her the like to drink; after which she sprinkled him with rose-water from front to foot, till the perfume 234scented the whole place. All this while,

the Jew was looking on and marvelling at the stress of love that was between them, and his heart was filled with fury for what he saw and he was not only wroth, but jealous with exceeding jealousy. Then he went out again and coming to the door found it locked and knocked a loud knock of the excess of his rage; whereupon quoth Sukub, "O my lady, here is my master;" and quoth Zayn al-Mawasif, "Open to him; would that Allah had not brought him back in safety!" So Sukub went and opened the door to the Jew, who said to her, "What ailed thee to lock the door?" Quoth she, "It hath never ceased to be locked thus during thine absence; nor hath it been opened night nor day," and cried he, "Thou hast done well; this pleaseth me." Then he went in to Masrur, laughing and dissembling his chagrin, and said to him, "O Masrur, let us put off the conclusion of our pact of brotherhood this day and defer it to another." Replied Masrur, "As thou wilt," and hied him home, leaving the Jew pondering his case and knowing not what to do; for his heart was sore troubled and he said in himself, "Even the mocking-bird disowneth me and the slave-girls shut the door in my face and favour another." And of his exceeding chagrin, he fell to reciting these couplets:—

Masrur joys life made fair by all delight of days, ✿ Fulfilled of boons, while mine the sorest grief displays.
The Days have falsed me in the breast of her I love ✿ And in my heart are fires which all-consuming blaze:
Yea, Time was clear for thee, but now 'tis past and gone ✿ While yet her lovely charms thy wit and senses daze:
Espied these eyes of mine her gifts of loveliness: ✿ Oh, hard my case and sore my woe on spirit weighs!
I saw the maiden of the tribe deal rich old wine ✿ Of lips like Salsabíl to friend my love betrays:
E'en so, O mocking-bird, thou dost betray my breast ✿ And to a rival teachest Love and lover-ways:
Strange things indeed and wondrous saw these eyne of me ✿ Which were they sleep-drowned still from Sleep's abyss would raise:
I see my best belovèd hath forsworn my love ✿ And eke like my mocking-bird fro' me a-startled strays.
By truth of Allah, Lord of Worlds who, whatso wills ✿ His Fate, for creatures works and none His hest gainsays,
Forsure I'll deal to that ungodly wight his due ✿ Who but to sate his wicked will her heart withdrew!

When Zayn al-Mawasif heard this, her side-muscles trembled and 235 quoth she to her handmaid, "Heardest thou those lines?"; whereupon quoth the girl, "I never heard him in my born days recite the like of these verses; but let him say what he will." Then having assured himself of the truth of his suspicions, the Jew began to sell all his property, saying to himself, "Unless I part them by removing her from her mother land the twain will not turn back from this that they are engaged in, no, never!" So, when he had converted all his possessions into coin, he forged a letter and read it to Zayn al-Mawasif, declaring that it had come from his kinsmen, who invited him to visit them, him and his wife. She asked, "How long shall we tarry with them?" and he answered, "Twelve days." Accordingly she consented to this and said, "Shall I take any of my maids with me?"; whereto he replied, "Take Hubub and Sukub and leave Khutub here." Then he made ready a handsome camel-litter[348] for his spouse and her women and prepared to set out with them; whilst she sent to her leman, telling him

what had betided her and saying, "O Masrur, an the trysting-time[349] that is between us pass and I come not back, know that he hath cheated and cozened us and planned a plot to separate us each from other, so forget thou not the plighted faith betwixt us, for I fear that he hath found out our love and I dread his craft and perfidy." Then, whilst her man was busy about his march she fell a-weeping and lamenting and no peace was left her, night or day. Her husband saw this, but took no note thereof; and when she saw there was scant help for it, she gathered together her clothes and gear and deposited them with her sister, telling her what had befallen her. Then she farewelled her and going out from her, drowned in tears, returned to her own house, where she found her husband had brought the camels and was busy loading them, having set apart the handsomest dromedary for her riding, and when she saw this and knew that needs must she be separated from Masrur, she waxt clean distraught. Presently it chanced that the Jew went out on some business of his; so she fared forth to the first or outer door and wrote thereon these couplets:——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif saw her spouse summon the camels and knew that the march needs must be, she waxt clean distraught. Presently it chanced that the Jew went out on some business so she fared forth to the first door and wrote thereon these couplets:—

Bear our salams, O Dove, from this our stead ✿ From lover to beloved far severèd!
Bid him fro' me ne'er cease to yearn and mourn ✿ O'er happy days and hours for ever fled:
Eke I in grief shall ever mourn and yearn, ✿ Dwelling on days of love and lustihead;
Long was our joyance, seeming aye to last, ✿ When night and morning to reunion led;
Till croaked the Raven[350] of the Wold one day ✿ His cursed croak and did our union dead.
We sped and left the homestead dark and void ✿ Its gates unpeopled and its dwellers sped.

Then she went to the second door and wrote thereon these couplets:—

O who passest this doorway, by Allah, see ✿ The charms of my fere in the glooms and make plea
For me, saying, "I think of the Past and weep ✿ Yet boot me no tears flowing full and free."
Say, "An fail thee patience for what befel ✿ Scatter earth and dust on the head of thee!
And o'er travel lands East and West, and deem ✿ God sufficeth thy case, so bear patiently!"

Then she went to the third door and wept sore and thereon wrote these couplets:—

237 Fare softly, Masrúr! an her sanctuary ✿ Thou seek, and read what a-door writ she.
Ne'er forget Love-plight, if true man; how oft ✿ Hast savoured Nights' bitter and sweetest gree!
O Masrúr! forget not her neighbourhood ✿ For wi' thee must her gladness and joyance flee!
But beweep those dearest united days ✿ When thou camest veilèd in secresy;
Wend for sake of us over farthest wone; ✿ Span the wold for us, for us dive in sea;

Allah bless the past days! Ah, how glad they were ✿ When in Gardens of Fancy the flowers pluckt we!
The nights of Union from us are fled ✿ And parting-glooms dim their radiancy;
Ah! had this lasted as hopèd we, but ✿ He left only our breasts and the rosery.
Will revolving days on Re-union dawn? ✿ Then our vow to the Lord shall accomplisht be.
Learn thou our lots are in hand of Him ✿ Who on lines of skull[351] writes our destiny!

Then she wept with sore weeping and returned to the house, wailing and remembering what had passed and saying, "Glory be to God who hath decreed to us this!" And her affliction redoubled for severance from her beloved and her departure from her mother-land, and she recited these couplets:—

Allah's peace on thee, House of Vacancy! ✿ Ceased in thee all our joys, all our jubilee.
O thou Dove of the homestead, ne'er cease to bemoan ✿ Whose moons and full moons[352] sorest severance dree:
Masrúr, fare softly and mourn our loss; ✿ Loving thee our eyes lose their brilliancy:
Would thy sight had seen, on our marching day, ✿ Tears shed by a heart in Hell's flagrancy!
Forget not the plight in the garth-shade pledged ✿ When we set enveiléd in privacy:

Then she presented herself before her husband, who lifted her into the litter he had let make for her; and, when she found herself on the camel's back, she recited these couplets:—

238 The Lord, empty House! to thee peace decree ✿ Long we bore therein growth of misery:
Would my life-thread were shorn in that safe abode ✿ And o' night I had died in mine ecstasy!
Home-sickness I mourn, and my strangerhood ✿ Irks my soul, nor the riddle of future I ree.
Would I wot shall I ever that house resee ✿ And find it, as erst, home of joy and glee!

Said her husband, "O Zayn al-Mawasif grieve not for thy departure from thy dwelling; for thou shalt return to it ere long Inshallah!" And he went on to comfort her heart and soothe her sorrow. Then all set out and fared on till they came without the town and struck into the high road, whereupon she knew that separation was certain and this was very grievous to her. And while such things happened Masrur sat in his quarters, pondering his case and that of his mistress, and his heart forewarned him of severance. So he rose without stay and delay and repairing to her house, found the outer door padlocked and read the couplets she had written thereon; upon which he fell down in a fainting fit. When he came to himself, he opened the first door and entering, read what was written upon the second and likewise upon the third doors; wherefore passion and love-longing and distraction grew on him. So he went forth and hastened in her track, till he came up with the light caravan[353] and found her at the rear, whilst her husband rode in the van, because of his merchandise. When he saw her, he clung to the litter, weeping and wailing for the anguish of parting, and recited these couplets:—

Would I wot for what crime shot and pierced are we ✿ Thro' the days with Estrangement's archery!
O my heart's desire, to thy door I came ✿ One day, when high waxt mine expectancy:
But I found the home waste as the wold and void ✿ And I 'plained my pine and groaned wretchedly:

And I asked the walls of my friends who fared ✿ With my heart in pawn and in pendency;

239 And they said, "All marched from the camp and left ✿ An ambushed sorrow on hill and lea;"

And a writ on the walls did they write, as write ✿ Folk who keep their faith while the Worlds are three.

Now when Zayn al-Mawasif heard these lines, she knew that it was Masrur——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif heard these lines she knew that it was Masrur and wept, she and her handmaids, and said to him, "O Masrur, I conjure thee by Allah, turn back, lest my husband see us twain together!" At her words he swooned away; and when he revived, they took leave each of other and he recited the following couplets:—

The Caravan-chief calleth loud o' night ✿ Ere the Breeze bear his cry in the morning-light:

They girded their loads and prepared to fare, ✿ And hurried while murmured the leader-wight.

They scent the scene on its every side, ✿ As their march through the valley they expedite.

After winning my heart by their love they went ✿ O' morn when their track could deceive my sight.

O my neighbour fair, I reckt ne'er to part, ✿ Or the ground bedewed with my tears to sight!

Woe betide my heart, now hath Severance hand ✿ To heart and vitals dealt bane and blight.

Then he clung to the litter, weeping and wailing, whilst she besought him to turn back ere morn for fear of scorn. So he came up to her Haudaj and farewelling her a second time, fell down in a swoon. He lay an hour or so without life, and when he revived he found the caravan had fared forth of sight. So he turned in the direction of their wayfare and scenting the breeze which blew from their quarter, chanted these improvised lines:—

No breeze of Union to the lover blows ✿ But moan he maketh burnt with fiery woes:

The Zephyr fans him at the dawn o' day; ✿ But when he wakes the horizon lonely shows:

240 On bed of sickness strewn in pain he lies, ✿ And weeps he bloody tears in burning throes,

For the fair neighbour with my heart they bore ✿ 'Mid travellers urging beasts with cries and blows

By Allah from their stead no Zephyr blew ✿ But sniffed I as the wight on eyeballs goes;[354]

And snuff the sweetest South as musk it breathes ✿ And on the longing lover scent bestows.

Then Masrur returned, mad with love-longing, to her house, and finding it lone from end to end[355] and forlorn of friend, wept till he wet his clothes; after which he swooned away and his soul was like to leave his body. When he revived, he recited these two couplets:—

O Spring-camp have ruth on mine overthrowing ✿ My abjection, my leanness, my tears aye flowing,

Waft the scented powder[356] of breezes they breathe ✿ In hope it cure heart of a grief e'er growing.

Then he returned to his own lodging confounded and tearful-eyed, and abode there for the space of ten days. Such was his case; but as regards the Jew, he journeyed on with Zayn al-Mawasif half a score days, at the end of which he halted at a certain city and

she, being by that time assured that her husband had played her false, wrote to Masrur a letter and gave it to Hubub, saying, "Send this to Masrur, so he may know how foully and fully we have been tricked and how the Jew hath cheated us." So Hubub took it and despatched it to Masrur, and when it reached, its news was grievous to him and he wept till he watered the ground. Then he wrote a reply and sent it to his mistress, subscribing it with these two couplets:—

Where is the way to Consolation's door ✿ How shall console him flames burn evermore?

How pleasant were the days of yore all gone: ✿ Would we had somewhat of those days of yore!

241 When the missive reached Zayn al-Mawasif, she read it and again gave it to her handmaid Hubub, saying to her, "Keep it secret!" However, the husband came to know of their correspondence and removed with her and her two women to another city, at a distance of twenty days' march. Thus it befel Zayn al-Mawasif; but as regards Masrur, sleep was not sweet to him nor was peace peaceful to him or patience left to him, and he ceased not to be thus till, one night, his eyes closed for weariness and he dreamt that he saw Zayn al-Mawasif come to him in the garden and embrace him; but presently he awoke and found her not: whereupon his reason fled and his wits wandered and his eyes ran over with tears; love-longing to the utterest gat hold of his heart and he recited these couplets:—

Peace be to her, who visits me in sleeping phantasy ✿ Stirring desire and growing love to uttermost degree:

Verily from that dream I rose with passion maddenèd ✿ For sight of fairest phantom come in peace to visit me:

Say me, can dreams declare the truth anent the maid I love, ✿ And quench the fires of thirst and heal my love-sick malady?

Anon to me she is liberal and she strains me to her breast; ✿ Anon she soothes mine anxious heart with sweetest pleasantry:

From off her dark-red damask lips the dew I wont to sip ✿ The fine old wine that seemed to reek of musk's perfumery.

I wondered at the wondrous things between us done in dreams, ✿ And won my wish and all my will of things I hoped to see;

And from that dreamery I rose, yet ne'er could hope to find ✿ Trace of my phantom save my pain and fiery misery:

And when I looked on her a-morn, 'twas as a lover mad ✿ And every eve was drunken yet no wine brought jollity.

O breathings of the northern breeze, by Allah fro' me bear ✿ Them-wards the greetings of my love and best salams that be:

Say them, "The wight with whom ye made that plight of fealty ✿ Time with his changes made him drain Death's cup and slain is he!"

Then he went out and ceased not to weep till he came to her house and looking on it, saw it empty and void. Presently, it seemed to him he beheld her form before him, whereupon fires flamed in him and his griefs redoubled and he fell down a-swoon;—

—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Masrur saw the vision of Zayn al-Mawasif and felt her embrace, he joyed with passing joy. As soon as he awoke he sought her house, but finding it empty and void he fell down a-swoon; and when he came to himself, he recited these couplets:—

Fro' them inhale I scent of Ottar and of Bán; ✿ So fare with heart which ecstasies of love unman:

I'd heal thy longings (love-sick lover!) by return ✿ To site of beauty void sans friend or mate to scan:

But still it sickeneth me with parting's ban and bane ✿ Minding mine olden plight with friend and partisan.

When he had made an end of these verses, he heard a raven croak beside the house and wept, saying, "Glory be to God! The raven croaketh not save over a ruined homestead." Then he moaned and groaned and recited these couplets:—

What ails the Raven that he croaks my lover's house hard by, ✿ And in my vitals lights a fire that flameth fierce and high?

For times now past and gone I spent in joyance of their love ✿ With love my heart hath gone to waste and I sore pain aby:

I die of longing love and lowe still in my liver raging ✿ And wrote to her but none there is who with the writ may hie:

Ah well-away for wasted frame! Hath farèd forth my friend ✿ And if she will o' nights return Oh would that thing wot I!

Then, Ho thou Breeze of East, and thou by morn e'er visit her; ✿ Greet her from me and stand where doth her tribe encampèd lie!

Now Zayn al-Mawasif had a sister, by name Nasím—the Zephyr—who stood espying him from a high place; and when she saw him in this plight, she wept and sighed and recited these couplets:—

How oft bewailing the place shall be this coming and going, ✿ While the House bemoaneth its builder with tear-flood ever a-flowing?

Here was bestest joy ere fared my friend with the caravan hieing ✿ And its dwellers and brightest-suns[357] ne'er ceased in its walls a-glowing:

Where be those fullest moons that here were alway arising? ✿ Bedimmed them the Shafts of Days their charms of spirit unknowing:

243 Leave then what is past of the Fair thou wast ever with love espying ✿ And look; for haply the days may restore them without foreshowing:

For hadst thou not been, its dwellers had never departed flying ✿ Nor haddest thou seen the Crow with ill-omened croak a-crying.

Masrur wept sore hearing these verses and apprehending their significance. Now Nasim knew that which was between him and her sister of love and longing, ecstasy and passion; so she said to him, "Allah upon thee, O Masrur, away from this house, lest any see thee and deem thou comest on my account! Indeed thou hast caused my sister quit it and now thou wouldst drive me also away. Thou knowest that, but for

thee, the house would not now be void of its dwellers: so be consoled for her loss and leave her: what is past is past." When he heard this, he wept bitterly and said to her, "O Nasim, if I could, I should fly for longing after her; so how can I be comforted for her?" Quoth she, "Thou hast no device save patience;" and quoth he, "I beseech thee, for Allah's sake, write me a writ to her, as from thyself, and get me an answer from her, to comfort my heart and quench the fire in my vitals." She replied, "With love and gladness," and took inkcase and paper, whilst Masrur began to set out to her the violence of his longing and what tortures he suffered for the anguish of severance, saying:—This letter is from the lover despairing and sorrowful ✿ the bereaved, the woeful ✿ with whom no peace can stay ✿ nor by night nor by day ✿ but he weepeth copious tears alway. ✿ Indeed, tears his eyelids have ulcerated and his sorrows have kindled in his liver a fire unsated. His lamentation is lengthened and restlessness is strengthened and he is as he were a bird unmated ✿ While for sudden death he awaiteth ✿ Alas, my desolation for the loss of thee ✿ and alas, my yearning affliction for the companionship of thee! ✿ Indeed, emaciation hath wasted my frame ✿ and my tears a torrent became ✿ mountains and plains are straitened upon me for grame ✿ and of the excess of my distress, I go saying:—

Still cleaves to this homestead mine ecstasy, ✿ And redoubled pine for its dwellers I dree;
And I send to your quarters the tale of my love ✿ And the cup of your love gave the Cup-boy to me.
And for faring of you and your farness from home ✿ My wounded lids are from tears ne'er free:
O thou leader of litters, turn back with my love ✿ For my heart redoubleth its ardency:
Greet my love and say him that naught except ✿ Those brown-red lips deals me remedy:
They bore him away and our union rent ✿ And my vitals with Severance-shaft shot he:
My love, my lowe and my longing to him ✿ Convey, for of parting no cure I see:
I swear an oath by your love that I ✿ Will keep pact and covenant faithfully,
To none I'll incline or forget your love ✿ How shall love-sick lover forgetful be?
So with you be the peace and my greeting fair ✿ In letters that perfume of musk-pod bear.

Her sister Nasim admired his eloquence of tongue and the goodliness of his speech and the elegance of the verses he sang, and was moved to ruth for him. So she sealed the letter with virgin musk and incensed it with Nadd-scent and ambergris, after which she committed it to a certain of the merchants saying, "Deliver it not to any save to Zayn al-Mawasif or to her handmaid Hubub." Now when the letter reached her sister, she knew it for Masrur's dictation and recognised himself in the grace of its expression. So she kissed it and laid it on her eyes, whilst the tears streamed from her lids and she gave not over weeping, till she fainted. As soon as she came to herself, she called for pencase and paper and wrote him the following answer; complaining the while of her desire and love-longing and ecstasy and what was hers to endure of

pining for her lover and yearning to him and the passion she had conceived for him.—
—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Zayn al-Mawasif wrote the following reply to Masrur's missive:—"This letter to my lord and master I indite ✿ the king of my heart and my secret sprite ✿ Indeed, wakefulness agitateth me ✿ and melancholy increaseth on me ✿ and I have no patience to endure the absence of thee ✿ O thou who excellest sun and moon in brilliancy ✿ Desire of repose despoileth me ✿ and passion destroyeth me ✿ and how should it be otherwise with me, seeing that I am of the number of the dying? ✿ O glory of the world and 245 Ornament of life, she whose vital spirits are cut off shall her cup be sweet to quaff? ✿ For that she is neither with the quick nor with the dead." And she improvised these couplets and said:—

Thy writ, O Masrúr, stirred my sprite to pine ✿ For by Allah, all patience and solace I tyne:
When I read thy scripture, my vitals yearned ✿ And watered the herbs of the wold these eyne.
On Night's wings I'd fly an a bird ✿ And sans thee I weet not the sweets of wine:
Life's unlawful to me since thou faredst far ✿ To bear parting-lowe is no force of mine.

Then she sprinkled the letter with powder of musk and ambergris and, having sealed it with her signet, committed it to a merchant, saying, "Deliver it to none save to my sister." When it reached Nasim she sent it to Masrur, who kissed it and laid it on his eyes and wept till he fell into a trance. Such was their case; but as regards the Jew, he presently heard of their correspondence and began again to travel from place to place with Zayn al-Mawasif and her damsels, till she said to him, "Glory to God! How long wilt thou fare with us and bear us afar from our homes?" Quoth he, "I will fare on with you a year's journey, so no more letters may reach you from Masrur. I see how you take all my monies and give them to him; so all that I miss I shall recover from you: and I shall see if Masrur will profit you or have power to deliver you from my hand." Then he repaired to a blacksmith, after stripping her and her damsels of their silken apparel and clothing them in raiment of hair-cloth, and bade him make three pairs of iron shackles. When they were ready, he brought the smith in to his wife, having said to him, "Put the shackles on the legs of these three slave-girls." The first that came forward was Zayn al-Mawasif, and when the blacksmith saw her, his sense forsook him and he bit his finger tips and his wit fled forth his head and his transport grew sore upon him. So he said to the Jew, "What is the crime of these damsels?" Replied the other, "They are my slave-girls, and have stolen my good and fled from me." Cried the smith, "Allah disappoint thy jealous whims! By the Almighty, were this girl before the Kazi of Kazis,[358] he would not even reprove 246 her, though she

committed a thousand crimes a day. Indeed, she showeth not thief's favour and she cannot brook the laying of irons on her legs." And he asked him as a boon not to fetter her, interceding with him to forbear the shackles. When she saw the blacksmith taking her part in this wise she said to her husband, "I conjure thee, by Allah, bring me not forth before yonder strange man!" Said he, "Why then camest thou forth before Masrur?"; and she made him no reply. Then he accepted the smith's intercession, so far as to allow him to put a light pair of irons on her legs, for that she had a delicate body, which might not brook harsh usage, whilst he laid her handmaids in heavy bilboes, and they ceased not, all three, to wear hair-cloth night and day till their bodies became wasted and their colour changed. As for the blacksmith, exceeding love had fallen on his heart for Zayn al-Mawasif; so he returned home in great concern and he fell to reciting extempore these couplets:—

Wither thy right, O smith, which made her bear ✿ Those iron chains her hands and feet to wear!
Thou hast ensoiled a lady soft and bright, ✿ Marvel of marvels, fairest of the fair:
Hadst thou been just, those anklets ne'er had been ✿ Of iron: nay of purest gold they were:
By Allah! did the Kázis' Kázi sight ✿ Her charms, he'd seat her in the highest chair.

Now it chanced that the Kazi of Kazis passed by the smith's house and heard him improvise these lines; so he sent for him and as soon as he saw him said to him, "O blacksmith, who is she on whom thou callest so instantly an eloquently and with whose love thy heart is full filled?" The smith sprang to his feet and kissing the Judge's hand, answered, "Allah prolong the days of our lord the Kazi and ample his life!" Then he described to him Zayn al-Mawasif's beauty and loveliness, brilliancy and perfection, and symmetry and grace and how she was lovely faced and had a slender waist and heavily based; and acquainted him with the sorry plight wherein she was for abasement and durance vile and lack of victual. When the Kazi heard this, he said, "O blacksmith, send her to us and show her that we may do her justice, for thou art become accountable for the damsel and unless thou guide her to us, Allah will punish thee at the Day of Doom." "I hear and obey," replied the smith and betook himself without stay and 247 delay to Zayn al-Mawasif's lodging, but found the door barred and heard a voice of plaintive tone that came from heart forlorn and lone; and it was Zayn al-Mawasif reciting these couplets:—

I and my love in union were unite; ✿ And filled my friend to me cups clearly bright
Between us reigned high mirth and jollity, ✿ Nor Eve nor Morn brought 'noyance or affright
Indeed we spent most joyous time, with cup ✿ And lute and dulcimer to add delight,
Till Time estranged our fair companionship; ✿ My lover went and blessing turned to blight.
Ah would the Severance-raven's croak were stilled ✿ And Union-dawn of Love show blessèd light!

When the blacksmith heard this, he wept like the weeping of the clouds. Then he knocked at the door and the women said, "Who is at the door?" Answered he, "'Tis I, the blacksmith," and told them what the Kazi had said and how he would have them

appear before him and make their complaint to him, that he might do them justice on their adversary.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the blacksmith told Zayn al-Mawasif what the Kazi had said, and how he summoned them that he might apply the Lex Talionis to their adversary, she rejoined, "How can we go to him, seeing the door is locked on us and our feet shackled and the Jew hath the keys?" The smith replied, "I will make the keys for the padlocks and therewith open door and shackles." Asked she, "But who will show us the Kazi's house?"; and he answered, "I will describe it to you." She enquired, "But how can we appear before him, clad as we are in hair-cloth reeking with sulphur?" And the smith rejoined, "The Kazi will not reproach this to you, considering your case." So saying, he went forthright and made keys for the padlocks, wherewith he opened the door and the shackles, and loosing the irons from their legs, carried them forth and guided them to the Kazi's mansion. Then Hubub did off the hair-cloth garments from her lady's body and carried her to the Hammam, where she bathed her and attired her in silken raiment, and her 248 colour returned to her. Now it happened, by exceeding good fortune, that her husband was abroad at a bride-feast in the house of one of the merchants; so Zayn al-Mawasif, the Adornment of Qualities, adorned herself with the fairest ornaments and repaired to the Kazi, who at once on espying her rose to receive her. She saluted him with softest speech and winsomest words, shooting him through the vitals the while with the shafts of her glances, and said, "May Allah prolong the life of our lord the Kazi and strengthen him to judge between man and man!" Then she acquainted him with the affair of the blacksmith and how he had done nobly by them, whenas the Jew had inflicted on her and her women heart-confounding torments; and how his victims deathwards he drave, nor was there any found to save. "O damsel," quoth the Kazi, "what is thy name?" "My name is Zayn al-Mawasif,—Adornment of Qualities—and this my handmaid's name is Hubub." "Thy name accordeth with the named and its sound conformeth with its sense." Whereupon she smiled and veiled her face, and he said to her, "O Zayn al-Mawasif, hast thou a husband or not?" "I have no husband"; "And what is thy Faith?" "That of Al-Islam, and the religion of the Best of Men." "Swear to me by Holy Law replete with signs and instances that thou ownest the creed of the Best of Mankind." So she swore to him and pronounced the profession of the Faith. Then asked the Kazi, "How cometh it that thou wastest thy youth with this Jew?" And she answered, "Know, O Kazi (may Allah prolong thy days in contentment and bring thee to thy will and thine acts with benefits seal!), that my father left me, after his death, fifteen thousand dinars, which he placed in the hands of this Jew, that he might trade therewith and share his gains with me, the head of the property[359] being secured by legal acknowledgment. When my father died, the Jew

coveted me and sought me in marriage of my mother, who said:—How shall I drive her from her Faith and cause to become a Jewess? By Allah, I will denounce thee to the rulers! He was affrighted at her words and taking the money, fled to the town of Adan.[360] When we heard where he was, we came 249 to Adan in search of him, and when we foregathered with him there, he told us that he was trading in stuffs with the monies and buying goods upon goods. So we believed him and he ceased not to cozen us till he cast us into jail and fettered us and tortured us with exceeding sore torments; and we are strangers in the land and have no helper save Almighty Allah and our lord the Kazi." When the Judge heard this tale he asked Hubub the nurse, "Is this indeed thy lady and are ye strangers and is she unmarried?"; and she answered, "Yes." Quoth he, "Marry her to me and on me be incumbent manumission of my slaves and fasting and pilgrimage and almsgiving of all my good an I do you not justice on this dog and punish him for that he hath done!" And quoth she, "I hear and obey." Then said the Kazi, "Go, hearten thy heart and that of thy lady; and to-morrow, Inshallah, I will send for this Miscreant and do you justice on him and ye shall see prodigies of his punishment." So Hubub called down blessings upon him and went forth from him with her mistress, leaving him with passion and love-longing fraught and with distress and desire distraught. Then they enquired for the house of the second Kazi and presenting themselves before him, told him the same tale. On like wise did the twain, mistress and maid with the third and the fourth, till Zayn al-Mawasif had made her complaint to all the four Kazis, each of whom fell in love with her and besought her to wed him, to which she consented with a "Yes"; nor wist any one of the four that which had happened to the others. All this passed without the knowledge of the Jew, who spent the night in the house of the bride-feast. And when morning morrowed, Hubub arose and gat ready her lady's richest raiment; then she clad her therewith and presented herself with her before the four 250 Kazis in the court of justice. As soon as she entered, she veiled her face and saluted the judges, who returned her salam and each and every of them recognised her. One was writing, and the reed-pen dropped from his hand, another was talking, and his tongue became tied, and a third was reckoning and blundered in his reckoning; and they said to her, "O admirable of attributes and singular among beauties! be not thy heart other than hearty, for we will assuredly do thee justice and bring thee to thy desire." So she called down blessings on them and farewelled them and went her ways.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kazis said to Zayn al-Mawasif, "O admirable of attributes and singular among beauties! Be not thy heart other than hearty for our doing thy desire and thy winning to thy will." So she called down blessings on them and farewelled them and went her ways, the while her husband abode with his friends at the marriage-banquet and knew naught of her

doings. Then she proceeded to beseech the notaries and scribes and the notables and the Chiefs of Police to succour her against that unbelieving miscreant and deliver her from the torment she suffered from him. Then she wept with sore weeping and improvised these couplets:—

Rain showers of torrent tears, O Eyne and see ✿ An they will quench the fires that flame in me:
After my robes of gold-embroidered silk ✿ I wake to wear the frieze of monkery:
And all my raiment reeks of sulphur-fumes ✿ When erst my shift shed musky fragrancy:
And hadst thou, O Masrúr, my case descried, ✿ Ne'er hadst thou borne my shame and ignomy.
And eke Hubúb in iron chains is laid ✿ By Miscreant who unknows God's Unity.
The creed of Jewry I renounce and home, ✿ The Moslem's Faith accepting faithfully
Eastwards[361] I prostrate self in fairest guise ✿ Holding the only True Belief that be:
251 Masrúr! forget not love between us twain ✿ And keep our vows and troth with goodly gree:
I've changed my faith for sake of thee, and I ✿ For stress of love will cleave to secrecy:
So haste to us, an us in heart thou bear, ✿ As noble spirit, nor as laggard fare.

After this she wrote a letter to Masrur, describing to him all that the Jew had done with her from first to last and enclosed the verses aforesaid. Then she folded the scroll and gave it to her maid Hubub, saying, "Keep this in thy pocket, till we send it to Masrur." Upon these doings lo and behold! in came the Jew and seeing them joyous, said to them, "How cometh it that I find you merry? Say me, hath a letter reached you from your bosom friend Masrur?" Replied Zayn al-Mawasif, "We have no helper against thee save Allah, extolled and exalted be He! He will deliver us from thy tyranny, and except thou restore us to our birth-place and homestead, we will complain of thee to-morrow to the Governor of this town and to the Kazi." Quoth he, "Who struck off the shackles from your legs? But needs must I let make for each of you fetters ten pounds in weight and go round about the city with you." Replied Hubub, "All that thou purposest against us thou shall fall into thyself, so it please Allah the Most High, by token that thou hast exiled us from our homes, and to-morrow we shall stand, we and thou, before the Governor of the city." They nighted on this wise and next morning the Jew rose up in haste and went out to order new shackles, whereupon Zayn al-Mawasif arose and repaired with her women to the court-house, where she found the four Kazis and saluted them. They all returned her salutation and the Kazi of Kazis said to those about him, "Verily this damsel is lovely as the Venus-star[362] and all who see her love her and bow before her 252 beauty and loveliness." Then he despatched four sergeants, who were Sharífs,[363] saying, "Bring ye the criminal after abjectest fashion." So, when the Jew returned with the shackles and found none in the house, he was confounded; but, as he abode in perplexity, suddenly up came the officers and laying hold of him beat him with a sore beating and dragged him face downwards before the Kazi. When the judge saw him, he cried out in his face and said to him, "Woe to thee, O foe of God, is it come to such a pass with thee

that thou doest the deed thou hast done and bringest these women far from their country and stealest their monies and wouldst make them Jews? How durst thou seek to make Miscreants of Moslems?" Answered the Jew, "O my lord this woman is my wife." Now when the Kazis heard this, they all cried out, saying, "Throw this hound on the ground and come down on his face with your sandals and beat him with sore blows, for his offence is unpardonable." So they pulled off his silken gear and clad him in his wife's raiment of hair-cloth, after which they threw him down and plucked out his beard and belaboured him about the face with sandals. Then they sat him on an ass, face to crupper, arsi-versy, and making him take its tail in his hand, paraded him round about the city, ringing the bell before him in every street; after which they brought him back to the Judges in sorriest plight; and the four Kazis with one voice condemned him to have his feet and hands cut off and lastly to be crucified. When the accursed heard this sentence his sense forsook him and he was confounded and said, "O my lords the 253Kazis, what would ye of me?" They replied, "Say thou:—This damsel is not my wife and the monies are her monies, and I have transgressed against her and brought her far from her country." So he confessed to this and the Kazis recorded his confession in legal form and taking the money from him, gave it to Zayn al-Mawasif, together with the document. Then she went away and all who saw her were confounded at her beauty and loveliness, whilst each of the Kazis looked for her committing herself to him. But, when she came to her lodging, she made ready all matters she needed and waited till night. Then she took what was light of load and weighty of worth, and setting out with her maids under cover of the murks three days with their nights fared on without stopping. Thus it was with her; but as regards the Kazis they ordered the Jew to prison.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Kazis ordered the Jew to prison and on the morrow they looked for Zayn al-Mawasif coming to them, they and their assessors; but she presented herself not to any of them. Then said the Chief Kazi, "I wish to-day to make an excursion without the town on business there." So he mounted his she-mule and taking his page with him, went winding about the streets of the town, searching its length and width for Zayn al-Mawasif, but never finding her. On this errand he came upon the other three Kazis, going about on the same, each deeming himself the only one to whom she had given tryst. He asked them whither they were riding and why they were going about the streets; when they told him their business, whereby he saw that their plight was as his plight and their quest as his quest. So they all four rode throughout the city, seeking her, but could hit on no trace of her and returned to their houses, sick for love, and lay down on the bed of langour. Presently the Chief Kazi bethought himself of the blacksmith; so he sent for him and said to him, "O blacksmith, knowest thou aught of the damsel whom thou didst direct

to me? By Allah, an thou discover her not to me, I will whack thee with whips." Now when the smith heard this, he recited these couplets[364]:—

254 She who my all of love by love of her hath won ✿ Owns every Beauty and for others leaves she none:

She gazes, a gazelle; she breathes, fresh ambergris ✿ She waves, a lake; she sways, a bough; she shines, a Sun.

Then said the blacksmith, "By Allah, O my lord, since she fared forth from thy worshipful presence,[365] I have not set eyes on her; no, not once. Indeed she took possession of my heart and wits and all my talk and thoughts are of her. I went to her lodging but found her not, nor found I any who could give me news of her, and it is as if she had dived into the depths of the sea or had ascended to the sky." Now when the Kazi heard this, he groaned a groan, that his soul was like to depart therefor, and he said, "By Allah, well it were had we never seen her!" Then the smith went away, whilst the Kazi fell down on his bed and became sick of languor for her sake, and on like wise fared it with the other three Kazis and assessors. The mediciners paid them frequent calls, but found in them no ailment requiring a leach: so the city-notables went in to the Chief Kazi and saluting him, questioned him of his case; whereupon he sighed and showed them that was in his heart, reciting these couplets:—

Stint ye this blame; enough I suffer from Love's malady ✿ Nor chide the Kazi frail who fain must deal to folk decree!

Who doth accuse my love let him for me find some excuse: ✿ Nor blame; for lovers blameless are in lover-slavery!

I was a Kázi whom my Fate deigned aid with choicest aid ✿ By writ and reed and raisèd me to wealth and high degree;

Till I was shot by sharpest shaft that knows nor leach nor cure ✿ By Damsel's glance who came to spill my blood and murther me.

To me came she, a Moslemah and of her wrongs she 'plained ✿ With lips that oped on Orient-pearls ranged fair and orderly:

I looked beneath her veil and saw a wending moon at full ✿ Rising below the wings of Night engloomed with blackest blee:

A brightest favour and a mouth bedight with wondrous smiles; ✿ Beauty had brought the loveliest garb and robed her cap-à-pie.

By Allah, ne'er beheld my eyes a face so ferly fair ✿ Amid mankind whoever are, Arab or Ajamí.

My Fair! What promise didst thou make what time to me thou said'st ✿ "Whenas I promise I perform, O Kazi, faithfully."

Such is my stead and such my case calamitous and dire ✿ And ask me not, ye men of spunk, what dreadful teen I dree.

255 When he ended his verse he wept with sore weeping and sobbed one sob and his spirit departed his body, which seeing they washed him and shrouded him and prayed over him and buried him graving on his tomb these couplets:—

Perfect were lover's qualities in him was brought a-morn, ✿ Slain by his love and his beloved, to this untimely grave:

Kázi was he amid the folk, and aye 'twas his delight ✿ To foster all the folk and keep a-sheath the Justice-glaive:

Love caused his doom and ne'er we saw among mankind before ✿ The lord and master louting low before his thrallèd slave.

Then they committed him to the mercy of Allah and went away to the second Kazi, in company with the physician, but found in him nor injury nor ailment needing a leach. Accordingly they questioned him of his case and what preoccupied him; so he told them what ailed him, whereupon they blamed him and chid him for his predicament and he answered them with these couplets:—

Blighted by her yet am I not to blame; ✿ Struck by the dart at me her fair hand threw.

Unto me came a woman called Hubúb ✿ Chiding the world from year to year anew:

And brought a damsel showing face that shamed ✿ Full moon that sails through Night-tide's blackest hue,

She showed her beauties and she 'plained her plain ✿ Which tears in torrents from her eyelids drew:

I to her words gave ear and gazed on her ✿ Whenas with smiling lips she made me rue.

Then with my heart she fared where'er she fared ✿ And left me pledged to sorrows soul subdue.

Such is my tale! So pity ye my case ✿ And this my page with Kazi's gear indue.

Then he sobbed one sob and his soul fled his flesh; whereupon they gat ready his funeral and buried him commending him to the mercy of Allah; after which they repaired to the third Kazi and the fourth, and there befel them the like of what befel their brethren.[366] Furthermore, they found the Assessors also sick for love of her, and indeed all who saw her died of her love or, an they died not, lived on tortured with the lowe of passion——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the city folk found all the Kazis and the Assessors sick for love of her, and all who saw her died love-sick or, an they died not, lived on tortured with the lowe of passion for stress of pining to no purpose—Allah have mercy on them one and all! Meanwhile Zayn al-Mawasif and her women drave on with all diligence till they were far distant from the city and it so fortuned that they came to a convent by the way, wherein dwelt a Prior called Danis and forty monks.[367] When the Prior saw her beauty, he went out to her and invited her to alight, saying, "Rest with us ten days and after wend your ways." So she and her damsels alighted and entered the convent; and when Danis saw her beauty and loveliness, she debauched his belief and he was seduced by her: wherefore he fell to sending the monks, one after other with love-messages; but each who saw her fell in love with her and sought her favours for himself, whilst she excused and denied herself to them. But Danis ceased not his importunities till he had dispatched all the forty, each one of whom fell love-sick at first sight and plied her with blandishments never even naming Danis; whilst she refused and rebuffed them with harsh replies. At last when Danis's patience was at an end and his passion was sore on him, he said in

himself, "Verily, the sooth-sayer saith:—Naught scratcheth my skin but my own nail and naught like my own feet for mine errand may avail." So up he rose and made ready rich meats, and it was the ninth day of her sojourn in the convent where she had purposed only to rest. Then he carried them in to her and set them before her, saying, "Bismillah, favour us by tasting the best of the food at our command." So she put forth her hand, saying, "For the name of Allah the Compassionating, the Compassionate!" and ate, she and her handmaidens. When she had made an end of eating, he said to her, "O my lady, I wish to recite to thee some verses." Quoth she, "Say on," and he recited these couplets:—

Thou hast won my heart by cheek and eye of thee, ✿ I'll praise for love in prose and poesy.

257 Wilt fly a lover, love-sick, love-distraught ✿ Who strives in dreams some cure of love to see?

Leave me not fallen, passion-fooled, since I ✿ For pine have left uncared the Monast'ry:

O Fairest, 'tis thy right to shed my blood, ✿ So rue my case and hear the cry of me!

When Zayn al-Mawasif heard his verses, she answered him with these two couplets:—

O who suest Union, ne'er hope such delight ✿ Nor solicit my favours, O hapless wight!

Cease to hanker for what thou canst never have: ✿ Next door are the greedy to sore despight.

Hearing this he returned to his place, pondering in himself and knowing not how he should do in her affair, and passed the night in the sorriest plight. But, as soon as the darkness was darkest Zayn al-Mawasif arose and said to her handmaids, "Come, let us away, for we cannot avail against forty men, monks, each of whom requireth me for himself." Quoth they, "Right willingly!" So they mounted their beasts and issued forth the convent gate,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Zayn al-Mawasif and her handmaids issued forth the convent gate and, under favour of the night, rode on till they overtook a caravan, with which they mingled and found it came from the city of 'Adan wherein the lady had dwelt. Presently, Zayn al-Mawasif heard the people of the caravan discoursing of her own case and telling how the Kazis and Assessors were dead of love for her and how the townsfolk had appointed in their stead others who released her husband from prison. Whereupon she turned to her maids and asked them, "Heard ye that?"; and Hubub answered, "If the monks were ravished with love of thee, whose belief it is that shunning women is worship, how should it be with the Kazis, who hold that there is no monkery in Al-Islam? But let us make our way to our own country, whilst our affair is yet hidden." So they drave on with all diligence. Such was 258 their case; but as regards the monks, on the morrow, as soon as it was day they repaired to Zayn al-Mawasif's lodging, to salute her, but found the place

empty, and their hearts sickened within them. So the first monk rent his raiment and improvised these couplets:—

Ho ye, my friends, draw near, for I forthright ✿ From you depart, since parting is my lot:
My vitals suffer pangs o' fiery love; ✿ Flames of desire in heart burn high and hot,
For sake of fairest girl who sought our land ✿ Whose charms th' horizon's full moon evens not.
She fared and left me victimed by her love ✿ And slain by shaft those lids death-dealing shot.

Then another monk recited the following couplets:—

O ye who with my vitals fled, have ruth ✿ On this unhappy: haste ye homeward-bound:
They fared, and fared fair Peace on farthest track ✿ Yet lingers in mine ear that sweetest sound:
Fared far, and far their fane; would Heaven I saw ✿ Their shade in vision float my couch around:
And when they went wi' them they bore my heart ✿ And in my tear-floods all of me left drowned.

A third monk followed with these extempore lines:—

Throne you on highmost stead, heart, ears and sight ✿ Your wone's my heart; mine all's your dwelling-site:
Sweeter than honey is your name a-lip, ✿ Running, as 'neath my ribs runs vital sprite:
For Love hath made me as a toothpick[368] lean ✿ And drowned in tears of sorrow and despight:
Let me but see you in my sleep, belike ✿ Shall clear my cheeks of tears that lovely sight.

Then a fourth recited the following couplets:—

Dumb is my tongue and scant my speech for thee ✿ And Love the direst torture gars me dree:
O thou full Moon, whose place is highest Heaven, ✿ For thee but double pine and pain in me.

259 And a fifth these[369]:—

I love a moon of comely shapely form ✿ Whose slender waist hath title to complain:
Whose lip-dews rival must and long-kept wine; ✿ Whose heavy haunches haunt the minds of men:
My heart each morning burns with pain and pine ✿ And the night-talkers note I'm passion-slain;
While down my cheeks carnelian-like the tears ✿ Of rosy red shower down like railing rain.

And a sixth the following:—

O thou who shunnest him thy love misled! ✿ O Branch of Bán, O star of highmost stead!
To thee of pine and passion I complain, ✿ O thou who fired me with cheeks rosy-red.
Did e'er such lover lose his soul for thee, ✿ Or from prostration and from prayers fled?

And a seventh these:—

He seized my heart and freed my tears to flow ✿ Brought strength to Love and bade my Patience go.
His charms are sweet as bitter his disdain; ✿ And shafts of love his suitors overthrow.
Stint blame, O blamer, and for past repent ✿ None will believe thee who dost Love unknow!

And on like wise all the rest of the monks shed tears and repeated verses. As for Danis, the Prior, weeping and wailing redoubled on him, for that he found no way to her enjoyment, and he chanted the following couplets[370]:—

My patience failed me when my lover went ✿ And fled that day mine aim and best intent.
O Guide o' litters lead their camels fair, ✿ Haply some day they'll deign with me to tent!

On parting-day Sleep parted from my lids ✿ And grew my grieving and my joy was shent.
I moan to Allah what for Love I dree'd ✿ My wasted body and my forces spent.

Then, despairing of her, they took counsel together and with one mind agreed to fashion her image and set it up with them, and applied themselves to this till there came to them the Destroyer 260 of delights and Severer of societies. Meanwhile, Zayn al-Mawasif fared on, without ceasing, to find her lover Masrur, till she reached her own house. She opened the doors, and entered; then she sent to her sister Nasim, who rejoiced with exceeding joy at the news of her return and brought her the furniture and precious stuffs left in her charge. So she furnished the house and dressed it, hanging the curtains over the doors and burning aloes-wood and musk and ambergris and other essences till the whole place reeked with the most delightful perfumes: after which the Adornment of Qualities donned her finest dress and decorations and sat talking with her maids, whom she had left behind when journeying, and related to them all that had befallen her first and last. Then she turned to Hubub and giving her dirhams, bade her fetch them something to eat. So she brought meat and drink and when they had made an end of eating and drinking,[371] Zayn al-Mawasif bade Hubub go and see where Masrur was and how it fared with him. Now he knew not of her return; but abode with concern overcast and sorrow might not be overpast;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Zayn al-Mawasif entered her house she was met by her sister Nasim who brought her the furniture and stuffs wherewith she furnished the place; and then she donned her finest dress. But Masrur knew naught of her return and abode with concern overcast and sorrow might not be overpast; no peace prevailed with him nor was patience possible to him. Whenas pine and passion, desire and distraction waxed on him, he would solace himself by reciting verse and go to the house and set him its walls to buss. It chanced that he went out that day to the place where he had parted from his mistress and repeated this rare song:—

My wrongs hide I, withal they show to sight; ✿ And now mine eyes from sleep to wake are dight.
I cry when melancholy tries my sprite ✿ Last not, O world nor work more despight;
Lo hangs my soul 'twixt hardship and affright.
261 Were the Sultan hight Love but fair to me, ✿ Slumber mine eyes' companion were to me,
My Lords, some little mercy spare to me, ✿ Chief of my tribe: be debonnair to me,
Whom Love cast down, erst rich now pauper-wight!
Censors may blame thee but I look beyond ✿ Mine ears I stop and leave their lies unconned
And keep my pact wi' those I love so fond: ✿ They say, "Thou lov'st a runaway!" I respond,
"Whist! whenas Fate descends she blinds the sight!"

Then he returned to his lodging and sat there weeping, till sleep overcame him, when he saw in a dream as if Zayn al-Mawasif were come to the house, and awoke in tears. So he set off to go thither, improvising these couplets:—

Shall I be consoled when Love hath mastered the secret of me ✿ And my heart is aglow with more than the charcoal's ardency?

I love her whose absence I plain before Allah for parting-stower ✿ And the shifts of the days and doom which allotted me Destiny:

When shall our meeting be, O wish o' my heart and will? ✿ O favour of fullest Moon, when shall we Re-union see?

As he made an end of his recitation, he found himself walking adown in Zayn al-Mawasif's street and smelt the sweet savour of the pastiles wherewithal she had incensed the house; wherefore his vitals fluttered and his heart was like to leave his breast and desire flamed up in him and distraction redoubled upon him; when lo, and behold! Hubub, on her way to do her lady's errand suddenly appeared at the head of the street and he rejoiced with joy exceeding. When she saw him, she went up to him and saluting him, gave him the glad news of her mistress's return, saying, "She hath sent me to bid thee to her." Whereat he was glad indeed, with gladness naught could exceed; and she took him and returned with him to the house. When Zayn al-Mawasif saw him, she came down to him from the couch and kissed him and he kissed her and she embraced him and he embraced her; nor did they leave kissing and embracing till both swooned away for stress of affection and separation. They lay a long while senseless, and when they revived, Zayn al-Mawasif bade Hubub fetch her a gugglet of sherbet of sugar and another of sherbet of lemons. So she brought what she desired and they sat eating and drinking nor ceased before nightfall, when they fell to recalling all that had 262 befallen them from commencement to conclusion. Then she acquainted him with her return to Al-Islam, whereat he rejoiced and he also became a Moslem. On like wise did her women, and they all repented to Allah Almighty of their infidelity. On the morrow she bade send for the Kazi and the witnesses and told them that she was a widow and had completed the purification-period and was minded to marry Masrur. So they drew up the wedding-contract between them and they abode in all delight of life. Meanwhile, the Jew, when the people of Adan released him from prison, set out homewards and fared on nor ceased faring till he came within three days' journey of the city. Now as soon as Zayn al-Mawasif heard of his coming she called for her handmaid Hubub and said to her, "Go to the Jews' burial-place and there dig a grave and plant on it sweet basil and jessamine and sprinkle water thereabout. If the Jew come and ask thee of me, answer:—My mistress died twenty days ago of chagrin on thine account. If he say, show me her tomb, take him to the grave and after weeping over it and making moan and lament before him, contrive to cast him therein and bury him alive."[372] And Hubub answered, "I hear and I obey." Then they laid up the furniture in the store closets, and Zayn al-Mawasif removed to Masrur's lodging, where he and she abode eating and drinking, till the

three days were past; at the end of which the Jew arrived and knocked at the door of his house. Quoth Hubub, “Who’s at the door?”; and quoth he, “Thy master.” So she opened to him and he saw the tears railing down her cheeks and said, “What aileth thee to weep and where is thy mistress?” She replied, “My mistress is dead of chagrin on thine account.” When he heard this, he was perplexed and wept with sore weeping and presently said, “O Hubub, where is her tomb?” So she carried him to the Jews’ burial-ground and showed him the grave she had dug; whereupon he shed bitter tears and recited this pair of couplets[373]:—

263 Two things there are, for which if eyes wept tear on tear ✿ Of blood, till they were like indeed to disappear,
They never could fulfil the Tithe of all their due: ✿ And these are prime of youth and loss of loveling dear.

Then he wept again with bitter tears and recited these also:—

Alack and Alas! Patience taketh flight; ✿ And from parting of friend to sore death I’m dight:
O how woeful this farness from dear one, and oh ✿ How my heart is rent by mine own unright!
Would Heaven my secret I erst had kept ✿ Nor had told the pangs and my liver-blight:
I lived in all solace and joyance of life ✿ Till she left and left me in piteous plight:
O Zayn al-Mawasif, I would there were ✿ No parting departing my frame and sprite:
I repent me for troth-breach and blame my guilt ✿ Of unruth to her whereon hopes I built.

When he had made an end of this verse, he wept and groaned and lamented till he fell down a-swoon, whereupon Hubub made haste to drag him to the grave and throw him in, whilst he was insensible yet quick withal. Then she stopped up the grave on him and returning to her mistress acquainted her with what had passed, whereat she rejoiced with exceeding joy and recited these two couplets:—

The world sware that for ever ’twould gar me grieve: ✿ ’Tis false, O world, so thine oath retrieve[374]!
The blamer is dead and my love’s in my arms: ✿ Rise to herald of joys and tuck high thy sleeve[375]!

Then she and Masrur abode each with other in eating and drinking and sport and pleasure and good cheer, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Sunderer of societies and Slayer of sons and daughters. And I have also heard tell the following tale of

35- ALI NUR AL-DIN AND MIRIAM THE GIRDLE-GIRL.[376]

There was once in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before in the parts of Cairo, a merchant named Táj al-Dín who was of the most considerable of the merchants and of the chiefs of the freeborn. But he was given to travelling everywhere and loved to fare over wild and wold, waterless lowland and stony waste, and to journey to the isles of the seas, in quest of dirhams and dinars: wherefore he had in his time encountered dangers and suffered duresse of the way such as would grizzle little children and turn their black hair grey. He was possessed of black slaves and Mamelukes, Eunuchs and concubines, and was the wealthiest of the merchants of his time and the goodliest of them in speech, owning horses and mules and Bactrian camels and dromedaries; sacks great and small of size; goods and merchandise and stuffs such as muslins of Hums, silks and brocades of Ba'allak, cotton of Mery, stuffs of India, gauzes of Baghdad, burnouses of Moorland and Turkish white slaves and Abyssinian castratos and Grecian girls and Egyptian boys; and the coverings of his bales were silk with gold purfled fair, for he was wealthy beyond compare. Furthermore he was rare of comeliness, accomplished in goodliness, and gracious in his kindliness, even as one of his describers doth thus express:—

A merchant I spied whose lovers ✿ Were fighting in furious guise:

Quoth he, "Why this turmoil of people?" ✿ Quoth I, "Trader, for those fine eyes!"

And saith another in his praise and saith well enough to accomplish the wish of him:—

265 Came a merchant to pay us a visit ✿ Whose glance did my heart surprise:

Quoth he, "What surprised thee so?" ✿ Quoth I, "Trader, 'twas those fine eyes."

Now that merchant had a son called Ali Nur al-Din, as he were the full moon whenas it meeteth the sight on its fourteenth night, a marvel of beauty and loveliness, a model of form and symmetrical grace, who was sitting one day as was his wont, in his father's shop, selling and buying, giving and taking when the sons of the merchants girt him around and he was amongst them as moon among stars, with brow flower-white and cheeks of rosy light in down the tenderest dight, and body like alabaster-bright even as saith of him the poet:—

"Describe me!" a fair one said. ✿ Said I, "Thou 'art Beauty's queen."

And, speaking briefest speech, ✿ "All charms in thee are seen."

And as saith of him one of his describers:—

His mole upon plain of cheek is like ✿ Ambergrís-crumb on marble plate,

And his glances likest the sword proclaim ✿ To all Love's rebels "The Lord is Great!"[371]

The young merchants invited him saying, "O my lord Nur al-Din, we wish thee to go this day a-pleasuring with us in such a garden." And he answered, "Wait till I consult my parent, for I cannot go without his consent." As they were talking, behold, up came Taj al-Din, and his son looked to him and said, "O father mine, the sons of the merchants have invited me to wend a-pleasuring with them in such a garden. Dost thou grant me leave to go?" His father replied, "Yes, O my son, fare with them;" and gave him somewhat of money. So the young men mounted their mules and asses and Nur al-Din mounted a she-mule and rode with them to a garden, wherein was all that soul desireth and that eye charmeth. It was high of walls which from broad base were seen to rise; and it had a gateway vault-wise with a portico like a saloon and a door azure as the skies, as it were one of the gates of Paradise: the name of the door-keeper was Rizwán,[378] and over the gate were trained an hundred trellises which grapes overran; 266 and these were of various dyes, the red like coralline, the black like the snouts of Súdán[379]-men and the white like egg of the pigeon-hen. And in it peach and pomegranate were shown and pear, apricot and pomegranate were grown and fruits with and without stone hanging in clusters or alone,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the sons of the merchants entered the vergier, they found therein all that soul desireth or eye charmeth, grapes of many hues grown, hanging in bunches or alone, even as saith of them the poet:—

Grapes tasting with the taste of wine ✿ Whose coats like blackest Raven's shine:

Their sheen, amid the leafage shows, ✿ Like women's fingers henna'd fine.

And as saith another on the same theme:—

Grape-bunches likest as they sway ✿ A-stalk, my body frail and snell:

Honey and water thus in jar, ✿ When sourness past, make Hydromel.

Then they entered the arbour of the garden and saw there Rizwan the gate-keeper sitting, as he were Rizwan the Paradise-guardian, and on the door were written these lines:—

Garth Heaven-watered wherein clusters waved ✿ On boughs which full of sap to bend were fain:

And, when the branches danced on Zephyr's palm, ✿ The Pleiads shower'd as gifts[380] fresh pearls for rain.

267 And within the arbour were written these two couplets:—

Come with us, friend, and enter thou ✿ This garth that cleanses rust of grief:

Over their skirts the Zephyrs trip[381] ✿ And flowers in sleeve to laugh are lief.[382]

So they entered and found all manner fruits in view and birds of every kind and hue, such as ring-dove, nightingale and curlew; and the turtle and the cushat sang their love lays on the sprays. Therein were rills that ran with limpid wave and flowers suave; and bloom for whose perfume we crave and it was even as saith of it the poet in these two couplets:—

The Zephyr breatheth o'er its branches, like ✿ Fair girls that trip as in fair skirts they pace:

Its rills resemble swords in hands of knights ✿ Drawn from the scabbard and containing-case.[383]

And again as singeth the songster:—

The streamlet swings by branchy wood and aye ✿ Joys in its breast those beauties to display;

And Zephyr noting this, for jealousy ✿ Hastens and bends the branches other way.

On the trees of the garden were all manner fruits, each in two sorts, and amongst them the pomegranate, as it were a ball of silver-dross,[384] whereof saith the poet and saith right well:—

Granados of finest skin, like the breasts ✿ Of maid firm-standing in sight of male;

When I strip the skin, they at once display ✿ The rubies compelling all sense to quail.

And even as quoth another bard:—

Close prest appear to him who views th' inside ✿ Red rubies in brocaded skirts bedight:

Granado I compare with marble dome ✿ Or virgin's breasts delighting every sight:

Therein is cure for every ill as e'en ✿ Left an Hadís the Prophet pure of sprite;

And Allah (glorify His name) eke deigned ✿ A noble say in Holy Book indite.[385]

268 The apples were the sugared and the musky and the Dámáni, amazing the beholder, whereof saith Hassán the poet:—

Apple which joins hues twain, and brings to mind ✿ The cheek of lover and beloved combined:

Two wondrous opposites on branch they show ✿ This dark[386] and that with hue incarnadined

The twain embraced when spied the spy and turned ✿ This red, that yellow for the shame designed.[387]

There also were apricots of various kinds, almond and camphor and Jíláni and 'Antábi,[388] whereof saith the poet:—

And Almond-apricot suggesting swain ✿ Whose lover's visit all his wits hath ta'en.

Enough of love-sick lovers' plight it shows ✿ Of face deep yellow and heart torn in twain.[389]

And saith another and saith well:—

Look at that Apricot whose bloom contains ✿ Gardens with brightness gladding all men's eyne:

Like stars the blossoms sparkle when the boughs ✿ Are clad in foliage dight with sheen and shine.

There likewise were plums and cherries and grapes, that the sick of all diseases assain and do away giddiness and yellow choler from the brain; and figs the branches between, vari-coloured red and green, amazing sight and sense, even as saith the poet:—

'Tis as the Figs with clear white skins outthrown ✿ By foliaged trees, athwart whose green they peep,

Were sons of Roum that guard the palace-roof ✿ When shades close in and night-long ward they keep.[390]

And saith another and saith well:—

269 Welcome[391] the Fig! To us it comes ✿ Ordered in handsome plates they bring:

Likest a Sufrah[392]-cloth we draw ✿ To shape of bag without a ring.

And how well saith a third:—

Give me the Fig sweet-flavoured, beauty-clad, ✿ Whose inner beauties rival outer sheen:

And when it fruits thou tastest it to find ✿ Chamomile's scent and Sugar's saccharine:

And eke it favoureth on platters poured ✿ Puff-balls of silken thread and sendal green.

And how excellent is the saying of one of them!—

Quoth they (and I had trained my taste thereto ✿ Nor cared for other fruits whereby they swore),

"Why lovest so the Fig?" whereto quoth I ✿ "Some men love Fig and others Sycamore."[393]

And are yet goodlier those of another:—

Pleaseth me more the fig than every fruit ✿ When ripe and hanging from the sheeny bough;

Like Devotee who, when the clouds pour rain, ✿ Sheds tears and Allah's power doth avow.

And in that garth were also pears of various kinds Sinaïtic,[394] Aleppine and Grecian growing in clusters and alone, parcel green and parcel golden——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the merchants' sons went down into the garth they saw therein all 270 the fruits we mentioned and found pears Sinaïtic, Aleppine and Grecian of every hue, which here clustering there single grew, parcel green and parcel yellow to the gazer a marvel-view, as saith of them the poet:—

With thee that Pear agree, whose hue a-morn ✿ Is hue of hapless lover yellow pale;

Like virgin cloistered strait in strong Harím ✿ Whose face like racing steed outstrips the veil.

And Sultani[395] peaches of shades varied, yellow and red, whereof saith the poet:—

Like Peach in vergier growing ✿ And sheen of Andam[396] showing:

Whose balls of yellow gold, ✿ Are dyed with blood-gouts flowing.

There were also green almonds of passing sweetness, resembling the cabbage[397] of the palm-tree, with their kernels within three tunics lurking of the Munificent King's handiworking, even as is said of them:—

Three coats yon freshest form endue ✿ God's work of varied shape and hue:

Hardness surrounds it night and day; ✿ Prisoning without a sin to rue.

And as well saith another:—

Seest not that Almond plucked by hand ✿ Of man from bough where wont to dwell:

Peeling it shows the heart within ✿ As union-pearl in oyster-shell.

And as saith a third better than he:—

How good is Almond green I view! ✿ The smallest fills the hand of you:
Its nap is as the down upon ✿ The cheeks where yet no beardlet grew:
Its kernels in the shell are seen, ✿ Or bachelors or married two,
As pearls they were of lucent white ✿ Casèd and lapped in Jasper's hue.

And as saith yet another and saith well:—

Mine eyes ne'er looked on aught the Almond like ✿ For charms, when blossoms[398] in the Prime show bright:
271 Its head to hoariness of age inclines ✿ The while its cheek by youth's fresh down is dight.

And jujube-plums of various colours, grown in clusters and alone whereof saith one, describing them:—

Look at the Lote-tree, note on boughs arrayed ✿ Like goodly apricots on reed-strown floor,[399]
Their morning-hue to viewer's eye is like ✿ Cascavels[400] cast of purest golden ore.

And as saith another and saith right well:—

The Jujube-tree each Day ✿ Robeth in bright array.
As though each pome thereon ✿ Would self to sight display.
Like falcon-bell of gold ✿ Swinging from every spray.

And in that garth grew blood oranges, as they were the Khaulanján,[401] whereof quoth the enamoured poet[402]:—

Red fruits that fill the hand, and shine with sheen ✿ Of fire, albe the scarf-skin's white as snow.
'Tis marvel snow on fire doth never melt ✿ And, stranger still, ne'er burns this living lowe!

And quoth another and quoth well:—

And trees of Orange fruiting ferly fair ✿ To those who straitest have their charms surveyed;
Like cheeks of women who their forms have decked ✿ For holiday in robes of gold brocade.

272 And yet another as well:—

Like are the Orange-hills[403] when Zephyr breathes ✿ Swaying the boughs and spray with airy grace,
Her cheeks that glow with lovely light when met ✿ At greeting-tide by cheeks of other face.

And a fourth as fairly:—

And fairest Fawn, we said to him "Portray ✿ This garth and oranges thine eyes survey:"
And he, "Your garden favoureth my face, ✿ Who gathereth orange gathereth fire alwày."

In that garden too grew citrons, in colour as virgin gold, hanging down from on high and dangling among the branches, as they were ingots of growing gold;[404] and saith thereof the 'namoured poet:—

Hast seen a Citron-copse so weighed adown ✿ Thou fearest bending roll their fruit on mould;
And seemed, when Zephyr passed athwart the tree, ✿ Its branches hung with bells of purest gold?

And shaddocks,[405] that among their boughs hung laden as though each were the breast of a gazelle-like maiden, contenting the most longing wight, as saith of them the poet and saith aright:—

And Shaddock mid the garden-paths, on bough ✿ Freshest like fairest damsel met my sight;

And to the blowing of the breeze it bent ✿ Like golden ball to bat of chrysolite.

And the lime sweet of scent, which resembleth a hen's egg, but its yellowness ornamenteth its ripe fruit, and its fragrance hearteneth him who plucketh it, as saith the poet who singeth it:—

Seest not the Lemon, when it taketh form, ✿ Catch rays of light and all to gaze constrain;

Like egg of pullet which the huckster's hand ✿ Adorneth dyeing with the saffron-stain?

273 Moreover in this garden were all manner of other fruits and sweet-scented herbs and plants and fragrant flowers, such as jessamine and henna and water-lilies[406] and spikenard[407] and roses of every kind and plantain[408] and myrtle and so forth; and indeed it was without compare, seeming as it were a piece of Paradise to whoso beheld it. If a sick man entered it, he came forth from it like a raging lion, and tongue availeth not to its description, by reason of that which was therein of wonders and rarities which are not found but in Heaven: and how should it be otherwise when its door-keeper's name was Rizwan? Though widely different were the stations of those twain! Now when the sons of the merchants had walked about gazing at the garden after taking their pleasure therein, they sat down in one of its pavilions and seated Nur al-Din in their midst.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the sons of the merchants sat down in the pavilion they seated Nur al-Din in their midst on a rug of gold-purfled leather of Al-Táif,[409] leaning on a pillow[410] of minever, stuffed with ostrich down. And they gave him a fan of ostrich feathers, whereon were written these two couplets:—

A fan whose breath is fraught with fragrant scent; ✿ Minding of happy days and times forspent,

Wafting at every time its perfumed air ✿ O'er face of noble youth on honour bent.

274 Then they laid by their turbands and outer clothes and sat talking and chatting and inducing one another to discourse, while they all kept their eyes fixed on Nur al-Din and gazed on his beauteous form. After the sitting had lasted an hour or so, up came a slave with a tray on his head, wherein were platters of china and crystal containing viands of all sorts (for one of the youths had so charged his people before coming to the garden); and the meats were of whatever walketh earth or wingeth air or swimmeth waters, such as Katá-grouse and fat quails and pigeon-poults and mutton and chickens and the delicatest fish. So, the tray being sat before them, they fell to and ate their fill; and when they had made an end of eating, they rose from meat and washed their hands with pure water and musk-scented soap, and dried them with napery embroidered in silk and bugles; but to Nur al-Din they brought a napkin laced with red gold whereon he wiped his hands. Then coffee[411] was served up and each drank what he would, after which they sat talking, till presently the garden-keeper

who was young went away and returning with a basket full of roses, said to them, "What say ye, O my masters, to flowers?" Quoth one of them, "There is no harm in them,[412] especially roses, which are not to be resisted." Answered the gardener, "'Tis well, but it is of our wont not to give roses but in exchange for pleasant converse; so whoever would take aught thereof, let him recite some verses suitable to the situation." Now they were ten sons of merchants of whom one said, "Agreed: give me thereof and I will recite thee somewhat of verse apt to the case." Accordingly the gardener gave him a bunch of roses[413] which he took and at once improvised these three couplets:—

The Rose in highest stead I rate ✿ For that her charms ne'er satiate;

All fragrant flow'rs be troops to her ✿ Their general of high estate:

Where she is not they boast and vaunt; ✿ But, when she comes, they stint their prate.

275 Then the gardener gave a bunch to another and he recited these two couplets:—

Take, O my lord, to thee the Rose ✿ Recalling scent by musk be shed.

Like virginette by lover eyed ✿ Who with her sleeves[414] enveileth head.

Then he gave a bunch to a third who recited these two couplets:—

Choice Rose that gladdens heart to see her sight; ✿ Of Nadd recalling fragrance exquisite.

The branchlets clip her in her leaves for joy, ✿ Like kiss of lips that never spake in spite.

Then he gave a bunch to a fourth and he recited these two couplets:—

Seest not that rosery where Rose a-flowering displays ✿ Mounted upon her steed of stalk those marvels manifold?

As though the bud were ruby-stone and girded all around ✿ With chrysolite and held within a little hoard of gold.

Then he gave a posy to a fifth and he recited these two couplets:—

Wands of green chrysolite bare issue, which ✿ Were fruits like ingots of the growing gold.[415]

And drops, a dropping from its leaves, were like ✿ The tears my languorous eyelids railed and rolled.

Then he gave a sixth a bunch and he recited these two couplets:—

O Rose, thou rare of charms that dost contain ✿ All gifts and Allah's secrets singular,

Thou'rt like the loved one's cheek where lover fond ✿ And fain of Union sticks the gold dinár.[416]

276 Then he gave a bunch to a seventh and he recited these two couplets:—

To Rose quoth I, "What gars thy thorns to be put forth ✿ For all who touch thee cruellest injury?"

Quoth she, "These flowery troops are troops of me ✿ Who be their lord with spines for armoury."

And he gave an eighth a bunch and he recited these two couplets:—

Allah save the Rose which yellows a-morn ✿ Florid, vivid and likest the nugget-ore;

And bless the fair sprays that displayed such flowers ✿ And mimic suns gold-begilded bore.

Then he gave a bunch to a ninth and he recited these two couplets:—

The bushes of golden-hued Rose excite ✿ In the love-sick lover joys manifold:

'Tis a marvel shrub watered every day ✿ With silvern lymph and it fruiteth gold.

Then he gave a bunch of roses to the tenth and last and he recited these two couplets:—

Seest not how the hosts of the Rose display ✿ Red hues and yellow in rosy field?

I compare the Rose and her arming thorn ✿ To emerald lance piercing golden shield.

And whilst each one hent bunch in hand, the gardener brought the wine-service and setting it before them, on a tray of porcelain arabesqued with red gold, recited these two couplets:—

Dawn heralds day-light: so wine pass round, ✿ Old wine, fooling sage till his wits he tyne:

Wot I not for its purest clarity ✿ An 'tis wine in cup or 'tis cup in wine.[417]

Then the gardener filled and drank and the cup went round, till it came to Nur al-Din's turn, whereupon the man filled and handed it to him; but he said, "This thing I wot it not nor have I ever drunken thereof, for therein is great offence and the Lord 277 of All-might hath forbidden it in His Book." Answered the gardener, "O my Lord Nur al-Din, an thou forbear to drink only by reason of the sin, verily Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) is bountiful, of sufferance great, forgiving and compassionate and pardoneth the mortalest sins: His mercy embraceth all things, Allah's ruth be upon the poet who saith:—

Be as thou wilt, for Allah is bountiful ✿ And when thou sinnest feel thou naught alarm:

But 'ware of twofold sins nor ever dare ✿ To give God partner or mankind to harm."

Then quoth one of the sons of the merchants, "My life on thee, O my lord Nur al-Din, drink of this cup!" And another conjured him by the oath of divorce and yet another stood up persistently before him, till he was ashamed and taking the cup from the gardener, drank a draught, but spat it out again, crying, "'Tis bitter." Said the young gardener, "O my lord Nur al-Din, knowest thou not that sweets taken by way of medicine are bitter? Were this not bitter, 'twould lack of the manifold virtues it possesseth; amongst which are that it digesteth food and disperseth cark and care and dispelleth flatulence and clarifieth the blood and cleareth the complexion and quickeneth the body and hearteneth the hen-hearted and fortifieth the sexual power in man; but to name all its virtues would be tedious." Quoth one of the poets:—

We'll drink and Allah pardon sinners all ✿ And cure of ills by sucking cups I'll find:

Nor aught the sin deceives me; yet said He ✿ "In it there be advantage[418] to mankind."

278 Then he sprang up without stay or delay and opened one of the cupboards in the pavilion and taking out a loaf of refined sugar, broke off a great slice which he put into Nur al-Din's cup, saying, "O my lord, an thou fear to drink wine, because of its bitterness, drink now, for 'tis sweet." So he took the cup and emptied it: whereupon one of his comrades filled him another, saying, "O my lord Nur al-Din, I am thy slave," and another did the like, saying, "I am one of thy servants," and a third said, "For my sake!" and a fourth, "Allah upon thee, O my lord Nur al-Din, heal my heart!" And so they ceased not plying him with wine, each and every of the ten sons of

merchants till they had made him drink a total of ten cups. Now Nur al-Din's body was virgin of wine-bibbing, or never in all his life had he drunken vine-juice till that hour, wherefore its fumes wrought in his brain and drunkenness was stark upon him and he stood up (and indeed his tongue was thick and his speech stammering) and said, "O company, by Allah, ye are fair and your speech is goodly and your place pleasant; but there needeth hearing of sweet music; for drink without melody lacks the chief of its essentiality, even as saith the poet:—

Pass round the cup to the old and the young man, too, And take the bowl from the hand of the shining moon,[419]
But without music, I charge you, forbear to drink; I see even horses drink to a whistled tune."[420]

Therewith up sprang the gardener lad and mounting one of the young men's mules, was absent awhile, after which he returned with a Cairene girl, as she were a sheep's tail fat and delicate, or an ingot of pure silvern ore or a dinar on a porcelain plate or a gazelle in the wold forlore. She had a face that put to shame the shining sun and eyes Babylonian[421] and brows like bows bended and cheeks rose-painted and teeth pearly-hued and lips sugared and glances languishing and breasts ivory white and body slender and slight, full of folds and with dimples dight and hips like pillows stuffed and thighs like columns of Syrian stone, and 279 between them what was something like a sachet of spices in wrapper swathed. Quoth the poet of her in these couplets:—

Had she shown her shape to idolaters' sight, ✿ They would gaze on her face and their gods detest:
And if in the East to a monk she'd show'd, ✿ He'd quit Eastern posture and bow to West.[422]
An she crached in the sea and the briniest sea ✿ Her lips would give it the sweetest zest.

And quoth another in these couplets:—

Brighter than Moon at full with kohl'd eyes she came ✿ Like Doe, on chasing whelps of Lioness intent:
Her night of murky locks lets fall a tent on her ✿ A tent of hair[423] that lacks no pegs to hold the tent;
And roses lighting up her roseate cheeks are fed ✿ By hearts and livers flowing fire for languishment:
An 'spied her all the Age's Fair to her they'd rise ✿ Humbly,[424] and cry "The meed belongs to precedent!"

And how well saith a third bard[425]:—

Three things for ever hinder her to visit us, for fear Of the intriguing spy and eke the rancorous envier;
Her forehead's lustre and the sound of all her ornaments And the sweet scent her creases hold of ambergris and myrrh.
Grant with the border of her sleeve she hide her brow and doff Her ornaments, how shall she do her scent away from her?

She was like the moon when at fullest on its fourteenth night, and was clad in a garment of blue, with a veil of green, over brow flower-white that all wits amazed and those of understanding amated——And 280 Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the gardener brought a girl whom we have described possessed of the utmost beauty and loveliness and fine stature and symmetrical grace as it were she the poet signified when he said[426]:—

She came apparelled in a vest of blue,
That mocked the skies and shamed their azure hue;
I thought thus clad she burst upon my sight,
Like summer moonshine on a wintry night.

And how goodly is the saying of another and how excellent!—

She came thick veiled, and cried I, "O display ✿ That face like full moon bright with pure-white ray."
Quoth she, "I fear disgrace," quoth I, "Cut short ✿ This talk, no shift of days thy thoughts affray."
Whereat she raised her veil from fairest face ✿ And crystal spray on gems began to stray:
And I forsooth was fain to kiss her cheek, ✿ Lest she complain of me on Judgment-Day.
And at such tide before the Lord on High ✿ We first of lovers were redress to pray:
So "Lord, prolong this reckoning and review" ✿ (Prayed I) "that longer I may sight my may."

Then said the young gardener to her, "Know thou, O lady of the fair, brighter than any constellation which illumineth air we sought, in bringing thee hither naught but that thou shouldst entertain with converse this comely youth, my lord Nur al-Din, for he hath come to this place only this day." And the girl replied, "Would thou hadst told me, that I might have brought what I have with me!" Rejoined the gardener, "O my lady, I will go and fetch it to thee." "As thou wilt," said she: and he, "Give me a token." So she gave him a kerchief and he fared forth in haste and returned after awhile, bearing a green satin bag with slings of gold. The girl took the bag from him and opening it shook it, whereupon 281 there fell thereout two-and-thirty pieces of wood, which she fitted one into other, male into female and female into male[427] till they became a polished lute of Indian workmanship. Then she uncovered her wrists and laying the lute in her lap, bent over it with the bending of mother over babe, and swept the strings with her finger-tips; whereupon it moaned and resounded and after its olden home yearned; and it remembered the waters that gave it drink and the earth whence it sprang and wherein it grew and it minded the carpenters who cut it and the polishers who polished it and the merchants who made it their merchandise and the ships that shipped it; and it cried and called aloud and moaned and groaned; and it was as if she asked it of all these things and it answered her with the tongue of the case, reciting these couplets[428]:—

A tree whilere was I the Bulbul's home ✿ To whom for love I bowed my grass-green head:
They moaned on me, and I their moaning learnt ✿ And in that moan my secret all men read:
The woodman felled me falling sans offence, ✿ And slender lute of me (as view ye) made:
But, when the fingers smite my strings, they tell ✿ How man despite my patience did me dead;
Hence boon-companions when they hear my moan ✿ Distracted wax as though by wine misled:
And the Lord softens every heart to me, ✿ And I am hurried to the highmost stead:

All who in charms excel fain clasp my waist; ✿ Gazelles of languid eyne and Houri maid:

Allah ne’er part fond lover from his joy ✿ Nor live the loved one who unkindly fled.

Then the girl was silent awhile, but presently taking the lute in lap, again bent over it, as mother bendeth over child, and preluded in many different modes; then, returning to the first, she sang these couplets:—

Would they[429] the lover seek without ado, ✿ He to his heavy grief had bid adieu:

282 With him had vied the Nightingale[430] on bough ✿ As one far parted from his lover’s view:

Rouse thee! awake! The Moon lights Union-night ✿ As tho’ such Union woke the Morn anew.

This day the blamers take of us no heed ✿ And lute-strings bid us all our joys ensue.

Seest not how four-fold things conjoin in one ✿ Rose, myrtle, scents and blooms of golden hue[431].

Yea, here this day the four chief joys unite ✿ Drink and dinars, beloved and lover true:

So win thy worldly joy, for joys go past ✿ And naught but storied tales and legends last.

When Nur al-Din heard the girl sing these lines he looked on her with eyes of love and could scarce contain himself for the violence of his inclination to her; and on like wise was it with her, because she glanced at the company who were present of the sons of the merchants and she saw that Nur al-Din was amongst the rest as moon among stars; for that he was sweet of speech and replete with amorous grace, perfect in stature and symmetry, brightness and loveliness, pure of all defect, than the breeze of morn softer, than Tasnim blander, as saith of him the poet[432]:—

By his cheeks’ unfading damask and his smiling teeth I swear, By the arrows that he feathers with the witchery of his air,

By his sides so soft and tender and his glances bright and keen, By the whiteness of his forehead and the blackness of his hair,

By his arched imperious eyebrows, chasing slumber from my lids With their yeas and noes that hold me ’twixt rejoicing and despair,

By the scorpions that he launches from his ringlet-clustered brows, Seeking still to slay his lovers with his rigours unaware,

By the myrtle of his whiskers and the roses of his cheek, By his lips’ incarnate rubies and his teeth’s fine pearls and rare,

By the straight and tender sapling of his shape, which for its fruit Doth the twin pomegranates, shining in his snowy bosom, wear,

By his heavy hips that tremble, both in motion and repose, And the slender waist above them, all too slight their weight to bear,

By the silk of his apparel and his quick and sprightly wit, By all attributes of beauty that are fallen to his share;

Lo, the musk exhales its fragrance from his breath, and eke the breeze From his scent the perfume borrows, that it scatters everywhere.

Yea, the sun in all his splendour cannot with his brightness vie And the crescent moon’s a fragment that he from his nails doth pare.

283——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nur al-Din was delighted with the girl's verses and he swayed from side to side for drunkenness and fell a-praising her and saying:—

A lutanist to us inclined ✿ And stole our wits bemused with wine:

And said to us her lute, "The Lord ✿ Bade us discourse by voice divine."

When she heard him thus improvise the girl gazed at him with loving eyes and redoubled in passion and desire for him increased upon her, and indeed she marvelled at his beauty and loveliness, symmetry and grace, so that she could not contain herself, but took the lute in lap again and sang these couplets:—

He blames me for casting on him my sight ✿ And parts fro' me bearing my life and sprite:

He repels me but kens what my heart endures ✿ As though Allah himself had inspired the wight:

I portrayed his portrait in palm of hand ✿ And cried to mine eyes, "Weep your doleful plight."

For neither shall eyes of me spy his like ✿ Nor my heart have patience to bear its blight:

Wherefore, will I tear thee from breast, O Heart ✿ As one who regards him with jealous spite.

And when say I, "O heart be consoled for pine," ✿ 'Tis that heart to none other shall e'er incline:

Nur al-Din wondered at the charms of her verse and the elegance of her expression and the sweetness of her voice and the eloquence of her speech and his wit fled for stress of love and longing, and ecstasy and distraction, so that he could not refrain from her a single moment, but bent to her and strained her to his bosom; and she in like manner bowed her form over his and abandoned herself to his embrace and bussed him between the eyes. Then he kissed her on the mouth and played with her at kisses, after the manner of the billing of doves; and she met him with like warmth and did with him as she was done by till the others were distracted and rose to their feet; whereupon Nur al-Din was ashamed and held his hand from her. Then she took 284 her lute and, preluding thereon in manifold modes, lastly returned to the first and sang these couplets:—

A Moon, when he bends him those eyes lay bare ✿ A brand that gars gazing gazelle despair:

A King, rarest charms are the host of him ✿ And his lance-like shape men with cane compare:

Were his softness of sides to his heart transferred ✿ His friend had not suffered such cark and care:

Ah for hardest heart and for softest sides! ✿ Why not that to these alter, make here go there?

O thou who accusest my love excuse: ✿ Take eternal and leave me the transient share.[4331]

When Nur al-Din heard the sweetness of her voice and the rareness of her verse, he inclined to her for delight and could not contain himself for excess of wonderment; so he recited these couplets:—

Methought she was the forenoon sun until she donned the veil ✿ But lit she fire in vitals mine still flaring fierce and high,

How had it hurt her an she deigned return my poor salám ✿ With finger-tips or e'en vouchsafed one little wink of eye?

The cavalier who spied her face was wholly stupefied ✿ By charms that glorify the place and every charm outvie.

"Be this the Fair who makes thee pine and long for love liesse? ✿ Indeed thou art excused!" "This is my fairest she;" (quoth I)

Who shot me with the shaft of looks nor deigns to rue my woes ✿ Of strangerhood and broken heart and love I must aby:

I rose a-morn with vanquished heart, to longing love a prey ✿ And weep I through the live long day and all the night I cry.

The girl marvelled at his eloquence and elegance and taking her lute, smote thereon with the goodliest of performance, repeating all the melodies, and sang these couplets:—

By the life o' thy face, O thou life o' my sprite! ✿ I'll ne'er leave thy love for despair or delight:

When art cruel thy vision stands hard by my side ✿ And the thought of thee haunts me when far from sight:

O who saddenest my glance albe weeting that I ✿ No love but thy love will for ever requite?

Thy cheeks are of Rose and thy lips-dews are wine; ✿ Say, wilt grudge them to us in this charming site?

285 Hereat Nur al-Din was gladdened with extreme gladness and wondered with the utmost wonder, so he answered her verse with these couplets:—

The sun yellowed not in the murk gloom li'en ✿ But lay pearl enveiled 'neath horizon-chine;

Nor showed its crest to the eyes of Morn ✿ But took refuge from parting with Morning-shine.[434]

Take my tear-drops that trickle as chain on chain ✿ And they'll tell my case with the clearest sign.

An my tears be likened to Nile-flood, like ✿ Malak's[435] flooded flat be this love o' mine.

Quoth she, "Bring thy riches!" Quoth I, "Come, take!" ✿ "And thy sleep?" "Yes, take it from lids of eyne!"

When the girl heard Nur al-Din's words and noted the beauty of his eloquence her senses fled and her wit was dazed and love of him gat hold upon her whole heart. So she pressed him to her bosom and fell to kissing him like the billing of doves, whilst he returned her caresses with successive kisses; but preeminence appertaineth to precedence.[436] When she had made an end of kissing, she took the lute and recited these couplets:—

Alas, alack and well-away for blamer's calumny! ✿ Whether or not I make my moan or plead or show no plea:

O spurner of my love I ne'er of thee so hard would deem ✿ That I of thee should be despised, of thee my property.

I wont at lovers' love to rail and for their passion chide, ✿ But now I fain debase myself to all who rail at thee:

Yea, only yesterday I wont all amourists to blame ✿ But now I pardon hearts that pine for passion's ecstacy;

And of my stress of parting-stowre on me so heavy weighs ✿ At morning prayer to Him I'll cry, "In thy name, O Ali!"

And also these two couplets:—

His lovers said, "Unless he deign to give us all a drink ✿ Of wine, of fine old wine his lips deal in their purity;

We to the Lord of Threefold Worlds will pray to grant our prayer" ✿ And all exclaim with single cry "In thy name, O Ali!"

286 Nur al-Din, hearing these lines and their rhyme, marvelled at the fluency of her tongue and thanked her, praising her grace and passing seductiveness; and the damsel,

delighted at his praise, arose without stay or delay and doffing that was upon her of outer dress and trinkets till she was free of all encumbrance sat down on his knees and kissed him between the eyes and on his cheek-mole. Then she gave him all she had put off.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the girl gave to Nur al-Din all she had doffed, saying, "O beloved of my heart, in very sooth the gift is after the measure of the giver." So he accepted this from her and gave it back to her and kissed her on the mouth and cheeks and eyes. When this was ended and done, for naught is durable save the Living, the Eternal, Provider of the peacock and the owl,[437] Nur al-Din rose from the séance and stood upon his feet, because the darkness was now fallen and the stars shone out; whereupon quoth the damsel to him, "Whither away, O my lord?"; and quoth he, "To my father's home." Then the sons of the merchants conjured him to night with them, but he refused and mounting his she-mule, rode, without stopping, till he reached his parent's house, where his mother met him and said to him, "O my son, what hath kept thee away till this hour? By Allah, thou hast troubled myself and thy sire by thine absence from us, and our hearts have been occupied with thee." Then she came up to him, to kiss him on his mouth, and smelling the fumes of the wine, said, "O my son, how is it that, after prayer and worship thou hast become a wine-bibber and a rebel against Him to whom belong creation and commandment?" But Nur al-Din threw himself down on the bed and lay there. Presently in came his sire and said, "What aileth Nur al-Din to lie thus?"; and his mother answered, "'Twould seem his head acheth for the air of the garden." So Taj al-Din went up to his son, to ask him of his ailment, and 287 salute him, and smelt the reek of wine.[438] Now the merchant loved not wine-drinkers; so he said to Nur al-Din, "Woe to thee, O my son! Is folly come to such a pass with thee, that thou drinkest wine?" When Nur al-Din heard his sire say this, he raised his hand, being yet in his drunkenness, and dealt him a buffet, when by decree of the Decreer the blow lit on his father's right eye which rolled down on his cheek; whereupon he fell a-swoon and lay therein awhile. They sprinkled rose-water on him till he recovered, when he would have beaten his son; but the mother withheld him, and he swore, by the oath of divorce from his wife that, as soon as morning morrowed, he would assuredly cut off his son's right hand.[439] When she heard her husband's words, her breast was straitened and she feared for her son and ceased not to soothe and appease his sire, till sleep overcame him. Then she waited till moon-rise, when she went in to her son, whose drunkenness had now departed from him, and said to him, "O Nur al-Din, what is this foul deed thou diddest with thy sire?" He asked, "And what did I with him?"; and answered she, "Thou dealtest him a buffet on the right eye and struckest it out so that it rolled down his cheek; and he hath sworn by the divorce-oath that, as soon as

morning shall morrow he will without fail cut off thy right hand." Nur al-Din repented him of that he had done, whenas repentance profited him naught, and his mother said to him, "O my son, this penitence will not profit thee; nor will aught avail thee but that thou arise forthwith and seek safety in flight: go forth the house privily and take refuge with one of thy friends and there what Allah shall do await, for he changeth case after case and state upon state." Then she opened a chest and taking out a purse of an hundred dinars said, "O my son, take these dinars and provide thy wants therewith, and when they are at an end, O my son, send and let me know thereof, that I may send thee other than these, and at the same time convey to me news of thyself privily: haply Allah 288 will decree thee relief and thou shalt return to thy home." And she farewelled him and wept passing sore, nought could be more. Thereupon Nur al-Din took the purse of gold and was about to go forth, when he espied a great purse containing a thousand dinars, which his mother had forgotten by the side of the chest. So he took this also and binding the two purses about his middle,[440] set out before dawn threading the streets in the direction of Búlák, where he arrived when day broke and all creatures arose, attesting the unity of Allah the Opener and went forth each of them upon his several business, to win that which Allah had unto him allotted. Reaching Bulak he walked on along the river-bank till he sighted a ship with her gangway out and her four anchors made fast to the land. The folk were going up into her and coming down from her, and Nur al-Din, seeing some sailors there standing, asked them whither they were bound, and they answered, "To Rosetta-city." Quoth he, "Take me with you;" and quoth they, "Well come, and welcome to, thee to thee, O goodly one!" So he betook himself forthright to the market and buying what he needed of vivers and bedding and covering, returned to the port and went on board the ship, which was ready to sail and tarried with him but a little while before she weighed anchor and fared on, without stopping, till she reached Rosetta,[441] where Nur al-Din saw a small boat going to Alexandria. So he embarked in it and traversing the sea-arm of Rosetta fared on till he came to a bridge called Al-Jámí, where he landed and entered Alexandria by the gate called the Gate of the Lote-tree. Allah protected him, so that none of those who stood on guard at the gate saw him, and he walked on till he entered the city.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nur al-Din entered Alexandria he found it a city goodly of 289 pleasaunces, delightful to its inhabitants and inviting to inhabit therein. Winter had fared from it with his cold and Prime was come to it with his roses: its flowers were kindly ripe and welled forth its rills. Indeed, it was a city goodly of ordinance and disposition; its folk were of the best of men, and when the gates thereof were shut, its folk were safe.[442] And it was even as is said of it in these couplets:—

Quoth I to a comrade one day, ✿ A man of good speech and raré,
"Describe Alexandria." ✿ Quoth he, "'Tis a march-town[2] fair."
Quoth I, "Is there living therein?" ✿ And he, "An the wind blow there."

Or as saith one of the poets:—

Alexandria's a frontier;[443] ✿ Whose dews of lips are sweet and clear;
How fair the coming to it is, ✿ So one therein no raven speer!

Nur al-Din walked about the city and ceased not walking till he came to the merchants' bazar, whence he passed on to the mart of the money-changers and so on in turn to the markets of the confectioners and fruiterers and druggists, marvelling, as he went, at the city, for that the nature of its qualities accorded with its name.[444] As he walked in the druggists' bazar, behold, an old man came down from his shop and saluting him, took him by the hand and carried him to his home. And Nur al-Din saw a fair by-street, swept and sprinkled, whereon the zephyr blew and made pleasantness pervade it and the leaves of the trees overshaded it. Therein stood three houses and at the upper end a mansion, whose foundations were firm sunk in the water and its walls towered to the confines of the sky. They had swept the space before it and they had sprinkled it freshly; so it exhaled the fragrance of flowers, borne on the zephyr which breathed upon the place; and the scent met there who approached it on such wise as it were one of the gardens of Paradise. And, as they had cleaned and cooled the by-street's head, so was the end of it with 290 marble spread. The Shaykh carried Nur al-Din into the house and setting somewhat of food before him ate with his guest. When they had made an end of eating, the druggist said to him, "When camest thou hither from Cairo?"; and Nur al-Din replied, "This very night, O my father." Quoth the old man, "What is thy name?"; and quoth he, "Ali Nur al-Din." Said the druggist, "O my son, O Nur al-Din, be the triple divorce incumbent on me, an thou leave me so long as thou abidest in this city; and I will set thee apart a place wherein thou mayst dwell." Nur al-Din asked, "O my lord the Shaykh, let me know more of thee"; and the other answered, "Know, O my son, that some years ago I went to Cairo with merchandise, which I sold there and bought other, and I had occasion for a thousand dinars. So thy sire Taj al-Din weighed them out[445] for me, all unknowing me, and would take no written word of me, but had patience with me till I returned hither and sent him the amount by one of my servants, together with a gift. I saw thee, whilst thou wast little; and, if it please Allah the Most High, I will repay thee somewhat of the kindness thy father did me." When Nur al-Din heard the old man's story, he showed joy and pulling out with a smile the purse of a thousand dinars, gave it to his host the Shaykh and said to him, "Take charge of this deposit for me, against I buy me somewhat of merchandise whereon to trade." Then he abode some time in Alexandria city taking his pleasure every day in its thoroughfares, eating and drinking and indulging himself with mirth and merriment till he had made an end of the hundred dinars he had kept by way of spending-money; whereupon he repaired to the old druggist, to take of him

somewhat of the thousand dinars to spend, but found him not in his shop and took a seat therein to await his return. He sat there gazing right and left and amusing himself with watching the merchants and passers-by, and as he was thus engaged behold, there came into the bazar a Persian riding on a she-mule and carrying behind him a damsel; as she were argent of alloy free or a fish Balti[446] in mimic sea or a doe-gazelle on desert lea. Her face outshone the sun in shine and she had witching eyne and breasts of ivory 291 white, teeth of marguerite, slender waist and sides dimpled deep and calves like tails of fat sheep[447]; and indeed she was perfect in beauty and loveliness, elegant stature and symmetrical grace, even as saith one, describing her[448]:—

'Twas as by will of her she was create ✿ Nor short nor long, but Beauty's mould and mate:

Rose blushes reddest when she sees those cheeks ✿ And fruits the bough those marvel charms amate:

Moon is her favour, Musk the scent of her ✿ Branch is her shape:—she passeth man's estate:

'Tis e'en as were she cast in freshest pearl ✿ And every limblet shows a moon innate.

Presently the Persian lighted down from his she-mule and making the damsel also dismount loudly summoned the broker and said to him as soon as he came, "Take this damsel and cry her for sale in the market." So he took her and leading her to the middlemost of the bazar disappeared for a while and presently he returned with a stool of ebony, inlaid with ivory, and setting it upon the ground, seated her thereon. Then he raised her veil and discovered a face as it were a Median targe[449] or a cluster of pearls[450]: and indeed she was like the full moon, when it filleth on its fourteenth night, accomplished in brilliant beauty. As saith the poet:—

Vied the full moon for folly with her face, ✿ But was eclipsed[451] and split for rage full sore;

And if the spiring Bán with her contend ✿ Perish her hands who load of fuel bore[452]!

And how well saith another:—

Say to the fair in the wroughten veil ✿ How hast made that monk-like worshipper ail?

292 Light of veil and light of face under it ✿ Made the hosts of darkness to fly from bale;

And, when came my glance to steal look at cheek, ✿ With a meteor-shaft the Guard made me quail.[453]

Then said the broker to the merchants,[454] "How much do ye bid for the union-pearl of the diver and prize-quarry of the fowler?" Quoth one, "She is mine for an hundred dinars." And another said, "Two hundred," and a third, "Three hundred"; and they ceased not to bid, one against other, till they made her price nine hundred and fifty dinars, and there the biddings stopped awaiting acceptance and consent.[455]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the merchants bid one against other till they made the price of the girl nine hundred and fifty dinars. Then the broker went up to her Persian master and said to him, "The biddings for this thy slave-girl

have reached nine hundred and fifty dinars: so say me, wilt thou sell her at that price and take the money?" Asked the Persian, "Doth she consent to this? I desire to fall in with her wishes, for I sickened on my journey hither and this handmaid tended me with all possible tenderness, wherefore I sware not to sell her but to him whom she should like and approve, and I have put her sale in her own hand. So do thou consult her and if she say, I consent, sell her to whom thou wilt: but an she say, No, sell her not." So the broker went up to her and asked her, "O Princess of fair ones, know that thy master putteth thy sale in thine own hands, and thy price hath reached nine hundred and fifty dinars; dost thou give me leave to sell thee?" She answered, "Show me him who is minded to buy me before clinching the bargain." So he brought her up to one of the merchants a man stricken with years and decrepit; and she 293 looked at him a long while, then turned to the broker and said to him, "O broker, art thou Jinn-mad or afflicted in thy wit?" Replied he, "Why dost thou ask me this, O Princess of fair ones?"; and said she, "Is it permitted thee of Allah to sell the like of me to yonder decrepit old man, who saith of his wife's case these couplets:—

Quoth she to me,—and sore enraged for wounded pride was she, ✿ For she in sooth had bidden me to that which might not be,—

"An if thou swive me not forthright, as one should swive his wife, ✿ Thou be made a cuckold straight, reproach it not to me.

Meseems thy yard is made of wax, for very flaccidness; ✿ For when I rub it with my hand, it softens instantly."[456]

And said he likewise of his yard:—

I have a yard that sleeps in base and shameful way ✿ When grants my lover boon for which I sue and pray:

But when I wake o' mornings[457] all alone in bed, ✿ 'Tis fain o' foin and fence and fierce for futter-play.

And again quoth he thereof of his yard:—

I have a froward yard of temper ill ✿ Dishonouring him who shows it most regard:

It stands when sleep I, when I stand it sleeps ✿ Heaven pity not who pitieth that yard!

When the old merchant heard this ill flouting from the damsel, he was wroth with wrath exceeding beyond which was no proceeding and said to the broker, "O most ill-omened of brokers, thou hast not brought into the market this ill-conditioned wench but to gibe me and make mock of me before the merchants." Then the broker took her aside and said to her, "O my lady, be not wanting in self-respect. The Shaykh at whom thou didst mock is the Syndic of the bazar and Inspector[458] thereof and a committee-man of the council of the merchants." But she laughed and improvised these two couplets:—

294 It behoveth folk who rule in our time, ✿ And 'tis one of the duties of magistrateship,

To hang up the Wali above his door ✿ And beat with a whip the Mohtasib!

Adding, "By Allah, O my lord, I will not be sold to yonder old man; so sell me to other than him, for haply he will be abashed at me and vend me again and I shall become a mere servant[459] and it beseemeth not that I sully myself with menial service;

and indeed thou knowest that the matter of my sale is committed to myself." He replied, "I hear and I obey," and carried her to a man which was one of the chief merchants. And when standing hard by him the broker asked, "How sayst thou, O my lady? Shall I sell thee to my lord Sharíf al-Dín here for nine hundred and fifty gold pieces?" She looked at him and, seeing him to be an old man with a dyed beard, said to the broker, "Art thou silly, that thou wouldst sell me to this worn out Father Antic? Am I cotton refuse or threadbare rags that thou marchest me about from greybeard to greybeard, each like a wall ready to fall or an Ifrit smitten down of a fire-ball?" As for the first, the poet had him in mind when he said[460]:—

"I sought of a fair maid to kiss her lips of coral red, But, "No, by Him who fashioned things from nothingness!" she said.

Unto the white of hoary hairs I never had a mind, And shall my mouth be stuffed, forsooth, with cotton, ere I'm dead?"

And how goodly is the saying of the poet:—

The wise have said that white of hair is light that shines and robes ✿ The face of man with majesty and light that awes the sight;

Yet until hoary seal shall stamp my parting-place of hair ✿ I hope and pray that same may be black as the blackest night.

Albe Time-whitened beard of man be like the book he bears[461] ✿ When to his Lord he must return, I'd rather 'twere not white.

295 And yet goodlier is the saying of another:—

A guest hath stolen on my head and honour may he lack! ✿ The sword a milder deed hath done that dared these locks to hack.

Avaunt, O Whiteness,[462] wherein naught of brightness gladdens sight ✿ Thou 'rt blacker in the eyes of me than very blackest black!

As for the other, he is a model of wantonness and scurrilousness and a blackener of the face of hoariness; his dye acteth the foulest of lies: and the tongue of his case reciteth these lines[463]:—

Quoth she to me, "I see thou dy'st thy hoariness;" and I, "I do but hide it from thy sight, O thou mine ear and eye!"

She laughed out mockingly and said, "A wonder 'tis indeed! Thou so aboundest in deceit that even thy hair's a lie."

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:—

O thou who dyest hoariness with black, ✿ That youth wi' thee abide, at least in show;

Look ye, my lot was dyèd black whilome ✿ And (take my word!) none other hue 'twill grow.

When the old man with dyed beard heard such words from the slave-girl, he raged with exceeding rage in fury's last stage and said to the broker, "O most ill-omened of brokers, this day thou hast brought to our market naught save this gibing baggage to flout at all who are therein, one after other, and fleer at them with flyting verse and idle jest?" And he came down from his shop and smote on the face the broker who took her an angered and carried her away saying to her, "By Allah, never in my life

saw I a more shameless wench than thyself[464]! Thou hast cut off my daily bread and thine own this day and all the merchants will bear me a grudge on thine account." Then they saw on the way a merchant called Shihab al-Dín who bid ten dinars more for her, and the broker asked her leave to sell her to him. Quoth she, "Trot him out that I may see him and question him of a certain thing, which if he have in his house, I will be sold to him; and if not, then not." So the broker left her standing there and going up to Shihab al-Din, said to him, "O my lord, know that 296yonder damsel tells me she hath a mind to ask thee somewhat, which an thou have, she will be sold to thee. Now thou hast heard what she said to thy fellows, the merchants,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the broker said to the merchant, "Thou hast heard what this handmaid said to thy fellows, the traders, and by Allah, I fear to bring her to thee, lest she do with thee like as she did with thy neighbours and so I fall into disgrace with thee: but, an thou bid me bring her to thee, I will bring her." Quoth the merchant, "Hither with her to me." "Hearing and obeying," answered the broker and fetched for the purchaser the damsel, who looked at him and said, "O my lord, Shihab al-Din hast thou in thy house round cushions stuffed with ermine strips?" Replied Shihab al-Din, "Yes, O Princess of fair ones, I have at home half a score such cushions; but I conjure thee by Allah, tell me, what will thou do with them?" Quoth she, "I will bear with thee till thou be asleep, when I will lay them on thy mouth and nose and press them down till thou die." Then she turned to the broker and said to him, "O thou refuse of brokers, meseemeth thou art mad, in that thou showest me this hour past, first to a pair of grey-beards, in each of whom are two faults, and then thou proferrest me to my lord Shihab al-Din wherein be three defects; firstly, he is dwarfish, secondly, he hath a nose which is big, and thirdly, he hath a beard which is long." Of him quoth one of the poets:—

We never heard of wight nor yet espied ✿ Who amid men three gifts hath unified:

To wit, a beard one cubit long, a snout ✿ Span-long and figure tall a finger wide.

And quoth another poet:—

From the plain of his face springs a minaret ✿ Like a bezel of ring on his finger set:

Did creation enter that vasty nose ✿ No created thing would elsewhere be met.

297When Shihab al-Din heard this, he came down from his shop and seized the broker by the collar, saying, "O scurviest of brokers, what aileth thee to bring us a damsel to flout and make mock of us, one after other, with her verses and talk that a curse is?" So the broker took her and carried her away from before him and fared, saying, "By Allah, all my life long, since I have plied this profession never set I eyes on the like of thee for unmannerliness nor aught more curst to me than thy star, for thou hast cut off

my livelihood this day and I have gained no profit by thee save cuffs on the neck-nape and catching by the collar!" Then he brought her to the shop of another merchant, owner of negro slaves and white servants, and stationing her before him, said to her, "Wilt thou be sold to this my lord 'Alá al-Dín?" She looked at him and seeing him hump-backed, said, "This is a Gobbo," and quoth the poet of him:—

Drawn in thy shoulders are and spine thrust out, ✿ As seeking star which Satan gave the lout[465];
Or as he tasted had first smack of scourge ✿ And looked in marvel for a second bout.

And saith another on the same theme:—

As one of you who mounted mule, ✿ A sight for men to ridicule:
Is't not a farce? Who feels surprise ✿ An start and bolt with him the mule?

And another on a similar subject:—

Oft hunchback addeth to his bunchy back ✿ Faults which gar folk upon his front look black:
Like branch distort and dried by length of days ✿ With citrons hanging from it loose and slack.

With this the broker hurried up to her and, carrying her to another merchant, said to her, "Wilt thou be sold to this one?" She looked at him and said, "In very sooth this man is blue-eyed[466]; how wilt thou sell me to him?" Quoth one of the poets:—

His eyelids sore and bleared ✿ Weakness of frame denote:
Arise, ye folk and see ✿ Within his eyes the mote!

298 Then the broker carried her to another and she looked at him and seeing that he had a long beard, said to the broker, "Fie upon thee! This is a ram, whose tail hath sprouted from his gullet. Wilt thou sell me to him, O unluckiest of brokers? Hast thou not heard say:—All long of beard are little of wits? Indeed, after the measure of the length of the beard is the lack of sense; and this is a well-known thing among men of understanding." As saith one of the poets:—

Ne'er was a man with beard grown overlong, ✿ Tho' be he therefor reverenced and fear'd,
But who the shortness noted in his wits ✿ Added to longness noted in his beard.

And quoth another[467]:—

I have a friend with a beard which God hath made to grow to a useless length,
It is like unto one of the nights of winter long and dark and cold.

With this the broker took her and turned away with her, and she asked, "Whither goest thou with me?" He answered, "Back to thy master the Persian; it sufficeth me what hath befallen me because of thee this day; for thou hast been the means of spoiling both my trade and his by thine ill manners." Then she looked about the market right and left, front and rear till, by the decree of the Decreer her eyes fell on Ali Nur al-Din the Cairene. So she gazed at him and saw him[468] to be a comely youth of straight slim form and smooth of face, fourteen years old, rare in beauty and loveliness and elegance and amorous grace like the full moon on the fourteenth night with forehead flower-white, and cheeks rosy red, neck like alabaster and teeth than

jewels finer and dews of lips sweeter than sugar, even as saith of him one of his describers:—

Came to match him in beauty and loveliness rare ✿ Full moons and gazelles, but quoth I, "Soft fare!
Fare softly, gazelles, nor yourselves compare ✿ With him and, O Moons, all your pains forbear!"

299 And how well saith another bard:—

Slim-waisted loveling, from his hair and brow ✿ Men wake a-morn in night and light renewed.
Blame not the mole that dwelleth on his cheek ✿ For Nu'uman's bloom aye shows spot negro-hued.

When the slave-girl beheld Nur al-Din he interposed between her and her wits; she fell in love to him with a great and sudden fall and her heart was taken with affection for him;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the slave-girl beheld Nur al-Din, her heart was taken with affection for him; so she turned to the broker and said to him, "Will not yonder young merchant who is sitting among the traders in the gown of striped broadcloth bid somewhat more for me?" The broker replied, "O lady of fair ones, yonder young man is a stranger from Cairo, where his father is chief of the trader-guild and surpasseth all the merchants and notables of the place. He is but lately come to this our city and lodgeth with one of his father's friends; but he hath made no bid for thee nor more nor less." When the girl heard the broker's words, she drew from her finger a costly signet-ring of ruby and said to the man, "Carry me to yonder youth, and if he buy me, this ring shall be thine, in requital of thy travail with me this day." The broker rejoiced at this and brought her up to Nur al-Din, and she considered him straitly and found him like the full moon, perfect in loveliness and a model of fine stature and symmetric grace, even as saith of him one of his describers:—

Waters of beauty o'er his cheeks flow bright. ✿ And rain his glances shafts that sorely smite:
Choked are his lovers an he deal disdain's ✿ Bitterest draught denaying love-delight.
His forehead and his stature and my love ✿ Are perfect perfected perfection-dight;
His raiment folds enfold a lovely neck ✿ As crescent moon in collar buttoned tight:
His eyne and twinnèd moles and tears of me ✿ Are night that nighteth to the nightliest night.
300 His eyebrows and his features and my frame[469] ✿ Crescents on crescents are as crescents slight:
His pupils pass the wine-cup to his friends ✿ Which, albe sweet, tastes bitter to my sprite;
And to my thirsty throat pure drink he dealt ✿ From smiling lips what day we were unite:
Then is my blood to him, my death to him ✿ His right and rightful and most righteous right.

The girl gazed at Nur al-Din and said, "O my lord, Allah upon thee, am I not beautiful?"; and he replied, "O Princess of fair ones, is there in the world a comelier

than thou?" She rejoined, "Then why seest thou all the other merchants bid high for me and art silent nor sayest a word neither addest one dinar to my price? 'Twould seem I please thee not, O my lord!" Quoth he, "O my lady, were I in my own land, I had bought thee with all that my hand possesseth of monies;" and quoth she, "O my lord, I said not, Buy me against thy will yet, didst thou but add somewhat to my price, it would hearten my heart, though thou buy me not, so the merchants may say:—Were not this girl handsome, yonder merchant of Cairo had not bidden for her, for the Cairenes are connoisseurs in slave-girls." These words abashed Nur al-Din and he blushed and said to the broker, "How high are the biddings for her?" He replied, "Her price hath reached nine hundred and sixty dinars,[4701] besides brokerage, as for the Sultan's dues, they fall on the seller." Quoth Nur al-Din, "Let me have her for a thousand dinars, brokerage and price." And the damsel hastening to the fore and leaving the broker, said, "I sell myself to this handsome young man for a thousand dinars." But Nur al-Din held his peace. Quoth one, "We sell to him;" and another, "He deserveth her;" and a third, "Accursed, son of accursed, is he who biddeth and doth not buy!"; and a fourth, "By Allah, they befit each other!" Then, before Nur al-Din could think, the broker fetched Kazis and witnesses, who wrote out a contract of sale and purchase; and the broker handed the paper to Nur al-Din, saying, "Take thy slave-girl and Allah bless thee in her 301 for she beseemeth none but thee and none but thou beseemeth her." And he recited these two couplets:—

Boon Fortune sought him in humblest way[4711] ✿ And came to him draggle-tailed, all a-stir:
And none is fittest for him but she ✿ And none is fittest but he for her.

Hereat Nur al-Din was abashed before the merchants; so he arose without stay or delay and weighed out the thousand dinars which he had left as a deposit with his father's friend the druggist, and taking the girl, carried her to the house wherein the Shaykh had lodged him. When she entered and saw nothing but ragged patched carpets and worn out rugs, she said to him, "O my lord, have I no value to thee and am I not worthy that thou shouldst bear me to thine own house and home wherein are thy goods, that thou bringest me into thy servant's lodging? Why dost thou not carry me to thy father's dwelling?" He replied, "By Allah, O Princess of fair ones, this is my house wherein I dwell; but it belongeth to an old man, a druggist of this city, who hath set it apart for me and lodged me therein. I told thee that I was a stranger and that I am of the sons of Cairo city." She rejoined, "O my lord, the least of houses sufficeth till thy return to thy native place; but, Allah upon thee, O my lord, go now and fetch us somewhat of roast meat and wine and dried fruit and dessert." Quoth Nur al-Din, "By Allah, O Princess of fair ones, I had no money with me but the thousand dinars I paid down to thy price nor possess I any other good. The few dirhams I owned were spent by me yesterday." Quoth she, "Hast thou no friend in the town, of whom thou mayst borrow fifty dirhams and bring them to me, that I may tell thee what thou shalt do therewith?" And he said, "I have no intimate but the druggist." Then he betook

himself forthright to the druggist and said to him, “Peace be with thee, O uncle!” He returned his salam and said to him, “O my son, what hast thou bought for a thousand dinars this day?” Nur al-Din replied, “I have bought a slave-girl;” and the oldster rejoined, “O my son, art thou mad that thou givest a thousand dinars for one slave-girl? Would I knew what kind of slave-girl 302 she is?” Said Nur al-Din, “She is a damsel of the children of the Franks;”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nur al-Din said to the ancient druggist, “The damsel is of the children of the Franks;” and the Shaykh said, “O my son, the best of the girls of the Franks are to be had in this our town for an hundred dinars, and by Allah, O my son, they have cheated thee in the matter of this damsel! However, an thou have taken a fancy to her, lie with her this night and do thy will of her and to-morrow morning go down with her to the market and sell her, though thou lose by her two hundred dinars, and reckon that thou hast lost them by shipwreck or hast been robbed of them on the road.” Nur al-Din replied, “Right is thy rede, O uncle, but thou knowest that I had but the thousand dinars wherewith I purchased the damsel, and now I have not a single dirham left to spend; so I desire of thy favour and bounty that thou lend me fifty dirhams, to provide me withal, till to-morrow, when I will sell her and repay thee out of her price.” Said the old man, “Willingly, O my son,” and counted out to him the fifty dirhams. Then he said to him, “O my son, thou art but young in years and the damsel is fair, so belike thy heart will be taken with her and it will be grievous to thee to vend her. Now thou hast nothing to live on and these fifty dirhams will readily be spent and thou wilt come to me and I shall lend thee once and twice and thrice, and so on up to ten times; but, an thou come to me after this, I will not return thy salam[472] and our friendship with thy father will end ill.” Nur al-Din took the fifty dirhams and returned with them to the damsel, who said to him, “O my lord, wend thee at once to the market and fetch me twenty dirhams’ worth of stained silk of five colours and with the other thirty buy meat and bread and fruit and wine and flowers.” So he went to the market and purchasing 303 for her all she sought, brought it to her, whereupon she rose and tucking up her sleeves, cooked food after the most skilful fashion, and set it before him. He ate and she ate with him, till they had enough, after which she set on the wine, and she drank and he drank, and she ceased not to ply him with drink and entertain him with discourse, till he became drunken and fell asleep. Thereupon she arose without stay or delay and taking out of her bundle a budget of Táifí leather[473] opened it and drew forth a pair of knitting needles, wherewith she fell to work and stinted not till she had made a beautiful zone, which she folded up in a

wrapper after cleaning it and ironing it and laid it under her pillow. Then she doffed her dress till she was mother-naked and lying down beside Nur al-Din shampoo'd him till he awoke from his heavy sleep. He found by his side a maiden like virgin silver, softer than silk and delicater than a tail of fatted sheep than standard more conspicuous and goodlier than the red camel,[474] in height five feet tall with breasts firm and full, brows like bended bows, eyes like gazelles' eyes and cheeks like blood-red anemones, a slender waist with dimples laced and a navel holding an ounce of the unguent benzoin, thighs like bolsters stuffed with ostrich-down, and between them what the tongue fails to set forth and at mention whereof the tears jet forth. Brief it was as it were she to whom the poet alluded in these two couplets:—

From her hair is Night, from her forehead Noon ✿ From her side-face Rose; from her lip wine boon:

From her Union Heaven, her Severance Hell: ✿ Pearls from her teeth; from her front full Moon.

And how excellent is the saying of another bard[475]:—

A Moon she rises, Willow-wand she waves ✿ Breathes ambergris and gazeth a gazelle.

Meseems that sorrow wooes my heart and wins ✿ And when she wends makes haste therein to dwell.

Her face is fairer than the Stars of Wealth[476] ✿ And sheeny brows the crescent Moon excel.

304 And quoth a third also:—

They shine fullest Moons, unveil Crescent-bright; ✿ Sway tenderest Branches and turn wild kine;

'Mid which is a Dark-eyed for love of whose charms ✿ The Sailors[477] would joy to be ground low-li'en.

So Nur al-Din turned to her at once and clasping her to his bosom, sucked first her upper lip and then her under lip and slid his tongue between the twain into her mouth. Then he rose to her and found her a pearl unthridden and a filly none but he had ridden. So he abated her maidenhead and had of her amorous delight and there was knitted between them a love-bond which might never know breach nor severance.[478] He rained upon her cheeks kisses like the falling of pebbles into water, and struck with stroke upon stroke, like the thrusting of spears in battle brunt; for that Nur al-Din still yearned after clipping of necks and sucking of lips and letting down of tress and pressing of waist and biting of cheek and cavalcading on breast with Cairene buckings and Yamani wrigglings and Abyssinian sobbings and Hindí pamoisons and Nubian lasciviousness and Ríffí leg-liftings[479] and Damiettan moanings and Sa'ídí[480] hotness and Alexandrian languishment[481] and this damsel united in herself all these virtues, together with excess of beauty and loveliness, and indeed she was even as saith of her the poet:—

This is she I will never forget till I die ✿ Nor draw near but to those who to her draw nigh.

A being for semblance like Moon at full ✿ Praise her Maker, her Modeller glorify!

Tho' be sore my sin seeking love-liesse, ✿ On esperance-day ne'er repent can I;

A couplet reciting which none can know ✿ Save the youth who in couplets and rhymes shall cry,

"None weeteth love but who bears its load ✿ Nor passion, save pleasures and pains he aby."

305So Nur al-Din lay with the damsel through the night in solace and delight,——
And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nur al-Din lay with that damsel through the night in solace and delight, the twain garbed in the closely buttoned garments of embrace, safe and secure against the misways of nights and days, and they passed the dark hours after the goodliest fashion, fearing naught, in their joys love-fraught, from excess of talk and prate. As saith of them the right excellent poet[482]:—

Go, visit her thou lovest, and regard not
The words detractors utter; envious churls
Can never favour love. Oh! sure the merciful
Ne'er make a thing more fair to look upon,
Then two fond lovers in each other's arms,
Speaking their passion in a mute embrace.
When heart has turned to heart, the fools would part them
Strike idly on cold steel. So when thou'st found
One purely, wholly thine, accept her true heart,
And live for her alone. Oh! thou that blamest
The love-struck for their love, give o'er thy talk
How canst thou minister to a mind diseased?

When the morning morrowed in sheen and shone, Nur al-Din awoke from deep sleep and found that she had brought water:[483] so they made the Ghusl-ablution, he and she, and he performed that which behoved him of prayer to his Lord, after which she set before him meat and drink, and he ate and drank. Then the damsel put her hand under her pillow and pulling out the girdle which she had knitted during the night, gave it to Nur al-Din, who asked, "Whence cometh this girdle?"[484] Answered she, "O my lord, 'tis the silk thou boughtest yesterday for twenty dirhams. Rise now and go to the Persian bazar and give it to 306the broker, to cry for sale, and sell it not for less than twenty gold pieces in ready money." Quoth Nur al-Din, "O Princess of fair ones how can a thing, that cost twenty dirhams and will sell for as many dinars, be made in a single night?"; and quoth she, "O my lord, thou knowest not the value of this thing; but go to the market therewith and give it to the broker, and when he shall cry it, its worth will be made manifest to thee." Herewith he carried the zone to the market and gave it to the broker, bidding him cry it, whilst he himself sat down on a masonry bench before a shop. The broker fared forth and returning after a while said to him, "O my lord, rise take the price of thy zone, for it hath fetched twenty dinars money down." When Nur al-Din heard this, he marvelled with exceeding marvel and shook with delight. Then he rose, between belief and misbelief, to take the money and when

he had received it, he went forthright and spent it all on silk of various colours and returning home, gave his purchase to the damsel, saying, "Make this all into girdles and teach me likewise how to make them, that I may work with thee; for never in the length of my life saw I a fairer craft than this craft nor a more abounding in gain and profit. By Allah, 'tis better than the trade of a merchant a thousand times!" She laughed at his language and said, "O my lord, go to thy friend the druggist and borrow other thirty dirhams of him, and to-morrow repay him from the price of the girdle the thirty together with the fifty already loaned to thee." So he rose and repaired to the druggist and said to him, "O Uncle, lend me other thirty dirhams, and to-morrow, Almighty Allah willing, I will repay thee the whole fourscore." The old man weighed him out thirty dirhams, wherewith he went to the market and buying meat and bread, dried fruits, and flowers as before, carried them home to the damsel whose name was Miriam,[485] the Girdle-girl. She rose forthright and making ready rich meats, set them before her lord Nur al-Din; after which she brought the wine-service and they drank and plied each other with drink. When the wine began to play with their wits, his pleasant address and inner grace pleased her, and she recited these two couplets:—

307 Said I to Slim-waist who the wine engraced ✿ Brought in musk-scented bowl and a superfine,

"Was it prest from thy cheek?" He replied "Nay, nay! ✿ When did man from Roses e'er press the Wine?"

And the damsel ceased not to carouse with her lord and ply him with cup and bowl and require him to fill for her and give her to drink of that which sweeteneth the spirits, and whenever he put forth hand to her, she drew back from him, out of coquetry. The wine added to her beauty and loveliness, and Nur al-Din recited these two couplets:

Slim-waist craved wine from her companeer; ✿ Cried (in meeting of friends when he feared for his fere,)

"An thou pass not the wine thou shalt pass the night, ✿ A-banisht my bed!" And he felt sore fear.

They ceased not drinking till drunkenness overpowered Nur al-Din and he slept; whereupon she rose forthright and fell to work upon a zone, as was her wont. When she had wrought it to end, she wrapped it in paper and doffing her clothes, lay down by his side and enjoyed dalliance and delight till morn appeared.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Miriam the Girdle-girl, having finished her zone and wrapped it in paper doffed her dress and lay down by the side of her lord; and then happened to them what happened of dalliance and delight; and he did his devoir like a man. On the morrow, she gave him the girdle and said to him, "Carry this to the market and sell it for twenty dinars, even as thou soldest its fellow yesterday." So he went to the bazar and sold the girdle for twenty dinars, after which he repaired to the druggist and paid him back the eighty dirhams,

thanking him for his bounties and calling down blessings upon him. He asked, “O my son, hast thou sold the damsel?”; and Nur al-Din answered, “Wouldst thou have me sell the soul out of my body?” and told him all that had passed, from commencement to conclusion, whereat the druggist joyed with joy galore, than which could be no more and said to 308 him, “By Allah, O my son, thou gladdenest me! Inshallah, mayst thou ever be in prosperity! Indeed I wish thee well by reason of my affection for thy father and the continuance of my friendship with him.” Then Nur al-Din left the Shaykh and straightway going to the market, bought meat and fruit and wine and all that he needed according to his custom and returned therewith to Miriam. They abode thus a whole year in eating and drinking and mirth and merriment and love and good comradeship, and every night she made a zone and he sold it on the morrow for twenty dinars, wherewith he bought their needs and gave the rest to her, to keep against a time of necessity. After the twelvemonth she said to him one day, “O my lord, whenas thou sellest the girdle to-morrow, buy for me with its price silk of six colours, because I am minded to make thee a kerchief to wear on thy shoulders, such as never son of merchant, no, nor King’s son, ever rejoiced in its like.” So next day he fared forth to the bazar and after selling the zone brought her the dyed silks she sought and Miriam the Girdle-girl wrought at the Kerchief a whole week, for, every night, when she had made an end of the zone, she would work awhile at the kerchief till it was finished. Then she gave it to Nur al-Din, who put it on his shoulders and went out to walk in the market-place, whilst all the merchants and folk and notables of the town crowded about him, to gaze on his beauty and that of the kerchief which was of the most beautiful. Now it chanced that one night, after this, he awoke from sleep and found Miriam weeping passing sore and reciting these couplets:—

Nears my parting fro’ my love, nigher draws the Severance-day ✿ Ah well-away for parting! and again ah well-away!

And in tway is torn my heart and O pine I’m doomed to bear ✿ For the nights that erst witnessèd our pleasurable play!

No help for it but Envier the twain of us espy ✿ With evil eye and win to us his lamentable way.

For naught to us is sorer than the jealousy of men ✿ And the backbiter’s eyne that with calumny affray.

He said, “O my lady Miriam,[486] what aileth thee to weep?”; and she replied, “I weep for the anguish of parting for my heart 309 presageth me thereof.” Quoth he, “O lady of fair ones, and who shall interpose between us, seeing that I love thee above all creatures and tender thee the most?”; and quoth she, “And I love thee twice as well as thou me; but fair opinion of fortune still garreth folk fall into affliction, and right well saith the poet[487]:—

Think’st thou thyself all prosperous, in days which prosp’rous be,

Nor fearest thou impending ill, which comes by Heaven’s decree?

We see the orbs of heav’n above, how numberless they are,

But sun and moon alone eclips’d, and ne’er a lesser star!

And many a tree on earth we see, some bare, some leafy green,
Of them, not one is hurt with stone save that has fruitful been!
See'st not th' refluent ocean, bear carrion on its tide,
While pearls beneath its wavy flow, fixed in the deep, abide?"

Presently she added, "O my lord Nur al-Din, an thou desire to nonsuit separation, be on thy guard against a swart-visaged oldster, blind of the right eye and lame of the left leg; for he it is who will be the cause of our severance. I saw him enter the city and I opine that he is come hither in quest of me." Replied Nur al-Din, "O lady of fair ones, if my eyes light on him, I will slay him and make an example of him." Rejoined she, "O my lord, slay him not; but talk not nor trade with him, neither buy nor sell with him nor sit nor walk with him nor speak one word to him, no, not even the answer prescribed by law[4881] and I pray Allah to preserve us from his craft and his mischief?" Next morning, Nur al-Din took the zone and carried it to the market, where he sat down on a shop-bench and talked with the sons of the merchants, till the drowsiness preceding slumber overcame him and he lay down on the bench and fell asleep. Presently, behold, up came the Frank whom the damsel had described to him, in company with seven others, and seeing Nur al-Din lying asleep on the bench, with his head wrapped in the kerchief which Miriam had made for him and the edge thereof in his grasp, sat down by him and hent the end of the kerchief in hand and examined it turning 310 it over for some time. Nur al-Din sensed that there was something and awoke; then, seeing the very man of whom Miriam had warned him sitting by his side, cried out at him with a great cry which startled him. Quoth the Frank, "What aileth thee to cry out thus at us? Have we taken from thee aught?"; and quoth Nur al-Din, "By Allah, O accursed, haddest thou taken aught from me, I would carry thee before the Chief of Police!" Then said the Frank, "O Moslem, I conjure thee by thy faith and by that wherein thou believest, inform me whence thou haddest this kerchief;" and Nur al-Din replied, "'Tis the handiwork of my lady mother,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Frank asked Nur al-Din anent the maker of the kerchief, he answered, saying, "In very sooth this kerchief is the handiwork of my mother, who made it for me with her own hand." Quoth the Frank, "Wilt thou sell it to me and take ready money for it?" and quoth Nur al-Din, "By Allah, I will not sell it to thee or to any else, for she made none other than it." "Sell it to me and I will give thee to its price this very moment five hundred dinars, money down; and let her who made it make thee another and a finer." "I will not sell it at all, for there is not the like of it in this city." "O my lord, wilt thou sell it for six hundred ducats of fine gold?" And the Frank went on to add to his offer hundred by hundred, till he bid nine hundred dinars; but Nur al-Din said, "Allah will

open to me otherwise than by my vending it. I will never sell it, not for two thousand dinars nor more than that; no, never." The Frank ceased not to tempt him with money, till he bid him a thousand dinars, and the merchants present said, "We sell thee the kerchief at that price:[489] pay down the money." Quoth Nur al-Din, "I will not see it, I swear by Allah!"[490] But one of 311 the merchants said to him, "Know thou, O my son, that the value of this kerchief is an hundred dinars at most and that to an eager purchaser, and if this Frank pay thee down a thousand for it, thy profit will be nine hundred dinars, and what gain canst thou desire greater than this gain? Wherefore 'tis my rede that thou sell him this kerchief at that price and bid her who wrought it make thee other finer than it: so shalt thou profit nine hundred dinars by this accursed Frank, the enemy of Allah and of The Faith." Nur al-Din was abashed at the merchants and sold the kerchief to the Frank, who, in their presence, paid him down the thousand dinars, with which he would have returned to his handmaid to congratulate her on what had passed; but the stranger said, "Harkye, O company of merchants, stop my lord Nur al-Din, for you and he are my guests this night. I have a jar of old Greek wine and a fat lamb, fresh fruit, flowers and confections; wherefore do ye all cheer me with your company to-night and not one of you tarry behind." So the merchants said, "O my lord Nur al-Din, we desire that thou be with us on the like of this night, so we may talk together, we and thou, and we pray thee, of thy favour and bounty, to bear us company, so we and thou, may be the guests of this Frank, for he is a liberal man." And they conjured him by the oath of divorce[491] and hindered him by main force from going home. Then they rose forthright and shutting up their shops, took Nur al-Din and fared with the Frank, who brought them to a goodly and spacious saloon, wherein were two daïses. Here he made them sit and set before them a scarlet tray-cloth of goodly workmanship and unique handiwork, wroughten in gold with figures of breaker and broken, lover and beloved, asker and asked, whereon he ranged precious vessels of porcelain and crystal, full of the costliest confections, fruits and flowers, and brought them a flagon of old Greek wine. Then he bade slaughter a fat lamb and kindling fire, proceeded to roast of its flesh and feed the merchants therewith and give them draughts of that wine, winking at them the while to ply Nur al-Din with drink. Accordingly they ceased not plying him with wine till he became drunken and took leave of his wits; so when the Frank saw that he was drowned in liquor, he said to him, "O my lord Nur al-Din, thou gladdenest us with thy company to-night: welcome, and again welcome to thee?" Then he engaged him awhile in talk, till he could draw near to 312 him, when he said, with dissembling speech, "O my lord, Nur al-Din, wilt thou sell me thy slave-girl, whom thou boughtest in presence of these merchants a year ago for a thousand dinars? I will give thee at this moment five thousand gold pieces for her and thou wilt thus make four thousand ducats profit." Nur al-Din refused, but the Frank ceased not to ply him with meat and drink and lure him with lucre, still adding to his offers, till he bid him ten thousand dinars for her;

whereupon Nur al-Din, in his drunkenness, said before the merchants, “I sell her to thee for ten thousand dinars: hand over the money.” At this the Frank rejoiced with joy exceeding and took the merchants to witness the sale. They passed the night in eating and drinking, mirth and merriment, till the morning, when the Frank cried out to his pages, saying, “Bring me the money.” So they brought it to him and he counted out ten thousand dinars to Nur al-Din, saying, “O my lord, take the price of thy slave-girl, whom thou soldest to me last night, in the presence of these Moslem merchants.” Replied Nur al-Din, “O accursed, I sold thee nothing and thou liest anent me, for I have no slave-girls.” Quoth the Frank, “In very sooth thou didst sell her to me and these merchants were witnesses to the bargain.” Thereupon all said, “Yes, indeed! thou soldest him thy slave-girl before us for ten thousand dinars, O Nur al-Din and we will all bear witness against thee of the sale. Come, take the money and deliver him the girl, and Allah will give thee a better than she in her stead. Doth it irk thee, O Nur al-Din, that thou boughtest the girl for a thousand dinars and hast enjoyed for a year and a half her beauty and loveliness and taken thy fill of her converse and her favours? Furthermore thou hast gained some ten thousand golden dinars by the sale of the zones which she made thee every day and thou soldest for twenty sequins, and after all this thou hast sold her again at a profit of nine thousand dinars over and above her original price. And withal thou deniest the sale and belittlest and makest difficulties about the profit! What gain is greater than this gain and what profit wouldst thou have profitabler than this profit? An thou love her thou hast had thy fill of her all this time: so take the money and buy thee another handsomer than she; or we will marry thee to one of our daughters, lovelier than she, at a dowry of less than half this price, and the rest of the money will remain in thy hand as capital.” And the merchants ceased not to ply him with persuasion and specious arguments till he took the ten thousand dinars, the price 313 of the damsel, and the Frank straightway fetched Kazis and witnesses, who drew up the contract of sale by Nur al-Din of the handmaid hight Miriam the Girdle-girl. Such was his case; but as regards the damsel’s, she sat awaiting her lord from morning till sundown and from sundown till the noon of night; and when he returned not, she was troubled and wept with sore weeping. The old druggist heard her sobbing and sent his wife, who went in to her and finding her in tears, said to her, “O my lady, what aileth thee to weep?” Said she, “O my mother, I have sat waiting the return of my lord, Nur al-Din all day; but he cometh not, and I fear lest some one have played a trick on him, to make him sell me, and he have fallen into the snare and sold me.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Miriam the Girdle-girl said to the druggist’s wife, “I am fearful lest some one have been playing a trick on my

lord to make him sell me, and he have fallen into the snare and sold me." Said the other, "O my lady Miriam, were they to give thy lord this hall full of gold as thy price, yet would he not sell thee, for what I know of his love to thee. But, O my lady, belike there be a company come from his parents at Cairo and he hath made them an entertainment in the lodging where they alighted, being ashamed to bring them hither, for that the place is not spacious enough for them or because their condition is less than that he should bring them to his own house; or belike he preferred to conceal thine affair from them, so passed the night with them; and Inshallah! to-morrow he will come to thee safe and sound. So burden not thy soul with cark and care, O my lady, for of a certainty this is the cause of his absence from thee last night and I will abide with thee this coming night and comfort thee, until thy lord return to thee." So the druggist's wife abode with her and cheered her with talk throughout the dark hours and, when it was morning, Miriam saw her lord enter the street followed by the Frank and amiddlemost a company of merchants, at which sight her side-muscles quivered and her colour changed and she fell a-shaking, as ship shaketh in mid-ocean for the violence of the gale. When the 314 druggist's wife saw this, she said to her, "O my lady Miriam what aileth thee that I see thy case changed and thy face grown pale and show disfeatured?" Replied she, "By Allah, O my lady, my heart forebodeth me of parting and severance of union!" And she bemoaned herself with the saddest sighs, reciting these couplets[492]:—

Incline not to parting, I pray; ✿ For bitter its savour is aye.
E'en the sun at his setting turns pale ✿ To think he must part from the day;
And so, at his rising, for joy ✿ Of reunion, he's radiant and gay.

Then Miriam wept passing sore wherethan naught could be more, making sure of separation, and cried to the druggist's wife, "O my mother, said I not to thee that my lord Nur al-Din had been tricked into selling me? I doubt not but he hath sold me this night to yonder Frank, albeit I bade him beware of him; but deliberation availeth not against destiny. So the truth of my words is made manifest to thee." Whilst they were talking, behold, in came Nur al-Din, and the damsel looked at him and saw that his colour was changed and that he trembled and there appeared on his face signs of grief and repentance: so she said to him, "O my lord Nur al-Din, meseemeth thou hast sold me." Whereupon he wept with sore weeping and groaned and lamented and recited these couplets[493]:—

When e'er the Lord 'gainst any man,
Would fulminate some harsh decree,
And he be wise, and skilled to hear,
And used to see;
He stops his ears, and blinds his heart,
And from his brain ill judgment tears,
And makes it bald as 'twere a scalp,

Reft of its hairs[494];
Until the time when the whole man
Be pierced by this divine command;
Then He restores him intellect
To understand.

Then Nur al-Din began to excuse himself to his handmaid, saying, "By Allah, O my lady Miriam, verily runneth the Reed with 315whatso Allah hath decreed. The folk put a cheat on me to make me sell thee, and I fell into the snare and sold thee. Indeed I have sorely failed of my duty to thee; but haply He who decreed our disunion will vouchsafe us reunion." Quoth she, "I warned thee against this, for this it was I dreaded." Then she strained him to her bosom and kissed him between the eyes, reciting these couplets:—

Now, by your love! your love I'll ne'er forget, ✿ Though lost my life for stress of pine and fret:
I weep and wail through livelong day and night ✿ As moans the dove on sandhill-tree beset.
O fairest friends, your absence spoils my life; ✿ Nor find I meeting-place as erst we met.

At this juncture, behold, the Frank came in to them and went up to Miriam, to kiss her hands; but she dealt him a buffet with her palm on the cheek, saying, "Avaunt, O accursed! Thou hast followed after me without surcease, till thou hast cozened my lord into selling me! But O accursed, all shall yet be well, Inshallah!" The Frank laughed at her speech and wondered at her deed and excused himself to her, saying, "O my lady Miriam, what is my offence? Thy lord Nur al-Din here sold thee of his full consent and of his own free will. Had he loved thee, by the right of the Messiah, he had not transgressed against thee! And had he not fulfilled his desire of thee, he had not sold thee." Quoth one of the poets:—

Whom I irk let him fly fro' me fast and faster ✿ If I name his name I am no directer.
Nor the wide wide world is to me so narrow ✿ That I act expecter to this rejecter.[495]

Now this handmaid was the daughter of the King of France, the which is a wide and spacious city,[496] abounding in manufactures and rarities and trees and flowers and other growths, and resembleth the city of Constantinople: and for her going forth of her father's city there was a wondrous cause and thereby hangeth a marvellous tale which we will set out in due order, to divert and delight the 316hearer[497]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the cause of Miriam the Girdle-girl leaving her father and mother was a wondrous and thereby hangeth a marvellous tale. She was reared with her father and mother in honour and indulgence and learnt rhetoric and penmanship and arithmetic and cavalarice and all manner crafts, such as broidery and sewing and weaving and girdle-making and silk-cord making and

damascening gold on silver and silver on gold, brief all the arts both of men and women, till she became the union-pearl of her time and the unique gem of her age and day. Moreover, Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) had endowed her with such beauty and loveliness and elegance and perfection of grace that she excelled therein all the folk of her time, and the Kings of the isles sought her in marriage of her sire, but he refused to give her to wife to any of her suitors, for that he loved her with passing love and could not bear to be parted from her a single hour. Moreover, he had no other daughter than herself, albeit he had many sons, but she was dearer to him than all of them. It fortuned one year that she fell sick of an exceeding sickness and came nigh upon death, wherefore she made a vow that, if she recovered from her malady, she would make the pilgrimage to a certain monastery, situate in such an island, which was high in repute among the Franks, who used to make vows to it and look for a blessing therefrom. When Miriam recovered from her sickness, she wished to accomplish her vow anent the monastery and her sire despatched her to the convent in a little ship, with sundry daughters of the city-notables to wait upon her and patrician Knights to protect them all. As they drew near the island, there came out upon them a ship of the ships of the Moslems, champions of The Faith, warring in Allah's way, who boarded the vessel and making prize of all therein, knights and maidens, gifts and monies, sold their booty in the city of 317 Kayrawán.[498] Miriam herself fell into the hands of a Persian merchant, who was born impotent[499] and for whom no woman had ever discovered her nakedness; so he set her to serve him. Presently, he fell ill and sickened well nigh unto death, and the sickness abode with him two months, during which she tended him after the goodliest fashion, till Allah made him whole of his malady, when he recalled her tenderness and loving-kindness to him and the persistent zeal with which she had nurst him and being minded to requite her the good offices she had done him, said to her, "Ask a boon of me?" She said, "O my lord, I ask of thee that thou sell me not but to the man of my choice." He answered, "So be it. I guarantee thee. By Allah, O Miriam, I will not sell thee but to him of whom thou shalt approve, and I put thy sale in thine own hand." And she rejoiced herein with joy exceeding. Now the Persian had expounded to her Al-Islam and she became a Moslemah and learnt of him the rules of worship. Furthermore during that period the Persian had taught her the tenets of The Faith and the observances incumbent upon her: he had made her learn the Koran by heart and master somewhat of the theological sciences and the traditions of the Prophet; after which, he brought her to Alexandria-city and sold her to Nur al-Din, as we have before set out. Meanwhile, when her father, the King of France, heard what had befallen his daughter and her company, he saw Doomsday break and sent after her ships full of knights and champions, horsemen and footmen; but they fell not in any trace of her whom they sought in the Islands[500] of the Moslems; so all returned to him, crying out and saying, "Well-away!" and "Ruin!" and "Well worth the 318 day!" The

King grieved for her with exceeding grief and sent after her that one-eyed lameter, blind of the left,[501] for that he was his chief Wazir, a stubborn tyrant and a froward devil,[502] full of craft and guile, bidding him make search for her in all the lands of the Moslems and buy her, though with a shipload of gold. So the accursed sought her, in all the islands of the Arabs and all the cities of the Moslems, but found no sign of her till he came to Alexandria-city where he made quest for her and presently discovered that she was with Nur al-Din Ali the Cairene, being directed to the trace of her by the kerchief aforesaid, for that none could have wrought it in such goodly guise but she. Then he bribed the merchants to help him in getting her from Nur al-Din and beguiled her lord into selling her, as hath been already related. When he had her in his possession, she ceased not to weep and wail: so he said to her, "O my lady Miriam, put away from thee this mourning and grieving and return with me to the city of thy sire, the seat of thy kingship and the place of thy power and thy home, so thou mayst be among thy servants and attendants and be quit of this abasement and this strangerhood. Enough hath betided me of travail, of travel and of disbursing monies on thine account, for thy father bade me buy thee back, though with a shipload of gold; and now I have spent nigh a year and a half in seeking thee." And he fell to kissing her hands and feet and humbling himself to her; but the more he kissed and grovelled she only redoubled in wrath against him, and said to him, "O accursed, may Almighty Allah not vouchsafe thee to win thy wish!" Presently his pages brought her a she-mule with gold-embroidered housings and mounting her thereon, raised over her head a silken canopy, with staves of gold and silver, and the Franks walked round about her, till they brought her forth the city by the sea-gate,[503] where they took boat with her and rowing out to a great ship in harbour embarked therein. Then the monocular Wazir cried out to the sailors, saying, "Up with the mast!" So they set it up forthright and spreading the newly bent sails and the colours manned the sweeps and put out 319 to sea. Meanwhile Miriam continued to gaze upon Alexandria, till it disappeared from her eyes, when she fell a-weeping in her privacy with sore weeping——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir of the Frankish King put out to sea in the ship bearing Miriam the Girdle-girl she gazed Alexandria-wards till the city was hidden from her sight when she wailed and wept copious tears and recited these couplets:—

O dwelling of my friends say is there no return ✿ Uswards? But what ken I of matters Allah made?
Still fare the ships of Severance, sailing hastily ✿ And in my wounded eyelids tears have ta'en their stead,
For parting from a friend who was my wish and will ✿ Healed every ill and every pain and pang allay'd.
Be thou, O Allah, substitute of me for him ✿ Such charge some day the care of Thee shall not evade.

Then she could not refrain from weeping and wailing. So the patrician[504] knights came up to her and would have comforted her, but she heeded not their consoling words, being distracted by the claims of passion and love-longing. And she shed tears and moaned and complained and recited these couplets:—

The tongue of Love within my vitals speaketh ✿ Saying, "This lover boon of Love aye seeketh!"

And burn my liver hottest coals of passion ✿ And parting on my heart sore suffering wreaketh.

How shall I face this fiery love concealing ✿ When fro' my wounded lids the tear aye leaketh?

In this plight Miriam abode during all the voyage; no peace was left her at all nor would patience come at her call. Such was her case in company with the Wazir, the monocular, the lameter; but as regards Nur al-Din the Cairene, when the ship had sailed with Miriam, the world was straitened upon him and he had 320 neither peace nor patience. He returned to the lodging where they twain had dwelt, and its aspect was black and gloomy in his sight. Then he saw the *métier* wherewith she had been wont to make the zones and her dress that had been upon her beauteous body: so he pressed them to his breast, whilst the tears gushed from his eyes and he recited these couplets:—

Say me, will Union after parting e'er return to be ✿ After long-lasting torments, after hopeless misery?

Alas! Alas! what wont to be shall never more return ✿ But grant me still return of dearest her these eyne may see.

I wonder me will Allah deign our parted lives unite ✿ And will my dear one's plighted troth preserve with constancy!

Naught am I save the prey of death since parting parted us; ✿ And will my friends consent that I a weird so deadly dree?

Alas my sorrow! Sorrowing the lover scant avails; ✿ Indeed I melt away in grief and passion's ecstacy:

Past is the time of my delight when were we two conjoined: ✿ Would Heaven I wot if Destiny mine esperance will degree!

Redouble then, O Heart, thy pains and, O mine eyes, o'erflow ✿ With tears till not a tear remain within these eyne of me?

Again alas for loved ones lost and loss of patience eke! ✿ For helpers fail me and my griefs are grown beyond decree.

The Lord of Threefold Worlds I pray He deign to me return ✿ My lover and we meet as wont in joy and jubilee.

Then Nur al-Din wept with weeping galore than which naught could be more; and peering into every corner of the room, recited these two couplets:—

I view their traces and with pain I pine ✿ And by their sometime home I weep and yearn;

And Him I pray who parting deigned decree ✿ Some day He deign vouchsafe me their return!

Then Nur al-Din sprang to his feet and locking the door of the house, fared forth running at speed, to the sea shore whence he fixed his eyes on the place of the ship which had carried off his Miriam whilst sighs burst from his breast and tears from his lids as he recited these couplets:—

Peace be with you, sans you naught compensateth me ✿ The near, the far, two cases only here I see:

I yearn for you at every hour and tide as yearns ✿ For water-place wayfarer plodding wearily.

321 With you abide my hearing, heart and eyen-sight ✿ And (sweeter than the honeycomb) your memory.

Then, O my Grief when fared afar your retinue ✿ And bore that ship away my sole expectancy.

And Nur al-Din wept and wailed, bemoaned himself and complained, crying out and saying, "O Miriam! O Miriam! Was it but a vision of thee I saw in sleep or in the allusions of dreams?" And by reason of that which grew on him of regrets, he recited these couplets[505]:—

Mazed with thy love no more I can feign patience,
This heart of mine has held none dear but thee!
And if mine eye hath gazed on other's beauty,
Ne'er be it joyed again with sight of thee!
I've sworn an oath I'll ne'er forget to love thee,
And sad's this breast that pines to meet with thee!
Thou'st made me drink a love-cup full of passion,
Blest time! When I may give the draught to thee!
Take with thee this my form where'er thou goest,
And when thou'rt dead let me be laid near thee!
Call on me in my tomb, my bones shall answer
And sigh responses to a call from thee!
If it were asked, "What wouldst thou Heaven should order?"
"His will," I answer, "First, and then what pleases thee."

As Nur al-Din was in this case, weeping and crying out, "O Miriam! O Miriam!" behold, an old man landed from a vessel and coming up to him, saw him shedding tears and heard him reciting these verses:—

O Maryam of beauty[506] return, for these eyne ✿ Are as densest clouds railing drops in line:

Ask amid mankind and my railers shall say ✿ That mine eyelids are drowning these eyeballs of mine.

Said the old man, "O my son, meseems thou weepest for the 322damsel who sailed yesterday with the Frank?" When Nur al-Din heard these words of the Shaykh he fell down in a swoon and lay for a long while without life; then, coming to himself, he wept with sore weeping and improvised these couplets:—

Shall we e'er be unite after severance-tide ✿ And return in the perfectest cheer to bide?

In my heart indeed is a lowe of love ✿ And I'm pained by the spies who my pain deride:

My days I pass in amaze distraught, ✿ And her image a-nights I would see by side:

By Allah, no hour brings me solace of love ✿ And how can it when makebates vex me and chide?

A soft-sided damsel of slenderest waist ✿ Her arrows of eyne on my heart hath plied?

Her form is like Bán[507]-tree branch in garth ✿ Shame her charms the sun who his face most hide:

Did I not fear God (be He glorified!) ✿ "My Fair be glorified!" Had I cried.

The old man looked at him and noting his beauty and grace and symmetry and the fluency of his tongue and the seductiveness of his charms, had ruth on him and his

heart mourned for his case. Now that Shaykh was the captain of a ship, bound to the damsel's city, and in this ship were a hundred Moslem merchants, men of the Saving Faith; so he said to Nur al-Din, "Have patience and all will yet be well; I will bring thee to her an it be the will of Allah, extolled and exalted be He!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old skipper said to Nur al-Din, "I will bring thee to her, Inshallah!" the youth asked, "When shall we set out?" and the other said, "Come but three days more and we will depart in peace and prosperity." Nur al-Din rejoiced at the captain's words with joy exceeding and thanked him for his bounty and 323 benevolence. Then he recalled the days of love-liesse dear and union with his slave-girl without peer, and he shed bitter tears and recited these couplets:—

Say, will to me and you the Ruthful union show ✿ My lords! Shall e'er I win the wish of me or no?
A visit-boon by you will shifty Time vouchsafe? ✿ And seize your image eyelids which so hungry grow?
With you were Union to be sold, I fain would buy; ✿ But ah, I see such grace doth all my means outgo!

Then Nur al-Din went forthright to the market and bought what he needed of vitiacum and other necessaries for the voyage and returned to the Rais, who said to him, "O my son, what is that thou hast with thee?" said he, "My provisions and all whereof I have need for the voyage." Thereupon quoth the old man, laughing, "O my son, art thou going a-pleasuring to Pompey's Pillar[508]? Verily, between thee and that thou seekest is two months' journey an the wind be fair and the weather favourable." Then he took of him somewhat of money and going to the bazar, bought him a sufficiency of all that he needed for the voyage and filled him a large earthen jar[509] with fresh water. Nur al-Din abode in the ship three days until the merchants had made an end of their precautions and preparations and embarked, when they set sail and putting out to sea, fared on one-and-fifty days. After this, there came out upon them corsairs,[510] pirates who sacked the ship and taking Nur al-Din and all therein prisoners, carried them to the city of France and paraded them before the King, who bade cast them into jail, Nur al-Din amongst the number. As they were being led to prison the galleon[511] arrived with the Princess Miriam and the one-eyed Wazir, and when it made the harbour, the lameter landed and going up to the King gave him the glad news of his daughter's safe return: whereupon they beat the kettle-drums for good tidings and decorated the city after the goodliest fashion. Then the King took horse, with all his 324 guards and lords and notables and rode down to the sea to meet her. The moment the ship cast anchor she came ashore, and the King saluted her and embraced her and mounting her on a blood-steed, bore her to the palace, where her mother received her with open arms, and asked her of her case and whether she was a maid as before or whether she had become a woman carnally known by man.[512] She replied,

"O my mother, how should a girl, who hath been sold from merchant to merchant in the land of Moslems, a slave commanded, abide a virgin? The merchant who bought me threatened me with the bastinado and violenced me and took my maidenhead, after which he sold me to another and he again to a third." When the Queen heard these her words, the light in her eyes became night and she repeated her confession to the King who was chagrined thereat and his affair was grievous to him. So he expounded her case to his Grandees and Patricians[513] who said to him, "O King, she hath been defiled by the Moslems and naught will purify her save the striking off of an hundred Mohammedan heads." Whereupon the King sent for the True Believers he had imprisoned; and they decapitated them, one after another, beginning with the captain, till none was left save Nur al-Din. They tare off a strip of his skirt and binding his eyes therewith, led him to the rug of blood and were about to smite his neck, when behold, an ancient dame came up to the King at that very moment and said, "O my lord, thou didst vow to bestow upon each and every church five Moslem captives, to help us in the service thereof, so Allah would restore thee thy daughter the Princess Miriam; and now she is restored to thee, so do thou fulfil thy vow." The King replied, "O my mother, by the virtue of the Messiah and the Veritable Faith, there remaineth to me of the prisoners but this one captive, whom they are about to put to death: so take him with thee to help in the service of the church, till there come to me more prisoners of the Moslems, when I will send thee other four. Hadst thou come earlier, before they hewed off the heads of these, I had given thee as many as thou wouldest have." The old woman thanked the King for his boon and wished him continuance of life, glory and prosperity. Then without loss of time 325 she went up to Nur al-Din, whom she raised from the rug of blood; and, looking narrowly at him saw a comely youth and a dainty, with a delicate skin and a face like the moon at her full; whereupon she carried him to the church and said to him, "O my son, doff these clothes which are upon thee, for they are fit only for the service of the Sultan.[514]" So saying the ancient dame brought him a gown and hood of black wool and a broad girdle,[515] in which she clad and cowled him; and, after binding on his belt, bade him do the service of the church. Accordingly, he served the church seven days, at the end of which time behold, the old woman came up to him and said, "O Moslem, don thy silken dress and take these ten dirhams and go out forthright and divert thyself abroad this day, and tarry not here a single moment, lest thou lose thy life." Quoth he, "What is to do, O my mother?"; and quoth she, "Know, O my son, that the King's daughter, the Princess Miriam the Girdle-girl, hath a mind to visit the church this day, to seek a blessing by pilgrimage and to make oblation thereto, a douceur[516] of thank-offering for her deliverance from the land of the Moslems and in fulfilment of the vows she vowed to the Messiah, so he would save her. With her are four hundred damsels, not one of whom but is perfect in beauty and loveliness and all of them are daughters of Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees: they will be here during this very hour and if their eyes fall on thee in this church, they will hew thee in pieces with swords." Thereupon

Nur al-Din took the ten dirhams from the ancient dame, and donning his own dress, went out to the bazar and walked about the city and took his pleasure therein, till he knew its highways and gates,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nur al-Din, after donning his own dress and taking the ten dirhams from the ancient dame, fared forth to the market streets and wandered 326 about a while till he knew every quarter of the city, after which he returned to the church[517] and saw the Princess Miriam the Girdle-girl, daughter of the King of France come up to the fane, attended by four hundred damsels, high-bosomed maids like moons, amongst whom was the daughter of the one-eyed Wazir and those of the Emirs and Lords of the realm; and she walked in their midst as she were moon among stars. When his eyes fell upon her Nur al-Din could not contain himself, but cried out from the core of his heart, "O Miriam! O Miriam!" When the damsels heard his outcry they ran at him with swords shining bright like flashes of leven-light and would have slain him forthright. But the Princess turned and looking on him, knew him with fullest knowledge, and said to her maidens, "Leave this youth; doubtless he is mad, for the signs of madness be manifest on his face." When Nur al-Din heard this, he uncovered his head and rolled his eyes and made signs with his hands and twisted his legs, foaming the while at the mouth. Quoth the Princess, "Said I not that the poor youth was mad? Bring him to me and stand off from him, that I may hear what he saith; for I know the speech of the Arabs and will look into his case and see if his madness admit of cure or not." So they laid hold of him and brought him to her; after which they withdrew to a distance and she said to him, "Hast thou come hither on my account and ventured thy life for my sake and feignest thyself mad?" He replied, "O my lady, hast thou not heard the saying of the poet[518]?:—

Quoth they, "Thou'rt surely raving mad for her thou lov'st;" and I, "There is no pleasantness in life but for the mad," reply.

Compare my madness with herself for whom I rave; if she Accord therewith, then blame me not for that which I aby."

Miriam replied, "By Allah, O Nur al-Din, indeed thou hast sinned against thyself, for I warned thee of this before it befel thee: yet wouldst thou not hearken to me, but followedst thine own lust: albeit that whereof I gave thee to know I learnt not by means of inspiration nor physiognomy[519] nor dreams, but by eye-witness and 327 very sight; for I saw the one-eyed Wazir and knew that he was not come to Alexandria but in quest of me." Said he, "O my lady Miriam, we seek refuge with Allah from the error of the intelligent[520]!" Then his affliction redoubled on him and he recited this saying[521]:—

Pass o’er my fault, for ’tis the wise man’s wont
Of other’s sins to take no harsh account;
And as all crimes have made my breast their site,
So thine all shapes of mercy should unite.
Who from above would mercy seek to know,
Should first be merciful to those below.

Then Nur al-Din and Princess Miriam ceased not from lovers’ chiding which to trace would be tedious, relating each to other that which had befallen them and reciting verses and making moan, one to other, of the violence of passion and the pangs of pine and desire, whilst the tears ran down their cheeks like rivers, till there was left them no strength to say a word and so they continued till day departed and night darkened. Now the Princess was clad in a green dress, purfled with red gold and broidered with pearls and gems which enhanced her beauty and loveliness and inner grace; and right well quoth the poet of her[522]:—

Like the full moon she shineth in garments all of green, With loosened vest and collars and flowing hair beseen.
“What is thy name?” I asked her, and she replied, “I’m she Who roasts the hearts of lovers on coals of love and teen.
I am the pure white silver, ay, and the gold wherewith The bondmen from strait prison and dour releasèd been.”
Quoth I, “I’m all with rigours consumed;” but “On a rock,” Said she, “such as my heart is, thy plaints are wasted clean.”
“Even if thy heart,” I answered, “be rock in very deed, Yet hath God caused fair water well from the rock, I ween.”

And when night darkened on them the Lady Miriam went up to her women and asked them, “Have ye locked the door?”; and they answered, “Indeed we have locked it.” So she took them and went with them to a place called the Chapel of the Lady Mary the Virgin, Mother of Light, because the Nazarenes hold 328 that there are her heart and soul. The girls betook themselves to prayer for blessings from above and circuited all the church; and when they had made an end of their visitation, the Princess turned to them and said, “I desire to pass the night alone in the Virgin’s chapel and seek a blessing thereof, for that yearning after it hath betided me, by reason of my long absence in the land of the Moslems; and as for you, when ye have made an end of your visitation, do ye sleep whereso ye will.” Replied they, “With love and goodly gree: be it as thou wilt!”; and leaving her alone in the chapel, dispersed about the church and slept. The Lady Miriam waited till they were out of sight and hearing, then went in search of Nur al-Din, whom she found sitting in a corner on live coals, awaiting her. He rose and kissed her hands and feet and she sat down and seated him by her side. Then she pulled off all that was upon her of raiment and ornaments and fine linen and taking Nur al-Din in her arms strained him to her bosom. And they ceased not, she and he, from kissing and clipping and strumming to the tune of “hocus-pocus,[523]” saying the while, “How short are the nights of Union and the nights of Disunion how long are they!” and reciting these verses:—

O Night of Union, Time's virginal prize, ✿ White star of the Nights with auroral dyes,
Thou garrest Dawn after Noon to rise ✿ Say art thou Kohl in Morning's Eyes,
Or wast thou Slumber to bleared eye lief?
O Night of Parting, how long thy stay ✿ Whose latest hours aye the first portray,
This endless circle that noways may ✿ Show breach till the coming of Judgment-day,
Day when dies the lover of parting-grief.[524]

As they were in this mighty delight and joy engrossing they heard one of the servants of the Saint[525] smite the gong[526] upon the roof, 329 to call the folk to the rites of their worship, and he was even as saith the poet: —

I saw him strike the gong and asked of him straightway, ✿ "Who made the Fawn[527] at striking gong so knowing, eh?"
And to my soul, "What smiting irketh thee the more ✿ Striking the gong or striking note of going,[528] say?"

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Nur al-Din and Miriam the Girdle-girl rose forthwith and donned her clothes and ornaments; but this was grievous to Nur al-Din, and his gladness was troubled; the tears streamed from his eyes and he recited these couplets:—

I ceasèd not to kiss that cheek with budding roses dight ✿ And eyes down cast and bit the same with most emphatic bite;
Until we were *in gloria*[529] and lay him down the spy ✿ And sank his eyes within his brain declining further sight:
And struck the gongs as they that had the charge of them were like ✿ Muezzin crying duty-prayers in Allah's book indite.
Then rose she up right hastily and donned the dress she'd doffed ✿ Sore fearing lest a shooting-star[530] upon our heads alight.
And cried, "O wish and will of me, O end of all my hopes! ✿ Behold the morning comes to us in brightest whitest light."
I swear if but one day of rule were given to my life ✿ And I were made an Emperor of majesty and might,
Adown I'd break the buttresses of churches one and all ✿ And by their slaughter rid the earth of every shaveling wight.

Then the Lady Miriam pressed him to her bosom and kissed his 330 cheek and asked him, "O Nur al-Din, how long hast thou been in this town?" "Seven days." "Hast thou walked about in it, and dost thou know its ways and issues and its sea-gates and land gates?" "Yes!" "Knowest thou the way to the offertory-chest[531] of the church?" "Yes!" "Since thou knowest all this, as soon as the first third[532] of the coming night is over, go to the offertory-chest and take thence what thou wishest and willest. Then open the door that giveth upon the tunnel[533] leading to the sea, and go down to the harbour, where thou wilt find a little ship and ten men therein, and when the Rais shall see thee, he will put out his hand to thee. Give him thy hand and he will take thee up into

the ship, and do thou wait there till I come to thee. But 'ware and have a care lest sleep overtake thee this night, or thou wilt repent whenas repentance shall avail thee naught." Then the Princess farewelled him and going forth from Nur al-Din, aroused from sleep her women and the rest of the damsels, with whom she betook herself to the church door and knocked; whereupon the ancient dame opened to her and she went forth and found the knights and varlets standing without. They brought her a dapple she-mule and she mounted: whereupon they raised over her head a canopy[534] with curtains of silk, and the knights took hold of the mule's halter. Then the guards[535] encompassed her about drawn brand in hand and fared on with her, followed by her, till they brought her to the palace of the King her father. Meanwhile, Nur al-Din abode concealed behind the curtain, under cover of which Miriam and he had passed the night till it was broad day, when the main door was opened and the church became full of people. Then he mingled with the folk and accosted the old Prioress, the guardian[536] of the shrine, who said to him, "Where didst thou lie last night?" Said he, "In the town as thou badest me." Quoth she, "O my son, thou hast done the right thing; for, hadst thou nighted in the Church, she had slain thee on the foulest wise." And quoth he, "Praised be Allah who hath delivered me from the evil of this night!" Then he busied himself with the service of 331 the church and ceased not busying till day departed and night with darkness starkened when he arose and opened the offertory-chest and took thence of jewels whatso was light of weight and weighty of worth. Then he tarried till the first watch of the night was past, when he made his way to the postern of the tunnel and opening it, went forth, calling on Allah for protection, and ceased not faring on until, after finding and opening the door, he came to the sea. Here he discovered the vessel moored to the shore near the gate; and her skipper, a tall old man of comely aspect with a long beard, standing in the waist, his ten men being ranged before him. Nur al-Din gave him his hand, as Miriam had bidden him, and the captain took it and pulling him on board of the ship cried out to his crew, saying, "Cast off the moorings and put out to sea with us, ere day break." Said one of the ten, "O my lord the Captain, how shall we put out now, when the King hath notified us that to-morrow he will embark in this ship and go round about the sea, being fearful for his daughter Miriam from the Moslem thieves?" But the Rais cried out at them saying, "Woe to you, O accursed; Dare ye gainsay me and bandy words with me?" So saying the old captain bared his blade and with it dealt the sailor who had spoken a thrust in the throat, that the steel came out gleaming from his nape, and quoth another of the sailors, "What hath our comrade done of crime, that thou shouldst cut his throat?" Thereupon the captain clapped hand to sword and smote off the speaker's head, nor did he leave smiting the rest of the sailors, till he had slain them all, one after other, and cast the ten bodies ashore. Then he turned to Nur al-Din and cried out at him with a terrible great cry, that made him tremble, saying, "Go down and pull up the mooring-stake." Nur al-Din feared lest he should strike him also with the sword; so he sprang up and leapt ashore and pulling up the stake jumped

aboard again, swiftlier than the dazzling leven. The captain ceased not to bid him do this and do that and tack and wear hither and thither and look at the stars, and Nur al-Din did all that he bade him, with heart a-quaking for affright; whilst he himself spread the sails, and the ship fared with the twain into the dashing sea, swollen with clashing billows.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the old skipper had made sail he drave the ship, aided by Nur al-Din, into the dashing sea before a favouring gale. Meanwhile, Nur al-Din held on to the tackle immersed in deep thought, and drowned in the sea of solicitude, knowing not what was hidden for him in the future; and whenever he looked at the captain, his heart quaked and he knew not whither the Rais went with him. He abode thus, preoccupied with care and doubt, till it was high day, when he looked at the skipper and saw him take hold of his long beard and pull at it, whereupon it came off in his hand and Nur al-Din, examining it, saw that it was but a false beard glued on. So he straitly considered that same Rais, and behold, it was the Princess Miriam, his mistress and the dearling of his heart, who had contrived to waylay the captain and slay him and skinned off his beard, which she had stuck on to her own face. At this Nur al-Din was transported for joy, and his breast broadened and he marvelled at her prowess and the stoutness of her heart and said to her, "Welcome, O my hope and my desire and the end of mine every wish!" Then love and gladness agitated him and he made sure of winning to his hopes and his expectancy; wherefore he broke out into song and chanted these couplets:—

To all who unknown my love for the May ✿ From whom Fate disjoins me O say, I pray,
"Ask my kith and kin of my love that aye ✿ Ensweetens my verses to lovely lay:
For the loss of the tribesmen my life o'er sway!"
Their names when named heal all malady; ✿ Cure and chase from heart every pain I dree:
And my longings for love reach so high degree ✿ That my Sprite is maddened each morn I see,
And am grown of the crowd to be saw and say.
No blame in them will I e'er espy: ✿ No! nor aught of solace sans them descry:
Your love hath shot me with pine, and I ✿ Bear in heart a flame that shall never die,
But fire my liver with fiery ray.
All folk my sickness for marvel score ✿ That in darkest night I wake evermore
What ails them to torture this heart forlore ✿ And deem right for loving my blood t' outpour:
And yet—how justly unjust are they!
333 Would I wot who 'twas could obtain of you ✿ To wrong a youth who's so fain of you:
By my life and by Him who made men of you ✿ And the spy tell aught I complain of you

He lies, by Allah, in foulest way!
May the Lord my sickness never dispel, ✿ Nor ever my heart of its pains be well,
What day I regret that in love I fell ✿ Or laud any land but wherein ye dwell:
Wring my heart and ye will or make glad and gay!
I have vitals shall ever be true to you ✿ Though racked by the rigours not new to you
Ere this wrong and this right I but sue to you: ✿ Do what you will to thrall who to you
Shall ne'er grudge his life at your feet to lay.

When Nur al-Din ceased to sing, the Princess Miriam marvelled at his song and thanked him therefor, saying, "Whoso's case is thus it behoveth him to walk the ways of men and never do the deed of curs and cowards." Now she was stout of heart and cunning in the sailing of ships over the salt sea, and she knew all the winds and their shiftings and every course of the main. So Nur al-Din said, "O my lady, hadst thou prolonged this case on me,[537] I had surely died for stress of affright and chagrin, more by token of the fire of passion and love-longing and the cruel pangs of separation." She laughed at his speech and rising without stay or delay brought out somewhat of food and liquor; and they ate and drank and enjoyed themselves and made merry. Then she drew forth rubies and other gems and precious stones and costly trinkets of gold and silver and all manner things of price, light of weight and weighty of worth, which she had taken from the palace of her sire and his treasuries, and displayed them to Nur al-Din, who rejoiced therein with joy exceeding. All this while the wind blew fair for them and merrily sailed the ship nor ceased sailing till they drew near the city of Alexandria and sighted its landmarks, old and new, and Pompey's Pillar. When they made the port Nur al-Din landed forthright and securing the ship to one of the 334 Fulling-Stones,[538] took somewhat of the treasures that Miriam had brought with her, and said to her, "O my lady, tarry in the ship, against I return and carry thee up into the city in such way as I should wish and will." Quoth she, "It behoveth that this be done quickly, for tardiness in affairs engendereth repentance." Quoth he, "There is no tardiness in me;" and, leaving her in the ship, went up into the city to the house of the druggist his father's old friend, to borrow of his wife for Miriam veil and mantilla, and walking boots and petticoat-trousers after the usage of the women of Alexandria, unknowing that there was appointed to betide him of the shifts of Time, the Father of Wonders, that which was far beyond his reckoning. Thus it befel Nur al-Din and Miriam the Girdle-girl; but as regards her sire the King of France, when he arose in the morning, he missed his daughter and questioned her women and her eunuchs of her. Answered they, "O our lord, she went out last night, to go to Church and after that we have no tidings of her." But, as the King talked with them, behold, there arose so great a clamour of cries below the palace, that the place rang thereto, and he said, "What may be the news?" The folk replied, "O King, we have found ten men slain on the sea-shore, and the royal yacht is missing. Moreover we saw the postern of the Church, which giveth upon the tunnel leading to the sea, wide open; and the Moslem

prisoner, who served in the Church, is missing." Quoth the King, "An my ship be lost, without doubt or dispute."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King of France missed his daughter they brought him tidings of her, saying, "Thy yacht is lost"; and he replied, "An the craft be lost, without dispute or doubt my daughter is in it." So he summoned without stay or delay the Captain of the Port and cried 335 out at him, saying, "By the virtue[1] of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, except thou and thy fighting men overtake my ship forthright and bring it back to me, with those who are therein, I will do thee die the foulest of deaths and make a terrible example of thee!" Thereupon the captain went out from before him, trembling, and betook himself to the ancient dame of the Church, to whom said he, "Heardest thou aught from the captive, that was with thee, anent his native land and what countryman he was?"[539] And she answered, "He used to say, I come from the town of Alexandria." When the captain heard the old woman's words he returned forthright to the port and cried out to the sailors, "Make ready and set sail." So they did his bidding and straightway putting out to sea, fared night and day till they sighted the city of Alexandria at the very time when Nur al-Din landed, leaving the Princess in the ship. They soon espied the royal yacht and knew her; so they moored their own vessel at a distance therefrom and putting off in a little frigate they had with them, which drew but two cubits of water and in which were an hundred fighting-men, amongst them the one-eyed Wazir (for that he was a stubborn tyrant and a froward devil and a wily thief, none could avail against his craft, as he were Abu Mohammed al-Battál[540]), they ceased not rowing till they reached the bark and boarding her, all at once, found none therein save the Princess Miriam. So they took her and the ship, and returning to their own vessel, after they had landed and waited a long while,[541] set sail forthright for the land of the Franks, having accomplished their errand, without a fight or even drawing sword. The wind blew fair for them and they sailed on, without ceasing and with all diligence, till they reached the city of France and landing with the Princess Miriam carried her to her father, who received her, seated on the throne of his Kingship. As soon as he saw her, he said to her, "Woe to thee, O traitress! What ailed thee to leave the faith 336 of thy fathers and forefathers and the safeguard of the Messiah, on whom is our reliance, and follow after the faith of the Vagrants,[542] to wit, the faith of Al-Islam, the which arose with the sword against the Cross and the Images?" Replied Miriam, "I am not at fault, I went out by night to the church, to visit the Lady Mary and seek a blessing of her, when there fell upon me unawares a band of Moslem robbers, who gagged me and bound me fast and carrying me on board the barque, set sail with me for their own country. However, I beguiled them and talked with them of their religion, till they loosed my bonds; and ere I knew it thy men overtook me and

delivered me. And by the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar and the Cross and the Crucified thereon, I rejoiced with joy exceeding in my release from them and my bosom broadened and I was glad for my deliverance from the bondage of the Moslems!" Rejoined the King, "Thou liest, O whore! O adultress! By the virtue of that which is revealed of prohibition and permission in the manifest Evangel,[543] I will assuredly do thee die by the foulest of deaths and make thee the vilest of examples! Did it not suffice thee to do as thou didst the first time and put off thy lies upon us, but thou must return upon us with thy deceitful inventions?" Thereupon the King bade kill her and crucify her over the palace gate; but, at that moment the one-eyed Wazir, who had long been enamoured of the Princess, came in to him and said, "Ho King! slay her not, but give her to me to wife, and I will watch over her with the utmost warding, nor will I go in unto her, till I have built her a palace of solid stone, exceeding high of foundation, so no thieves may avail to climb up to its terrace-roof; and when I have made an end of building it, I will sacrifice thirty Moslems before the gate thereof, as an expiatory offering to the Messiah for 337 myself and for her." The King granted his request and bade the priests and monks and patriarchs marry the Princess to him; so they did his bidding, whereupon he bade set about building a strong and lofty palace, befitting her rank and the workmen fell to work upon it. On this wise it betided the Princess Miriam and her sire and the one-eyed Wazir; but as regards Nur al-Din, when he came back with the petticoat-trousers and mantilla and walking boots and all the attire of Alexandrian women which he had borrowed of the druggist's wife, he "found the air void and the fane afar[544]";——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Nur al-Din, "found the air void[545] and the fane afar," his heart sank within him and he wept floods of tears and recited these verses[546]:—

The phantom of Soada came by night to wake me towards morning while my companions were sleeping in the desert:

But when we awoke to behold the nightly phantom, I saw the air vacant, and the place of visitation distant.

Then Nur al-Din walked on along the sea-shore and turned right and left, till he saw folk gathered together on the beach and heard 338 them say, "O Moslems, there remaineth no honour to Alexandria-city, since the Franks enter it and snatch away those who are therein and return to their own land, at their leisure[547] nor pursued of any of the Moslems or fighters for the Faith!" Quoth Nur al-Din to them, "What is to do?"; and quoth they, "O my son, one of the ships of the Franks, full of armed men, came down but now upon the port and carried off a ship which was moored here, with her that was therein, and made unmolested for their own land." Nur al-Din fell down a-swoon, on hearing these words; and when he recovered they questioned him of his case and he told them all that had befallen him first and last; whereupon they all took

to reviling him and railing at him, saying, “Why couldst thou not bring her up into the town without mantilla and muffler?” And all and each of the folk gave him some grievous word, berating him with sharp speech, and shooting at him some shaft of reproach, albeit one said, “Let him be; that which hath befallen him sufficeth him,” till he again fell down in a fainting-fit. And behold, at this moment, up came the old druggist, who, seeing the folk gathered together, drew near to learn what was the matter and found Nur al-Din lying a-swoon in their midst. So he sat down at his head and arousing him, said to him as soon as he recovered, “O my son, what is this case in which I see thee?” Nur al-Din said, “O uncle, I had brought back in a barque my lost slave-girl from her father’s city, suffering patiently all I suffered of perils and hardships; and when I came with her to this port, I made the vessel fast to the shore and leaving her therein, repaired to thy dwelling and took of thy consort what was needful for her, that I might bring her up into the town; but the Franks came and capturing barque and damsel made off unhindered, and returned to their own land.” Now when the Shaykh, the druggist, heard this, the light in his eyes became night and he grieved with sore grieving for Nur al-Din and said to him, “O my son, why didst thou not bring her out of the ship into the city without mantilla? But speech availeth not at this season; so rise, O my son, and come up with me to the city; haply Allah will vouchsafe thee a girl fairer than she, who shall console thee for her. Alhamdolillah—praised be Allah—who hath not made thee lose 339 aught by her! Nay, thou hast gained by her. And bethink thee, O my son, that Union and Disunion are in the hands of the Most High King.” Replied Nur al-Din, “By Allah, O uncle, I can never be consoled for her loss nor will I ever leave seeking her, though on her account I drink the cup of death!” Rejoined the druggist, “O my son, and what art thou minded to do?” Quoth Nur al-Din, “I am minded to return to the land of the Franks[548] and enter the city of France and emperil myself there; come what may, loss of life or gain of life.” Quoth the druggist, “O my son, there is an old saw:—Not always doth the crock escape the shock; and if they did thee no hurt the first time, belike they will slay thee this time, more by token that they know thee now with full knowledge.” Quoth Nur al-Din, “O my uncle, let me set out and be slain for the love of her straightway and not die of despair for her loss by slow torments.” Now as Fate determined there was then a ship in port ready to sail, for its passengers had made an end of their affairs[549] and the sailors had pulled up the mooring-stakes, when Nur al-Din embarked in her. So they shook out their canvas and relying on the Compassionate, put out to sea and sailed many days, with fair wind and weather, till behold, they fell in with certain of the Frank cruisers, which were scouring those waters and seizing upon all ships they saw, in their fear for the King’s daughter from the Moslem corsairs: and as often as they made prize of a Moslem ship, they carried all her people to the King of France, who put them to death in fulfilment of the vow he had vowed on account of his daughter Miriam. So, seeing the ship wherein was Nur al-Din they boarded her and taking him and the rest of the company prisoners, to

the number of an hundred Moslems, carried them to the King and set them between his hands. He bade cut their throats. Accordingly they slaughtered them all forthwith, one after another, till there was none left but Nur al-Din, whom the headsman had left to the last, in pity of his tender age and slender shape. When the King saw him, he knew him right well and said to him, "Art thou not Nur al-Din, who was with us before?" Said he, "I was never with thee; and my name is not Nur al-Din, but Ibrahim." Rejoined the King; "Thou liest, thou art Nur al-Din, he whom I gave to the ancient dame 340 the Prioress, to help her in the service of the church." But Nur al-Din replied, "O my lord, my name is Ibrahim." Quoth the King, "Wait a while," and bade his knights fetch the old woman forthright, saying, "When she cometh and seeth thee, she will know an thou be Nur al-Din or not." At this juncture, behold, in came the one-eyed Wazir who had married the Princess and kissing the earth before the King said to him, "Know, O King, that the palace is finished; and thou knowest now I vowed to the Messiah that, when I had made an end of building it, I would cut thirty Moslems' throats before its doors; wherefore I am come to take them of thee, that I may sacrifice them and so fulfil my vow to the Messiah. They shall be at my charge, by way of loan, and whenas there come prisoners to my hands, I will give thee other thirty in lieu of them." Replied the King, "By the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, I have but this one captive left!" And he pointed to Nur al-Din, saying, "Take him and slaughter him at this very moment and the rest I will send thee, when there come to my hands other prisoners of the Moslems." Thereupon the one-eyed Wazir arose and took Nur al-Din and carried him to his palace, thinking to slaughter him on the threshold of the gate; but the painters said to him, "O my lord, we have two days' painting yet to do: so bear with us and delay to cut the throat of this captive, till we have made an end of our work; haply by that time the rest of the thirty will come, so thou mayst despatch them all at one bout and accomplish thy vow in a single day." Thereupon the Wazir bade imprison Nur al-Din——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir bade imprison Nur al-Din, they carried him to the stables and left him there in chains, hungering and thirsting and making moan for himself; for indeed he saw death face to face. Now it fortuned, by the ordinance of Destiny and foreordained Fate, that the King had two stallions, own brothers,[550] such as the Chosroe 341 Kings might sigh in vain to possess themselves of one of them; they were called Sábik and Láhik[551] and one of them was pure silvern white while the other was black as the darksome night. And all the Kings of the isles had said, "Whoso stealeth us one of these stallions, we will give him all he seeketh of red gold and pearls and gems;" but none could avail to steal them. Now

one of them fell sick of a jaundice and there came a whiteness over his eyes[552]; whereupon the King gathered together all the farriers in the city to treat him; but they all failed of his cure. Presently the Wazir came into the King; and finding him troubled because of the horse, thought to do away his concern and said to him, "O King, give me the stallion and I will cure him." The King consented and caused carry the horse to the stable wherein Nur al-Din lay chained; but, when he missed his brother, he cried out with an exceeding great cry and neighed, so that he affrighted all the folk. The Wazir, seeing that he did thus but because he was parted from his brother, went to tell the King, who said, "If this, which is but a beast, cannot brook to be parted from his brother, how should it be with those that have reason?" And he bade his grooms take the other horse and put him with his brother in the Wazir's stables, saying, "Tell the Minister that the two stallions be a gift from me to him, for the sake of my daughter Miriam." Nur al-Din was lying in the stable, chained and shackled, when they brought in the two stallions and he saw that one of them had a film over his eyes. Now he had some knowledge of horses and of the doctoring of their diseases; so he said to himself, "This by Allah is my opportunity! I will go to the Wazir and lie to him, saying, "I will heal thee this horse:" then will I do with him somewhat that shall destroy his eyes, and he will slay me and I shall be at rest from this woe-full life." So he waited till the Wazir entered the stable, to look upon the steed, and said to him, "O my lord, what will be my due, an I heal this horse, and make his eyes whole again?" Replied the Wazir, "As my head liveth, an thou cure him, I will spare thy life and give thee leave to crave a boon of me!" And Nur al-Din said, "O my lord, bid my hands be unbound!" So the Wazir bade unbind 342 him and he rose and taking virgin glass,[553] brayed it and mixed it with unslaked lime and a menstruum of onion-juice. Then he applied the whole to the horse's eyes and bound them up, saying in himself, "Now will his eyes be put out and they will slay me and I shall be at rest from this woe-full life." Then he passed the night with a heart free from the uncertainty[554] of cark and care, humbling himself to Allah the Most High and saying, "O Lord, in Thy knowledge is that which dispenseth with asking and craving!" Now when the morning morrowed and the sun shone, the Wazir came to the stable and, loosing the bandage from the horse's eyes considered them and found them finer than before, by the ordinance of the King who openeth evermore. So he said to Nur al-Din, "O Moslem, never in the world saw I the like of thee for the excellence of thy knowledge. By the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, thou makest me with wonder to admire, for all the farriers of our land have failed to heal this horse!" Then he went up to Nur al-Din and, doing off his shackles with his own hand, clad him in a costly dress and made him his master of the Horse; and he appointed him stipends and allowances and lodged him in a story over the stables. So Nur al-Din abode awhile, eating and drinking and making merry and bidding and forbidding those who tended the horses; and whoso neglected or failed to fodder those tied up in the stable wherein was his service, he would throw down and beat with

grievous beating and lay him by the legs in bilboes of iron. Furthermore, he used every day to descend and visit the stallions and rub them down with his own hand, by reason of that which he knew of their value in the Wazir's eyes and his love for them; wherefore the Minister rejoiced in him with joy exceeding and his breast broadened and he was right glad, unknowing what was to be the issue of his case. Now in the new palace, which the one-eyed Wazir had bought for the Princess Miriam, was a lattice-window overlooking his old house and the flat wherein Nur al-Din lodged. The Wazir had a daughter, a virgin of extreme loveliness, 343 as she were a fleeing gazelle or a bending branchlet, and it chanced that she sat one day at the lattice aforesaid and behold, she heard Nur al-Din singing and solacing himself under his sorrows by improvising these verses:—

O my Censor who wakest a-morn to see ✿ The joys of life and its jubilee!
Had the fangs of Destiny bitten thee ✿ In such bitter case thou hadst pled this plea:—
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
But from Fate's despight thou art safe this day;— ✿ From her falsest fay and her crying "Nay!"
Yet blame him not whom his woes waylay ✿ Who distraught shall say in his agony,
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
Excuse such lovers in flight abhorr'd ✿ Nor to Love's distresses thine aid afford:
Lest thy self be bound by same binding cord ✿ And drink of Love's bitterest injury.
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
In His service I wont as the days went by ✿ With freest heart through the nights to lie;
Nor tasted wake, nor of Love aught reckt ✿ Ere my heart to subjection summoned he:
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
None weet of Love and his humbling wrong ✿ Save those he sickened so sore, so long,
Who have lost their wits 'mid the lover-throng ✿ Draining bitterest cup by his hard decree:
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
How oft in Night's gloom he cause wake to rue ✿ Lovers' eyne, and from eyelids their sleep withdrew;
Till tears to the railing of torrents grew, ✿ Overflowing cheeks, unconfined and free:
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
How many a man he has joyed to steep ✿ In pain, and for pine hath he plundered sleep,—
Made don garb of mourning the deepest deep ✿ And even his dreaming forced to flee:
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
How oft sufferance fails me! How bones are wasted ✿ And down my cheeks torrent tear-drops hasted:

344 And embittered She all the food I tasted ✿ However sweet it was wont to be:
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
Most hapless of men who like me must love, ✿ And must watch when Night droops her wing from above,
Who, Swimming the main where affection drove ✿ Must sigh and sink in that gloomy sea:
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
Who is he to whom Love e'er stinted spite ✿ And who scaped his springes and easy sleight;
Who free from Love lived in life's delight? ✿ Where is he can boast of such liberty?
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!
Deign Lord such suffering wight maintain ✿ Then best Protector, protect him deign!
Establish him and his life assain ✿ And defend him from all calamity:
Ah me, for Love and his case, ah me:
My heart is burnt by the fires I dree!

And when Nur al-Din ended his say and ceased to sing his rhyming lay, the Wazir's daughter said to herself, "By the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, verily this Moslem is a handsome youth! But doubtless he is a lover separated from his mistress. Would Heaven I wot an the beloved of this fair one is fair like unto him and if she pine for him as he for her! An she be seemly as he is, it behoveth him to pour forth tears and make moan of passion; but, an she be other than fair, his days are wasted in vain regrets and he is denied the taste of delights."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir's daughter said to herself, "An his beloved be fair as he, it behoveth him to pour forth tears; and, if other than fair, his heart is wasted in vain regrets!" Now Miriam the Girdle-girl, the Minister's consort, had removed to the new palace the day before and the Wazir's daughter knew that she was straitened of breast; so she was minded to seek her and talk with her and tell her the tidings of the young man and the rhymes and verses she 345 had heard him recite; but, before she could carry out her design the Princess sent for her to cheer her with her converse. So she went to her and found her heavy at heart and her tears hurrying down her cheeks; and whilst she was weeping with sore weeping she recited these couplets:

My life is gone but love-longings remain ✿ And my breast is straitened with pine and pain:
And my heart for parting to melt is fain ✿ Yet hoping that union will come again,
And join us in one who now are twain.
Stint your blame to him who in heart's your thrall ✿ With the wasted frame which his sorrows gall,

Nor with aim of arrow his heart appal ✿ For parted lover is saddest of all,
And Love's cup of bitters is sweet to drain!

Quoth the Wazir's daughter to her, "What aileth thee, O Princess, to be thus straitened in breast and sorrowful of thought?" Whereupon Miriam recalled the greatness of the delights that were past and recited these two couplets:—

I will bear in patience estrangement of friend ✿ And on cheeks rail tears that like torrents wend:
Haply Allah will solace my sorrow, for He ✿ Neath the ribs of unease maketh ease at end.

Said the Wazir's daughter, "O Princess, let not thy breast be straitened, but come with me straightway to the lattice; for there is with us in the stable[555] a comely young man, slender of shape and sweet of speech, and meseemeth he is a parted lover." Miriam asked, "And by what sign knowest thou that he is a parted lover?"; and she answered, "O Queen, I know it by his improvising odes and verses all watches of the night and tides of the day." Quoth the Princess in herself, "If what the Wazir's daughter says be true, these are assuredly the traits of the baffled, the wretched Ali Nur al-Din. Would I knew if indeed he be the youth of whom she speaketh?" At this thought, love-longing and distraction of passion redoubled on her and she rose at once and walking with the maiden to the lattice, looked down upon the stables, where she saw her love and lord Nur al-Din and fixing her eyes steadfastly upon him, knew him with the bestest knowledge 346 of love, albeit he was sick, of the greatness of his affection for her and of the fire of passion, and the anguish of separation and yearning and distraction. Sore upon him was emaciation and he was improvising and saying:—

My heart is a thrall; my tears ne'er abate ✿ And their rains the railing of clouds amate;
'Twixt my weeping and watching and wanting love; ✿ And whining and pining for dearest mate.
Ah my burning heat, my desire, my lowe! ✿ For the plagues that torture my heart are eight;
And five upon five are in suite of them; ✿ So stand and listen to all I state:
Mem'ry, madding thoughts, moaning languishment, ✿ Stress of longing love, plight disconsolate;
In travail, affliction and strangerhood, ✿ And annoy and joy when on her I wait.
Fail me patience and stay for engrossing care ✿ And sorrows my suffering soul regrate.
On my heart the possession of passion grows ✿ O who ask of what fire in my heart's create,
Why my tears in vitals should kindle flame, ✿ Burning heart with ardours insatiate,
Know, I'm drowned in Deluge[556] of tears and my soul ✿ From Lazá-lowe fares to Háwiyah-goal.[557]

When the Princess Miriam beheld Nur al-Din and heard his loquence and verse and speech, she made certain that it was indeed her lord Nur al-Din; but she concealed her case from the Wazir's daughter and said to her, "By the virtue of the Messiah and the Faith which is no liar, I thought not thou knewest of my sadness!" Then she arose forthright and withdrawing from the window, returned to her own place, whilst the Wazir's daughter went to her own occupations. The Princess awaited patiently awhile, then returned to the window and sat there, gazing upon her beloved Nur al-Din and delighting her eyes with his beauty and inner and outer grace. And indeed, she saw

that he was like unto moon at full on fourteenth night; but he was ever sighing with tears never drying, for that he recalled whatso he had been abying. So he recited these couplets:—

347 I hope for Union with my love which I may ne'er obtain ✿ At all, but bitterness of life is all the gain I gain:

My tears are likest to the main for ebb and flow of tide; ✿ But when I meet the blamer-wight to staunch my tears I'm fain.

Woe to the wretch who garred us part by spelling of his spells;[558] ✿ Could I but hend his tongue in hand I'd cut his tongue in twain:

Yet will I never blame the days for whatso deed they did ✿ Mingling with merest, purest gall the cup they made me drain!

To whom shall I address myself; and whom but you shall seek ✿ A heart left hostage in your Court, by you a captive ta'en?

Who shall avenge my wrongs on you,[559] tyrant despotical ✿ Whose tyranny but grows the more, the more I dare complain?

I made him regnant of my soul that he the reign assain ✿ But me he wasted wasting too the soul I gave to reign.

Ho thou, the Fawn, whom I so lief erst gathered to my breast ✿ Enow of severance tasted I to own its might and main,

Thou'rt he whose favours joined in one all beauties known to man, ✿ Yet I thereon have wasted all my Patience' fair domain.

I entertained him in my heart whereto he brought unrest ✿ But I am satisfied that I such guest could entertain.

My tears for ever flow and flood, likest the surging sea ✿ And would I wot the track to take that I thereto attain.

Yet sore I fear that I shall die in depths of my chagrin ✿ And must despair for evermore to win the wish I'd win.

When Miriam heard the verses of Nur al-Din the loving-hearted, the parted; they kindled in her vitals a fire of desire, and, whilst her eyes ran over with tears, she recited these two couplets:—

I longed for him I love; but, when we met, ✿ I was amazed nor tongue nor eyes I found.

I had got ready volumes of reproach; ✿ But when we met, could syllable no sound.

When Nur al-Din heard the voice of Princess Miriam, he knew it and wept bitter tears, saying, "By Allah, this is the chanting of the Lady Miriam."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

348 NOTE. (p. 93).—There is something wondrous naïve in a lover who, when asked by his mistress to sing a song in her honour, breaks out into versical praises of her parts. But even the classical Arab authors did not disdain such themes. See in Al-Harírí (Ass. of Mayyáfarikín) where Abú Zayd laments the impotency of old age in form of a Rasy or funeral oration (Preston p. 484, and Chenery p. 221). It completely deceived Sir William Jones, who inserted it into the chapter "De Poesi Funebri," p. 527 (Poeseos Asiaticæ Commentarii) gravely noting, "Hæc Elegia non admodum dissimilis esse videtur pulcherrimi illius carminis de Sauli et Jonathani obitu; at que adeò versus iste 'ubi provocant adversarios nunquam rediit a pugnæ contentione sine spiculo sanguine imbuto,' ex Hebræo reddi videtur,

A sanguine occisorum, a fortium virorum adipe,
Arcus Jonathani non rediit irritus."

I need hardly say with Captain Lockett (226) that this "Sabb warrior," this Arabian Achilles is the celebrated Bonus Deus or Hellespontiacus of the Ancients. The oration runs thus:—

O folk I have a wondrous tale, so rare
Much shall it profit hearers wise and ware!
I saw in salad-years a potent Brave
And sharp of edge and point his warrior glaive;
Who entered joust and list with hardiment
Fearless of risk, of victory confident,
His vigorous onset straitest places oped
And easy passage through all narrows groped:
He ne'er encountered foe in single fight
But came from tilt with spear in blood stained bright;
Nor stormed a fortress howso strong and stark—
With fencèd gates defended deep and dark—
When shown his flag without th' auspicious cry
"Aidance from Allah and fair victory nigh!"[560]
Thuswise full many a night his part he played
In strength and youth-tide's stately garb arrayed,
Dealing to fair young girl delicious joy
And no less welcome to the blooming boy.
But Time ne'er ceased to stint his wondrous strength
(Steadfast and upright as the gallows' length)
Until the Nights o'erthrew him by their might
And friends contemned him for a feckless wight;
Nor was a wizard but who wasted skill
Over his case, nor leach could heal his ill.
Then he abandoned arms abandoned him
Who gave and took salutes so fierce and grim;
And now lies prostrate drooping haughty crest;
For who lives longest him most ills molest.
Then see him, here he lies on bier for bed:—
Who will a shroud bestow on stranger dead?

349 A fair measure of the difference between Eastern and Western manners is afforded by such a theme being treated by their gravest writers and the verses being read and heard by the gravest and most worshipful men, whilst amongst us Preston and Chenery do not dare even to translate them. The latter, indeed, had all that immodest modesty for which English professional society is notable in this xixth century. He spoiled by needlessly excluding from a scientific publication (Mem. R.A.S.) all of my

Proverbia Communia Syriaca (See Unexplored Syria, i. 364) and every item which had a shade of double entendre. But Nemesis frequently found him out: during his short and obscure rule in Printing House Square The Thunderer was distinguished by two of the foulest indecencies that ever appeared in an English paper.

36- THE MAN OF UPPER EGYPT AND HIS FRANKISH WIFE.

We lay one night in the house of a man of the Sa'íd or Upper Egypt, and he entertained us and entreated us hospitably. Now he was a very old man swart with exceeding swarthiness, and he had little children, who were white, of a white dashed with red. So we said to him, "Harkye, such an one, how cometh it that these thy children are white, whilst thou thyself art passing swart?" And he said, "Their mother was a Frankish woman, whom I took prisoner in the days of Al-Malik al-Násir Saláh al-Dín,[28] after the battle of Hattín,[29] when I was a young man." We asked, "And how gottest thou her?" and he answered, "I had a rare adventure with her." Quoth we, "Favour us with it;" and quoth he:—With all my heart! You must know that I once sowed a crop of flax in these parts and pulled it and scutched it and spent on it five hundred gold pieces; after which I would have sold it, but could get no more than this therefor, and the folk said to me, "Carry it to Acre: for there thou wilt haply make good gain by it." Now Acre was then in the hands of the Franks[30]; so I carried my flax thither and sold part of it at six months' credit. One day, as I was selling, behold, there came up a Frankish woman (now 'tis the custom of the women of the Franks to go about the market streets with unveiled faces), to buy flax of me, and I saw of her beauty what dazed my wits. So I sold her somewhat of flax and was easy with her concerning the price; and she took it and went away. Some days after, she 20 returned and bought somewhat more flax of me and I was yet easier with her about the price; and she repeated her visits to me, seeing that I was in love with her. Now she was used to walk in company of an old woman to whom I said, "I am sore enamoured of thy mistress. Canst thou contrive for me to enjoy her?" Quoth she, "I will contrive this for thee; but the secret must not go beyond us three, me, thee and her; and there is no help but that thou be lavish with money, to boot." And I answered, saying, "Though my life were the price of her favours 'twere no great matter."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman said to the man, "However the secret must not go beyond us three, to wit me, thee and her; and there is no help but thou be lavish of thy money to boot." He replied, "Though my life were

the price of her favours 'twere no great matter." So it was agreed (continued the man of Upper Egypt), that I should pay her fifty dinars and that she should come to me; whereupon I procured the money and gave it to the old woman. She took it and said, "Make ready a place for her in thy house, and she will come to thee this night." Accordingly I went home and made ready what I could of meat and drink and wax candles and sweetmeats. Now my house overlooked the sea and 'twas the season of summer; so I spread the bed on the terrace roof. Presently, the Frank woman came and we ate and drank, and the night fell dark. We lay down under the sky, with the moon shining on us, and fell to watching the shimmering of the stars in the sea: and I said to myself, "Art thou not ashamed before Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) and thou a stranger, under the heavens and in presence of the deep waters, to disobey Him with a Nazarene woman and merit the torment of Fire?" Then said I, "O my God, I call Thee to witness that I abstain from this Christian woman this night, of shamefastness before Thee and fear of Thy vengeance!" So I slept till the morning, and she arose at peep of day full of anger and went away. I walked to my shop and sat there; and behold, presently she passed, as she were the moon, accompanied by the old woman 21 who was also angry; whereat my heart sank within me and I said to myself, "Who art thou that thou shouldst refrain from yonder damsel? Art thou Sarí al-Sakatí or Bishr Barefoot or Junayd of Baghdad or Fuzayl bin 'Iyáz[31]?" Then I ran after the old woman and coming up with her said to her, "Bring her to me again;" and said she, "By the virtue of the Messiah, she will not return to thee but for an hundred ducats!" Quoth I, "I will give thee a hundred gold pieces." So I paid her the money and the damsel came to me a second time; but no sooner was she with me than I returned to my whilome way of thinking and abstained from her and forbore her for the sake of Allah Almighty. Presently she went away and I walked to my shop, and shortly after the old woman came up, in a rage. Quoth I to her, "Bring her to me again;" and quoth she, "By the virtue of the Messiah, thou shalt never again enjoy her presence with thee, except for five hundred ducats, and thou shalt perish in thy pain!" At this I trembled and resolved to expend the whole price of my flax and therewith ransom my life. But, before I could think, I heard the crier proclaiming and saying, "Ho, all ye Moslems, the truce which was between us and you is expired, and we give all of you Mahometans who are here a week from this time to have done with your business and depart to your own country." Thus her visits were cut off from me and I betook myself to getting in the price of my flax which men had bought upon credit, and to bartering what remained in my hands for other goods. Then I took with me fair merchandise and departed Acre with a soul full of affection and love-longing for the Frankish woman, who had taken my heart and my coin. So I journeyed till I made Damascus, where I sold the stock in trade I had brought from Acre, at the highest price, because of the cutting off of communication by reason of the term of truce having expired; and Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) vouchsafed me good gain. Then I fell to trading in captive slave-girls, thinking thus to ease my heart of its pining

for the Frankish woman, and in this traffic engaged I abode three years, till there befel between Al-Malik al-Násir and the Franks what befel of the action of Hattin and other encounters and Allah gave him the victory over them, 22 so that he took all their Kings prisoners and he opened[32] the coast[33] cities by His leave. Now it fortuned one day after this, that a man came to me and sought of me a slave-girl for Al-Malik al-Nasir. Having a handsome handmaid I showed her to him and he bought her of me for an hundred dinars and gave me ninety thereof, leaving ten still due to me, for that there was no more found in the royal treasury that day, because he had expended all his monies in waging war against the Franks. Accordingly they took counsel with him and he said, "Carry him to the treasury[34] where are the captives' lodging and give him his choice among the damsels of the Franks, so he may take one of them for the ten dinars."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that whenas Al-Malik al-Nasir said, "Give him his choice to take one of the girls for the ten dinars that are due to him;" they brought me to the captives' lodging and showed me all who were therein, and I saw amongst them the Frankish damsel with whom I had fallen in love at Acre and knew her right well. Now she was the wife of one of the cavaliers of the Franks. So I said, "Give me this one," and carrying her to my tent, asked her, "Dost thou know me?" She answered, "No;" and I rejoined, "I am thy friend, the sometime flax-merchant with whom thou hadst to do at Acre and there befel between us what befel. Thou tookest money of me and saidest, 'Thou shalt never again see me but for five hundred dinars.' And now thou art become my property for ten ducats." Quoth she, "This is a mystery. Thy faith is the True Faith and I testify that there is no god but *the* God and that Mohammed is the Messenger of God!" And she made perfect 23 profession of Al-Islam. Then said I to myself, "By Allah, I will not go in unto her till I have set her free and acquainted the Kazi." So I betook myself to Ibn Shaddád[35] and told him what had passed and he married me to her. Then I lay with her that night and she conceived; after which the troops departed and we returned to Damascus. But within a few days there came an envoy from the King of the Franks, to seek the captives and the prisoners, according to the treaty between the Kings. So Al-Malik al-Nasir restored all the men and women captive, till there remained but the woman who was with me and the Franks said, "The wife of such an one the Knight is not here." Then they asked after her and making strict search for her, found that she was with me; whereupon they demanded her of me and I went in to her sore concerned and with colour changed; and she said to me, "What aileth thee and what evil assaileth thee?" Quoth I, "A messenger is come from the King to take all the captives, and they demand thee of me." Quoth she, "Have no fear, bring me to the King and I know what to say before and to him." I carried her into the presence of the

Sultan Al-Malik al-Nasir, who was seated, with the envoy of the King of the Franks on his right hand, and I said to him, “This is the woman that is with me.” Then quoth the King and the envoy to her, “Wilt thou go to thy country or to[36] thy husband? For Allah hath loosed thy bonds and those of thy fellow captives.” Quoth she to the Sultan, “I am become a Moslemah and am great with child, as by my middle ye may see, and the Franks shall have no more profit of me.” The envoy asked, “Whether is dearer to thee, this Moslem or thy first husband the knight such an one?;” and she answered him even as she had answered the Sultan. Then said the envoy to the Franks with him, “Heard ye her words?” They replied, “Yes.” And he said to me, “Take thy wife and depart with her.” So I took her and went away; but the envoy sent after me in haste and cried, “Her mother gave me a charge for her, saying, My daughter is a captive and naked: and I would have thee carry her this chest. Take it thou and deliver it to her.” Accordingly I carried the chest home and gave it to her. She opened it and found in it all her raiment as she had left it and therein I saw the two purses of 24 fifty and an hundred dinars which I had given her, untouched and tied up with my own tying, wherefore I praised Almighty Allah. These are my children by her and she is alive to this day and ’twas she dressed you this food. We marvelled at his story and at that which had befallen him of good fortune, and Allah is All-knowing. But men also tell a tale anent the

37- RUINED MAN OF BAGHDAD AND HIS SLAVE-GIRL.

There was of old time in Baghdad a man of condition, who had inherited from his father abounding affluence. He fell in love with a slave-girl; so he bought her and she loved him as he loved her; and he ceased not to spend upon her, till all his money was gone and naught remained thereof; whereupon he sought a means of getting his livelihood, but availed not to find any. Now this young man had been used, in the days of his affluence, to frequent the assemblies of those who were versed in the art of singing and had thus attained to the utmost excellence therein. Presently he took counsel with one of his intimates, who said to him, "Meseems thou canst find no better profession than to sing, thou and thy slave-girl; for on this wise thou wilt get money in plenty and wilt eat and drink." But he misliked this, he and the damsel, and she said to him, "I have bethought me of a means of relief for thee." He asked, "What is it?;" and she answered, "Do thou sell me; thus shall we be delivered of this strait, thou and I, and I shall be in affluence; for none will buy the like of me save a man of fortune, and with this I will contrive for my return to thee." He carried her to the market and the first who saw her was a Háshimí[37] of Bassorah, a man of good breeding, fine taste and generosity, who bought her for fifteen hundred dinars. (Quoth the young man, the damsel's owner), When I had received the price, I repented me and wept, I and the damsel; and I sought to cancel the sale; but the purchaser would not consent. So I took the gold in a bag, 25 knowing not whither I should wend, now my house was desolate of her, and buffeted my face and wept and wailed as I had never done before. Then I entered a mosque and sat shedding tears, till I was stupefied and losing my senses fell asleep, with the bag of money under my head by way of pillow. Presently, ere I could be ware, a man plucked the bag from under my head and ran off with it at speed: whereupon I started up in alarm and affright and would have arisen to run after him; but lo! my feet were bound with a rope and I fell on my face. Then I took to weeping and buffeting myself, saying, "Thou hast parted with thy soul[38] and thy wealth is lost!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man continued:—So I said to myself, “Thou hast parted with thy soul and thy wealth is lost.” Then, of the excess of my chagrin, I betook myself to the Tigris and wrapping my face in my gown, cast myself into the stream. The bystanders saw me and cried, “For sure, this is because of some great trouble that hath betided him.” They cast themselves in after me and bringing me ashore, questioned me of my case. I told them what misadventure had befallen me and they condoled with me. Then an old man of them came to me and said, “Thou hast lost thy money, but why goest thou about to lose thy life and become of the people of The Fire?[39] Arise, come with me, that I may see thy lodging.” I went with him to my house and he sat with me awhile, till I waxed calmer, and becoming tranquil I thanked him and he went away. When he was gone, I was like to kill myself, but bethought me of the Future and the Fire; so I fared forth my house and fled to one of my friends and told him what had befallen me. He wept for pity of me and gave me fifty dinars, saying, “Take my advice and hie thee from Baghdad forthright and let this provide thee till thy heart be diverted from the love of her and thou forget her. Thy forbears were Secretaries and Scribes and thy handwriting is fine and thy breeding right good: 26 seek out, then, whom thou wilt of the Intendants[40] and throw thyself on his bounty; thus haply Allah shall reunite thee with thy slave-girl.” I hearkened to his words (and indeed my mind was strengthened and I was somewhat comforted) and resolved to betake myself to Wásit,[41] where I had kinsfolk. So I went down to the river-side, where I saw a ship moored and the sailors embarking goods and goodly stuffs. I asked them to take me with them and carry me to Wasit; but they replied, “We cannot take thee on such wise, for the ship belongeth to a Hashimi.” However I tempted them with promise of passage-money and they said, “We cannot embark thee on this fashion;[42] but, if it must be, doff those fine clothes of thine and don sailor’s gear and sit with us as thou wert one of us.” I went away and buying somewhat of sailors’ clothes, put them on; after which I bought me also somewhat of provisions for the voyage; and, returning to the vessel, which was bound for Bassorah, embarked with the crew. But ere long I saw my slave-girl herself come on board, attended by two waiting-women; whereupon what was on me of chagrin subsided and I said in myself, “Now shall I see her and hear her singing, till we come to Bassorah.” Soon after, up rode the Hashimi, with a party of people, and they embarked aboard the ship, which dropped down the river with them. Presently the Hashimi brought out food and ate with the damsel, whilst the rest ate amidships. Then said he to her, “How long this abstinence from singing and permanence in this wailing and weeping? Thou art not the first that hath been parted from a beloved!” Wherefore I knew what she suffered for love of me. Then he hung a curtain before her along the gunwale and calling those who ate apart, sat down with them without the curtain; and I enquired concerning them and behold they were his brethren.[43] He set before them what they needed of wine and dessert, and they ceased not to press the damsel to sing, till she called for the lute and tuning it, intoned these two couplets:—

27 The company left with my love by night, ✿ Nor forbore to fare with my heart's delight:

And raged, since their camels off paced, a fire ✿ As of Ghazá[44]-wood in the lover's sprite.

Then weeping overpowered her and she threw down the lute and ceased singing; whereat the folk were troubled and I slipped down a-swoon. They thought I was possessed[45] and one of them began reciting exorcisms in my ear; nor did they cease to comfort her and beseech her to sing, till she tuned the lute again and chaunted these couplets twain:—

I stood and bewailed who their loads had bound ✿ And far yode but still in my heart are found:

I drew near the ruins and asked of them ✿ And the camp was void and lay waste the ground.

Then she fell down in a fainting-fit and weeping arose amongst the folk; and I also cried out and fainted away. The sailors were startled by me and one of the Hashimi's pages said to them, "How came ye to take this madman on board?" So they said one to other, "As soon as we come to the next village, we will set him ashore and rid us of him." When I heard this, I was sore troubled but I heartened and hardened myself, saying in thought, "Nothing will serve me to deliver myself from their hands, except I make shift to acquaint her with my presence in the ship, so she may prevent my being set ashore." Then we sailed when we came hard by a hamlet[46] and the skipper said, "Come, let us go ashore." Therewith they all landed, save myself: and as evening fell I rose and going behind the curtain took the lute and changed its accord, mode[47] by mode, and tuning it after a fashion of my own,[48] that 28 she had learnt of me, returned to my place in the ship;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man continued:—I returned to my place in the ship; and presently the whole party came on board again and the moon shone bright upon river and height. Then said the Hashimi to the damsel, "Allah upon thee, trouble not our joyous lives!" So she took the lute, and touching it with her hand, gave a sob, that they thought her soul had fled her frame, and said, "By Allah, my master and teacher is with us in this ship!" Answered the Hashimi, "By Allah, were this so, I would not forbid him our conversation! Haply he would lighten thy burthen, so we might enjoy thy singing: but his being on board is far from possible." However she said, "I cannot smite lute-string or sing sundry airs I was wont to sing whilst my lord is with us." Quoth the Hashimi, "Let us ask the sailors;" and quoth she, "Do so." He questioned them, saying, "Have ye carried anyone with you?"; and they answered, "No." Then I feared lest the enquiry should end there; so I laughed and said, "Yes; I am her master and taught her whenas I was her lord." Cried she, "By Allah, that is my lord's voice!" Thereupon the pages carried me to the Hashimi, who knew me at first sight and said to me, "Out on thee! What

plight is this in which I see thee and what hath brought thee to such condition?" I related to him all that had befallen me of my affair, weeping the while, and the damsel made loud wail from behind the curtain. The Hashimi wept with sore weeping, he and his brethren, for pity of me, and he said, "By Allah, I have not drawn near this damsel nor enjoyed her, nor have I even heard her sing till this day! I am a man to whom Allah hath been ample and I came to Baghdad but to hear singing and seek my allowances of the Commander of the Faithful. I 29 accomplished both my needments and being about to return home, said to myself, 'Let us hear some what of the singing of Baghdad.' Wherefore I bought this damsel, knowing not that such was the case with you twain; and I take Allah to witness that, when I reach Bassorah I will free her and marry her to thee and assign you what shall suffice you, and more; but on condition that, whenever I have a mind to hear music, a curtain shall be hung for her and she shall sing to me from behind it, and thou shalt be of the number of my brethren and boon-companions." Hereat I rejoiced and the Hashimi put his head within the curtain and said to her, "Will that content thee?"; whereupon she fell to blessing and thanking him. Then he called a servant and said to him, "Take this young man and do off his clothes and robe him in costly raiment and incense him[49] and bring him back to us." So the servant did with me as his master bade him and brought me back to him, and served me with wine, even as the rest of the company. Then the damsel began singing after the goodliest fashion and chanted these couplets:—

They blamed me for causing my tears to well ✿ When came my beloved to bid farewell:

They ne'er tasted the bitters of parting nor felt ✿ Fire beneath my ribs that flames fierce and fell!

None but baffled lover knows aught of Love, ✿ Whose heart is lost where he wont to dwell.

The folk rejoiced in her song with exceeding joy and my gladness redoubled, so that I took the lute from the damsel and preluding after the most melodious fashion, sang these couplets:—

Ask (if needs thou ask) the Compassionate, ✿ And the generous donor of high estate.

For asking the noble honours man ✿ And asking the churl entails bane and bate:

When abasement is not to be 'scaped by wight ✿ Meet it asking boons of the good and great.

Of Grandee to sue ne'er shall vilify man, ✿ But 'tis vile on the vile of mankind to 'wait.

The company rejoiced in me with joy exceeding and they ceased not from pleasure and delight, whilst anon I sang and anon the damsel, till we came to one of the landing-places, where the vessel 30 moored and all on board disembarked and I with them. Now I was drunken with wine and squatted on my hams to make water; but drowsiness overcame me and I slept, and the passengers returned to the ship which ran down stream without any missing me, for that they also were drunken, and continued their voyage till they reached Bassorah. As for me I awoke not till the heat of the sun aroused me, when I rose and looked about me, but saw no one. Now I had given my spending-money to the damsel and had naught left: I had also forgotten to

ask the Hashimi his name and where his house was at Bassorah and his titles; thus I was confounded and my joy at meeting the damsel had been but a dream; and I abode in perplexity till there came up a great vessel wherein I embarked and she carried me to Bassorah. Now I knew none there much less the Hashimi's house, so I accosted a grocer and taking of him inkcase and paper,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Eight Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Baghdad man who owned the maid entered Bassorah, he was perplexed for not knowing the Hashimi's house. So I accosted (said he) a grocer and, taking of him inkcase and paper, sat down to write. He admired my handwriting and seeing my dress stained and soiled, questioned me of my case, to which I replied that I was a stranger and poor. Quoth he, "Wilt thou abide with me and order the accounts of my shop and I will give thee thy food and clothing and half a dirham a day for ordering the accompts of my shop?"; and quoth I, "'Tis well," and abode with him and kept his accounts and ordered his income and expenditure for a month, at the end of which he found his income increased and his disbursements diminished; wherefore he thanked me and made my wage a dirham a day. When the year was out, he proposed to me to marry his daughter and become his partner in the shop. I agreed to this and went in to my wife and applied me to the shop. But I was broken in heart and spirit, and grief was manifest upon me; and the grocer used to drink and invite me thereto, but I refrained for melancholy. I abode on this wise two years till, one day, as I sat in the shop, behold, there passed by a parcel of people with meat and drink, and I asked the grocer what was 31 the matter. Quoth he, "This is the day of the pleasure-makers, when all the musicians and dancers of the town go forth with the young men of fortune to the banks of the Ubullah river[501] and eat and drink among the trees there." The spirit prompted me to solace myself with the sight of this thing and I said in my mind, "Haply among these people I may foregather with her I love." So I told the grocer that I had a mind to this and he said, "Up and go with them an thou please." He made me ready meat and drink and I went till I came to the River of Ubullah, when, behold, the folk were going away: I also was about to follow, when I espied the Rais of the bark wherein the Hashimi had been with the damsel and he was going along the river. I cried out to him and his company who knew me and took me on board with them and said to me, "Art thou yet alive?"; and they embraced me and questioned me of my case. I told them my tale and they said, "Indeed, we thought that drunkenness had gotten the better of thee and that thou hadst fallen into the water and wast drowned." Then I asked them of the damsel, and they answered, "When she came to know of thy loss, she rent her raiment and burnt the lute and fell to buffeting herself and lamenting and when we returned with the Hashimi to Bassorah we said to her, "Leave this weeping and wailing." Quoth she, "I will don black and make me a tomb beside the

house and abide thereby and repent from singing.[51] We allowed her so to do and on this wise she abideth to this day." Then they carried me to the Hashimi's house, where I saw the damsel as they had said. When she espied me, she cried out a great cry, methought she had died, and I embraced her with a long embrace. Then said the Hashimi to me, "Take her;" and I said, "'Tis well: but do thou free her and according to thy promise marry her to me." Accordingly he did this and gave us costly goods and store of raiment and furniture and five hundred dinars, saying, "This is the amount of that which I purpose to 32 allow you every month, but on condition that thou be my cup-companion and that I hear the girl sing when I will." Furthermore, he assigned us private quarters and bade transport thither all our need; so, when I went to the house, I found it filled full of furniture and stuffs and carried the damsel thither. Then I betook me to the grocer and told him all that had betided me, begging to hold me guiltless for divorcing his daughter, without offence on her part; and I paid her her dowry[52] and what else behoved me.[53] I abode with the Hashimi in this way two years and became a man of great wealth and was restored to the former estate of prosperity wherein I had been at Baghdad, I and the damsel. And indeed Allah the Bountiful put an end to our troubles and loaded us with the gifts of good fortune and caused our patience to result in the attainment of our desire: wherefore to Him be the praise in this world and the next whereto we are returning.[54] And among the tales men tell is that of

38- KING JALI'AD OF HIND AND HIS WAZIR SHIMAS; FOLLOWED BY THE HISTORY OF KING WIRD KHAN, SON OF KING JALI'AD, WITH HIS WOMEN AND WAZIRS.[55]

There was once in days of yore and in ages and times long gone before, in the land of Hind, a mighty King, tall of presence and fair of favour and goodly of parts, noble of nature and generous, beneficent to the poor and loving to his lieges and all the people 33 of his realm. His name was Jalí'ád and under his hand were two and-seventy Kings and in his cities three hundred and fifty Kazis. He had three score and ten Wazirs and over every ten of them he set a premier. The chiefest of all his ministers was a man called Shimás[56] who was then[57] two-and-twenty years old, a statesman of pleasant presence and noble nature, sweet of speech and ready in reply; shrewd in all manner of business, skilful withal and sagacious, for all his tender age, a man of good counsel and fine manners versed in all arts and sciences and accomplishments; and the King loved him with exceeding love and cherished him by reason of his proficiency in eloquence and rhetoric and the art of government and for that which Allah had given him of compassion and brooding care[58] with his lieges for he was a King just in his Kingship and a protector of his peoples, constant in beneficence to great and small and giving them that which befitted them of good governance and bounty and protection and security and a lightener of their loads in taxes and tithes. And indeed he was loving to them each and every, high and low, entreating them with kindness and solicitude and governing them in such goodly guise as none had done before him. But, with all this, Almighty Allah had not blessed him with a child, and this was grievous to him and to the people of his reign. It chanced, one night, as

Jali'ad[591] lay in his bed, occupied with anxious thought of the issue of the affair of his Kingdom, that sleep overcame him and he dreamt that he poured water upon the roots of a tree,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundredth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King saw himself in his vision pouring water upon the roots of a tree, about which were many other trees; and lo and behold! there came fire out of this tree and burnt up every growth which encompassed it; whereupon Jali'ad awoke affrighted and trembling, and calling one of his pages said to him, "Go fetch the Wazir 34Shimas in all haste." So he betook himself to Shimas and said to him, "The King calleth for thee forthright because he hath awoke from his sleep in affright and hath sent me to bring thee to him in haste." When Shimas heard this, he arose without stay or delay and going to the King, found him seated on his bed. He prostrated himself before him, wishing him permanence of glory and prosperity, and said, "May Allah not cause thee grieve, O King! What hath troubled thee this night, and what is the cause of thy seeking me thus in haste?" The King bade him be seated; and, as soon as he sat down, began telling his tale and said to him, "I have dreamt this night a dream which terrified me, and 'twas, that methought I poured water upon the roots of a tree where about were many other trees and as I was thus engaged, lo and behold! fire issued therefrom and burnt up all the growths that were around it; wherefore I was affrighted and fear took me. Then I awoke and sent to bid thee to me, because of thy knowledge and skill in the interpretation of dreams and of that which I know of the vastness of thy wisdom and the greatness of thine understanding." At this Shimas the Wazir bowed his head groundwards awhile and presently raising it, smiled; so the King said to him, "What deemest thou, O Shimas? Tell me the truth of the matter and hide naught from me." Answered Shimas, "O King, verily Allah Almighty granteth thee thy wish and cooleth thine eyes; for the matter of this dream presageth all good, to wit, that the Lord will bless thee with a son, who shall inherit the Kingdom from thee, after thy long life. But there is somewhat else I desire not to expound at this present, seeing that the time is not favourable for interpretation." The King rejoiced in these words with exceeding joy and great was his contentment; his trouble departed from him, his mind was at rest and he said, "If the case be thus of the happy presage of my dream, do thou complete to me its exposition when the fitting time betideth: for that which it behoveth not to expound to me now, it behoveth that thou expound to me when its time cometh, so my joy may be fulfilled, because I seek naught in this save the approof of Allah extolled and exalted be He!" Now when the Wazir Shimas saw that the King was urgent to have the rest of the exposition, he put him off with a pretext; but Jali'ad assembled all the astrologers and interpreters of dreams of his realm and as soon as they were in the presence related to them his vision, saying, "I desire you to tell me

the true interpretation of this." Whereupon 35 one of them came forward and craved the King's permission to speak, which being granted, he said, "Know, O King, that thy Wazir Shimas is nowise unable to interpret this thy dream; but he shrank from troubling thy repose: wherefore he disclosed not unto thee the whole thereof: but, an thou suffer me to speak I will expose to thee that which he concealed from thee." The King replied, "Speak without respect for persons, O interpreter, and be truthful in thy speech." The interpreter said, "Know then, O King, that there will be born to thee a boy-child who shall inherit the Kingship from thee, after thy long life; but he shall not order himself towards the lieges after thy fashion; nay, he shall transgress thine ordinances and oppress thy subjects, and there shall befal him what befel the Mouse with the Cat[60]; and I seek refuge with Almighty Allah[61]!" The King asked, "But what is the story of the Cat and the Mouse?"; and the interpreter answered "May Allah prolong the King's life! They tell the following tale of

THE MOUSE AND THE CAT."

A Grimalkin, that is to say, a Cat, went out one night to a certain garden, in search of what she might devour, but found nothing and became weak for the excess of cold and rain that prevailed that night. So she sought for some device whereby to save herself. As she prowled about in search of prey, she espied a nest at the foot of a tree, and drawing near unto it, sniffed thereat and purred till she scented a Mouse within and went round about it, seeking to enter and seize the inmate. When the Mouse smelt the Cat, he turned his back to her and scraped up the earth with his forehand, to stop the nest-door against her; whereupon she assumed a weakly voice and said, "Why dost thou thus, O my brother? I come to seek refuge with thee, hoping that thou wilt take pity on me and harbour me in thy nest this night; for I am weak because of the greatness of my age and the loss of my strength, and can hardly move. I have ventured into thy garden 36 to-night, and how many a time have I called upon death, that I might be at rest from this pain! Behold, here am I at thy door, prostrate for cold and rain and I beseech thee, by Allah, take of thy charity my hand and bring me in with thee and give me shelter in the vestibule of thy nest; for I am a stranger and wretched and 'tis said:—Whoso sheltereth a stranger and a wretched one in his home his shelter shall be Paradise on the Day of Doom. And thou, O my brother, it behoveth thee to earn eternal reward by succouring me and suffering me abide with thee this night till the morning, when I will wend my way."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and First Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the Cat to the Mouse, "So suffer me to night with thee this night, after which I will wend my way." Hearing

these words the Mouse replied, “How shall I suffer thee enter my nest seeing that thou art my natural foe and thy food is of my flesh? Indeed I fear lest thou false me, for that is of thy nature and there is no faith in thee, and the byword saith:—It befitteth not to entrust a lecher with a fair woman nor a moneyless man with money nor fire with fuel. Neither doth it behove me to entrust myself to thee; and ’tis said:—Enmity of kind, as the enemy himself groweth weaker groweth stronger.” The Cat made answer in the faintest voice, as she were in most piteous case, saying, “What thou advancest of admonitory instances is the truth and I deny not my offences against thee; but I beseech thee to pardon that which is past of the enmity of kind between me and thee; for ’tis said:—Whoso forgiveth a creature like himself, his Creator will forgive him his sins. ’Tis true that whilome I was thy foe, but here am I a suitor for thy friendship, and they say, “An thou wilt have thy foe become thy friend, do with him good. O my brother, I swear to thee by Allah and make a binding covenant with thee that I will hurt thee nevermore and for the best of reasons, to wit, that I have no power thereto; wherefore place thy trust in Allah and do good and accept my oath and covenant.” Quoth the Mouse, “How can I accept the covenant of one between 37 whom and me there is a rooted enmity, and whose wont it is to deal treacherously by me? Were the feud between us aught but one of blood, this were light to me; but it is an enmity of kind between souls, and it is said:—Whoso trusteth himself to his foe is as one who thrusteth hand into a serpent’s[62] mouth.” Quoth the Cat, full of wrath, “My breast is strait and my soul is faint: indeed I am *in articulo mortis* and ere long I shall die at thy door and my blood will be on thy head, for that thou hadst it in thy power to save me in mine extremity: and this is my last word to thee.” Herewith the fear of Allah Almighty overcame the Mouse and ruth gat hold upon his heart and he said in himself, “Whoso would have the succour of Allah the Most High against his foe, let him entreat him with compassion and kindness show. I rely upon the Almighty in this matter and will deliver this Cat from this her strait and earn the divine reward for her.” So he went forth and dragged into his nest the Cat, where she abode till she was rested and somewhat strengthened and restored, when she began to bewail her weakness and wasted strength and want of gossips. The Mouse entreated her in friendly guise and comforted her and busied himself with her service; but she crept along till she got command of the issue of the nest, lest the Mouse should escape. So when the nest-owner would have gone out after his wont, he drew near the Cat; whereupon she seized him and taking him in her claws, began to bite him and shake him and take him in her mouth and lift him up and cast him down and run after him and cranch him and torture him.[63] The Mouse cried out for help, beseeching deliverance of Allah and began to upbraid the Cat, saying, “Where is the covenant thou madest with me and where are the oaths thou swarest to me? Is this my reward from 38 thee? I brought thee into my nest and trusted myself to thee: but sooth he speaketh that saith:—Whoso relieth on his enemy’s promise desireth not salvation

for himself. And again:—Whoso confideth himself to his foe deserveth his own destruction. Yet do I put my trust in my Creator, for He will deliver me from thee." Now as he was in this condition, with the Cat about to pounce on him and devour him, behold, up came a huntsman, with hunting dogs trained to the chase. One of the hounds passed by the mouth of the nest and hearing a great scuffling, thought that within was a fox tearing somewhat; so he crept into the hole, to get at him, and coming upon the Cat, seized on her. When she found herself in the dog's clutches, she was forced to take thought anent saving herself and loosed the Mouse alive and whole without wound. Then the hound brake her neck and dragging her forth of the hole, threw her down dead: and thus was exemplified the truth of the saying, "Who hath compassion shall at the last be compassionated. Whoso oppresseth shall presently be oppressed." "This, then, O King," added the interpreter, "is what befel the Mouse and the Cat and teacheth that none should break faith with those who put trust in him; for whoever doth perfidy and treason, there shall befal him the like of that which befel the Cat. As a man meteth, so shall it be meted unto him, and he who betaketh himself to good shall gain his eternal reward. But grieve thou not, neither let this trouble thee, O King, for that assuredly thy son, after his tyranny and oppression, shall return to the goodliness of thy policy. And I would that yon learned man, thy Wazir Shimas, had concealed from thee naught in that which he expounded unto thee; and this had been well-advised of him, for 'tis said:—Those of the folk who most abound in fear are the amplest of them in knowledge and the most emulous of good." The King received the interpreter's speech with submission and gifted him and his fellows with rich gifts; then, dismissing them he arose and withdrew to his own apartments and fell to pondering the issue of his affair. When night came, he went in to one of his women, who was most in favour with him and dearest to him of them all, and lay with her: and ere some four months had passed over her, the child stirred in her womb, whereat she rejoiced with joy exceeding and told the King. Quoth he, "My dream said sooth, by Allah the Helper!"; and he lodged her in the goodliest of lodgings and 39 entreated her with all honour, bestowing on her store of rich gifts and manifold boons. Then he sent one of his pages to fetch his Wazir Shimas and as soon as he was in the presence told the Minister what had betided, rejoicing and saying, "My dream is come true and I have won my wish. It may be this burthen will be a man-child and inherit the Kingship after me; what sayest thou of this, O Shimas?" But he was silent and made no reply, whereupon cried the King, "What aileth thee that thou rejoicest not in my joy and returnest me no answer? Doth the thing mislike thee, O Shimas?" Hereat the Wazir prostrated himself before him and said, "O King, may Allah prolong thy life! What availeth it to sit under the shade of a tree, if there issue fire therefrom, and what is the delight of one who drinketh pure wine, if he be choked thereby, and what doth it profit to quench one's thirst with sweet cool water, if one be drowned therein? I am Allah's servant and thine, O King; but there are three things[64] whereof it besitteth not the understanding to speak, till they be accomplished; to wit, the wayfarer, till he

return from his way, the man who is in fight, till he have overcome his foe, and the pregnant woman, till she have cast her burthen.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after Shimas had enumerated to the King the three things whereof it besitteth not the understanding to speak save after they are done, he continued, "For know, O King, that he, who speaketh of aught before its accomplishment is like the Fakir who had hung over his head the jar of clarified butter.[65]" "What is the story of the Fakir," asked the King, "and what happened to him?" Answered the Wazir, "O King, they tell this tale anent

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THE FAKIR AND HIS JAR OF BUTTER.[66]"

A Fakir[67] abode once with one of the nobles of a certain town, who made him a daily allowance of three scones and a little clarified butter and honey. Now such butter was dear in those parts and the Devotee laid all that came to him together in a jar he had, till he filled it and hung it up over his head for safe keeping. One night, as he sat on his bed staff in hand, he fell a-musing upon the butter and the greatness of its price and said in himself:—Needs must I sell all this butter I have by me and buy with the price an ewe and take to partner therein a Fellah[68] fellow who hath a ram. The first year she will bear a male lamb and a female and the second a female and a male and these in their turn will bear other males and other females, nor will they give over bearing females and males, till they become a great matter. Then will I take my share and vent thereof what I will. The males I will sell and buy with them bulls and cows, which will also increase and multiply and become many; after which I will purchase such a piece of land and plant a garden therein and build thereon a mighty fine[69] palace. Moreover, I will get me robes and raiment and slaves and slave-girls and hold a wedding never was seen the like thereof. I will slaughter cattle and make rich meats and sweetmeats and confections and assemble all the musicians and mimes and mountebanks and player-folk and after providing flowers and perfumes and all manner sweet herbs I will bid rich and poor, Fakirs and Olema, captains and lords of the land, and whoso asketh for aught, I will cause it to be brought him; and, I 41 will make ready all manner of meat and drink and send out a crier to cry aloud and say, "Whoso seeketh aught, let him ask and get it." Lastly I will go in to my bride, after her unveiling and enjoy her beauty and loveliness; and I will eat and drink and make merry and say to myself, "Verily, hast thou won thy wish," and will rest from devotion and divine worship. Then in due time my wife will bear me a boy, and I shall rejoice in him and make banquets in his honour and rear him daintily and teach

him philosophy and mathematics and polite letters;[70] so that I shall make his name renowned among men and glory in him among the assemblies of the learned; and I will bid him do good and he shall not gainsay me, and I will forbid him from lewdness and iniquity and exhort him to piety and the practice of righteousness; and, I will bestow on him rich and goodly gifts; and, if I see him obsequious in obedience, I will redouble my bounties towards him: but, an I see him incline to disobedience, I will come down on him with this staff. So saying, he raised his hand, to beat his son withal but the staff hit the jar of butter which overhung his head, and brake it; whereupon the shards fell upon him and the butter ran down upon his head, his rags and his beard. So his clothes and bed were spoiled and he became a caution to whoso will be cautioned. "Wherefore, O King," added the Wazir, "it behoveth not a man to speak of aught ere it come to pass." Answered the King, "Thou sayest sooth! Fair fall thee for a Wazir! Verily the truth thou speakest and righteousness thou counsellest. Indeed, thy rank with me is such as thou couldst wish[71] and thou shalt never cease to be accepted of me." Thereupon the Wazir prostrated himself before the King and wished him permanence of prosperity, saying, "Allah prolong thy days and thy rank upraise! Know that I conceal from thee naught, nor in private nor in public aught; thy pleasure is my pleasure, and thy displeasure my displeasure. There is no joy for me save in thy joyance and I cannot sleep o' nights an thou be angered against me, for that Allah the Most High hath vouchsafed me all good through thy bounties to me; wherefore I beseech the Almighty to guard thee with His 42 angels, and to make fair thy reward whenas thou meetest Him." The King rejoiced in this, whereupon Shimas arose and went out from before him. In due time the King's wife bare a male child, and the messengers hastened to bear the glad tidings and to congratulate the Sovran, who rejoiced therein with joy exceeding and thanked all with abundant thanks, saying, "Alhamdolillah—laud to the Lord—who hath vouchsafed me a son, after I had despaired, for He is pitiful and ruthful to His servants." Then he wrote to all the lieges of his land, acquainting them with the good news and bidding them to his capital; and great were the rejoicings and festivities in all the realm. Accordingly there came Emirs and Captains, Grandees and Sages, Olema and literati, scientists and philosophers from every quarter to the palace and all presenting themselves before the King, company after company, according to their different degrees, gave him joy, and he bestowed largesse upon them. Then he signed to the seven chief Wazirs, whose head was Shimas, to speak, each after the measure of his wisdom, upon the matter which concerned him the most. So the Grand Wazir Shimas began and sought leave of the King to speak, which being granted, he spake as follows.[72] "Praised be Allah who brought us into existence from non-existence and who favoureth His servants with Kings that observe justice and equity in that wherewith He hath invested them of rule and dominion, and who act righteously with that which he appointeth at their hands of provision for their lieges; and most especially our Sovereign by whom He hath quickened the deadness of our land, with that which He hath conferred upon us

of bounties, and hath blessed us of His protection with ease of life and tranquillity and fair dealing! What King did ever with his folk that which this King hath done with us in fulfilling our needs and giving us our dues and doing us justice, one of other, and in abundant carefulness over us and redress of our wrongs? Indeed, it is of the favour of Allah to the people that their King be assiduous in ordering their affairs and in defending them from their foes; for the end of the enemy's intent is to subdue his enemy and hold him in his hand; and many peoples[73] bring their sons as servants unto Kings, and they 43 become with them in the stead of slaves, to the intent that they may repel ill-willers from them.[74] As for us, no enemy hath trodden our soil in the days of this our King, by reason of this passing good fortune and exceeding happiness, that no describer may avail to describe, for indeed it is above and beyond all description. And verily, O King, thou art worthy of this highest happiness, and we are under thy safeguard and in the shadow of thy wings, may Allah make fair thy reward and prolong thy life![75] Indeed, we have long been diligent in supplication to Allah Almighty that He would vouchsafe an answer to our prayers and continue thee to us and grant thee a virtuous son, to be the coolth of thine eyes: and now Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) hath accepted of us and replied to our petition"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shimas the Wazir said to the King, "And now Almighty Allah hath accepted of us and answered our petition and brought us speedy relief, even as He did to the Fishes in the pond of water." The King asked, "And how was that, and what is the tale?"; and Shimas answered him, "Hear, O King the story of

THE FISHES AND THE CRAB."

In a certain place there was a piece of water, wherein dwelt a number of Fishes, and it befel that the pond dwindled away and shrank and wasted, till there remained barely enough to suffice them and they were nigh upon death and said, "What will become of us? How shall we contrive and of whom shall we seek counsel for our deliverance?" Thereupon arose one of them, who was the chiefest in wit and age, and cried, "There is nothing will serve us 44 save that we seek salvation of Allah; but let us consult the Crab and ask his advice: so come ye all[76] and hie we himwards and hear his rede for indeed he is the chiefest and wisest of us all in coming upon the truth." Each and every approved of the Fish's advice and betook themselves in a body to the Crab, whom they found squatted in his hole, without news or knowledge of their strait. So they saluted him with the salam and said, "O our lord, doth not our affair concern thee, who art ruler and the head of us?" The Crab returned their salutation,

replying, “And on you be The Peace! What aileth you and what d’ye want?” So they told him their case and the strait wherein they were by reason of the wastage of the water, and that, when it should be dried up, destruction would betide them, adding, “Wherefore we come to thee, expecting thy counsel and what may bring us deliverance, for thou art the chiefest and the most experienced of us.” The Crab bowed his head awhile and said, “Doubtless ye lack understanding, in that ye despair of the mercy of Allah Almighty and His care for the provision of His creatures one and all. Know ye not that Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) provideth all His creatures without account and that He fore-ordained their daily meat ere He created aught of creation and appointed to each of His creatures a fixed term of life and an allotted provision, of His divine All might? How then shall we burthen ourselves with concern for a thing which in His secret purpose is indite? Wherefore it is my rede that ye can do naught better than to seek aid of Allah Almighty, and it behoveth each of us to clear his conscience with his Lord, both in public and private, and pray Him to succour us and deliver us from our difficulties; for Allah the Most High disappointeth not the expectation of those who put their trust in Him and rejecteth not the supplications of those who prefer their suit to Him. When we have mended our ways, our affairs will be set up and all will be well with us, and when the winter cometh and our land is deluged, by means of a just one’s prayer, He will not cast down the good He hath built up. So ’tis my counsel that 45 we take patience and await what Allah shall do with us. An death come to us, as is wont, we shall be at rest, and if there befal us aught that calleth for flight, we will flee and depart our land whither Allah will.”[771] Answered all the fishes with one voice “Thou sayst sooth, O our lord: Allah requite thee for us with weal!” Then each returned to his stead, and in a few days the Almighty vouchsafed unto them a violent rain and the place of the pond was filled fuller than before. “On like wise, O King,” continued Shimas, “we despaired of a child being born to thee, and now that God hath blessed us and thee with this well-omened son, we implore Him to render him blessed indeed and make him the coolth of thine eyes and a worthy successor to thee and grant us of him the like of that which He hath granted us of thee; for Almighty Allah disappointeth not those that seek Him and it behoveth none to cut off hope of the mercy of his God.” Then, rose the second Wazir and saluting the King with the salam spake, after his greeting was returned, as follows: “Verily, a King is not called a King save he give presents and do justice and rule with equity and show munificence and wisely govern his lieges, maintaining the obligatory laws and apostolic usages established among them and justifying them, one against other, and sparing their blood and warding off hurt from them; and of his qualities should be that he never abide incurious of the poor and that he succour the highest and lowest of them and give them each the rights to them due, so that they all bless him and are obedient to his command. Without doubt, a King who is after this wise of his lieges is beloved and gaineth of this world eminence and of the next honour and favour with the Creator thereof. And we, the body politic of thy subjects,

acknowledge in thee, O King, all the attributes of kingship I have noted, even as it is said:—The best of things is that the King of a people be just and equitable, their physician skilful and their teacher experience-full, acting according to his knowledge. Now we enjoy this happiness, after we had 46 despaired of the birth of a son to thee, to inherit thy kingship; however, Allah (extolled be His name!) hath not disappointed thine expectation, but hath granted thy petition, by reason of the goodliness of thy trust in Him and thy submission of thine affairs to Him. Then fair fall thy hope! There hath betided thee that which betided the Crow and the Serpent." Asked the King, "What was that?"; and the Wazir answered, "Hear, O King, the tale of

THE CROW AND THE SERPENT."

A crow once dwelt in a tree, he and his wife, in all delight of life, till they came to the time of the hatching of their young, which was the midsummer season, when a Serpent issued from its hole and crawled up the tree wriggling around the branches till it came to the Crows' nest, where it coiled itself up and there abode all the days of the summer, whilst the Crow was driven away and found no opportunity to clear his home nor any place wherein to lie. When the days of heat were past, the Serpent went away to its own place and quoth the Crow to his wife, "Let us thank Almighty Allah, who hath preserved us and delivered us from this Serpent, albeit we are forbidden from increase this year. Yet the Lord will not cut off our hope; so let us express our gratitude to Him for having vouchsafed us safety and soundness of body: indeed, we have none other in whom to confide, and if He will and we live to see the next year, He shall give us other young in the stead of those we have missed this year." Next summer when the hatching-season came round, the Serpent again sallied forth from its place and made for the Crows' nest: but, as it was coiling up a branch, a kite swooped down on it and struck claws into its head and tare it, whereupon it fell to the ground a-swoon, and the ants came out upon it and ate it."[78] So the Crow and his wife 47 abode in peace and quiet and bred a numerous brood and thanked Allah for their safety and for the young that were born to them. In like manner, O King, continued the Wazir, "it behoveth us to thank God for that wherewith He hath favoured thee and us in vouchsafing us this blessed child of good omen, after despair and the cutting off of hope. May He make fair thy future reward and the issue of thine affair!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the second Wazir had ended with the words, "Allah make fair thy future reward and the issue of thine affair!"; the third Wazir presently rose and said, "Rejoice, O just King, in the

assurance of present prosperity and future felicity; for him, whom the denizens of Earth love, the denizens of Heaven likewise love; and indeed Almighty Allah hath made affection to be thy portion and hath stablished it in the hearts of the people of thy kingdom; wherefore to Him be thanks and praise from us and from thee, so He may deign increase His bounty unto thee and unto us in thee! For know, O King, that man can originate naught but by command of Allah the Most High and that He is the Giver and all good which befalleth a creature hath its end and issue in Him. He allotteth His favours to His creatures, as it liketh Him; to some he giveth gifts galore while others He doometh barely to win their daily bread. Some He maketh Lords and Captains, and others Recluses, who abstain from the world and aspire but to Him, for He it is who saith:—I am the Harmer with adversity and the Healer with prosperity. I make whole and make sick. I enrich and impoverish. I kill and quicken: in my hand is everything and unto Me all things do tend. Wherefore it behoveth all men to praise Him. Now, especially thou, O King, art of the fortunate, the pious, of whom it is said:—The happiest of the just is he for whom Allah uniteth the weal of this world and of the next world; who is content with that portion which Allah allotteth to him and who giveth Him thanks for that which He hath stablished. And indeed he that is rebellious and seeketh other than the dole which God hath decreed unto him and for him, favoureth the wild Ass 48 and the Jackal."[791] The King asked, "And what is the story of the twain?"; the Wazir answered, "Hear, O King, the tale of

THE WILD ASS AND THE JACKAL."

A certain Jackal was wont every day to leave his lair and fare forth questing his daily bread. Now one day, as he was in a certain mountain, behold, the day was done and he set out to return when he fell in with another Jackal who saw him on the tramp, and each began to tell his mate of the quarry he had gotten. Quoth one of them, "The other day I came upon a wild Ass and I was anhungred, for it was three days since I had eaten; so I rejoiced in this and thanked Almighty Allah for bringing him into my power. Then I tear out his heart and ate it and was full and returned to my home. That was three days ago, since which time I have found nothing to eat, yet am I still full of meat." When the other Jackal heard his fellow's story, he envied his fulness and said in himself, "There is no help but that I eat the heart of a wild Ass." So he left feeding for some days, till he became emaciated and nigh upon death and bestirred not himself neither did his endeavour to get food, but lay coiled up in his earth. And whilst he was thus, behold, one day there came out two hunters trudging in quest of quarry and started a wild Ass. They followed on his trail tracking him all day, till at last one of them shot at him a forked[801] arrow, which pierced his vitals and reached his heart and killed him in front of the Jackal's hole. Then the hunters came up and finding him dead, pulled out the shaft from his heart, but only the wood came away

and the forked head abode in the Ass's belly. So they left him where he lay, expecting that others of the wild beasts would flock to him; but, when it was eventide 49 and nothing fell to them, they returned to their abiding-places. The Jackal, hearing the commotion at the mouth of his home, lay quiet till nightfall, when he came forth of his lair, groaning for weakness and hunger, and seeing the dead Ass lying at his door, rejoiced with joy exceeding till he was like to fly for delight and said, "Praised be Allah who hath won me my wish without toil! Verily, I had lost hope of coming at a wild Ass or aught else; and assuredly[81] the Almighty hath sent him to me and drave him fall to my homestead." Then he sprang on the body and tearing open its belly, thrust in his head and with his nose rummaged about its entrails, till he found the heart and tearing a tid-bit swallowed it: but, as soon as he had so done, the forked head of the arrow struck deep in his gullet and he could neither get it down into his belly nor bring it forth of his throttle. So he made sure of destruction and said, "Of a truth it beseemeth not the creature to seek for himself aught over and above that which Allah hath allotted to him. Had I been content with what He appointed to me, I had not come to destruction." "Wherefore, O King," added the Wazir, "it becometh man to be content with whatso Allah hath distributed to him and thank Him for His bounties to him and cast not off hope of his Lord. And behold, O King, because of the purity of thy purpose and the fair intent of thy good works, Allah hath blessed thee with a son, after despair: wherefore we pray the Almighty to vouchsafe him length of days and abiding happiness and make him a blessed successor, faithful in the observance of thy covenant, after thy long life." Then arose the fourth Wazir and said, "Verily, an the King be a man of understanding, a frequenter of the gates of wisdom,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the fourth Wazir arose and said, "Verily an the King be a man of understanding, a frequenter of the gates of wisdom, versed in science, government and policy, and eke upright in purpose and just to his subjects, honouring those to whom honour is due, 50 revering those who are digne of reverence, tempering puissance with using clemency whenas it behoveth, and protecting both governors and governed, lightening all burthens for them and bestowing largesse on them, sparing their blood and covering their shame and keeping his troth with them. Such a King, I say, is worthy of felicity both present and future worldly and otherworldly, and this is of that which protecteth him from ill-will and helpeth him to the stablishing of his Kingdom and the victory over his enemies and the winning of his wish, together with increase of Allah's bounty to him and His favouring him for his praise of Him and the attainment of His protection. But an the King be the contrary of this, he never ceaseth from misfortunes and calamities, he and the people of his realm; for that his oppression embraceth both stranger far and kinsman near and there cometh to pass with him that which befel the unjust King with

the pilgrim Prince." King Jali'ad asked, "And how was that?" and the Wazir answered, "Hear, O King, the tale of

THE UNJUST KING AND THE PILGRIM PRINCE."

There was once in Mauritania-land[82] a King who exceeded in his rule, a tyrant, violent and over severe, who had no respect for the welfare or protection of his lieges nor of those who entered his realm; and from everyone who came within his Kingdom his officers took four-fifths of his monies, leaving him one-fifth and no more. Now Allah Almighty decreed that he should have a son, who was fortunate and God-favoured and seeing the pomps and vanities of this world to be transient as they are unrighteous, renounced them in his youth and rejected the world and that which is therein and fared forth serving the Most High, wandering pilgrim-wise over wolds and wastes and bytimes entering towns and cities. One day, he came to his father's capital and the guards laid hands on him and searched him but found naught 51 upon him save two gowns, one new and the other old.[83] So they stripped the new one from him and left him the old, after they had entreated him with contumely and contempt; whereat he complained and said, "Woe to you, O ye oppressors! I am a poor man and a pilgrim,[84] and what shall this gown by any means profit you? Except ye restore it to me, I will go to the King and make complaint to him of you." They replied, "We act thus by the King's command: so do what seemeth good to thee." Accordingly he betook himself to the King's palace and would have entered; but the chamberlains denied him admittance, and he turned away, saying in himself, "There is nothing for me except to watch till he cometh out and complain to him of my case and that which hath befallen me." And whilst he waited, behold, he heard one of the guards announce the King's faring forth; whereupon he crept up, little by little, till he stood before the gate; and presently when the King came out, he threw himself in his way and after blessing him and wishing him weal, he made his complaint to him informing him how scurvily he had been entreated by the gatekeepers. Lastly he gave him to know that he was a man of the people of Allah[85] who had rejected the world seeking acceptance of Allah and who went wandering over earth and entering every city and hamlet, whilst all the folk he met gave him alms according to their competence. "I entered this thy city" (continued he), "hoping that the folk would deal kindly and graciously with me as with others of my condition[86]; but thy followers stopped me and stripped me of one of my gowns and loaded me with blows. Wherefore do thou look into my case and take me by the hand and get me back my gown and I will not abide in thy city an hour." Quoth the unjust King, "Who directed thee to enter this city, unknowing the custom of its King?"; and quoth the pilgrim, "Give me back my gown and do with me

what thou wilt." Now when the King heard this, his 52temper changed for the worse and he said, "O fool,[87] we stripped thee of thy gown, so thou mightest humble thyself to us; but since thou makest this clamour I will strip thy soul from thee." Then he commanded to cast him into gaol, where he began to repent of having answered the King and reproached himself for not having left him the gown and saved his life. When it was the middle of the night, he rose to his feet and prayed long and prayerfully, saying, "O Allah, Thou art the Righteous Judge; Thou knowest my case and that which hath befallen me with this tyrannical King, and I, Thine oppressed servant, beseech Thee, of the abundance of Thy mercy, to deliver me from the hand of this unjust ruler and send down on him Thy vengeance; for Thou art not unmindful of the unright of every oppressor. Wherefore, if Thou know that he hath wronged me, loose on him Thy vengeance this night and send down on him Thy punishment; for Thy rule is just and Thou art the Helper of every mourner, O Thou to whom belong the power and the glory to the end of time!" When the gaoler heard the prayer of the poor prisoner he trembled in every limb, and behold, a fire suddenly broke out in the King's palace and consumed it and all that were therein, even to the door of the prison,[88] and none was spared but the gaoler and the pilgrim. Now when the gaoler saw this, he knew that it had not befallen save because of the pilgrim's prayer; so he loosed him and fleeing with him forth of the burning, betook himself, he and the King's son, to another city. So was the unjust King consumed, he and all his city, by reason of his injustice, and he lost the goods both of this world and the next world. "As for us, O auspicious King" continued the Wazir, "we neither lie down nor rise up without praying for thee and thanking Allah the Most High for His grace in giving thee to us, tranquil in reliance on thy justice and the excellence of thy governance; and sore indeed was our care for thy lack of a son to inherit thy kingdom, fearing lest after thee there betide us a King unlike thee. But now the Almighty hath bestowed His favours upon us and done away our concern and brought us gladness in the birth of this blessed child; wherefore we beseech the 53Lord to make him a worthy successor to thee and endow him with glory and felicity enduring and good abiding." Then rose the fifth Wazir and said, "Blessed be the Most High,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the fifth Wazir said, "Blessed be the Most High, Giver of all good gifts and graces the most precious! But to continue: we are well assured that Allah favoureth whoso are thankful to Him and mindful of His faith; and thou, O auspicious King, art far-famed for these illustrious virtues and for justice and equitable dealing between subject and subject and in that which is acceptable to Allah Almighty. By reason of this hath the Lord exalted thy dignity and prospered thy days and bestowed on thee the good gift of this august child, after despair, wherefrom there hath betided us gladness abiding and joys which

may not be cut off; for we before this were in exceeding cark and passing care, because of thy lack of issue, and full of concern bethinking us of all thy justice and gentle dealing with us and fearful lest Allah decree death to thee and there be none to succeed thee and inherit the kingdom after thee, and so we be divided in our counsels and dissensions arise between us and there befal us what befel the Crows." Asked the King, "And what befel the Crows?"; and the Wazir answered saying, "Hear O auspicious King, the tale of

THE CROWS AND THE HAWK."

There was once, in a certain desert, a spacious Wady, full of rills and trees and fruits and birds singing the praises of Allah the One of All-might, Creator of day and night; and among them was a troop of Crows, which led the happiest of lives. Now they were under the sway and government of a Crow who ruled them with mildness and benignity, so that they were with him in peace and contentment; and by reason of their wisely ordering their affairs, none of the other birds could avail against them. Presently it chanced that there befel their chief the doom irrevocably appointed 54 to all creatures and he departed life[891]; whereupon the others mourned for him with sore mourning, and what added to their grief was that there abided not amongst them like him one who should fill his place. So they all assembled and took counsel together concerning whom it befitted for his goodness and piety to set over them: and a party of them choose one Crow, saying, "It beseemeth that this be King over us;" whilst others objected to him and would none of him; and thus there arose division and dissension amidst them and the strife of excitement waxed hot between them. At last they agreed amongst themselves and consented to sleep the night upon it and that none should go forth at dawn next day to seek his living, but that all must wait till high morning, when they should gather together all in one place. "Then," said they, "we will all take flight at once and whichsoever shall soar above the rest in his flying, he shall be accepted of us as ruler and be made King over us." The fancy pleased them; so they made covenant together and did as they had agreed and took flight all, but each of them deemed himself higher than his fellow; wherefore quoth this one, "I am highest," and that, "Nay; that am I." Then said the lowest of them, "Look up, all of you, and whomsoever ye find the highest of you, let him be your chief." So they raised their eyes and seeing the Hawk soaring over them, said each to other, "We agreed that which bird soever should be the highest of us we will make king over us, and behold, the Hawk is the highest of us: what say ye to him?" And they all cried out, "We accept of him." Accordingly they summoned the Hawk and said to him, "O Father of Good,[901] we have chosen thee ruler over us, that thou mayst look into our affair." The Hawk consented, saying, "Inshallah, ye shall win of me abounding weal." So they rejoiced and made him their King. But after awhile, he fell to taking a

company of them every day and betaking himself with them afar off to one of the caves, where he struck them down and eating their eyes and brains, threw their bodies into the river. And he ceased not doing on this wise, it being his intent to destroy them all till, seeing their number daily diminishing, the Crows flocked to him and said, "O our King, we complain to thee because [55] from the date we made thee Sovran and ruler over us, we are in the sorriest case and every day a company of us is missing and we know not the reason of this, more by token that the most part thereof are the high in rank and of those in attendance on thee. We must now look after our own safety." Thereupon the Hawk waxed wroth with them and said to them, "Verily, ye are the murtherers, and ye forestall me with accusation!" So saying, he pounced upon them and tearing to pieces half a score of their chiefs in front of the rest, threatened them and drave them out sorely cuffed and beaten, from before him. Hereat they repented them of that which they had done and said, "We have known no good since the death of our first King especially in the deed of this stranger in kind; but we deserve our sufferings even had he destroyed us one by one to the last of us, and there is exemplified in us the saying of him that saith, "Whoso submitteth him not to the rule of his own folk, the foe hath dominion over him, of his folly." And now there is nothing for it but to flee for our lives, else shall we perish." So they took flight and dispersed to various places. "And we also, O King," continued the Wazir, "feared lest the like of this befal us and there become ruler over us a King other than thyself; but Allah hath vouchsafed us this boon and hath sent us this blessed child, and now we are assured of peace and union and security and prosperity in our Mother-land. So lauded be Almighty Allah and to Him be praise and thanks and goodly gratitude! And may He bless the King and us all his subjects and vouchsafe unto us and him the acme of felicity and make his life-tide happy and his endeavour constant!" Then arose the sixth Wazir and said, "Allah favour thee with all felicity, O King, in this world and in the next world! Verily, the ancients have left us this saying:—Whoso prayeth and fasteth and giveth parents their due and is just in his rule meeteth his Lord and He is well pleased with him. Thou hast been set over us and hast ruled us justly and thine every step in this hath been blessed; wherefore we beseech Allah Almighty to make great thy reward eternal and requite thee thy beneficence. I have heard what this wise man hath said respecting our fear for the loss of our prosperity, by reason of the death of the King or the advent of another who should not be his parallel, and how after him dissensions would be rife among us and calamity betide from our division and how it behoved us therefore to be instant in prayer to Allah the Most High, so haply He might vouchsafe the King a happy son, to [56] inherit the kingship after him. But, after all, the issue of that which man desireth of mundane goods and wherefor he lusteth is unknown to him and consequently it behoveth a mortal to ask not of his Lord a thing whose end he wotteth not; for that haply the hurt of that thing is nearer to him than its gain and his destruction may be in that he seeketh and there may befal him what befel

the Serpent-charmer, his wife and children and the folk of his house.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the sixth Wazir said, "It behoveth not a man to ask of his Lord aught whereof he ignoreth the issue for that haply the hurt of that thing may be nearer than its gain, his destruction may be in that he seeketh and there may befal him what befel the Serpent-charmer, his children, his wife and his household," the King asked, "What was that?"; and the Wazir answered, "Hear, O King the tale of

THE SERPENT-CHARMER AND HIS WIFE."

There was once a man, a Serpent-charmer,[91] who used to train serpents, and this was his trade; and he had a great basket,[92] wherein were three snakes but the people of his house knew this not. Every day he used to go round with this pannier about the town gaining his living and that of his family by showing the snakes, and at eventide he returned to his house and clapped them back into the basket privily. This lasted a long while; but it chanced one day, when he came home, as was his wont, his wife asked 57 him, saying, "What is in this pannier?"; and he replied, "What wouldest thou with it? Is not provision plentiful with you? Be thou content with that which Allah hath allotted to thee and ask not of aught else." With this the woman held her peace; but she said in herself, "There is no help but that I search this basket and know what is there." So she egged on her children and enjoined them to ask him of the pannier and importune him with their questions, till he should tell them what was therein. They presently concluded that it contained something to eat and sought every day of their father that he should show them what was therein; and he still put them off with pleasant pretences and forbade them from asking this. On such wise they abode awhile, the wife and mother still persisting in her quest till they agreed with her that they would neither eat meat nor drain drink with their father, till he granted them their prayer and opened the basket to them. One night, behold, the Serpent-charmer came home with great plenty of meat and drink and took his seat calling them to eat with him: but they refused his company and showed him anger; whereupon he began to coax them with fair words, saying, "Lookye, tell me what you would have, that I may bring it you, be it meat or drink or raiment." Answered they, "O our father, we want nothing of thee but that thou open this pannier that we may see what is therein: else we will slay ourselves." He rejoined, "O my children, there is nothing good for you therein and indeed the opening of it will be harmful to you." Hereat they redoubled in rage for all he could say, which when he saw, he began to scold them and threaten

them with beating, except they returned from such condition; but they only increased in anger and persistence in asking, till at last he waxed wroth and took a staff to beat them, and they fled from before him within the house. Now the basket was present and the Serpent-charmer had not hidden it anywhere; so his wife left him occupied with the children and opened the pannier in haste, that she might see what was therein. Thereupon behold, the serpents came out and first struck their fangs into her and killed her; then they hied round about the house and slew all, great and small, who were therein; except the Serpent-charmer, who left the place and went his way. "If then, O auspicious King," continued the Wazir, "thou consider this, thou wilt be convinced that it is not for a man to desire aught save that which God the Great refuseth not to him; nay, he should be content with what He willeth. And 58 thou, O King, for the overflowing of thy wisdom and the excellence of thine understanding, Allah hath cooled thine eyes with the advent of this thy son, after despair, and hath comforted thy heart; wherefore we pray the Almighty to make him of the just successors acceptable to Himself and to his subjects." Then rose the seventh Wazir and said, "O King, I know and certify all that my brethren, these Ministers wise and learned, have said in the presence, praising thy justice and the goodness of thy policy and proving how thou art distinguished in this from all Kings other than thyself; wherefore they gave thee the preference over them. Indeed, this be of that which is incumbent on us, O King, and I say:—Praised be Allah in that He hath guerdoned thee with His gifts and vouchsafed thee of His mercy, the welfare of the realm; and hath succoured thee and ourselves, on condition that we increase in gratitude to Him; and all this no otherwise than by thine existence! What while thou remainest amongst us, we fear not oppression neither dread unright, nor can any take long-handed advantage of our weakness! and indeed it is said, The greatest good of a people is a just King and their greatest ill an unjust King; and again, Better dwell with rending lions than with a tyrannous Sultan. So praised be Almighty Allah with eternal praise for that He hath blessed us with thy life and vouchsafed thee this blessed child, whenas thou wast stricken in years and hadst despaired of issue! For the goodliest of the gifts in this world is a virtuous sire, and it is said, Whoso hath no progeny his life is without result and he leaveth no memory. As for thee, because of the righteousness of thy justice and thy pious reliance on Allah the Most High, thou hast been vouchsafed this happy son; yea, this blessed[193] child cometh as a gift from the Most High Lord to us and to thee, for the excellence of thy governance and the goodliness of thy long-sufferance; and in this thou hast fared even as fared the Spider and the Wind." Asked the King, "And what is the story of the Spider and the Wind?"—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King asked, "And what is the story of the twain?"; the Wazir answered, "Give ear, O King, to the tale of

THE SPIDER AND THE WIND."

A spider once attached herself to a high gate[94] and a retired and span her web there and dwelt therein in peace, giving thanks to the Almighty, who had made this dwelling-place easy to her and had set her in safety from noxious reptiles. On this wise she abode a long while, still giving thanks to Allah for her ease and regular supply of daily bread, till her Creator bethought Him to try her and make essay of her gratitude and patience. So he sent upon her a strong east Wind, which carried her away, web and all, and cast her into the main. The waves washed her ashore and she thanked the Lord for safety and began to upbraid the Wind, saying, "O Wind, why hast thou dealt thus with me and what good hast thou gotten by bearing me hither from my abiding-place, where indeed I was in safety, secure in my home on the top of that gate?" Replied the Wind, saying, "O Spider, hast thou not learnt that this world is a house of calamities; and, say me, who can boast of lasting happiness that such portion shall be thine? Wottest thou not that Allah tempteth His creatures in order to learn by trial what may be their powers of patience? How, then, doth it beset thee to upbraid me, thou who hast been saved by me from the vasty deep?" "Thy words are true, O Wind," replied the Spider, "yet not the less do I desire to escape from this stranger land into which thy violence hath cast me." The Wind rejoined, "Cease thy blaming; for right soon I will bear thee back and replace thee in thy place, as thou wast aforetime." So the Spider waited patiently, till the north-east Wind left blowing and there arose a south-west Wind, which gently caught her up and flew with her towards her dwelling-place; and 60 when she came to her abode, she knew it and clung to it. "And we," continued the Wazir, "beseech Allah (who hath rewarded the King for his singleness of heart and patience and hath taken pity on his subjects and blessed them with His favour and hath vouchsafed the King this son in his old age, after he had despaired of issue and removed him not from the world, till He had blessed him with coolth of eyes and bestowed on him what He hath bestowed of Kingship and Empire!) to vouchsafe unto thy son that which He hath vouchsafed unto thee of dominion and Sultanship and glory! Amen." Then said the King, "Praised be Allah over all praise and thanks be to Him over all thanks! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things, by the light of whose signs we know the glory of His greatness and who giveth kingship and command over his own country to whom He willeth of His servants! He chooseth of them whomso He please to make him His viceroy and viceregent over His creatures and commandeth him to just and equitable dealing with them and the maintenance of religious laws and practices and right conduct and

constancy in ordering their affairs to that which is most acceptable to Him and most grateful to them. Whoso doth thus and obeyeth the commandment of his Lord, his desire attaineth and the orders of his God maintaineth; so Providence preserveth him from the perils of the present world and maketh ample his recompense in the future world; for indeed He neglecteth not the reward of the righteous. And whoso doth otherwise than as Allah biddeth him sinneth mortal sin and disobeyeth his Lord, preferring his mundane to his supra-mundane weal. He hath no trace in this world and in the next no portion: for Allah spareth not the unjust and the mischievous, nor doth He neglect any of His servants. These our Wazirs have set forth how, by reason of our just dealing with them and our wise governance of affairs, Allah hath vouchsafed us and them His grace, for which it behoveth us to thank Him, because of the great abundance of His mercies: each of them hath also spoken that wherewith the Almighty inspired Him concerning this matter, and they have vied one with another in rendering thanks to the Most High Lord and praising Him for His favours and bounties. I also render thanks to Allah for that I am but a slave commanded; my heart is in His hand and my tongue in His subjection, accepting that which He adjudgeth to me and to them, come what may thereof. Each one of them hath said what passed through his mind on the 61 subject of this boy and hath set forth that which was of the renewal of divine favour to us, after my years had reached the term when confidence faileth and despair assaileth. So praised be Allah who hath saved us from disappointment and from the alternation of rulers, like to the alternation of night and day! For verily, this was a great boon both to them and to us; wherefore we praise Almighty Allah who hath given a ready answer to our prayer and hath blessed us with this boy and set him in high place, as the inheritor of the kingship. And we entreat Him, of His bounty and clemency, to make him happy in his actions, prone to pious works, so he may become a King and a Sultan governing his people with justice and equity, guarding them from perilous error and frowardness, of His grace, goodness and generosity!" When the King had made an end of his speech, the sages and Olema rose and prostrated themselves before Allah and thanked the King; after which they kissed his hands and departed, each to his own house, whilst Jali'ad withdrew into his palace, where, he looked upon the new-born and offered up prayers for him and named him Wird Khán.[95] The boy grew up till he attained the age of twelve,[96] when the King being minded to have him taught the arts and sciences, bade build him a palace amiddlemost the city, wherein were three hundred and threescore rooms,[97] and lodged him therein. Then he assigned him three wise men of the Olema and bade them not be lax in teaching him day and night and look that there was no kind of learning but they instruct him therein, so he might become versed in all knowledge. He also commanded them to sit with him one day in each of the rooms by turn and write on the door thereof that which they had taught him therein of various kinds of lore and report to himself, every seven days, whatso instructions they had imparted to him. So they went in to the Prince and stinted not from educating him day nor night,

nor withheld from him aught of that they knew; and presently there appeared in him readiness to receive instruction such as none had shown before him. Every seventh day his governors reported to the King what his son had 62 learnt and mastered, whereby Jali'ad became proficient in goodly learning and fair culture, and the Olema said to him, "Never saw we one so richly gifted with understanding as is this boy: Allah bless thee in him and give thee joy of his life!" When the Prince had completed his twelfth year, he knew the better part of every science and excelled all the Olema and sages of his day: wherefore his governors brought him to his sire and said to him, "Allah gladden thine eyes, O King, with this auspicious youth! We bring him to thee, after he hath learnt all manner knowledge, and there is not one of the learned men of the time nor a scientist who hath attained to that whereto he hath attained of science." The King rejoiced in this with joy exceeding and thanking the Almighty prostrated himself in gratitude before Allah (to whom belong Majesty and Might!), saying, "Laud be to the Lord for His mercies incalculable!" Then he called his Chief Wazir and said to him, "Know, O Shimas, that the governors of my son are come to tell me that he hath mastered every kind of knowledge and there is nothing but they have instructed him therein, so that he surpasseth in this all who forewent him. What sayst thou, O Shimas?" Hereat the Minister prostrated himself before Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) and kissed the King's hand, saying, "Loath is the ruby-stone, albe it be bedded in the hardest rock on hill, to do aught but shine as a lamp, and this thy son is such a gem; his tender age hath not hindered him from becoming a sage and Alhamdolillah—praised be Allah—for that which He deigned bestow on him! But to-morrow I will call an assembly of the flower of the Emirs and men of learning and examine the Prince and cause him speak forth that which is with him in their presence, Inshallah!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King Jali'ad heard the words of his Wazir Shimas, he commanded the attendance of the keenest-witted[98] of the Olema and most accomplished of the learned and sages of his dominions, and 63 they all presented themselves on the morrow at the door of the palace, whereupon the King bade admit them. Then entered Shimas and kissed the hands of the Prince, who rose and prostrated himself to the Minister: but Shimas said, "It behoveth not the lion-whelp to prostrate himself to any of the wild beasts, nor besitteth it that Light prostrate itself to shade." Quoth the Prince, "Whenas the lion-whelp seeth the leopard,[99] he riseth up to him and prostrateth himself before him, because of his wisdom, and Light prostrateth itself to shade for the purpose of disclosing that which is therewithin." Quoth Shimas, "True, O my lord; but I would have thee answer me anent whatso I shall ask thee, by leave of His Highness and his lieges." And the youth said, "And I, with permission of my sire, will answer thee." So

Shimas began and said, “Tell me what is the Eternal, the Absolute, and what are the two manifestations[100] thereof and whether of the two is the abiding one?” Answered the Prince, “Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty!) is the Eternal, the Absolute; for that He is Alpha, without beginning, and Omega without end. Now his two manifestations are this world and the next; and the abiding one of the two is the world to come.” (¿) “Thou sayst truly and I approve thy reply: but I would have thee tell me, how knowest thou that one of Allah’s manifestations is this world and the other the world to come?”—“I know this because this world was created from nothingness and had not its being from any existing thing; wherefore its affair is referable to the first essence. Moreover, it is a commodity swift of ceasing, the works whereof call for requital of action and this postulateth the reproduction[101] of whatso passeth away: so the next world is the second manifestation.” (¿) “Now inform me how knowest thou that the world to come is the abiding one of the two existences?”—“Because it is the house of requital for deeds done in this world prepared by the Eternal sans surcease.” (¿) “Who 64 are the people of this world most to be praised for their practice?”—“Those who prefer their weal in the world to come before their weal in this world.” (¿) “And who is he that preferreth his future to his present welfare?”—“He who knoweth that he dwelleth in a perishing house, that he was created but to vade away and that, after vading away, he will be called to account; and indeed, were there in this world one living and abiding for ever, he would not prefer it to the next world.” (¿) “Can the future life subsist permanently without the present?”—“He who hath no present life hath no future life: and indeed I liken this world and its folk and the goal to which they fare with certain workmen, for whom an Emir buildeth a narrow house and lodgeth them therein, commanding each of them to do a certain task and assigning to him a set term and appointing one to act as steward over them. Whoso doeth the work appointed unto him, the steward bringeth him forth of that straitness; but whoso doeth it not within the stablished term is punished. After awhile, behold, they find honey exuding from the chinks of the house,[102] and when they have eaten thereof and tasted its sweetness of savour, they slacken in their ordered task and cast it behind their backs. So they patiently suffer the straitness and distress wherein they are, with what they know of the future punishment whereto they are fast wending, and are content with this worthless and easily won sweetness: and the Steward leaveth not to fetch every one of them forth of the house, for ill or good, when his appointed period shall have come. Now we know the world to be a dwelling wherein all eyes are dazed, and that each of its folk hath his set term; and he who findeth the little sweetness that is in the world and busieth himself therewith is of the number of the lost, since he preferreth the things of this world to the things of the next world: but whoso payeth no heed to this poor sweetness and preferreth the things of the coming world to those of this world, is of those who are saved.” (¿) “I have heard what thou sayest of this world and the next and I accept thine answer; but I see they are as two placed in authority over man; needs must he content them both, and they are contrary

one to other. So, if the creature set himself to seek his livelihood, it is harmful to his soul in the future: and if he devote himself to 65the next world, it is hurtful to his body; and there is no way for him of pleasing these two contraries at once."—"Indeed, the quest of one's worldly livelihood with pious intent and on lawful wise is a viaticum for the quest of the goods of the world to come, if a man spend a part of his days in seeking his livelihood in this world, for the sustenance of his body, and devote the rest of his day to seeking the goods of the next world, for the repose of his soul and the warding off of hurt therefrom; and indeed I see this world and the other world as they were two Kings, a just and an unjust." Asked Shimas, "How so?" and the youth began the tale of

THE TWO KINGS.

There were once two Kings, a just and an unjust; and this one had a land abounding in trees and fruits and herbs; but he let no merchant pass without robbing him of his monies and his merchandise, and the traders endured this with patience, by reason of their profit from the fatness of the earth in the means of life and its pleasantness, more by token that it was renowned for its richness in precious stones and gems. Now the just King, who loved jewels, heard of this land and sent one of his subjects thither, giving him much specie and bidding him pass with it into the other's realm and buy jewels therefrom. So he went thither; and, it being told to the unjust King that a merchant was come to his kingdom with much money to buy jewels withal, he sent for him to the presence and said to him, "Who art thou and whence comest thou and who brought thee thither and what is thy errand?" Quoth the merchant, "I am of such and such a region, and the King of that land gave me money and bade me buy therewith jewels from this country; so I obeyed his bidding and came." Cried the unjust King, "Out on thee! Knowest thou not my fashion of dealing with the people of my realm and how each day I take their monies? How then comest thou to my country? And behold, thou hast been a sojourner here since such a time!" Answered the trader, "The money is not mine, not a mite of it; nay, 'tis a trust in my hands, till I bring its equivalent to its owner." But the King said, "I will not let thee take thy livelihood of my land or go out therefrom, except thou ransom thyself with this money 66all of it."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Tenth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the unjust Ruler said to the trader who came to buy jewels from his country, "'Tis not possible for thee to take thy livelihood of my land except thou ransom thy life with this money, all of it; else shalt thou die." So the man said in himself, "I am fallen between two Kings, and I know

that the oppression of this ruler embraceth all who abide in his dominions: and if I satisfy him not, I shall lose both life and money (whereof is no doubt) and shall fail of my errand; whilst, on the other hand, if I give him all the gold, it will most assuredly prove my ruin with its owner, the other King: wherefore no device will serve me but that I give this one a trifling part thereof and content him therewith and avert from myself and from the money perdition. Thus shall I get my livelihood of the fatness of this land, till I buy that which I desire of jewels; and, after satisfying the tyrant with gifts, I will take my portion of the profit and return to the owner of the money with his need, trusting in his justice and indulgence, and unfearing that he will punish me for that which this unjust King taketh of the treasure, especially if it be but a little." Then the trader called down blessings on the tyrant and said to him, "O King, I will ransom myself and this specie with a small portion thereof, from the time of my entering thy country to that of my going forth therefrom." The King agreed to this and left him at peace for a year, till he bought all manner jewels with the rest of the money and returned therewith to his master, to whom he made his excuses, confessing to having saved himself from the unjust King as before related. The just King accepted his excuse and praised him for his wise device and set him on his right hand in his divan and appointed him in his kingdom an abiding inheritance and a happy life-tide.[103] Now the just King is the similitude of the future world and the unjust King that of the present world; the jewels that be in the tyrant's dominions are good deeds and pious works. The merchant is man and the money he hath with 67 him is the provision appointed him of Allah. When I consider this, I know that it behoveth him who seeketh his livelihood in this world to leave not a day without seeking the goods of the world to come, so shall he content this world with that which he gaineth of the fatness of the earth and satisfy the other world with that which he spendeth of his life in seeking after it." (¿) "Are the spirit[104] and the body alike in reward and retribution, or is the body, as the luster of lusts and doer of sinful deeds, and especially affected with punishment?" "The inclination to lusts and sins may be the cause of earning reward by the withholding of the soul therefrom and the repenting thereof; but the command[105] is in the hand of Him who doth what He will, and things by their contraries are distinguished. Thus subsistence is necessary to the body, but there is no body without soul; and the purification of the spirit is in making clean the intention in this world and taking thought to that which shall profit in the world to come. Indeed, soul and body are like two horses racing for a wager or two foster-brothers or two partners in business. By the intent are good deeds distinguished and thus the body and soul are partners in actions and in reward and retribution, and in this they are like the Blind man and the Cripple with the Overseer of the garden." Asked Shimas, "How so?"; and the Prince said, "Hear, O Wazir, the tale of

THE BLIND MAN AND THE CRIPPLE."

A Blind man and a Cripple were travelling-companions and used to beg alms in company. One day they sought admission into the garden of some one of the benevolent, and a kind-hearted wight, hearing their talk, took compassion on them and carried them into his garden, where he left them after plucking for them some of its produce and went away, bidding them do no waste nor damage therein. When the fruits became ripe, the Cripple said to the Blind man, "Harkye, I see ripe fruits and long for them; but I cannot rise to eat thereof; so go thou arise, for thou art sound of either leg, and fetch us somewhat that we may eat." Replied the 68 Blind, "Fie upon thee! I had no thought of them, but now that thou callest them to my mind, I long to eat of them and I am impotent unto this, being unable to see them; so how shall we do to get at them?" At this moment, behold, up came the Overseer of the garden, who was a man of understanding, and the Cripple said to him, "Harkye, O Overseer! I long for somewhat of those fruits; but we are as thou seest; I am a cripple and my mate here is stone-blind: so what shall we do?" Replied the Overseer, "Woe to you! Have ye forgotten that the master of the garden stipulated with you that ye should do nothing whereby waste or damage befal it: so take warning and abstain from this." But they answered, "Needs must we get our portion of these fruits that we may eat thereof: so tell us some device whereby we shall contrive this." When the Overseer saw that they were not to be turned from their purpose, he said, "This, then, is my device, O Cripple, let the Blind bear thee on his back and take thee under the tree whose fruit pleaseth thee, so thou mayst pluck what thou canst reach thereof." Accordingly the Blind man took on his back the Cripple who guided him, till he brought him under a tree, and he fell to plucking from it what he would and tearing at its boughs till he had despoiled it: after which they went roundabout and throughout the garden and wasted it with their hands and feet, nor did they cease from this fashion, till they had stripped all the trees of the garth. Then they returned to their place and presently up came the master of the garden, who, seeing it in this plight, was wroth with sore wrath and coming up to them said, "Woe to you! What fashion is this? Did I not stipulate with you that ye should do no damage in the garden?" Quoth they, "Thou knowest that we are powerless to come at any of the fruit, for that one of us is a cripple and cannot rise and the other is blind and cannot see that which is before him: so what is our offence?" But the master answered, "Think ye I know not how ye wrought and how ye have gone about to do waste in my garden? I know, as if I had been with thee, O Blind, that thou tookest the Cripple pick-a-back and he showed thee the way till thou borest him to the trees." Then he punished them with grievous punishment and thrust them out of the garden. Now the Blind is the similitude of the body which seeth not save by the spirit, and the Cripple that of the soul, for that it hath no power of motion but by the body; the garden is the works, for which the creature is rewarded or punished, and the Overseer is the reason which biddeth to good 69 and forbiddeth from evil. Thus the body and the soul are partners

in reward and retribution." (¿) "Which of the learned men is most worthy of praise, according to thee?"—"He who is learned in the knowledge of Allah and whose knowledge profiteth him." (¿) "And who is this?"—"Whoso is intent upon seeking to please his Lord and avoid His wrath." (¿) "And which of them is the most excellent?"—"He who is most learned in the knowledge of Allah." (¿) "And which is the most experienced of them?"—"Whoso in doing according to his knowledge is most constant." (¿) "And which is the purest-hearted of them?"—"He who is most assiduous in preparing for death and praising the Lord and least of them in hope, and indeed he who penetrateth his soul with the awful ways of death is as one who looketh into a clear mirror, for that he knoweth the truth, and the mirror still increaseth in clearness and brilliance." (¿) "What are the goodliest of treasures?"—"The treasures of heaven." (¿) "Which is the goodliest of the treasures of Heaven?"—"The praise of Allah and His magnification." (¿) "Which is the most excellent of the treasures of earth?"—"The practice of kindness."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eleventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir Shimas asked the King's son, saying, "Which is the most excellent of the treasures of earth?" he answered, "The practice of kindness." So the Minister pursued, "Tell me of three several and different things, knowledge and judgment and wit, and of that which uniteth them."—"Knowledge cometh of learning, judgment of experience and wit of reflection, and they are all stablished and united in reason. Whoso combineth these three qualities attaineth perfection and he who addeth thereto the piety and fear of the Lord is in the right course." (¿) "Take the case of a man of learning and wisdom, endowed with right judgment, luminous intelligence and a keen wit and excelling, and tell me can desire and lust change these his qualities?"—"Yes; for these two passions, when they enter into a man, alter his wisdom and understanding and judgment and wit, and he is like the Ossifrage[106] 70 which, for precaution against the hunters, abode in the upper air, of the excess of his subtlety; but, as he was thus, he saw a fowler set up his nets and when the toils were firmly staked down bait them with a bit of meat; which when he beheld, desire and lust thereof overcame him and he forgot that which he had seen of springes and of the sorry plight of all birds that fell into them. So he swooped down from the welkin and pouncing upon the piece of meat, was meshed in the same snare and could not win free. When the fowler came up and saw the Ossifrage taken in his toils he marvelled with exceeding marvel and said, "I set up my nets, thinking to take therein pigeons and the like of small fowl; how came this Ossifrage to fall into it?" It is said that when desire and lust incite a man of understanding to aught, he considereth the end thereof and refraineth from that which they make fair and represseth with his reason his lust and his concupiscence; for, when these passions urge him to aught, it behoveth him to make his reason like unto a

horseman skilled in horsemanship who mounting a skittish horse, curbeth him with a sharp bit,[107] so that he go aright with him and bear him whither he will. As for the ignorant man, who hath neither knowledge nor judgment, while all things are obscure to him and desire and lust lord it over him, verily he doeth according to his desire and his lust and is of the number of those that perish; nor is there among men one in worse case than he." (¿) "When is knowledge profitable and when availeth reason to ward off the ill effects of desire and lust?"—"When their possessor useth them in quest of the goods of the next world, for reason and knowledge are altogether profitable; but it befitteth not their owner to expend them in the quest of the goods of this world, save in such measure as may be needful for gaining his livelihood and defending himself from its mischief; but to lay them out with a view to futurity." (¿) "What is most worthy that a man should apply himself thereto and occupy his heart withal?"—"Good works and pious." (¿) "If a man do this it diverteth him from gaining his living: how then shall he do for his daily bread wherewith he may not dispense?"—"A man's day 71 is four-and-twenty hours, and it behoveth him to employ one-third thereof in seeking his living, another in prayer and repose and the other in the pursuits of knowledge;[108] for a reasonable man without knowledge is a barren land, which hath no place for tillage, tree-planting or grass-growing. Except it be prepared for tilth and plantation no fruit will profit therein; but, if it be tilled and planted, it bringeth forth goodly fruits. So with the man lacking education; there is no profit in him till knowledge be planted in him: then doth he bear fruit." (¿) "What sayst thou of knowledge without understanding?"—"It is as the knowledge of a brute[109] beast, which hath learnt the hours of its foddering and waking, but hath no reason." (¿) "Thou hast been brief in thine answer here anent; but I accept thy reply. Tell me, how shall I guard myself against the Sultan?"—"By giving him no way to thee." (¿) "And how can I but give him way to me, seeing that he is set in dominion over me and that the reins of my affair be in his hand?"—"His dominion over thee lieth in the duties thou owest him; wherefore, an thou give him his due, he hath no farther dominion over thee." (¿) "What are a Wazir's duties to his King?"—"Good counsel and zealous service both in public and private, right judgment, the keeping of his secrets and that he conceal from his lord naught of that whereof he hath a right to be informed, lack of neglect of aught of his need with the gratifying of which he chargeth him, the seeking his approval in every guise and the avoidance of his 72 anger." (¿) "How should the Wazir do with the King?"—"An thou be Wazir to the King and wouldst fain become safe from him, let thy hearing and thy speaking to him surpass his expectation of thee and be thy seeking of thy want from him after the measure of thy rank in his esteem, and beware lest thou advance thyself to a dignity whereof he deemeth thee unworthy, for this would be like presuming against him. So, if thou take advantage of his mildness and raise thee to a rank beyond that which he deemeth thy due, thou wilt be like the hunter, whose wont it was to trap wild beasts for their pelts and cast away the

flesh. Now a lion used to come to that place and eat of the carrion; and in course of time, he made friendship with the hunter, who would throw meat to him and wipe his hands on his back, whilst the lion wagged his tail.[110] But when the hunter saw his tameness and gentleness and submissiveness to him, he said to himself, "Verily this lion humbleth himself to me and I am master of him, and I see not why I should not mount him and strip off his hide, as with the other wild beasts." So he took courage and sprang on the lion's back, presuming on his mildness and deeming himself sure of him; which when the lion saw, he raged with exceeding rage and raising his fore paw, smote the hunter, that he drove his claws into his vitals; after which he cast him under foot and tare him in pieces and devoured him. By this we may know that it behoveth the Wazir to bear himself towards the King according to that which he seeth of his condition and not presume upon the superiority of his own judgment, lest the King become jealous of him."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twelfth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth, the son of King Jali'ad, said to Shimas the Wazir, "It behoveth the Minister to bear himself towards the Monarch according to that which he seeth of his condition, and not to presume upon the superiority of his own judgment lest the King wax jealous of him." Quoth Shimas, "How shall the Wazir grace himself in the King's sight?"—"By the performance of the 73 trust committed to him and of loyal counsel and sound judgment and the execution of his commands." (¿) "As for what thou sayest of the Wazir's duty to avoid the King's anger and perform his wishes and apply himself diligently to the doing of that wherewith he chargeth him, such duty is always incumbent on him: but how, an the King's whole pleasure be tyranny and the practice of oppression and exorbitant extortion; and what shall the Wazir do, if he be afflicted by intercourse with this unjust lord? An he strive to turn him from his lust and his desire, he cannot do this, and if he follow him in his lusts and flatter him with false counsel, he assumeth the weight of responsibility herein and becometh an enemy to the people. What sayst thou of this?"—"What thou speakest, O Wazir, of his responsibility and sinfulness ariseth only in the case of his abetting the King in his wrong-doing; but it behoveth the Wazir, when the King taketh counsel with him of the like of this, to show forth to him the way of justice and equity and warn him against tyranny and oppression and expound to him the principles of righteously governing the lieges; alluring him with the future reward that pertaineth to this and restraining him with warning of the punishment he otherwise will incur. If the King incline to him and hearken unto his words, his end is gained, and if not, there is nothing for it but that he depart from him after courteous fashion, because in parting for each of them is ease." (¿) "What are the duties of the King to his subjects and what are the obligations of the lieges to their lord?"——"They shall do whatso he ordereth

them with pure intent and obey him in that which pleaseth him and pleaseth Allah and the Apostle of Allah. And the lieges can claim of the lord that he protect their possessions and guard their women,[111] even as it is their duty to hearken unto him and obey him and expend their lives freely in his defence and give him his lawful due and praise him fairly for that which he bestoweth upon them of his justice and bounty." (¿) "Have his subjects any claim upon the King other than that which thou hast said?"——"Yes: the rights of the subjects from their Sovran are more binding than the liege lord's claim upon his lieges; for that the breach of his duty towards them is more harmful than that of their duty towards him; because the ruin of the King and the loss of his kingdom and fortune 74 befal not save by the breach of his devoir to his subjects: wherefore it behoveth him who is invested with the kingship to be assiduous in furthering three things, to wit, the fostering of the faith, the fostering of his subjects and the fostering of government; for by the ensuing of these three things, his kingdom shall endure." (¿) "How doth it behove him to do for his subjects' weal?"——"By giving them their due and maintaining their laws and customs[112] and employing Olema and learned men to teach them and justifying them, one of other, and sparing their blood and defending their goods and lightening their loads and strengthening their hosts." (¿) "What is the Minister's claim upon the Monarch?"——"None hath a more imperative claim on the King than hath the Wazir, for three reasons: firstly, because of that which shall befal him from his liege lord in case of error in judgment, and because of the general advantage to King and commons in case of sound judgment: secondly, that folk may know the goodliness of the degree which the Wazir holdeth in the King's esteem and therefore look on him with eyes of veneration and respect and submission[113]; and thirdly, that the Wazir, seeing this from King and subjects, may ward off from them that which they hate and fulfil to them that which they love." (¿) "I have heard all thou hast said of the attributes of King and Wazir and liege and approve thereof: but now tell me what is incumbent in keeping the tongue from lying and folly and slandering good names and excess in speech."——"It behoveth a man to speak naught but good and kindness and to talk not of that which toucheth him not; to leave detraction nor carry talk he hath heard from one man to his enemy, neither seek to harm his friend nor his foe with his Sultan and reck not of any (neither of him from whom he hopeth for good nor of him whom he feareth for mischief) save of Allah Almighty; for He indeed is the only one who harmeth or profiteth. Let him not impute default unto any nor talk ignorantly, lest he incur the weight and the sin thereof before Allah and earn hate among men; for know 75 thou that speech is like an arrow which once shot none can avail to recall. Let him also beware of disclosing his secret to one who shall discover it, lest he fall into mischief by reason of its disclosure, after confidence on its concealment; and let him be more careful to keep his secret from his friend than from his foe; for the keeping a secret with all folk is of the performance of faithful trust." (¿) "Tell me how a man should

bear himself with his family and friends."——"There is no rest for a son of Adam save in righteous conduct: he should render to his family that which they deserve and to his brethren whatso is their due." (¿) "What should one render to one's kinsfolk?"——"To parents, submission and soft speech and affability and honour and reverence. To brethren good counsel and readiness to expend money for them and assistance in their undertakings and joyance in their joy and grieving for their grief and closing of the eyes toward the errors that they may commit; for, when they experience this from a man, they requite him with the best of counsel they can command and expend their lives in his defence; wherefore, an thou know thy brother to be trusty, lavish upon him thy love and help him in all his affairs."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirteenth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth, the son and heir of King Jali'ad, when questioned by the Wazir upon the subjects aforesaid, returned him satisfactory replies; when Shimas resumed, "I see that brethren are of two kinds, brethren of trust and brethren of society.[114] As for the first who be friends, there is due to them that which thou hast set forth; but now tell me of the others who be acquaintances."——"As for brethren of society thou gettest of them pleasance and goodly usance and fair speech and enjoyable company; so be thou not sparing to them of thy delights, but be lavish to them thereof, like as they are lavish to thee, and render to them that which they render to thee of affable countenance and an open favour and sweet speech; so shall thy life be pleasant and thy words be accepted of them." (¿) "Tell me now of the provision decreed by 76the Creator to all creatures. Hath He allotted to men and beasts each his several provision to the completion of his appointed life-term; and if this allotment be thus, what maketh him who seeketh his livelihood to incur hardships and travail in the quest of that which he knoweth must come to him, if it be decreed to him, albeit he incur not the misery of endeavour; and which, if it be not decreed to him, he shall not win, though he strive after it with his uttermost striving? Shall he therefore stint endeavour and in his Lord put trust and to his body and his soul give rest?"——"Indeed, we see clearly that to each and every there is a provision distributed and a term prescribed; but to all livelihood are a way and means, and he who seeketh would get ease of his seeking by ceasing to seek; withal there is no help but that he seek his fortune. The seeker is, however, in two cases; either he gaineth his fortune or he faileth thereof. In the first case, his pleasure consisteth in two conditions; first, in the having gained his fortune, and secondly, in the laudable[115] issue of his quest; and in the other case, his pleasure consisteth, first, in his readiness to seek his daily bread, secondly, in his abstaining from being a burthen to the folk, and thirdly, in his freedom from liability to blame." (¿) "What sayst thou of the means of seeking one's fortune?"——"A man shall hold lawful that which Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty) alloweth, and unlawful whatso He

forbiddeth." Reaching this pass the discourse between them came to an end, and Shimas and all the Olema present rose and prostrating themselves before the young Prince, magnified and extolled him, whilst his father pressed him to his bosom and seating him on the throne of kingship, said, "Praised be Allah who hath blessed me with a son to be the coolth of mine eyes in my lifetime!" Then said the King's son to Shimas in presence of all the Olema, "O sage that art versed in spiritual questions, albeit Allah have vouchsafed to me but scanty knowledge, yet do I comprehend thine intent in accepting from me what I proffered in answer concerning that whereof thou hast asked me, whether I hit or missed the mark therein, and belike thou forgavest my errors; but now I am minded to question thee anent a thing, whereof my judgment faileth and whereto my capacity is insufficient and which my tongue availeth not to set forth, for that it is obscure to me, with the obscurity of clear water in a black vessel. Wherefore I 77 would have thee expound it to me so no iota thereof may remain doubtful to the like of me, to whom its obscurity may present itself in the future, even as it hath presented itself to me in the past; since Allah, even as He hath made life to be in lymph[116] and strength in food and the cure of the sick in the skill of the leach, so hath He appointed the healing of the fool to be in the learning of the wise. Give ear, therefore, to my speech." Replied the Wazir, "O luminous of intelligence and master of casuistical questions, thou whose excellence all the Olema attest, by reason of the goodliness of thy discretion of things and thy distribution[117] thereof and the justness of thine answers to the questions I have asked thee, thou knowest that thou canst enquire of me naught but thou art better able than I to form a just judgment thereon and expound it truly: for that Allah hath vouchsafed unto thee such wisdom as He hath bestowed on none other of men. But inform me of what thou wouldst question me." Quoth the Prince, "Tell me from what did the Creator (magnified be His all-might!) create the world, albeit there was before it naught and there is naught seen in this world but it is created from something; and the Divine Creator (extolled and exalted be He!) is able to create things from nothing,[118] yet hath His will decreed, for all the perfection of His power and grandeur, that He shall create naught but from something." The Wazir replied, "As for those, who fashion vessels of potter's clay,[119] and other handicraftsmen, who cannot originate one thing save from another thing, they are themselves only created entities: but, as for the Creator, who hath wrought the world after this wondrous fashion, an thou wouldst know His power (extolled and exalted be He!) of calling things into existence, extend thy thought and consider the various kinds of created things, and thou wilt find signs and instances, proving the perfection of His puissance and that He is able to create the ens from the non-ens: nay, He called things into being, after absolute non-existence, for the elements which be the matter of 78 created things were sheer nothingness. I will expound this to thee, so thou mayst be in no scepticism thereof, and the marvel-signs of the alternation of Night and Day shall make this clear

to thee. When the light goeth and the night cometh, the day is hidden from us and we know not the place where it abideth; and when the night passeth away with its darkness and its terror, the day cometh and we know not the abiding-place of the night.[120] In like manner, when the sun riseth upon us, we know not where it hath laid up its light, and when it setteth, we ignore the abiding-place of its setting: and the examples of this among the works of the Creator (magnified be His name and glorified be His might;) abound in what confoundeth the thought of the keenest-witted of human beings." Rejoined the Prince, "O sage, thou hast set before me of the power of the Creator what is incapable of denial; but tell me how He called His creatures into existence." Answered Shimas, "He created them by the sole power of His one Word,[121] which existed before time, and wherewith he created all things." Quoth the Prince, "Then Allah (be His name magnified and His might glorified!) only willed the existence of created things, before they came into being?" Replied Shimas, "And of His will, He created them with His one Word and but for His speech and that one Word, the creation had not come into existence."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fourteenth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after the King's son had asked his sire's Wazir the casuistical questions 79 aforesaid, and had received a sufficient answer, Shimas said to him, "O dear my son,[122] there is no man can tell thee other but this I have said, except he twist the words handed down to us of the Holy Law and turn the truths thereof from their evident meaning. And such a perversion is their saying that the Word hath inherent and positive power and I take refuge with Allah from such a misbelief! Nay, the meaning of our saying that Allah (to whom belong Might and Majesty) created the world with His Word is that He (exalted be His name!) is One in His essence and His attributes and not that His Word hath independent power. On the contrary, power is one of the attributes of Allah, even as speech and other attributes of perfection are attributes of Allah (exalted be His dignity and extolled be His empery!); wherefore He may not be conceived without His Word, nor may His Word be conceived without Him; for, with His Word, Allah (extolled be His praise!) created all His creatures, and without His Word, the Lord created naught. Indeed, He created all things but by His Word of Truth, and by Truth are we created." Quote the Prince, "I comprehend that which thou hast said on the subject of the Creator and from thee I accept this with understanding; but I hear thee say that He created the world by His Word of Truth. Now Truth is the opposite of Falsehood; whence then arose Falsehood with its opposition unto Truth, and how cometh it to be possible that it should be confounded therewith and become doubtful to human beings, so that they need to distinguish between the twain? And doth the Creator (to whom belong Might and Majesty) love Falsehood or hate it? An thou say He loveth Truth and by it created all things and abhorreth Falsehood, how came the False, which

the Creator hateth, to invade the True which He loveth?" Quoth Shimas, "Verily Allah the Most High created man all Truth[123], loving His name and obeying His word, and on this wise man had 80 no need of repentance till Falsehood invaded the Truth whereby he was created by means of the capability[124] which Allah had placed in him, being the will and the inclination called lust of lucre.[125] When the False invaded the True on this wise, right became confounded with wrong, by reason of the will of man and his capability and greed of gain, which is the voluntary side of him together with the weakness of human nature: wherefore Allah created penitence for man, to turn away from him Untruth and stablish him in Truth; and He created for him also punishment, if he should abide in the obscurity of Falsehood." Quoth the Prince, "Tell me how came Untruth to invade Truth, so as to be confounded therewith and how became man liable to punishment and so stood in need of repentance." Replied Shimas, "When Allah created man with Truth, He made him loving to Himself and there was for him neither repentance nor punishment; but he abode thus till Allah put in him the soul, which is of the perfection of humanity, albeit naturally inclined to lust which is inherent therein. From this sprang the growth of Untruth and its confusion with Truth, wherewith man was created and with the love whereof his nature had been made; and when man came to this pass, he declined from the Truth with disobedience and whoso declineth from the Truth falleth into Falsehood." Said the Prince, "Then Falsehood invaded Truth only by reason of disobedience and transgression?" Shimas replied, "Yes: and it is thus because Allah loveth mankind, and of the abundance of His love to man He created him having need of Himself, that is to say, of the very Truth: but oftentimes man lapseth from this by cause of the inclination of the soul to lusts and turneth to frowardness, wherefore he falleth into Falsehood by the act of disobeying his Lord and thus deserveth punishment; and by putting away from himself Falsehood with repentance and by the returning to the love of the Truth, he meriteth future reward." Quoth the Prince, "Tell me the origin of sin, whilst all mankind trace 81 their being to Adam, and how cometh it that he, being created of Allah with truth, drew disobedience on himself; then was his disobedience coupled with repentance, after the soul had been set in him, that his issue might be reward or retribution? Indeed, we see some men constant in sinfulness, inclining to that which He loveth not and transgressing in this the original intent and purpose of their creation, which is the love of the Truth, and drawing on themselves the wrath of their Lord, whilst we see others constant in seeking the satisfaction of their Creator and obeying Him and meriting mercy and future recompense. What causeth this difference prevailing between them?" Replied Shimas, "The origin of disobedience descending upon mankind is attributable to Iblis, who was the noblest of all that Allah (magnified be His name!) created of angels[126] and men and Jinn, and the love of the Truth was inherent in him, for he knew naught but this; but whenas he saw himself unique in such dignity, there entered into him pride and conceit, vainglory and arrogance which

revolted from loyalty and obedience to the commandment of His Creator; wherefore Allah made him inferior to all creatures and cast him out from love, making his abiding-place to be in disobedience. So when he knew that Allah (glorified be His name!) loved not disobedience and saw Adam and the case wherein he was of truth and love and obedience to his Creator, envy entered into him and he devised some device to pervert Adam from the truth, that he might be a partaker with himself in Falsehood; and by this, Adam incurred chastisement for his inclining to disobedience, which his foe made fair to him, and his subjection to his lusts, whenas he transgressed the charge of his Lord, by reason of the appearance of Falsehood. When the Creator (magnified be the praises of Him and hallowed be the names of Him!) saw the weakness of man and the swiftness of his inclining to his enemy and leaving the truth, He appointed to him, of His mercy, repentance, that therewith he might arise from the slough[127] of inclination to disobedience and taking the arms and armour of 82 repentance, overcome therewith his foe Iblis and his hosts and return to the Truth, wherein he was created. When Iblis saw that Allah (magnified be His praise!) had appointed him a protracted term,[128] he hastened to wage war upon man and to beset him with wiles, to the intent that he might oust him from the favour of his Lord and make him a partaker with himself in the wrath which he and his hosts had incurred; wherefore Allah (extolled be His praises!) appointed unto man the capability of penitence and commanded him to apply himself to the Truth and persevere therein; and forbade him from disobedience and frowardness and revealed to him that he had on the earth an enemy warring against him and relaxing not from him night nor day. Thus hath man a right to future reward, if he adhere to the Truth, in the love of which his nature was created; but he becometh liable to punishment, if the flesh master him and incline him to lusts."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifteenth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the young Prince had questioned Shimas touching disputed points of olden time and had been duly answered, he presently said, "Now tell me by what power is the creature able to transgress against his Creator, seeing that His omnipotence is without bounds, even as thou hast set forth, and that naught can overcome Him or depart from His will? Deemest thou not that He is able to turn His creatures from this disobedience and compel them eternally to hold the Truth?" Answered Shimas, "In very sooth Almighty Allah (honoured be His name!) is just and equitable and loving-kind to the people of His affection.[129] He created His creatures with justice and equity and of the inspiration of His justice and the overflowing of His mercy, He gave them kingship over themselves, that they should do whatever they might design. He showeth them the way of righteousness and bestoweth on them the power and ability of doing what they will of good: and if they do the opposite thereof, they fall into destruction and

disobedience." 83(¿) "If the Creator, as thou sayest, have granted to mankind power and ability[130] and they by reason thereof are empowered to do whatso they will, why then doth He not come between them and that which they desire of wrong and turn them to the right?"—"This is of the greatness of His mercy and the goodliness of His wisdom; for, even as aforetime he showed wrath to Iblis and had no mercy on him, even so he showed Adam mercy, by means[131] of repentance, and accepted of him, after He had been wroth with him." (¿) "He is indeed mere Truth, for He it is who requiteth every one according to his works, and there is no Creator save Allah who hath power over all things. But tell me, hath He created that which He loveth and that which He loveth not or only that which He loveth?"—"He created all things, but favoureth only that which he loveth." (¿) "What reckest thou of two things, one whereof is pleasing to God and earneth future reward for him who practiseth it and the other offendeth Allah and entaileth lawful punishment upon the doer?"—"Expound to me these two things and make me to apprehend them, that I may speak concerning them." "They are good and evil, the two things inherent in the body and in the soul."—"O wise youth, I see that thou knowest good and evil to be of the works which the soul and the body combine to do. Good is named good, because it is in favour with God, and evil is termed ill, for that in it is His ill-will. Indeed, it behoveth thee to know Allah and to please Him by the practice of good, for that He hath bidden us to this and forbidden us to do evil." (¿) "I see these two things, to wit, good and evil, to be wrought only by the five senses familiarly known in the body of man, which be the sensorium[132] whence proceed speech, hearing, sight, smell and touch. Now I would have thee tell me whether these five senses were created altogether for good or for evil."—"Apprehend, O man, the exposition of that whereof thou askest and it is a manifest proof; so lay it up in thine innermost thought and take it to thy heart. 84And this it is that the Creator (extolled and exalted be He!) created man with Truth and impressed him with the love thereof and there proceedeth from it no created thing save by the puissance of the Most High, whose trace is in every phenomenon. He[133] (extol we Him and exalt we Him!) is not apt but to the ordering of justice and equity and beneficence, and He created man for the love of Him and set in him a soul, wherein the inclination to lusts was innate and assigned him capability and ableness and appointed the Five Senses aforesaid to be to him a means of winning Heaven or Hell." (¿) "How so?"—"In that He created the Tongue for speech, the Hands for action, the Feet for walking and the Eyes for seeing and the Ears for hearing, and upon each bestowed especial power and incited them to exercise and motion, bidding each of them do naught save that which pleaseth Him. Now what pleaseth Him in Speech is truthfulness and abstaining from its opposite, which is falsehood; and what pleaseth Him in Sight is turning it unto that which He loveth and leaving the contrary, which is turning it unto that which He hateth, such as looking unto lusts: and what pleaseth Him in Hearing is hearkening to naught but the True, such as admonition and

that which is in Allah's writ and leaving the contrary, which is listening to that which incurreth the anger of Allah; and what pleaseth Him in the Hands is not hoarding up that which He entrusteth to them, but expending it in such way as shall please Him and leaving the contrary, which is avarice or spending in sinfulness that which He hath committed to them; and what pleaseth Him in the Feet is that they be constant in the pursuit of good, such as the quest of instruction, and leave its contrary, which is the walking in other than the way of Allah. Now respecting the rest of the lusts which man practiseth, they proceed from the body by command of the soul. But the lusts which proceed from the body are of two kinds, the lust of reproduction and the lust of the belly. As for the former, that which pleaseth Allah thereof is that it be not other than lawful[134] and He is displeased with it if contrary to His law. 85 As for the lust of the belly, eating and drinking, what pleaseth Allah thereof is that each take naught save that which the Almighty hath appointed him be it little or mickle, and praise the Lord and thank Him: and what angereth Him thereof is that a man take that which is not his by right. All precepts other than these are false, and thou knowest that Allah created every thing and delighteth only in Good and commandeth each member of the body to do that which He hath made on it incumbent, for that He is the All-wise, the All-knowing." (¿) "Was it foreknown unto Allah Almighty (exalted be His power!) that Adam, by eating of the tree from which He forbade him and whence befel what befel, would leave obedience for disobedience?"—"Yes, O sage youth. This was foreknown unto Allah Almighty ere He created Adam; and the proof and manifestation attached thereto is the warning He gave him against eating of the tree and His informing him that, if he ate of the fruit he would be disobedient. And this was in the way of justice and equity, lest Adam should have an argument wherewith he might excuse himself against his Lord. When, therefore, he fell into error and calamity and when disgrace waxed sore upon him and reproach, this passed to his posterity after him; wherefore Allah sent Prophets and Apostles and gave to them Books and they taught us the divine commandments and expounded to us what was therein of admonitions and precepts and made clear to us and manifest the way of righteousness and explained to us what it behoved us to do and what to leave undone. Now we are endowed with Freewill and he who acteth within these lawful limits winneth his wish and prospereth, while whoso transgresseth these legal bounds and doeth other than that which these precepts enjoin, resisteth the Lord and is ruined in both Abodes. This then is the road of Good and Evil. Thou knowest that Allah over all things is Omnipotent and created not lusts for us but of His pleasure and volunty and He bade us use them in the way of lawfulness, so they might be to us a good; but, when we use them in the way of sinfulness they are to us an evil. Therefore what of righteous we compass is from Allah Almighty, and what of wrongous from ourselves[135] His creatures, not from the Creator, exalted be He herefor with highmost exaltation!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixteenth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the youth, King Jali'ad's son had questioned Shimas concerning these subtleties and had been duly answered, he pursued, "That which thou hast expounded to me concerning Allah and His creatures I understand; but tell me of one matter, concerning which my mind is perplexed with extreme wonderment, and that is that I marvel at the sons of Adam, how careless they are of the life to come and at their lack of taking thought thereof and their love to this world, albeit they know that they must needs leave it and depart from it, whilst they are yet young in years."—"Yes, verily; and that which thou seest of its changefulness and traitorousness with its children is a sign that Fortune to the fortunate will not endure nor to the afflicted affliction; for none of its people is secure from its changefulness and even if one have power over it and be content therewith, yet there is no help but that his estate change and removal hasten unto him. Wherefore man can put no trust therein nor profit by that which he enjoyeth of its gilding and glitter[136]; and we knowing this will know that the sorriest of men in condition are those who are deluded by this world and are unmindful of the other world; for that whatso of present ease they enjoy will not even the fear and misery and horrors which will befal them after their removal therefrom. Thus are we certified that, if the creature knew that which will betide him with the coming of death[137] and his severance from that which he enjoyeth of pleasure and delight, he would cast away the world and that which is therein; for we are certified that the 87 next life is better for us and more profitable." Said the Prince, "O sage, thou hast dispelled the darkness that was upon my heart by the light of thy shining lamp and hast directed me into the right road I must tread on the track of Truth and hast given me a lantern whereby I may see." Then rose one of the learned men who were in the presence and said, "When cometh the season of Prime, needs must the hare seek the pasture as well as the elephant; and indeed I have heard from you twain such questions and solutions as I never before heard; but now leave that and let me ask you of somewhat. Tell me, what is the best of the goods of the world?" Replied the Prince, "Health of body, lawful livelihood and a virtuous son." (¿) "What is the greater and what is the less?"—"The greater is that to which a lesser than itself submitteth and the less that which submitteth to a greater than itself." (¿) "What are the four things wherein concur all creatures?"—"Men concur in meat and drink, the sweet of sleep, the lust of women and the agonies of death." (¿) "What are the three things whose foulness none can do away?"—"Folly, meanness of nature, and lying." (¿) "What is the best kind of lie,[138] though all kinds are foul?"—"That which averteth harm from its utterer and bringeth gain." (¿) "What kind of truthfulness is foul, though all kinds are fair?"—"That of a man glorying in that which he hath and vaunting himself thereof." (¿) "What is the foulest of foulnesses?"—"When a man boasteth himself of that which he

hath not." (¿) "Who is the most foolish of men?"—"He who hath no thought but of what he shall put in his belly." Then said Shimas, "O King, verily thou art our King, but we desire that thou assign the kingdom to thy son after thee, and we will be thy servants and lieges." So the King exhorted the Olema and others who were in the presence to remember that which they had heard and do according thereto and enjoined them to obey his son's commandment, for that he made him his heir-apparent,[139] so he should be the successor of the King his sire; and he took an oath of all the people of his empire, 88 literates and braves and old men and boys, to mention none other, that they would not oppose him in the succession nor transgress against his commandment. Now when the Prince was seventeen years old, the King sickened of a sore sickness and came nigh to die; so, being certified that his decease was at hand, he said to the people of his household, "This is disease of Death which is upon me; wherefore do ye summon my son and kith and kin and gather together the Grandees and Notables of my empire, so not one of them may remain except he be present." Accordingly they fared forth and made proclamation to those who were near and published the summons to those who were afar off, and they all assembled and went in to the King. Then said they to him, "How is it with thee, O King, and how deemest thou for thyself of these thy dolours?" Quoth Jali'ad, "Verily, this my malady is mortal and the shaft of death hath executed that which Allah Almighty decreed against me: this is the last of my days in the world here and the first of my days in the world hereafter." Then said he to his son, "Draw near unto me." So the youth drew near, weeping with weeping so sore, that he well nigh drenched the bed, whilst the King's eyes welled tears and all who were present wept. Quoth Jali'ad, "Weep not, O my son; I am not the first whom this Inevitable betideth; nay, it is common to all that Allah hath created. But fear thou the Almighty and do good deeds which shall precede thee to the place whither all creatures tend and wend. Obey not thy lusts, but occupy thy soul with lauding the Lord in thy standing up and thy sitting down, in thy waking and in thy sleeping. Make the Truth the aim of thine eyes; this is the last of my speech with thee and—The Peace."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventeenth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Jali'ad charged his son with such injunctions and made him his heir to succeed him in his reign, the Prince said, "O dear father mine,[140] thou knowest that I have ever been to thee obedient and thy commandment carrying out, mindful of thine injunctions 89 and thine approof seeking; for thou hast been to me the best of fathers; how, then, after thy death, shall I depart from that which contenteth thee? And now, having fairly ordered my nurture thou art about to depart from me and I have no power to bring thee back to me; but, an I be mindful of thy charge, I shall be blessed therein and great good fortune shall betide me." Quoth the King, and indeed he was in the last agony of

departing life, “Dear my son, cleave fast unto ten precepts, which if thou hold, Allah shall profit thee herewith in this world and the next world, and they are as follows. Whenas thou art wroth, curb thy wrath; when thou art afflicted, be patient; when thou speakest be soothfast; when thou promisest, perform; when thou judgest, do justice; when thou hast power, be merciful; deal generously by thy governors and lieutenants; forgive thy foes; be lavish of good offices to thine adversary, and stay thy mischief from him. Observe also other ten precepts,[141] wherewith Allah shall profit thee among the people of thy realm, to wit, when thou dividest, be just; when thou punishest, oppress not; when thou engagest thyself, fulfil thine engagement; hearken to those that give thee loyal counsel; when offence is offered to thee, neglect it; abstain from contention; enjoin thy subjects to the observance of the divine laws and of praiseworthy practices; abate ignorance with a sharp sword; withhold thy regard from treachery and its untruth; and, lastly, do equal justice between the folk, so they may love thee, great and small, and the wicked and corrupt of them may fear thee.” Then he addressed himself to the Emirs and Olema which were present when he appointed his son to be his successor, saying, “Beware ye of transgressing the commandment of your King and neglecting to hearken to your chief, for therein lieth ruin for your realm and sundering for your society and bane for your bodies and perdition for your possessions; and your foe would exult over you. Well ye wot the covenant ye made with me, and even thus shall be your covenant with this youth and the troth which plighted between you and me shall be also between you and him; wherefore it behoveth you to give ear unto and obey his commandment, for that in this is the well-being of your conditions. So be ye constant with him anent that wherein ye were with me and your estate shall prosper and your affairs be fair; for behold, he hath the Kingship over you and is the lord of your 90 fortune, and—The Peace?” Then the death-agony[142] seized him and his tongue was bridled: so he pressed his son to him and kissed him and gave thanks unto Allah; after which his hour came and his soul fared forth. All his subjects and the people of his court mourned and keened over him and they shrouded him and buried him with pomp and honour and reverence; after which they returned with the Prince and clad him in the royal robes and crowned him with his father’s crown and put the seal-ring on his finger, after seating him on the Throne of Sovranship. The young King ordered himself towards them, after his father’s fashion of mildness and justice and benevolence, for a little while till the world waylaid him and entangled him in its lusts, whereupon, its pleasures made him their prey and he turned to its gilding and gewgaws, forsaking the engagements which his father had imposed upon him and casting off his obedience to him, neglecting the affairs of his reign and treading a road wherein was his own destruction. The love of women waxed stark in him and came to such a pass that, whenever he heard tell of a beauty, he would send for her and take her to wife; and after this wise, he collected women more in number than ever had Solomon, David-son, King of the children of Israel. Also he would shut himself up with a company of them for a month at a time,

during which he went not forth neither enquired of his realm or its rule nor looked into the grievances of such of his subjects as complained to him; and if they wrote to him, he returned them no reply. Now when they saw this and witnessed his neglect of their affairs and lack of care for their interests and those of the state, they were assured that ere long some calamity would betide them and this was grievous to them. So they met privily one with other and took counsel together blaming their King, and one of them said to the rest, "Come, let us go to Shimas, Chief of the Wazirs, and set forth to 91 him our case and acquaint him with that wherein we are by reason of this King, so he may admonish him; else, in a little, calamity will dawn upon us, for the world hath dazzled the Sovran with its delights and seduced him with its snares." Accordingly, they repaired to Shimas and said to him, "O wise man and prudent, the world hath dazed the King with its delights and taken him in its toils, so that he turneth unto vanity and worketh for the undoing of the state. Now with the disordering of the state the commons will be corrupted and our affairs will run to ruin. We see him not for days and months nor cometh there forth from him any commandment to us or to the Wazir or any else. We cannot refer aught of our need to him and he looketh not to the administration of justice nor taketh thought to the condition of any of his subjects, in his disregard of them.[143] And behold we are come to acquaint thee with the truth of things, for that thou art the chiefest and most accomplished of us and it behoveth not that calamity befal a land wherein thou dwellest, seeing that thou art most able of any to amend this King. Wherefore go thou and speak with him: haply he will hearken to thy word and return unto the way of Allah."[144] So Shimas arose forthright and repairing to the palace, foregathered with the first page he could find and said to him, "Fair my son, I beseech thee ask leave for me to go in to the King, for I have an affair, concerning which I would fain see his face and acquaint him therewith and hear what he shall answer me thereanent." Answered the page, "O my lord, by Allah, this month past hath he given none leave to come in to him, nor have I all this time looked upon his face; but I will direct thee to one who shall crave admission for thee. Do thou lay hold of such a blackamoor slave who standeth at his head and bringeth him food from the kitchen. When he cometh forth to go to the kitchen, ask him what seemeth good to thee; for he will do for thee that which thou desirest." So the Wazir repaired to the door of the kitchen and sat there a little while, till up came the black and would have entered the kitchen; but Shimas caught hold of him and said to 92 him, "Dear my son, I would fain stand in presence of the King and speak with him of somewhat especially concerneth him; so prithee, of thy kindness, when he hath ended his undurn-meal and his temper is at its best, speak for me and get me leave to approach him, so I may bespeak him of that which shall suit him." "I hear and obey," answered the black and taking the food carried it to the King, who ate thereof and his temper was soothed thereby. Then said the black to him, "Shimas standeth at the door and craveth admission, so he may acquaint thee

with matters that specially concern thee." At this the King was alarmed and disquieted and commanded to admit the Minister.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighteenth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King bade the blackamoor admit Shimas, the slave went forth to him and bade him enter; whereupon he went in and falling prone before Allah, kissed the King's hands and blessed him. Then said the King, "What hath betided thee, O Shimas, that thou seekest admission unto me?" He answered, "This long while have I not looked upon the face of my lord the King and indeed I longed sore for thee; and now, behold, I have seen thy countenance and come to thee with a word which I would lief say to thee, O King stablished in all prosperity!" Quoth the King, "Say what seemeth good to thee;" and quoth Shimas, "I would have thee bear in mind O King, that Allah Almighty hath endowed thee with learning and wisdom, for all the tenderness of thy years, such as He never vouchsafed unto any of the Kings before thee, and hath fulfilled the measure of his bounties to thee with the Kingship; and He loveth not that thou depart from that wherewith He hath endowed thee unto other than it, by means of thy disobedience to Him; wherefore it behoveth thee not to levy war against[145] Him with thy hoards but of His injunctions to be mindful and unto His commandments obedient. Indeed, I have seen thee, this while past, forget thy sire and his charges and reject his covenant and 93neglect his counsel and words of wisdom and renounce his justice and good governance, remembering not the bounty of Allah to thee neither requiting it with gratitude and thanks to Him." The King asked, "How so? And what is the manner of this?;" and Shimas answered, "The manner of it is that thou neglectest to administer the affairs of the state and that which Allah hath committed unto thee of the interests of thy lieges and surrenderest thyself to thy lower nature in that which it maketh fair to thee of the slight lusts of the world. Verily it is said that the welfare of the state and of the Faith and of the folk is of the things which it behoveth the King to watch; wherefore it is my rede, O King, that thou look fairly to the issue of thine affair, for thus wilt thou find the manifest road wherein is salvation, and not accept a trifling pleasure and a transient which leadeth to the abyss of destruction, lest there befal thee that which befel the Fisherman." The King asked, "What was that?"; and Shimas answered, "There hath reached me this tale of

THE FOOLISH FISHERMAN."

A Fisherman went forth to a river for fishing therein as was his wont; and when he came thither and walked upon the bridge, he saw a great fish and said in himself, "'Twill not serve me to abide here, but I will follow yonder fish whitherso it goeth,

till I catch it, for it will relieve me from fishing for days and days." So he did off his clothes and plunged into the river after the fish. The current bore him along till he overtook it and laid hold of it, when he turned and found himself far from the bank. But albeit he saw what the stream had done with him, he would not loose the fish and return, but ventured life and gripping it fast with both hands, let his body float with the flow, which carried him on till it cast him into a whirlpool[146] none might enter and come out therefrom. With this he fell to crying out and saying, "Save a drowning man!" And there came to him folk of the keepers of the river and said to him, "What ailed thee to cast thyself into this great peril?" Quoth he, "It was I myself who forsook the plain way wherein 94 was salvation and gave myself over to concupiscence and perdition." Quoth they, "O fellow, why didst thou leave the way of safety and cast thyself into this destruction, knowing from of old that none may enter herein and be saved? What hindered thee from throwing away what was in thy hand and saving thyself? So hadst thou escaped with thy life and not fallen into this perdition, whence there is no deliverance; and now not one of us can rescue thee from this thy ruin." Accordingly the man cut off all his hopes of life and lost that which was in his hand and for which his flesh had prompted him to venture himself, and died a miserable death. "And I tell thee not this parable, O King," added Shimas, "but that thou mayest leave this contemptible conduct that diverteth thee from thy duties and look to that which is committed to thee of the rule of thy folk and the maintenance of the order of thy realm, so that none may see fault in thee." The King asked, "What wouldst thou have me do?" And Shimas answered, "To-morrow, an thou be well and in good case,[147] give the folk leave to come in to thee and look into their affairs and excuse thyself to them and promise them of thine own accord good governance and prosperity." Quoth the King, "O Shimas, thou hast spoken sensibly and rightly; and to-morrow, Inshallah, I will do that which thou counsellest me." So the Wazir went out from him and told the lieges all he had said to him; and, when morning morrowed, the King came forth of his privacy and bade admit the people, to whom he excused himself, promising them that thenceforward he would deal with them as they wished, wherewith they were content and departed each to his own dwelling.[148] Then one of the King's wives, who was his best-beloved of them and most in honour with him, visited him and seeing him changed of colour 95 and thoughtful over his affairs, by reason of that which he had heard from his chief Wazir, said to him, "O King, how is it that I see thee troubled in mind? Hast thou aught to complain of?" Answered he, "No: but my pleasures have distracted me from my duties. What right have I to be thus negligent of my affairs and those of my subjects? If I continue on this wise, soon, very soon, the kingdom will pass out of my hand." She rejoined, "I see, O King, that thou hast been duped by the Wazirs and Ministers, who wish but to torment and entrap thee, so thou mayst have no joyance of this thy kingship neither feel ease nor taste delight; nay, they would have thee consume thy life in warding off trouble from

them, till thy days be wasted in travail and weariness and thou be as one who slayeth himself for the benefit of another or like the Boy and the Thieves." Asked the King, "How was that?" and she answered, "They tell the following tale anent

THE BOY AND THE THIEVES."

Seven Thieves once went out to steal, according to their custom, and fell in with a Boy, poor and orphaned to boot, who besought them for somewhat to eat. One of them asked him, "Wilt go with us, O Boy, and we will feed thee and give thee drink, clothe thee and entreat thee kindly?" And he answered, "Needs must I go with you whitherso ye will and ye are as my own kith and kin." So they took him and fared on with him till they came to a garden, and entering, went round about therein, till they found a walnut-tree laden with ripe fruit and said to him, "O Boy, wilt thou enter this garden with us and swarm up this tree and eat of its walnuts thy sufficiency and throw the rest down to us?" He consented and entered with them,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Nineteenth Night,

She said. It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Boy consented and entered with the Thieves, one of them said to other "Look which is the lightest and smallest of us and make him climb the tree." And they said, "None of us is 96 slighter than this Boy." So they sent him up into the tree and said to him, "O Boy, touch not aught of the fruit, lest some one see thee and work thee a mischief." He asked, "How then shall I do?", and they answered, "Sit among the boughs and shake them one by one with all thy might, so that which is thereon may fall, and we will pick it up. Then, when thou hast made an end of shaking down the fruit, come down and take thy share of that which we have gathered." Accordingly he began to shake every branch at which he could come, so that the nuts fell and the thieves picked them up and ate some and hid other some till all were full, save the Boy who had eaten naught. As they were thus engaged, behold, up came the owner of the garden who, standing to witness the spectacle, enquired of them, "What do ye with this tree?" They replied "We have taken naught thereof; but we were passing by and seeing yonder Boy on the tree, took him for the owner thereof and besought him to give us to eat of the fruit. Thereat he fell to shaking one of the branches, so that the nuts dropped down, and we are not at fault." Quoth the master to the Boy, "What sayst thou?"; and quoth he, "These men lie; but I will tell thee the truth. It is that we all came hither together and they bade me climb the tree and shake its boughs that the nuts might fall down to them, and I obeyed their bidding." Said the master, "Thou hast cast thyself into sore calamity; but hast thou profited by eating aught of the fruit?"; and he said, "I have eaten naught thereof." Rejoined the owner of the garden, "Now know I thy folly and

thine ignorance in that thou hast wrought to ruin thyself and profit others." Then said he to the Thieves, "I have no resort against you, so wend your ways!" But he laid hands on the Boy and punished him. "On like wise," added the favourite, "thy Wazirs and Officers of state would sacrifice thee to their interests and do with thee as did the Thieves with the Boy." Answered the King, "Thou sayst sooth, and speakest truth: I will not go forth to them nor leave my pleasures." Then he passed the night with his wife in all delight till the morning, when the Grand Wazier arose and, assembling the Officers of state, together with those of the lieges who were present with them, repaired with them to the palace-gate, congratulating one another and rejoicing. But the door opened not nor did the King come forth unto them nor give them leave to go in to him. So, when they despaired of him, they said to Shimas, "O excellent Wazir and accomplished 97 sage, seest thou not the behaviour of this lad, young of years and little of wit, how he addeth to his offences falsehood? See how he hath broken his promise to us and hath not performed that for which he engaged unto us, and this sin it behoveth thee join unto his other sins; but we beseech thee go in to him yet again and discover what is the cause of his holding back and refusal to come forth; for we doubt not but that the like of this action cometh of his corrupt nature, and indeed he is now hardened to the highest degree." Accordingly, Shimas went in to the King and bespake him, saying, "Peace be with thee, O King! How cometh it that I see thee give thyself up to these slight pleasures and neglect the great affair whereto it behoveth thee sedulously apply thyself? Thou art like unto a man who had a milch-camel and, coming one day to milk her, the goodness of her milk made him neglect to hold fast her halter; which whenas she felt, she haled herself free and made off into the wold. Thus the man lost both milk and camel and the loss that betided him surpassed his gain. Wherefore, O King, do thou look unto that wherein is thy welfare and the weal of thy subjects; for, even as it behoveth not a man to sit for ever at the kitchen door, because of his need unto food, so should he not alway company with women, by reason of his inclination to them. And as a man should eat but as much food as will guard him from the pains of hunger and drink but what will ward off the pangs of thirst, in like manner it behoveth the sensible man to content himself with passing two of the four-and-twenty hours of his day with women and expend the rest in ordering his own affairs and those of his people. For to be longer than this in company with women is hurtful both to mind and body, seeing that they bid not unto good neither direct thereto: wherefore it besitteth not a man to accept from them or word or deed, for indeed it hath reached me that many men have come to ruin through their women, and amongst others a certain man who perished through conversation with his wife at her command." The King asked, "How was that?" and Shimas answered, saying, "Hear, O King, the tale of

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THE MAN AND HIS WIFE.”

They relate that a certain man had a wife whom he loved and honoured, giving ear to her speech and doing according to her rede. Moreover, he had a garden, which he had newly planted with his own hand, and was wont to go thither every day, to tend it and water it. One day his wife asked him, “What hast thou planted in thy garden?”: and he answered, “All thou lovest and desirest, and I am assiduous in tending and watering it.” Quoth she, “Wilt thou not carry me thither and show it to me, so I may look upon it and offer thee up a pious prayer for its prosperity, seeing that my orisons are effectual?” Quoth he, “I will well; but have patience with me till the morrow, when I will come and take thee.” So early on the ensuing day, he carried her to the garden which he entered with her. Now two young men saw them enter from afar and said each to other, “Yonder man is an adulterer and yonder woman an adulteress, and they have not entered this garden but to commit adultery.” Thereupon they followed the couple to see what they would do, and hid themselves in a corner of the garden. The man and his wife after entering abode awhile therein, and presently he said to her, “Pray me the prayer thou didst promise me;” but she replied, saying, “I will not pray for thee, until thou do away my desire of that which women seek from men.” Cried he, “Out on thee, O woman! Hast thou not thy fill of me in the house? Here I fear scandal, especially as thou divertest me from my affairs. Fearest thou not that some one will see us?” Quoth she, “We need have no care for that, seeing that we do neither sin nor lewdness; and, as for the watering of the garden, that may wait, because thou canst water it when thou wilt.” And she would take neither excuse nor reason from him, but was instant with him in seeking carnal coition. So he arose and lay with her, which when the young men aforesaid saw, they ran upon them and seized them,[149] saying, “We will not let you go, for ye are adulterers, and except we have carnal knowledge of the woman, we will report 99 you to the police.” Answered the man, “Fie upon you! This is my wife and I am the master of the garden.” They paid no heed to him, but fell upon the woman, who cried out to him for succour, saying, “Suffer them not to defile me!” Accordingly he came up to them, calling out for help; but one of them turned on him and smote him with his dagger and slew him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twentieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that after slaying the husband the two young men returned to the wife and ravished her. “This I tell thee, O King,” continued the Wazir, “but that thou mayst know that it becometh not men to give ear unto a woman’s talk neither obey her in aught nor accept her judgment in counsel. Beware, then, lest thou don the dress of ignorance, after the robe of knowledge and wisdom, and follow perverse rede, after knowing that which is righteous and

profitable. Wherefore pursue thou not a paltry pleasure, whose trending is to corruption and whose inclining is unto sore and uttermost perdition." When the King heard this from Shimas he said to him, "To-morrow I will come forth to them, an it be the will of Allah the Most High." So Shimas returned to the Grandees and Notables who were present and told them what the King had said. But this came to the ears of the favourite wife; whereupon she went in to the King and said to him, "The subjects of a King should be his slaves; but I see, O King, thou art become a slave to thy subjects, because thou standest in awe of them and fearest their mischief.[150] They do but desire to make proof of thine inner man; and if they find thee weak, they will disdain thee; but, if they find thee stout and brave, they will dread thee. On this wise do ill Wazirs with their King, for that their wiles are many; but I will make manifest unto thee the truth of their malice. An thou comply with the conditions they demand, they will cause thee cease ruling and do their will; nor will they leave leading thee on from affair to affair, 100 till they cast thee into destruction; and thy case will be as that of the Merchant and the Robbers." Asked the King, "How was that?" and she answered, "I have heard tell this tale anent

THE MERCHANT AND THE ROBBERS."

There was once a wealthy Merchant, who set out for a certain city purposing to sell merchandise there, and when he came thither, he hired him a lodging wherein he took up his abode. Now certain Robbers saw him, men wont to lie in wait for merchants, that they might rob their goods; so they went to his house and sought some device whereby to enter in, but could find no way thereto, and their Captain said, "I'll manage you his matter." Then he went away and, donning the dress of a leach, threw over his shoulder a bag containing somewhat of medicines, after which he set out, crying, "Who lacks a doctor?" and fared on till he came to the merchant's lodging and him sitting eating the noonday dinner. So he asked him, "Dost thou need thee a physician?;" and the trader answered, "I need naught of the kind; but sit thee down and eat with me." The thief sat down facing him and began to eat. Now this merchant was a *belle fourchette*; and the Robber seeing this, said to himself, "I have found my chance." Then he turned to his host and said to him, "'Tis but right for me to give thee an admonition; and after thy kindness to me, I cannot hide it from thee. I see thee to be a great eater and the cause of this is a disorder in thy stomach; wherefore unless thou take speedy measures for thy cure, thine affair will end in perdition." Quoth the merchant, "My body is sound and my stomach speedy of digestion, and though I be a hearty eater, yet is there no disease in my body, to Allah be the praise and the thanks!" Quoth the Robber, "It may appear thus unto thee; but I know thou hast a disease incubating in thy vitals and if thou hearken to me, thou wilt medicine thyself." The Merchant asked, "And where shall I find him who knoweth my remedy?"; and

the Robber answered "Allah is the Healer; but a physician like myself cureth the sick to the best of his power." Then the other said, "Show me at once my remedy and give me thereof." Hereupon he gave him a powder, wherein was a strong dose of aloes,[151] saying, "Use 101 this to-night;" and he accepted it gratefully. When the night came, the Merchant tasted somewhat of the powder and found it nauseous of gust; nevertheless he misdoubted not of it, but swallowed it all and therefrom found ease that night. Next night the thief brought him another powder, wherein was yet more aloes, and he took it: it purged him that night, but he bore patiently with this and rejected it not. When the Robber saw that he gave ear unto his word and put trust in him nor would gainsay him in aught, he brought him a deadly drug[152] and gave it to him. The Merchant swallowed it and no sooner had he done this than that which was in his stomach fell down and his bowels were rent in sunder, and by the morrow he was a dead man; whereupon the Robbers came and took all the merchandise and monies that belonged to him. "This I tell thee, O King," added the favourite "but that thou mayst not accept one word from these deluders; else will there befal thee that whereby thou wilt destroy thyself." Cried the King, "Thou sayst sooth; I will not go forth to them." Now when the morning morrowed, the folk assembled together and repairing to the King's door, sat there the most part of the day, till they despaired of his coming forth, when they returned to Shimas and said to him, "O sage philosopher and experienced master, seest thou not that this ignorant lad doth naught but redouble in falsehood to us? Verily 'twere only reasonable and right to take the Kingdom from him and give it to another, so our affairs may be ordered and our estates maintained; but go thou in to him a third time and tell him that naught hindereth us from rising against him and taking the Kingship from him but his father's goodness to us and that which he required from us of oaths and engagements. However, to-morrow, we will all, to the last of us, assemble here with our arms and break down the gate 102 of the citadel[153]; and if he come forth to us and do that which we wish, no harm is yet done[154]; else we will go in to him and slay him and put the Kingdom in the hand of other than he." So the Wazir Shimas went in to him and said, "O King, that grovellest in thy gusts and thy lusts, what is this thou dost with thyself? Would Heaven I wot who seduced thee thereto! An it be thou who sinnest against thyself, there hath ceased from thee that which we knew in thee aforetime of integrity and wisdom and eloquence. Could I but learn who hath thus changed thee and turned thee from wisdom to folly and from fidelity to iniquity and from mildness to harshness and from acceptation of me to aversion from me! How cometh it that I admonish thee thrice and thou acceptest not mine admonition and that I counsel thee rightfully and still thou gainsayest my counsel? Tell me, what is this child's play and who is it prompteth thee thereunto? Know that the people of thy Kingdom have agreed together to come in to thee and slay thee and give thy Kingdom to another. Art able to cope with them all and save thyself from their hands or canst quicken thyself after being killed? If,

indeed, thou be potent to do all this, thou art safe and hast no occasion for my rede; but an thou have any concern for thy life and thy kingship, return to thy sound sense and hold fast thy reign and show forth to the folk the power of thy prowess and persuade the people with thine excuse, for they are minded to tear away that which is in thy hand and commit it unto other, being resolved upon revolt and rebellion, led thereto by that which they know of thy youth and thy self-submission to love-liesse and lusts; for that stones, albeit they lie long under water, an thou withdraw them therefrom and smite one upon other, fire will be struck from them. Now thy lieges are many folk and they have taken counsel together against thee, with a design to transfer the Kingship from thee to another and accomplish upon thee whatso they desire of thy destruction. So shalt thou fare as did the Jackals with the Wolf."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Wazir Shimas concluded with saying, "And they shall accomplish upon thee whatso they desire of thy destruction: so shalt thou fare as fared the Jackals with the Wolf." Asked the King, "How was that?" and the Wazir answered, "They tell the following tale of

THE JACKALS AND THE WOLF."

A pack of Jackals[1155] went out one day to seek food, and as they prowled about in quest of this, behold, they happened upon a dead camel and said in themselves, "Verily we have found wherewithal we may live a great while; but we fear lest one of us oppress the other and the strong bear down the weak with his strength and so the puny of us perish. Wherefore it behoveth us seek one who shall judge between us and appoint unto each his part, so the force-full may not lord it over the feeble." As they consulted together on such subject, suddenly up came a Wolf, and one of the Jackals said to the others, "Right is your rede; let us make this Wolf judge between us, for he is the strongest of beasts and his father was Sultan over us aforetime; so we hope in Allah that he will do justice between us." Accordingly they accosted the Wolf and acquainting him with what they had resolved concerning him said, "We make thee judge between us, so thou mayst allot unto each of us his day's meat, after the measure of his need, lest the strong of us bear down the weak and some of us destroy other of us." The Wolf accepted the governance of their affairs and allotted to each of them what sufficed him that day; but on the morrow he said in his mind, "An I divide this camel amongst these weaklings, no part thereof will come to me, save the pittance they will assign to me, and if I eat it alone, they can do me no harm, seeing that they are a prey to me and to the people of my house. Who, then, is the one to

hinder me from taking it all for myself? Surely, 'tis Allah who hath bestowed it on me by way of 104provision without any obligation to any of them. It were best that I keep it for myself, and henceforth I will give them naught." Accordingly, next morning when the Jackals came to him, as was their wont, and sought of him their food, saying, "O Abu Sirhán,[156] give us our day's provender,[157]" he answered saying, "I have nothing left to give you." Whereupon they went away in the sorriest plight, saying, "Verily, Allah hath cast us into grievous trouble with this foul traitor, who regardeth not Allah nor feareth Him; but we have neither stratagem nor strength on our side." Moreover one of them said, "Haply 'twas but stress of hunger that moved him to this; so let him eat his fill to-day, and to-morrow we will go to him again." Accordingly, on the morrow, they again betook themselves to the Wolf and said to him, "O Father of Foray, we gave thee authority over us, that thou mightest apportion unto each of us his day's meat and do the weak justice against the strong of us, and that, when this provaunt is finished, thou shouldst do thine endeavour to get us other and so we be always under thy watch and ward. Now hunger is hard upon us, for that we have not eaten these two days; so do thou give us our day's ration and thou shalt be free to dispose of all that remaineth as thou wilt." But the Wolf returned them no answer and redoubled in his hardness of heart and when they strave to turn him from his purpose he would not be turned. Then said one of the Jackals to the rest, "Nothing will serve us but that we go to the Lion and cast ourselves on his protection and assign unto him the camel. If he vouchsafe us aught thereof, 'twill be of his favour, and if not, he is worthier of it than this scurvy rascal." So they betook themselves to the Lion and acquainted him with that which had betided them from the Wolf, saying, "We are thy slaves and come to thee imploring thy protection, so thou mayst deliver us from this Wolf, and we will be thy thralls." When the Lion heard their story, he was jealous for Almighty Allah[158] and went with them in quest of the Wolf who, seeing him approach 105addressed himself to flight; but the Lion ran after him and seizing him, rent him in pieces and restored their prey to the Jackals. "This showeth," added Shimas, "that it fitteth no King to neglect the affairs of his subjects; wherefore do thou hearken to my rede and give credit to the words which I say to thee." Quoth the King, "I will hearken to thee and to-morrow, Inshallah, I will go forth to them." Accordingly Shimas went from him and returning to the folk, told them that the King had accepted his advice and promised to come out unto them on the morrow. But, when the favourite heard this saying reported of Shimas and was certified that needs must the King go forth to his subjects, she betook herself to him in haste and said to him, "How great is my wonder at thy submissiveness and thine obedience to thy slaves! Knowest thou not that these Wazirs are thy thralls? Why then dost thou exalt them to this highmost pitch of importance that they imagine them it was they gave thee this kingship and advanced thee to this rank and that it is they who confer favours on thee, albeit they have no power to do thee the least damage? Indeed, 'tis

not thou who owest submission to them; but on the contrary they owe it to thee, and it is their duty to carry out thine orders. How cometh it then, that thou art so mightily affrighted at them? It is said:—Unless thy heart be like iron, thou art not fit to be a Sovran. But thy mildness hath deluded these men, so that they presume upon thee and cast off their allegiance, although it behoveth that they be constrained unto thy obedience and enforced to thy submission. Therefore an thou hasten to accept their words and leave them as they now are and vouchsafe to them the least thing against thy will, they will weigh heavily upon thee and require other concessions of thee, and this will become their habit. But, an thou hearken to me, thou wilt not advance any one of them to power neither wilt thou accept his word nor encourage him to presume upon thee; else wilt thou fare with them as did the Shepherd with the Rogue." Asked the King, "How was that?" and she answered, "They relate this adventure of

THE SHEPHERD AND THE ROGUE.[159]

There was once a Shepherd, who fed a flock of sheep in the wold and kept over them strait watch. One night, there came to him a Rogue thinking to steal some of his charges and finding him assiduous in guarding them, sleeping not by night nor neglecting them by day, prowled about him all the livelong night, but could plunder nothing from him. So, when he was weary of striving, he betook himself to another part of the waste and trapping a lion, skinned him and stuffed his hide with bruised straw[160]; after which he set it up on a high place in the desert, where the Shepherd might see it and be assured thereof. Then he accosted the Shepherd and said to him, "Yonder lion hath sent me to demand his supper of these sheep." The Shepherd asked, "Where is the lion?" and the Rogue answered, "Lift thine eyes: there he standeth." So the Shepherd raised his eyes and seeing the semblance deemed it a very lion and was much affrighted;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Shepherd saw the semblance of the lion, he deemed it a very lion and was affrighted with the sorest fright, trembling for dread; so he said to the thief, "O my brother take what thou wilt, I will not gainsay thee." Accordingly the Rogue took what he would of the sheep and redoubled in greed by reason of the excess of the Shepherd's fear. Accordingly, every little while, he would hie to him and terrify him, saying, "The lion hath need of this and requireth that, and his intent is to do thus and thus," and take his sufficiency of the sheep; and he stinted not to do thus with him, till he had wasted the most part of

his flock. “This, O King,” added the favourite, “I tell thee only that thou suffer not the 107Grandees of thy realm to be deluded by thy mildness and easiness of temper and presume on thee; and, in right rede, their death were better than that they deal thus with thee.” Quoth the King, “I accept this thy counsel and will not hearken to their admonition neither will I go out unto them.” On the morrow the Wazirs and Officers of State and heads of the people assembled; and, taking each with him his weapon, repaired to the palace of the King, so they might break in upon him and slay him and seat another in his stead. When they came to the door, they required the doorkeeper to open to them; but he refused, whereupon they sent to fetch fire, wherewith to burn down the doors and enter. The doorkeeper, hearing what they said went in to the King in haste and told him that the folk were gathered together at the gate, adding, “They required me to open to them, but I refused; and they have sent to fetch fire to burn down the doors withal, so they may come into thee and slay thee. What dost thou bid me do?” Quoth the King in himself, “Verily, I am fallen into uttermost perdition.” Then he sent for the favourite; and, as soon as she came, said to her, “Indeed, Shimas never told me aught but I found it true, and now great and small are come purposing to slay me and thee: and because the doorkeeper would not open to them, they have sent to fetch fire, to burn the doors withal: so will the house be burnt and we therein. What dost thou counsel me to do?” She replied, “No harm shall betide thee, nor let thine affair affright thee. This is a time when the simple rise against their Kings.” Quoth he, “What dost thou counsel me to do and how shall I act in this affair?” Quoth she, “My rede is that thou fillet thy head and feign thyself sick: then send for the Wazir Shimas, who will come and see the plight wherein thou art; and do thou say to him:—Verily I purposed to go forth to the folk this day; but this malady hindered me. So go thou out to them and acquaint them with my condition and tell them that to-morrow I will fare forth without fail to them and do their need and look into their affairs, so they may be reassured and their rage may subside. Then do thou summon ten of thy father’s slaves, stalwart men of strength and prowess, to whom thou canst entrust thyself, hearing to thy best and complying with thy commandment, surely keeping thy secret and lief to thy love; and charge them on the morrow to stand at thy head and bid them suffer none of the folk to enter, save one by one; and all who enter do thou say:—Seize them and do them die. An they agree with thee upon this, to-morrow set 108up thy throne in the Divan[161] and open thy doors. When the folk see that thou hast opened to them their minds will be set at ease and they will come to thee with a whole heart, and seek admission to thee. Then do thou admit them, one after one, even as I said to thee and work with them thy will; but it behoveth thee begin by slaying Shimas, their chief and leader; for he is the Grand Wazier and head of the matter. Therefore do him die first and after put all the rest to death, one after other, and spare none whom thou knowest to have broken with thee his covenant; and in like way slaughter all whose violence thou fearest. An thou deal thus with them,

there will be left them no power to make head against thee; so shalt thou be at rest from them with full repose, and shalt enjoy thy kingship in peace and do whatso thou wilt; and know that there is no device that will profit thee more than this." Quoth the King, "Verily, this thy counsel is just and that which thou biddest me is to the point and I will assuredly do as thou directest." So he called for a fillet and bound his head therewith and shammed sickness. Then he sent for the Grand Wazir and said to him, "O Shimas, thou knowest that I love thee and hearken to the counsel of thee and thou art to me as brother and father both in one; also thou knowest that I do all thou biddest me and indeed thou badest me go forth to the lieges and sit to judge between them. Now I was assured that this was right rede on thy part, and purposed to go forth to them yesterday; but this sickness assailed me and I cannot sit up. It hath reached me that the folk are incensed at my failure to come forth to them and are minded of their mischief to do with me that which is unmeet for that they know not what ailment aileth me. So go thou forth to them and acquaint them with my case and the condition I am in; and excuse me to them, for I am obedient to their bidding and will do as they desire; wherefore order this affair and engage thyself for me herefor, even as thou hast been a loyal counsellor to me and to my sire before me, and it is of thy wont to make peace between the people. To-morrow, Inshallah, I will without fail come forth to them, and peradventure my sickness will cease from me this night, by the blessing of the purest intent and the good 109 I purpose them in my heart." So Shimas prostrated himself to Allah and called down blessings on the King and kissed his hand, rejoicing at this. Then he went forth to the folk and told them what he had heard from the King and forbade them from that which they had a mind to do, acquainting them with what excused the King for his absence and informing them that he had promised to come forth to them on the morrow and deal with them according to their desires; whereupon they dispersed and hied them to their houses.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shimas went from the presence to the ringleaders of the commons and said to them, "To-morrow the Sovran will come forth to you and will deal with you as ye desire." So they hied them to their homes. On such wise fared it with them; but as regards the Monarch, he summoned ten slaves of gigantic stature,[162] men of hard heart and prow of prowess, whom he had chosen from amongst his father's body-guards; and said to them, "Ye know the favour, esteem and high rank ye held with my sire and all the bounties, benefits and honours he bestowed on you, and I will advance you to yet higher dignity with me than this. Now I will tell you the reason thereof and ye are under safeguard of Allah from me. But first I will ask you somewhat, wherein if ye do my desire, obeying me in that which I shall bid you and conceal my secret from all men, ye shall have of me largesse and favour surpassing expectation. But above all things obedience!" The ten

thralls answered him with one mouth and in sequent words, saying, “Whatso thou biddest us, O our liege, that we will do, nor will we depart in aught from thy commandment, for thou art our lord and master.” Quoth the King, “Allah allot you weal! Now will I tell you the reason why I have chosen you out for increase of honour with me. Ye know how liberally my father dealt with the folk of his realm and the oath he took from them on behalf of me and how they promised 110 him that they would not break faith with me nor gainsay the bidding of me; and ye saw how they did yesterday, whenas they gathered all together about me and would have slain me. Now I am minded to do with them somewhat; and ’tis this, for that I have considered their action of yesterday and see that naught will restrain them from its like save exemplary chastisement: wherefore I perforce charge you privily to do to death whom I shall point out to you, to the intent that I may ward off mischief and calamity from my realm by slaying their leaders and Chiefs; and the manner thereof shall be on this wise. To-morrow I will sit on this seat in this chamber and give them admission to me one by one, coming in at one door and going out at another; and do ye, all ten, stand before me and be attentive to my signs: and whoso entereth singly, take him and drag him into yonder chamber and kill him and hide his corpse.” The slaves answered, “We hearken to thy hest and obey thy order”: whereupon he gave them gifts and dismissed them for the night. On the morrow he summoned the thralls and bade set up the royal seat: then he donned his kingly robes and taking the Book of law-cases[163] in his hands, posted the ten slaves before him and commanded to open the doors. So they opened the doors and the herald proclaimed aloud, saying, “Whoso hath authority, let him come to the King’s carpet[164]!” Whereupon up came the Wazirs and Prefects and Chamberlains and stood, each in his rank. Then the King bade admit them, one after one, and the first to enter was Shimas, according to the custom of the Grand Wazir; but no sooner had he presented himself before the King, and ere he could beware, the ten slaves gat about him, and dragging him into the adjoining chamber, despatched him. On like wise did they with the rest of the Wazirs and Olema and Notables, slaying them, one after other, till they made a clean finish.[165] Then the King called the 111 headsmen and bade them ply sword upon all who remained of the folk of valour and stowre: so they fell on them and left none whom they knew for a man of mettle but they slew him, sparing only the proletaires and the refuse of the people. These they drove away and they returned each to his folk, whilst the King secluded himself with his pleasures and surrendered his soul to its lusts, working tyranny, oppression and violence, till he outraced all the men of evil who had forerun him.[166] Now this King’s dominion was a mine of gold and silver and jacinths and jewels and the neighbouring rulers, one and all, envied him this empire and looked for calamity to betide him. Moreover, one of them, the King of Outer Hind, said in himself, “I have gotten my desire of wresting the realm from the hand of yonder silly lad, by reason of that which hath betided of his

slaughter of the Chiefs of his State and of all men of valour and mettle that were in his country. This is my occasion to snatch away that which is in his hand, seeing he is young in years and hath no knowledge of war nor judgment thereto, nor is there any left to counsel him aright or succour him. Wherefore this very day will I open on him the door of mischief by writing him a writ wherein I will flyte him and reproach him with that which he hath done and see what he will reply." So he indited him a letter to the following effect:—"In the name of Allah the Compassionating, the Compassionate * And after * I have heard tell of that which thou hast done with thy Wazirs and Olema and men of valiancy * and that whereinto thou hast cast thyself of calamity * so that there is neither power nor strength left in thee to repel whoso shall assail thee, more by token that thou transgressest and orderest thyself tyrannously and profligately * Now Allah hath assuredly given me the conquering of thee and the mastery over thee and into my hand hath delivered thee; wherefore do thou give ear to my word and obey the commandment of me and build me an impregnable castle amiddlemost the sea * An thou can not do this, depart thy realm and with thy life go flee * for I will send unto thee, from the farthest ends of Hind, twelve hordes[167] of horse, each twelve thousand fighting-men strong, who shall enter thy land and spoil thy goods and slay thy men and carry thy women into captivity * Moreover, I will make 112 my Wazir, Badí'a captain over them and bid him lay strait siege to thy capital till the master he be; * and I have bidden the bearer of this letter that he tarry with thee but days three * So, an thou do my demand, thou shalt be saved; else will I send that which I have said unto thee." Then he sealed the scroll and gave it to a messenger, who journeyed with it till he came to the capital of Wird Khan and delivered it to him. When the King read it, his strength failed him, his breast waxed strait and he made sure of destruction, having none to whom he might resort for aid or advice. Presently he rose and went in to his favourite wife who, seeing him changed of colour, said to him, "What mattereth thee, O King?" Quoth he, "This day I am no King, but slave to the King." And he opened the letter and read it to her, whereupon she fell to weeping and wailing and rending her raiment. Then he asked her, "Hast thou aught of rede or resource in this grievous strait?"; but she answered, "Women have no resource in time of war, nor have women any strength or aught of counsel. 'Tis men alone who in like of this affair have force and discourse and resource." When the King heard her words, there befel him the utmost regret and repentance and remorse for that he had transgressed against his Wazirs and Officers and Lords of his land,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when King Wird Khan heard the words of his favourite wife there befel him the utmost regret and repentance

for having transgressed against and slain his Wazirs and the chiefs of his state, and he would that he had died ere there came to him the like of these shameful tidings. Then he said to his women, "Verily, there hath betided me from you that which befel the Francolin and the Tortoises." Asked they, "What was that?", and he answered, "Men tell this tale of

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THE FRANCOLIN AND THE TORTOISES."

It is said that sundry Tortoises dwelt once in a certain island abounding in trees and fruiterers and rills, and it fortuned, one day, that a Francolin, passing over the island, was overcome with the fiery heat and fatigue and being in grievous suffering stayed his flight therein. Presently, looking about for a cool place, he espied the resort of the Tortoises and alighted down near their home. Now they were then abroad foraging for food, and when they returned from their feeding-places to their dwelling, they found the Francolin there. His beauty pleased them and Allah made him lovely in their eyes, so that they exclaimed "Subhána 'lláh," extolling their Creator and loved the Francolin with exceeding love and rejoiced in him, saying one to other, "Forsure this is of the goodliest of the birds;" and all began to caress him and entreat him with kindness. When he saw that they looked on him with eyes of affection, he inclined to them and companioned with them and took up his abode with them, flying away in the morning whither he would and returning at eventide to pass the night by side of them. On this wise he continued a long while until the Tortoises, seeing that his daily absence from them desolated them and finding that they never saw him save by night (for at dawn he still took flight in haste and they knew not what came of him, for all that their love grew to him), said each to other, "Indeed, we love this Francolin and he is become our true friend and we cannot bear parting from him, so how shall we devise some device tending to make him abide with us always? For he flieth away at dawn and is absent from us all day and we see him not save by night." Quoth one of them, "Be easy, O my sisters: I will bring him not to leave us for the turn of an eye." and quoth the rest, saying, "An thou do this, we will all be thy thralls." So, when the Francolin came back from his feeding-place and sat down amongst them, that wily Tortoise drew near unto him and called down blessings on him, giving him joy of his safe return and saying, "O my lord, know that Allah hath vouchsafed thee our love and hath in like manner set in thy heart the love of us, whereby thou art become to us a familiar friend and a comrade in this desert. Now the goodliest of times for those who love one another is when they are united and the sorest of 114calamities for them are absence and severance. But thou departest from us at peep of day and returnest not to us till sundown, wherefore there betideth us extreme desolation. Indeed this is exceeding grievous to us and we abide in sore longing for such reason." The

Francolin replied, “Indeed, I love you also and yearn for you yet more than you can yearn for me, nor is it easy for me to leave you; but my hand hath no help for this, seeing that I am a fowl with wings and may not wone with you always, because that is not of my nature. For a bird, being a winged creature, may not remain still, save it be for the sake of sleep o’ nights; but, as soon as it is day, he flieth away and seeketh his morning-meal in what place soever pleaseth him.” Answered the Tortoise, “Sooth thou speakest! Nevertheless he who hath wings hath no repose at most seasons, for that the good he getteth is not a fourth part of what ill betideth him, and the highmost aims of the creature are repose and ease of life. Now Allah hath bred between us and thee love and fellowship and we fear for thee, lest some of thine enemies catch thee and thou perish and we be denied the sight of thy countenance.” Rejoined the Francolin, “True! But what rede hast thou or resource for my case?” Quoth the Tortoise, “My advice is that thou pluck out thy wing-feathers, wherewith thou speedest thy flight, and tarry with us in tranquillity, eating of our meat and drinking of our drink in this pasturage, that aboundeth in trees rife with fruits yellow-ripe and we will sojourn, we and thou, in this fruitful stead and enjoy the company of one another.” The Francolin inclined to her speech, seeking ease for himself, and plucked out his wing-feathers, one by one, in accordance with the rede approved of by the Tortoise; then he took up his abode with them and contented himself with the little ease and transient pleasure he enjoyed. Presently up came a Weasel[1168] and glancing at the Francolin, saw that his wings were plucked, so that he could not fly, whereat he rejoiced with joy exceeding and said to himself, “Verily yonder Francolin is fat of flesh and scant of feather.” So he went up to him and seized him, whereupon the Francolin called out to the Tortoises for help; but when they saw the Weasel hend him, they drew apart from him and huddled together, choked with weeping for him, for they witnessed how the beast tortured him. Quoth the Francolin, “Is there aught with you but weeping?”; and quoth 115 they, “O our brother, we have neither force nor resource nor any course against a Weasel.” At this the Francolin was grieved and cutting off all his hopes of life said to them, “The fault is not yours, but mine own fault, in that I hearkened to you and plucked out my wing-feathers wherewith I used to fly. Indeed I deserve destruction for having obeyed you, and I blame you not in aught.” “On like wise,” continued the King, “I do not blame you, O women; but I blame and reproach myself for that I remembered not that ye were the cause of the transgression of our father Adam, by reason whereof he was cast out from the Garden of Eden and for that I forgot ye are the root of all evil and hearkened to you, in mine ignorance, lack of sense and weakness of judgment, and slew my Wazirs and the Governors of my State, who were my loyal advisers in all mine actions and my glory and my strength against whatsoever troubled me. But at this time find I not one to replace them nor see I any who shall stand me in their stead; and I fall into utter perdition.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-fifth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King blamed himself saying, "'Twas I that hearkened to you in mine ignorance and slew my Wazirs so that now I find none to stand in their stead; and unless Allah succour me with one of sound judgment, who shall guide me to that wherein is my deliverance, I am fallen into utter perdition." Then he arose and withdrew into his bedchamber, bemoaning his Wazirs and wise men and saying, "Would Heaven those lions were with me at this time, though but for an hour; so I might excuse myself unto them and look on them and bemoan to them my case and the travail that hath betided me after them!" And he abode all his day sunken in the sea of cark and care neither eating nor drinking. But as soon as the night fell dark, he arose and changing his raiment, donned old clothes and disguised himself and went forth at a venture to walk about the city, so haply he might hear from any some word of comfort. As he wandered about the main streets, behold, he chanced upon two boys who had sought a retired seat by a wall and he observed that they were equal in age, or about twelve years old. As they talked together he drew 116 near them whereas he might hear and apprehend what they said, unseen of them, and heard one say to the other, "Listen, O my brother, to what my sire told me yesternight of the calamity which hath betided him in the withering of his crops before their time, by reason of the rarity of rain and the sore sorrow that is fallen on this city." Quoth the other, "Wottest thou not the cause of this affliction?"; and quoth the first, "No! and, if thou ken it, pray tell it me." Rejoined the other, "Yes, I wot it and will tell it thee. Know that I have heard from one of my father's friends that our King slew his Wazirs and Grandees, not for aught of offence done of them, but only by reason of his love for women and inclination to them; for that his Ministers forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden and commanded to do them die in obedience to his wives. Thus he slew Shimas my sire, who was his Wazir and the Wazir of his father before him and the chief of his council; but right soon thou shalt see how Allah will do with him by reason of his sins against them and how He shall avenge them of him." The other boy asked, "What can Allah do now that they are dead?"; and his fellow answered, "Know that the King of Outer Hind[169] maketh light of our monarch, and hath sent him a letter berating him and saying to him:—Build me a castle amiddlemost the sea, or I will send unto thee Badi'a my Wazir, with twelve hordes of horse, each twelve thousand strong, to seize upon thy kingdom and slay thy men and carry thee and thy women into captivity. And he hath given him three days' time to answer after the receipt of that missive. Now thou must know, O my brother, that this King of Outer Hind is a masterful tyrant, a man of might and prowess in fight, and in his realm are much people; so unless our King make shift to fend him off from himself, he will fall into perdition, whilst the King of Hind, after slaying our Sovran, will seize on our possessions and massacre our men and make prize of our women." When the King heard this their talk, his agitation increased and he inclined

to the boys, saying, “Surely, this boy is a wizard, in that he is acquainted with this thing without learning it from me; for the letter is in my keeping and the secret also and none hath knowledge of such matter but myself. How then knoweth this boy of it? I will 117 resort to him and talk with him and I pray Allah that our deliverance may be at his hand.” Hereupon the King approached the boy softly and said to him, “O thou dear boy, what is this thou sayest of our King, that he did ill of the evilest in slaying his Wazirs and the Chiefs of his State? Indeed he sinned against himself and his subjects and thou art right in that which thou sayest. But tell me, O my son, whence knowest thou that the King of Outer Hind hath written him a letter, berating him and bespeaking him with the grievous speech whereof thou tellest?” The boy replied, “O brother, I know this from the sand[170] wherewith I take compt of night and day and from the saying of the ancients:—No mystery from Allah is hidden; for the sons of Adam have in them a spiritual virtue which discovereth to them the darkest secrets.” Answered Wird Khan, “True, O my son, but whence learnedest thou geomancy and thou young of years?” Quoth the boy, “My father taught it me;” and quoth the King, “Is thy father alive or dead?” “He is dead,” replied the boy. Then Wird Khan asked, “Is there any resource or device for our King, whereby to ward off from himself and his kingdom this sore calamity?” And the boy answered, saying, “It befitteth not that I speak with thee of this; but, an the King send for me and ask me how he shall do to baffle his foe and get free of his snares, I will acquaint him with that wherein, by the power of Allah Almighty, shall be his salvation.” Rejoined Wird Khan, “But who shall tell the King of this that he may send for thee and invite thee to him?” The boy retorted, “I hear that he seeketh men of experience and good counsel, so I will go up with them to him and tell him that wherein shall be his welfare and the warding off of this affliction from him; but, an he neglect the pressing matter and busy himself with his love-liesse among his women and I go to him of my own accord designing to acquaint him with the means of deliverance, he will assuredly give orders to slay me, even as he slew those his Wazirs, and my courtesy to him will be the cause of my destruction. Wherefore the folk will think slightly of me and belittle my wit and I shall be of those of whom it is said:—He whose science excelleth his sense perisheth by his ignorance.” When the King heard the boy’s words, he was assured of his sagacity; and the excellence of his merit was 118 manifest and he was certified that deliverance would betide him and his subjects at the boy’s hands. So presently he resumed the colloquy and asked him, “Whence art thou and where is thy home?”; and the boy answered, “This is the wall of our house.” The King took note of the place and farewelling the boy, returned to his palace in high spirits. There he changed his clothes and called for meat and wine, forbidding his women from him; and he ate and drank and returned thanks to Allah the Most High and besought Him of succour and deliverance; and he craved His pardon and forgiveness for that which he had done with his Wazirs and Olema and turned to Him with sincere repentance,

imposing on himself many a prayer and long fasting, by way of discipline-vow. On the morrow, he called one of his confidential eunuchs and describing to him the boy's home, bade him repair thither and bring him to his presence with all gentleness. Accordingly the slave sought out the boy and said to him, "The King summoneth thee, that good may betide thee from him and that he may ask thee a question; then shalt thou return safe and sound to thy dwelling." Asked the boy, "What is the King's need of me that he biddeth me to him on this wise?"; and the eunuch answered, "My lord's occasion with thee is question and answer." "A thousand times hearkening and a thousand times obeying the commandment of the King!" replied the boy and accompanied the slave to the palace. When he came into the presence, he prostrated himself before Allah and after salaaming, called down blessings on the King who returned his salutation and bade him be seated.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the boy appeared before the King and saluted him with the salam, Wird Khan returned his salutation and bade him be seated. So he sat down and the King asked him, "Knowest thou who talked with thee yesternight?" Answered the boy, "Yes;" and the King said, "And where is he?" "'Tis he who speaketh with me at this present," said the boy. Rejoined the King, "Thou sayst sooth, O friend," and bade set him a chair beside his own, whereon he made him sit and called for meat and drink. Then they 119 talked awhile and the King said, "Ho thou the Wazir,[171] in our talk yesternight thou toldest me that thou hadst a device whereby thou couldst defend us from the malice of the King of Hind. What is this contrivance and how shall we manœuvre to ward off his mischief from us? Tell me, that I may make thee chief of those who speak with me in the realm and choose thee to be my Grand Wazir and do according to thy judgment in all thou counsellest me and assign thee a splendid honorarium." Answered the boy, "O King, keep thy honorarium to thyself and seek counsel and policy of thy women, who directed thee to slay my father Shimas and the rest of the Wazirs." When the King heard this, he was ashamed and sighed and said, "O thou dear boy, was Shimas indeed thy sire?" The boy replied, "Shimas was indeed my sire, and I am in truth his son." Whereupon the King bowed his head, whilst the tears ran from his eyes, and he craved pardon of Allah. Then said he, "O boy, indeed I did this of my ignorance and by the evil counsel of the women; for 'Great indeed is their malice'[172]: but I beseech thee to forgive me and I will set thee in thy father's stead and make thy rank higher than his rank. Moreover, an thou do away from us this retribution sent down from Heaven, I will deck thy neck with a collar of gold and mount thee on the goodliest of steeds and bid the crier make proclamation before thee, saying:—This is the lief[173] boy, the Wazir who sitteth in the second seat after the King! And touching what thou sayest of the women, I have it in mind to do vengeance on them at such time as

Almighty Allah shall will it. But tell me now what thou hast with thee of counsel and contrivance, that my heart may be content." Quoth the boy, "Swear to me an oath that thou wilt not gainsay me in whatso I 120 shall say to thee and that I from that which I fear shall be safe;" and quoth the King, "This is the covenant of Allah between me and thee, that I will not go from thy word and that thou shalt be my chief counsellor and whatsoever thou biddest me, that will I do; and the Almighty Lord is witness betwixt us twain whatso I say." Therewith the boy's breast waxed broad and the field of speech was opened to him wide and he said, "O King, my rede to thee is that thou await the expiration of the delay appointed to thee for answering the courier of the King of Hind; and when he cometh before thee seeking the reply, do thou put him off to another day. With this he will excuse himself to thee, on the ground of his master having appointed him certain fixed days, and importune for an answer; but do thou rebut him and defer him to another day, without specifying what day it be. Then will he go forth from thee angered and betake himself into the midst of the city and speak openly among the folk, saying:—O people of the city, I am a courier of the King of Outer Hind, who is a monarch of great puissance and of determination such as softeneth iron. He sent me with a letter to the King of this city appointing to me certain days, saying:—An thou be not with me by the time appointed, my vengeance shall fall on thee. Now, behold, I went in to the King of this city and gave him the missive, which when he had read, he sought of me a delay of three days, after which he would return me an answer to the letter and I agreed to this of courtesy and consideration for him. When the three days were past, I went to seek the reply of him, but he delayed me to another day; and now I have no patience to wait longer; so I am about to return to my lord, the King of Outer Hind, and acquaint him with that which hath befallen me; and ye, O folk, are witnesses between me and him. All this will be reported to thee and do thou send for him and speak him gently and say to him:—O thou who seekest thine own ruin, what hath moved thee to blame us among our subjects? Verily, thou deservest present death at our hands; but the ancients say:—Clemency is of the attributes of nobility. Know that our delay in answering arose not from helplessness on our part, but from our much business and lack of leisure to look into thine affair and write a reply to thy King." Then call for the scroll and read it again and laugh loud and long and say to the courier:—Hast thou a letter other than this? If so, we will write thee an answer to that also. He will say, I have none other than this letter; but do thou repeat thy question to 121 him a second time and a third time, and he will reply, I have none other at all. Then say to him, Verily, this thy King is utterly witless in that he writeth us the like of this writ seeking to arouse our wrath against him, so that we shall go forth to him with our forces and domineer over his dominions and capture his kingdom. But we will not punish him this time for his unmannerly manners as shown in this letter, because he is wanting in wit and feeble of foresight, and it beseemeth our dignity that we first warn him not to repeat the like

of these childish extravagances; and if he risk his life by returning to the like of this, he will deserve speedy destruction. Indeed, methinks this King of thine who sent thee on such errand must be an ignorant fool, taking no thought to the issue of things and having no Wazir of sense and good counsel, with whom he may advise. Were he a man of mind, he had taken counsel with a Wazir, ere sending us the like of this laughable letter. But he shall have a reply similar to his script and surpassing it; for I will give it to one of the boys of the school to answer. Then send for me; and, when I come to the presence, bid me read the letter and reply thereto." When the King heard the boy's speech, his breast broadened and he approved his proposal and his device delighted him. So he conferred gifts upon him and installing him in his father's office, sent him away rejoicing. And as soon as expired the three days of delay which he had appointed, the courier presented himself and going in to the King, demanded the answer; but he put him off to another day; whereupon he went to the end of the carpet-room[1174] and spake with unseemly speech, even as the boy had foresaid. Then he betook himself to the bazar and cried, "Ho, people of this city, I am a courier of the King of Outer Hind and came with a message to your monarch who still putteth me off from a reply. Now the term is past which my master limited to me and your King hath no excuse, and ye are witnesses unto this." When these words reached the King, he sent for that courier and said to him, "O thou that seeketh thine own ruin, art thou not the bearer of a letter from King to King, between whom are secrets, and how cometh it that thou goest forth among the folk and publishest Kings' secrets to the vulgar? Verily, thou meritest retribution from us, but this we will forbare, for the sake of returning an answer by thee to this fool of a King of thine: 122 and it befitteth not that any return to him reply but the least of the boys of the school." Then he sent for the Wazir's son, who came and prostrating himself before Allah, offered up prayers for the King's lasting glory and long life; whereupon Wird Khan threw him the letter, saying, "Read that letter and write me an acknowledgment thereof in haste." The boy took the letter and read it, smiled; then he laughed; then he laughed aloud and asked the King, "Didst thou send for me to answer this letter?" "Yes," answered Wird Khan, and the boy said, "O King, methought thou hadst sent for me on some grave occasion; indeed, a lesser than I had answered this letter but 'tis thine to command, O puissant potentate." Quoth the King, "Write the reply forthright, on account of the courier, for that he is appointed a term and we have delayed him another day." Quoth the boy, "With the readiest hearkening and obedience," and pulling out paper and inkcase[1175] wrote as follows:——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the boy took the letter and read it, he forthright pulled out inkcase and paper and wrote as follows:—"In the

name of Allah the Compassionating, the Compassionate! Peace be upon him who hath gotten pardon and deliverance and the mercy of the Merciful! But after. O thou who pretendest thyself a mighty King and art but a King in word and not in deed, we give thee to know that thy letter hath reached us and we have read it and have taken note of that which is therein of absurdities and peregrine extravagances, whereby we are certified of thine ignorance and ill-will to us. Verily, thou hast put out thy hand to that whereunto thou canst never reach; and, but that we have compassion on Allah's creatures and the lieges, we had not held back from thee. As for thy messenger, he went forth to the market-streets and published the news of thy letter to great and small, whereby he merited retaliation from us; but we spared him 123 and remitted his offence, of pity for him, seeing that he is excusable with thee and not for aught of respect to thyself. As for that whereof thou makest mention in thy letter of the slaying of my Wazirs and Olema and Grandees, this is the truth and this I did for a reason that arose with me, and I slew not one man of learning but there are with me a thousand of his kind, wiser than he and cleverer and wittier; nor is there with me a child but is filled with knowledge, and I have, in the stead of each of the slain, of those who surpass in his kind, what is beyond count. Each man of my troops also can cope with an horde of thine, whilst, as for monies I have a manufactory that maketh every day a thousand pounds of silver, besides gold, and precious stones are with me as pebbles; and as for the people of my possessions I cannot set forth to thee their goodliness and abundance of means. How darest thou, therefore, presume upon us and say to us, Build me a castle amiddlemost the main? Verily, this is a marvellous thing, and doubtless it ariseth from the slightness of thy wit; for hadst thou aught of sense, thou hadst enquired of the beatings of the billows and the waftings of the winds. But wall it off from the waves and the surges of the sea and still the winds, and we will build thee the castle. Now as for thy pretension that thou wilt vanquish me, Allah forfend that such thing should befal and the like of thee should lord it over us and conquer our realm! Nay, the Almighty hath given me the victory over thee, for that thou hast transgressed against me and rebelled without due cause. Know, therefore, that thou hast merited retribution from the Lord and from me; but I fear Allah in respect of thee and thy subjects[176] and will not take horse against thee except after warning. Wherefore, an thou also fear Allah, hasten to send me this year's tribute; else will I not turn from my design to ride forth against thee with a thousand thousand[177] and an hundred thousand fighting-men, all furious giants on elephants, and I will range them round about my Wazir and bid him besiege thee three years, in lieu of the three days' delay thou appointedst to thy messenger, and I will make myself master of thy dominion, except that I will slay 124 none save thyself alone and take captive therefrom none but thy Harim." Then the boy drew his own portrait in the margin of the letter and wrote thereunder the words: "This answer was written by the least of the boys of the school." After this he sealed it and handed it to the King, who gave it to

the courier, and the man, after taking it and kissing the King's hands went forth from him thanking Allah and the Sovran for his royal clemency to him and marvelling at the boy's intelligence. He arrived at the court of the King, his master, on the third day after the expiration of the term appointed to him, and found that he had called a meeting of his council, by reason of the failure of the courier to return at the time appointed. So he went in to the King and prostrating himself before him, gave him the letter. The King took it and questioned him of the cause of his tarrying and how it was with King Wird Khan. So he told him all he had seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears; whereat the King's wit was confounded and he said, "Out on thee! What tale is this thou tellest me of the like of this King?" Answered the courier, "O mighty monarch, here am I in thy presence,[178] but open the letter and read it, and the truth of my speech will be manifest to thee." So the King opened the letter and read it and seeing the semblance of the boy who had written it, made sure of the loss of his kingdom and was perplexed anent the end of his affair. Then, turning to his Wazirs and Grandees, he acquainted them with what had occurred and read to them the letter, whereat they were affrighted with the sorest affright and sought to sooth the King's terror with words that were only from the tongue, whilst their hearts were torn piecemeal with palpitations of alarm. But Badi'a (the Chief Wazir) presently said, "Know, O King, that there is no profit in that which my brother Wazirs have proffered, and it is my rede that thou write this King a writ and excuse thyself to him therein, saying:—I love thee and loved thy father before thee and sent thee not this letter by the courier except only to prove thee and try thy constancy and see what was in thee of valiancy and thy proficiency in matters of practick and theorick and skill in enigmas and that wherewith thou art endowed of all perfections. So we pray Almighty Allah to bless thee in thy kingdom and strengthen the defences of thy capital and add to thy dominion, 125 since thou art mindful of thyself and managest to accomplish every need of thy subjects. And send it to him by another courier." Exclaimed the King, "By Allah of All-might! 'tis a marvel of marvels that this man should be a mighty King and ready for war, after his slaughter of all the wise men of his kingdom and his counsellors and the captains of his host and that his realm should be populous and prosper after this and there should issue therefrom this prodigious power! But the marvelousest of all is that the little ones of its schools should return the like of this answer for its King. Verily, of the vileness of my greed I have kindled this fire upon myself and lieges, and I know not how I shall quench it, save by taking the advice of this my Wazir." Accordingly he gat ready a costly present, with eunuchs and slaves manifold, and wrote the following reply:—"In the name of Allah the Compassionating, the Compassionate! To proceed: O Glorious King Wird Khan, son of my dear brother, Jali'ad, may the Lord have mercy on thee and continue thee! Thine answer to our letter hath reached us and we have read it and apprehended its contents and see therein that which gladdeneth us and this is the utmost of that which we sought of Allah for thee; so we beseech Him to exalt thy dignity and stablish the

pillars of thy state and give thee the victory over thy foes and those who purpose thee frowardness. Know, O King, that thy father was my brother and that there were between us in his lifetime pacts and covenants, and never saw he from me aught save weal, nor ever saw I from him other than good; and when he deceased and thou tookest seat upon the throne of his kingship, there betided us the utmost joy and gladness; but, when the news reached us of that which thou didst with thy Wazirs and the Notables of thy State, we feared lest the report of thee should come to the ears of some King other than ourselves and he should presume against thee, for that we deemed thee negligent of thine affairs and of the maintenance of thy defences and neglectful of the interests of thy kingdom; so we let write unto thee what should arouse thy spirit. But, when we saw that thou returnedest us the like of this reply, our heart was set at ease for thee, may Allah give thee enjoyment[179] of thy kingdom and stablish thee in thy dignity! And so peace be with thee." Then he 126 despatched the letter and the presents to Wird Khan with an escort of an hundred horse,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the monarch of Outer Hind, after making ready his presents, despatched them to King Wird Khan, with an escort of an hundred horse, who fared on till they came to his court and saluting him, presented letter and gifts. The King read the writ and lodged the leader of the escort in a befitting place, entreating him with honour and accepting the presents he presented. So the news of this was bruited abroad among the folk and the King rejoiced therein with joy exceeding. Then he sent for the boy, the son of Shimas, and the Captain of the hundred horse; and, entreating the young Wazir with honour, gave him the letter to read; whilst he himself blamed the King's conduct to the Captain who kissed his hands and made his excuses to him, offering up prayers for the continuance of his life and the permanence of his prosperity. The King thanked him for this and bestowed upon him honours and largesse and gave to all his men what befitted them and made ready presents to send by them and bade the boy Wazir indite an answer to their King's letter. So the boy wrote a reply, wherein, after an address[180] beautiful exceedingly, he touched briefly on the question of reconciliation and praised the good breeding of the envoy and of his mounted men, and showed it, when duly finished, to the King who said to him, "Read it, O thou dear boy, that we may know what is written[181] therein." So the boy read the letter in the presence of the hundred horse, 127 and the King and all present marvelled at its ordinance of style and sense. Then the King sealed the letter and delivering it to the Captain of the hundred horse, dismissed him with some of his own troops, to escort him as far as the frontier of his country. The Captain returned, confounded in mind at that which he had seen of the

boy's knowledge and thanking Allah for the speedy accomplishment of his errand and the acceptance of peace, to the King of Outer Hind. Then going in to the presence, he delivered the presents and handed to him the letter, telling him what he had seen and heard, whereat the King rejoiced with joy exceeding and rendered lauds to his Lord the Most High and honoured the Captain commending his care and zeal and advancing him in rank. And from that hour he woned in peace and tranquillity and all happiness. As for King Wird Khan, he returned to the paths of righteousness, abandoning his evil ways and repenting to Allah with sincere penitence; and he gave up womanising altogether and applied himself wholly to the ordering of the affairs of his realm and the governance of his people in the fear of Allah. Furthermore, he made the son of Shimas Wazir in his father's stead, and the chief after himself in his realm and keeper of his secrets and bade decorate his capital for seven days and likewise the other cities of his kingdom. At this the subjects rejoiced and fear and alarm ceased from them and they were glad in the prospect of justice and equity and instant in prayer for the King and for the Minister who from him and them had done away this trouble. Then said the King to the Wazir, "What is thy rede for the assuring of the state and the prospering of the people and the return of the realm to its aforetime state as regards Captains and Councillors?" Answered the boy, "O King of high estate, in my judgment it behoveth before all, that thou begin by rending out from thy heart the root of wickedness and leave thy debauchery and tyranny and addiction to women; for, an thou return to the root of transgression, the second backsliding will be worse than the first." The King asked, "And what is the root of sinfulness that it behoveth me to root out from my heart?"; and was answered by the Wazir, little of years but great of wit, "O King the root of wickedness is subjection to the desire of women and inclining to them and following their counsel and contrivance; for the love of them changeth the soundest wit and corrupteth the most upright nature, and manifest proofs bear witness to my saying, wherein an thou meditate them and follow 128 their actions and consequences with eyes intent, thou wilt find a loyal counsellor against thy own soul and wilt stand in no need whatever of my rede. Look, then, thou occupy not thy heart with the thought of womankind and do away the trace of them from thy mind, for that Allah the Most High hath forbidden excessive use of them by the mouth of His prophet Moses, so that quoth a certain wise King to his son:—O my son, when thou succeedest to the kingdom after me, frequent not women overmuch, lest thy heart be led astray and thy judgment be corrupted; for that overmuch commerce with them leadeth to love of them, and love of them to corruption of judgment. And the proof of this is what befel our Lord Solomon, son of David, (peace be upon the twain of them!) whom Allah specially endowed with knowledge and wisdom and supreme dominion, nor vouchsafed He to any one of the Kings his predecessors the like of that which He gave him; and women were the cause of his father's offending. The examples of this are many, O King, and I do but make mention of Solomon to thee for that thou knowest that to none was given such dominion as that with which he was

invested, so that all the Kings of the earth obeyed him. Know then, O King, that the love of women is the root of all evil and none of them hath any judgment: wherefore it behoveth a man use them according to his need and not incline to them with utter inclination for that will cast him into corruption and perdition. An thou hearken to my words, all thine affairs will prosper; but, an thou neglect them thou wilt repent, whenas repentance will not profit thee." Answered the King, "Verily, I have left my whilome inclination to women——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Twenty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O mighty monarch, that King Wird Khan said to his Wazir, "Indeed, I have left my whilome inclination to women and have altogether renounced my infatuation for them; but how shall I do to punish them in retaliation of their misdeeds? For the slaying of thy sire Shimas was of their malice and not of my own will, and I know not what ailed my reason that I consented with their proposal to slay him." Then he cried, "Ah me!" and groaned and lamented, saying, "Well-away and alas for the loss of my Wazir and his just judgment 129 and admirable administration and for the loss of his like of the Wazirs and Heads of the State and of the goodliness of their apt counsels and sagacious!" "O King," quoth the boy-minister, "Know that the fault is not with women alone, for that they are like unto a pleasing stock in trade, whereto the lusts of the lookers-on incline. To whosoever lusteth and buyeth, they sell it, but whoso buyeth not, none forceth him to buy; so that the fault is of him who buyeth, especially if he know the harmfulness of that merchandise. Now, I warn thee, as did my sire before me, but thou acceptedest not to his counsel." Answered the King, "O Wazir, indeed I have fixed this fault upon myself, even as thou hast said, and I have no excuse except divine foreordainment." Rejoined the Wazir, "O King, know that Almighty Allah hath created us and endowed us with capability and appointed to us freewill and choice; so, if we will, we do, and if we will, we do not. The Lord commanded us not to do harm, lest sin attach to us; wherefore it befitteth us to take compt of whatso is right to do, for that the Almighty biddeth us naught but good in all cases and forbiddeth us only from evil; but what we do, we do of our own design, be it fair or faulty." Quoth the King, "Thou sayest sooth, and indeed my fault arose from my surrendering myself to my lusts, albeit often and often my better self warned me from this and thy sire Shimas also warned me often and often; but my lusts overcame my wits. Hast thou then with thee aught that may withhold me from again committing this error and whereby my reason may be victorious over the desires of my soul?" Quoth the Wazir, "Yes: I can tell thee what will restrain thee from relapsing into this fault, and it is that thou doff the garment of ignorance and don that of understanding, and disobey thy passions and obey thy Lord and revert to the policy of the just King thy sire, and fulfil thy duties to Allah the

Most High and to thy people and apply thyself to the defence of thy faith and the promotion of thy subjects' welfare and rule thyself aright and forbear the slaughter of thy people; and look to the end of things and sever thyself from tyranny and oppression and arrogance and lewdness, and practise justice, equity and humility and bow before the bidding of the Almighty and apply thyself to gentle dealing with those of His creatures over whom He set thee and be assiduous as it besitteth thee in fulfilling their prayers unto thee. An thou be constant herein may thy days be serene and may Allah of His mercy pardon thee and make thee loved and feared of all 130 who look on thee; so shall thy foes be brought to naught, for the Omnipotent shall rout their hosts and thou shalt have acceptance with Him and of His creatures be dreaded and to them endeared." Quoth the King, "Indeed thou hast quickened my vitals and illumined my heart with thy sweet speech and hast opened the eyes of my clear-seeing after blindness; and I am resolved to do whatso thou hast set forth to me, with the help of the Almighty, leaving my former case of lust and sinfulness and bringing forth my soul from durance vile to deliverance and from fear to safety. So it behoveth thee to be joyful hereat and contented, for that I am become to thee as a son, maugre my more of age, and thou to me as a dear father, despite thy tenderness of years, and it hath become incumbent on me to do mine utmost endeavour in all thou commandest me. Wherefore I thank the bounty of Allah and thy bounty because He hath vouchsafed me, by thee, fair fortune and goodly guidance and just judgment to ward off my cark and care; and the security of my lieges hath been brought about by thy hand, through the excellence of thy knowledge and the goodliness of thy contrivance. And thou, from this hour, shalt be the counsellor of my kingdom and equal to myself in all but sitting upon the throne; and whatso thou dost shall be law to me and none shall disobey thy word, young in years though thou be, for that thou art old in wit and knowledge. So I thank Allah who deigned grant thee to me, that thou mayst guide me into the way of salvation and out of the crooked paths of perdition." Quoth the Wazir, "O auspicious King, know that no merit is due to me for giving thee loyal counsel; for that to succour thee by deed and word is one of the things which is incumbent on me, seeing that I am but a plant of thy bounty; and not I alone, but one before me was overwhelmed with thy beneficence; so that we are both alike partakers in thy honours and favours, and how shall we not acknowledge this? Moreover thou, O King, art our shepherd and ruler and he who wardeth off from us our foes, and to whom are committed our protection and our guardian, constant in endeavour for our safety. Indeed, though we lavished our lives in thy service, yet should we not fulfil that which is incumbent on us of gratitude to thee; but we supplicate Allah Almighty, who hath set thee over us and made thee our ruler, and beseech Him vouchsafe thee long life and success in all thine enterprises and not to make trial of thee with afflictions in thy time, but bring thee to thy desire and make thee to be reverenced till the day of thy death and lengthen 131 thine arms in generosity, so thou mayst have

command over every wise man and subdue every wicked man and all the wise and brave be found with thee in thy realm and all the ignorant and cowardly be plucked out from thy reign; and we pray Him to withhold from thy people scarcity and calamity and sow among them the seed of love and friendship and cause them to enjoy of this world its prosperity and of the next felicity, of His grace and bounty and hidden mercies. Amen![182] For He is over all things Omnipotent and there is naught difficult unto Him, to Him all things tend." When the King heard the Wazir's prayer, he was mightily rejoiced and inclined to him with his whole heart, saying, "Know, O Wazir, thou art to me in lieu of brother and son and father, and naught but death shall divide me from thee. All that my hand possesseth thou shalt have the disposal of and, if I have no child to succeed me, thou shalt sit on my throne in my stead; for thou art the worthiest of all the folk of my realm, and I will invest thee with my Kingship in the presence of the Grandees of my state and appoint thee my heir apparent to inherit the kingdom after me, Inshallah!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirtieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Wird Khan said to the son of Shimas the whilome Wazir, "Presently I will name thee my successor and make thee my heir apparent: and I will call the Grandees of mine Empire to witness thereto." Then he summoned his Secretary and bade him write to all the Lords of his land, convoking them at his Court, and caused proclamation to be made in his city to all the townsfolk great and small, bidding every one of the Emirs and Governors and Chamberlains and other officers and dignitaries to his presence as well as the Olema and Literati learned in the law. He held to boot a grand Divan and made a banquet, never was its like seen anywhere and thereto he bade all the folk, high and low. So they assembled and abode in merry making, eating and drinking a 132 month's space; after which the King clothed the whole of his household and the poor of his Kingdom and bestowed on the men of knowledge abundant largesse. Then he chose out a number of the Olema and wise men who were known to the son of Shimas, and caused them go in to him, bidding him choose out of them six that he might make them Wazirs under commandment of the boy. Accordingly he selected six of the oldest of them in years and the best in wits and fullest of lore and the quickest of memory and judgment, and presented them to the King, who clad them in Wazirial habit saying, "Ye are become my Ministers, under the commandment of this my Grand Wazir, the son of Shimas. Whatsoever he saith to you or biddeth you to do, ye shall never and in no wise depart from it, albeit he is the youngest of you in years; for he is the eldest of you in intellect and intelligence." Then he seated them upon chairs, adorned with gold after the usage of Wazirs, and appointed to them stipends and allowances, bidding them choose out such of the notables of the kingdom and officers of the troops present at the banquet as were aptest for the service of the state, that he

might make them Captains of tens and Captains of hundreds and Captains of thousands and appoint to them dignities and stipends and assign them provision, after the manner of Grandees. This they did with entire diligence and he bade them also handsel all who were present with large gifts and dismiss them each to his country with honour and renown; he also charged his governors to rule the people with justice and enjoined them to be tender to the poor as well as to the rich and bade succour them from the treasury, according to their several degrees. So the Wazirs wished him permanence of glory and continuance of life, and he commanded to decorate the city three days, in gratitude to Allah Almighty for mercies vouchsafed to him. Such was the case with the King and his Wazir, Ibn Shimas, in the ordinance of his kingdom through his Emirs and Governors; but as regards the favourite women, wives, concubines and others who, by their malice and perfidy, had brought about the slaughter of the Wazirs and had well nigh ruined the realm, as soon as the Court was dissolved and all the people had departed, each to his own place, after their affairs had been set in order, the King summoned his boy-Minister, the son of Shimas, and the other six Wazirs and taking them apart privily, said to them, "Know, O Wazirs, that I have been a wanderer from the right way, drowned in ignorance, opposed to admonition, a breaker of facts and 133 promises and a gainsayer of good counsellors; and the cause of all this was my being fooled by these women and the wiles whereby they beset me and the glozing lure of their speech, whereby they seduced me to sin and my acceptance of this, for that I deemed the words of them true and loyal counsel, by reason of their sweetness and softness; but lo, and behold! they were deadly poison. And now I am certified that they sought but to ruin and destroy me, wherefore they deserve punishment and retribution from me, for justice sake, that I may make them a warning to whoso will be warned. And what say your just judgments anent doing them to die?" Answered the boy Wazir, "O mighty King, I have already told thee that women are not alone to blame, but that the fault is shared between them and the men who hearken to them. However, they deserve punishment and requital for two reasons: firstly for the fulfilment of thy word, because thou art the supreme King; and secondly, by reason of their presumption against thee and their seducing thee and their meddling with that which concerneth them not and whereof it befitteth them not even to speak. Wherefore they have right well deserved death; yet let that which hath befallen them suffice them, and do thou henceforth reduce them to servants' estate. But it is thine to command in this and in other than this." Then one of the Wazirs seconded the counsel of Ibn Shimas; but another of them prostrated himself before the King and said to him, "Allah prolong the King's life! An thou be indeed resolved to do with them that which shall cause their death, do with them as I shall say to thee." Asked Wird Khan, "And what is that?"; and the Wazir answered, "'Twere best that thou bid some of thy female slaves carry the women who played thee false to the apartment, wherein befel the slaughter of thy Wazirs and wise men and imprison them there; and bid that they be provided with a little meat and drink, enough to keep life in

their bodies. Let them never be suffered to go forth of that place, and whenever one of them dies, let her abide among them, as she is, till they die all, even to the last of them. This is the least of their desert, because they were the cause of this great avail; ay, and the origin of all the troubles and calamities that have befallen in our time; so shall there be verified in them the saying of the Sayer:—Whoso diggeth his brother a pit shall surely himself fall into it, albeit of long safety he have benefit." The King accepted the Wazir's counsel and sending for four stalwart female slaves, committed the 134offending women to them, bidding them bear them into the place of slaughter and imprison them there and allow them every day a little coarse food and a little troubled water. They did with them as he bade; wherefore the women mourned with sore mourning, repenting them of that which they had done and lamenting with grievous lamentation. Thus Allah gave them their reward of abjection in this world and prepared for them torment in the world to come; nor did they cease to abide in that murky and noisome place, whilst every day one or other of them died, till they all perished, even to the last of them;[183] and the report of this event was bruited abroad in all lands and countries. This is the end of the story of the King and his Wazirs and subjects, and praise be to Allah who causeth peoples to pass away, and quickeneth the bones that rot in decay; Him who alone is worthy to be glorified and magnified alway and hallowed for ever and aye! And amongst the tales they tell is one of

39- ABU KIR THE DYER AND ABU SIR THE BARBER.

There dwelt once, in Alexandria city, two men, of whom one was a dyer, by name Abú Kír, and the other a barber Abú Sír;[184] and they were neighbours in the market-street, where their shops stood side by side. The dyer was a swindler and a liar, an exceeding wicked wight, as if indeed his head-temples were hewn out of a boulder rock or fashioned of the threshold of a Jewish synagogue, nor was he ashamed of any shameful work he wrought amongst the folk. It was his wont, when any brought him cloth for staining, first to require of him payment under pretence of buying dye-stuffs therewith. So the customer would give him the wage in advance and wend his ways, and the dyer would spend all he 135 received on meat and drink; after which he would sell the cloth itself as soon as ever its owner turned his back and waste its worth in eating and drinking and what not else, for he ate not but of the daintiest and most delicate viands nor drank but of the best of that which doth away the wit of man. And when the owner of the cloth came to him, he would say to him, “Return to me to-morrow before sunrise and thou shalt find thy stuff dyed.” So the customer would go away, saying to himself, “One day is near another day,” and return next day at the appointed time, when the dyer would say to him, “Come to-morrow; yesterday I was not at work, for I had with me guests and was occupied with doing what their wants required till they went: but to-morrow before sunrise come and take thy cloth dyed.” So he would fare forth and return on the third day, when Abu Kir would say to him, “Indeed yesterday I was excusable, for my wife was brought to bed in the night and all day I was busy with manifold matters; but to-morrow, without fail, come and take thy cloth dyed.” When the man came again at the appointed time, he would put him off with some other pretence, it mattered little what, and would swear to him;—— Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that every time the owner of an article came to the dyer he would put him off with any pretext[185] and would swear to him; nor would he cease to promise and swear to him, as often as he came, till the customer lost patience and said, “How often wilt thou say to me, ‘To-morrow?’ Give me my stuff: I will not have it dyed.” Whereupon the dyer would make answer, “By

Allah, O my brother, I am abashed at thee; but I must tell the truth and may Allah harm all who harm folk in their goods!" The other would exclaim, "Tell me what hath happened;" and Abu Kir would 136 reply, "As for thy stuff I dyed that same on matchless wise and hung it on the drying rope but 'twas stolen and I know not who stole it." If the owner of the stuff were of the kindly he would say, "Allah will compensate me;" and if he were of the ill-conditioned, he would haunt him with exposure and insult, but would get nothing of him, though he complained of him to the judge. He ceased not doing thus till his report was noised abroad among the folk and each used to warn other against Abu Kir who became a byword amongst them. So they all held aloof from him and none would be entrapped by him save those who were ignorant of his character; but, for all this, he failed not daily to suffer insult and exposure from Allah's creatures. By reason of this his trade became slack and he used to go to the shop of his neighbour the barber Abu Sír and sit there, facing the dyery and with his eyes on the door. Whenever he espied any one who knew him not standing at the dyery-door, with a piece of stuff in his hand, he would leave the barber's booth and go up to him saying, "What seekest thou, O thou?"; and the man would reply, "Take and dye me this thing." So the dyer would ask, "What colour wilt thou have it?" For, with all his knavish tricks his hand was in all manner of dyes; but he was never true to any one; wherefore poverty had gotten the better of him. Then he would take the stuff and say, "Give me my wage in advance and come to-morrow and take the stuff." So the stranger would advance him the money and wend his way; whereupon Abu Kir would carry the cloth to the market-street and sell it and with its price buy meat and vegetables and tobacco[186] and fruit and what not else he needed; but, whenever he saw any one who had given him stuff to dye standing at the door of his shop, he would not come forth to him or even show himself to him. On this wise he abode years and years, till it fortuned one day that he received cloth to dye from a man of wrath and sold it and spent the proceeds. The owner came to him every day, but found him not in his shop; for, whenever he espied any one who had claim against him, he would flee from him into the shop of the barber Abu Sir. At last, that angry 137 man finding that he was not to be seen and growing weary of such work, repaired to the Kazi and bringing one of his serjeants to the shop, nailed up the door, in presence of a number of Moslems, and sealed it, for that he saw therein naught save some broken pans of earthenware to stand him instead of his stuff; after which the serjeant took the key, saying to the neighbours, "Tell him to bring back this man's cloth then come to me[187] and take his shop key;" and went his way, he and the man. Then said Abu Sir to Abu Kir, "What ill business is this?[188] Whoever bringeth thee aught thou losest it for him. What hath become of this angry man's stuff?" Answered the dyer, "O my neighbour, 'twas stolen from me." "Prodigious!" exclaimed the barber. "Whenever any one giveth thee aught, a thief stealeth it from thee! Art thou then the meeting-place of every rogue upon town? But I doubt me thou liest: so tell

me the truth." Replied Abu Kir, "O my neighbour, none hath stolen aught from me." Asked Abu Sir, "What then dost thou with the people's property?"; and the dyer answered, "Whenever any one giveth me aught to dye, I sell it and spend the price." Quoth Abu Sir, "Is this permitted thee of Allah?" and quoth Abu Kir, "I do this only out of poverty, because business is slack with me and I am poor and have nothing."[189] And he went on to complain to him of the dulness of his trade and his lack of means. Abu Sir in like manner lamented the little profit of his own calling, saying, "I am a master of my craft and have not my equal in this city; but no one cometh to me to be polled, because I am a pauper; and I loathe this art and mystery, O my brother." Abu Kir replied, "And I also loathe my own craft, by reason of its slackness; but, O my brother, what call is there for our abiding in this town? Let us depart from it, I and thou, and solace ourselves in the lands of mankind, carrying in our hands our crafts which are in demand all the world over; so shall we breathe the air and rest from this grievous trouble." And he ceased not to commend travel to 138 Abu Sir, till the barber became wishful to set out; so they agreed upon their route,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu Kir ceased not his praises of wayfaring to Abu Sir till the barber became wishful to depart; so they agreed upon their route, at which decision Abu Kir rejoiced and improvised these lines:—

Leave thy home for abroad an wouldst rise on high, ✿ And travel whence benefits five-fold rise;
The soothing of sorrow and winning of bread, ✿ Knowledge, manners and commerce with good men and wise.
An they say that in travel are travail and care, ✿ And disunion of friends and much hardship that tries;
Yet to generous youth death is better than life ✿ In the house of contempt betwixt haters and spies.

When they agreed to travel together Abu Kir said to Abu Sir, "O my neighbour, we are become brethren and there is no difference between us, so it behoveth us to recite the Fátihah[190] that he of us who gets work shall of his gain feed him who is out of work, and whatever is left, we will lay in a chest; and when we return to Alexandria, we will divide it fairly and equally." "So be it," replied Abu Sir, and they repeated the Opening Chapter of the Koran on this understanding. Then Abu Sir locked up his shop and gave the key to its owner, whilst Abu Kir left his door locked and sealed and let the key lie with the Kazi's serjeant; after which they took their baggage and embarked on the morrow in a galleon[191] upon the salt sea. They set sail the same day and fortune attended them, for, of Abu Sir's great good luck, there was not a barber in the ship albeit it carried an hundred and twenty men, besides captain and crew. So, when they loosed the sails, the barber said to the dyer, "O my brother, this is the sea and we shall need meat and drink; we have but little provaunt with us and haply

the 139voyage will be long upon us; wherefore methinks I will shoulder my budget and pass among the passengers, and may be some one will say to me:—Come hither, O barber, and shave me, and I will shave him for a scone or a silver bit or a draught of water: so shall we profit by this, I and thou too." "There's no harm in that," replied the dyer and laid down his head and slept, whilst the barber took his gear and water-tasse[192] and throwing over his shoulder a rag, to serve as napkin (because he was poor), passed among the passengers. Quoth one of them, "Ho, master, come and shave me." So he shaved him, and the man gave him a half-dirham;[193] whereupon quoth Abu Sir, "O my brother, I have no use for this bit; hadst thou given me a scone 'twere more blessed to me in this sea, for I have a shipmate and we are short of provision." So he gave him a loaf and a slice of cheese and filled him the tasse with sweet water. The barber carried all this to Abu Kir and said, "Eat the bread and cheese and drink the water." Accordingly he ate and drank, whilst Abu Sir again took up his shaving gear and, tasse in hand and rag on shoulder, went round about the deck among the passengers. One man he shaved for two scones and another for a bittock of cheese, and he was in demand, because there was no other barber on board. Also he bargained with every one who said to him, "Ho, master, shave me!" for two loaves and a half-dirham, and they gave him whatever he sought, so that, by sundown, he had collected thirty loaves and thirty silvers with store of cheese and olives and botargoes.[194] And besides these he got from the passengers whatever he asked for and was soon in possession of things galore. Amongst the rest he shaved the Captain,[195] to whom he complained of his lack of victual for the voyage, and the skipper said to him, "Thou art welcome to bring thy comrade every night and sup with me and have no care for that so long as ye sail with us." Then he 140returned to the dyer, whom he found asleep; so he roused him; and when Abu Kir awoke, he saw at his head an abundance of bread and cheese and olives and botargoes and said, "Whence gottest thou all this?" "From the bounty of Allah Almighty," replied Abu Sir. Then Abu Kir would have fallen to, but the barber said to him, "Eat not of this, O my brother; but leave it to serve us another time; for know that I shaved the Captain and complained to him of our lack of victual: whereupon quoth he:—Welcome to thee! Bring thy comrade and sup both of ye with me every night. And this night we sup with him for the first time." But Abu Kir replied, "My head goeth round with sea-sickness and I cannot rise from my stead; so let me sup off these things and fare thou alone to the Captain." Abu Sir replied, "There is no harm in that;" and sat looking at the other as he ate, and saw him hew off gobbets, as the quarryman heweth stone from the hill-quarries and gulp them down with the gulp of an elephant which hath not eaten for days, bolting another mouthful ere he had swallowed the previous one and glaring the while at that which was before him with the glowering of a Ghul and blowing as bloweth the hungry bull over his beans and bruised straw. Presently up came a sailor and said to the barber, "O craftsmaster, the Captain biddeth thee come to supper and

bring thy comrade." Quoth the barber to the dyer, "Wilt thou come with us?"; but quoth he, "I cannot walk." So the barber went by himself and found the Captain sitting before a tray whereon were a score or more of dishes and all the company were awaiting him and his mate. When the Captain saw him he asked, "Where is thy friend?"; and Abu Sir answered, "O my lord, he is sea-sick." Said the skipper, "That will do him no harm; his sickness will soon pass off; but do thou carry him his supper and come back, for we tarry for thee." Then he set apart a porringer of Kabábs and putting therein some of each dish, till there was enough for ten, gave it to Abu Sir, saying, "Take this to thy chum." He took it and carried it to the dyer, whom he found grinding away with his dog-teeth[196] at the food which was before him, as he were a camel, and heaping mouthful on mouthful in his hurry. Quoth Abu Sir, "Did I not say to thee:—Eat 141 not of this? Indeed the Captain is a kindly man. See what he hath sent thee, for that I told him thou wast sea-sick." "Give it here," cried the dyer. So the barber gave him the platter, and he snatched it from him and fell upon his food, ravening for it and resembling a grinning dog or a raging lion or a Rukh pouncing on a pigeon or one well-nigh dead for hunger who seeing meat falls ravenously to eat. Then Abu Sir left him and going back to the Captain, supped and enjoyed himself and drank coffee[197] with him; after which he returned to Abu Kir and found that he had eaten all that was in the porringer and thrown it aside, empty.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abu Sir returned to Abu Kir he saw that he had eaten all that was in the porringer and had thrown it aside empty. So he took it up and gave it to one of the Captain's servants, then went back to Abu Kir and slept till the morning. On the morrow he continued to shave, and all he got by way of meat and drink he gave to his shipmate, who ate and drank and sat still, rising not save to do what none could do for him, and every night the barber brought him a full porringer from the Captain's table. They fared thus twenty days until the galleon cast anchor in the harbour of a city; whereupon they took leave of the skipper and landing, entered the town and hired them a closet in a Khan. Abu Sir furnished it and buying a cooking pot and a platter and spoons[198] and what else they needed, fetched meat and cooked it; but Abu Kir fell asleep the moment he entered the Caravanserai and awoke not till Abu Sir aroused him and set the tray of food[199] 142 before him. When he awoke, he ate and saying to Abu Sir, "Blame me not, for I am giddy," fell asleep again. Thus he did forty days, whilst, every day, the barber took his gear and making the round of the city, wrought for that which fell to his lot,[200] and returning, found the dyer asleep and aroused him. The moment he awoke he fell ravenously upon the food, eating as one who cannot have his fill nor be satisfied; after which he went asleep again. On this wise he passed other forty days and whenever the barber said to him, "Sit up and be comfortable[201] and go forth and take

an airing in the city, for 'tis a gay place and a pleasant and hath not its equal among the cities," he would reply, "Blame me not, for I am giddy." Abu Sir cared not to hurt his feelings nor give him hard words; but, on the forty-first day, he himself fell sick and could not go abroad; so he engaged the porter of the Khan to serve them both, and he did the needful for them and brought them meat and drink whilst Abu Kir would do nothing but eat and sleep. The man ceased not to wait upon them on this wise for four days, at the end of which time the barber's malady redoubled on him, till he lost his senses for stress of sickness; and Abu Kir, feeling the sharp pangs of hunger, arose and sought in his comrade's clothes, where he found a thousand silver bits. He took them and, shutting the door of the closet upon Abu Sir, fared forth without telling any; and the doorkeeper was then at market and thus saw him not go out. Presently Abu Kir betook himself to the bazar and clad himself in costly clothes, at a price of five hundred half-dirhams; then he proceeded to walk about the streets and divert himself by viewing the city which he found to be one whose like was not among cities; but he noted that all its citizens were clad in clothes of white and blue, without other colour. Presently he came to a dyer's and seeing naught but blue in his shop, pulled out to him a kerchief and said, "O master, take this and dye it and win thy wage." Quoth the dyer, "The cost of dyeing this will be twenty dirhams;" and quoth Abu Kir, "In our country we dye it for two." "Then go and dye it in your own country! As for me, my price is twenty dirhams and I will not bate a little thereof." "What colour wilt thou dye it?" "I will dye it blue." "But I want it dyed red." "I know not how to dye red." "Then dye it green." "I know not how to dye 143 green." "Yellow." "Nor yet yellow." Thereupon Abu Kir went on to name the different tints to him, one after other, till the dyer said, "We are here in this city forty master-dyers, not one more nor one less; and when one of us dieth, we teach his son the craft. If he leave no son, we abide lacking one, and if he leave two sons, we teach one of them the craft, and if he die, we teach his brother. This our craft is strictly ordered, and we know how to dye but blue and no other tint whatsoever." Then said Abu Kir, "Know that I too am a dyer and wot how to dye all colours; and I would have thee take me into thy service on hire, and I will teach thee everything of my art, so thou mayst glory therein over all the company of dyers." But the dyer answered, "We never admit a stranger into our craft." Asked Abu Kir, "And what if I open a dyery for myself?"; whereto the other answered, "We will not suffer thee to do that on any wise;" whereupon he left him and going to a second dyer, made him the like proposal; but he returned him the same answer as the first; and he ceased not to go from one to other, till he had made the round of the whole forty masters; but they would not accept him either to master or apprentice. Then he repaired to the Shaykh of the Dyers and told him what had passed, and he said, "We admit no strangers into our craft." Hereupon Abu Kir became exceeding wroth and going up to the King of that city, made complaint to him, saying, "O King of the age, I am a stranger and a dyer by trade"; and he told him whatso had passed between himself and the dyers of the town, adding, "I can dye various kinds of red, such as

rose-colour and jujube-colour and various kinds of green, such as grass-green and pistachio-green and olive and parrot's wing, and various kinds of black, such as coal-black and Kohl-black, and various shades of yellow, such as orange[202] and lemon-colour," and went on to name to him the rest of the colours. Then said he, "O King of the age, all the dyers in thy city can not turn out of hand any one of these tincts, for they know not how to dye aught but blue; yet will they not admit me amongst them, either to master or apprentice." Answered the King, "Thou sayst sooth for that matter, but I will open to thee a dyery and give thee capital and have thou no care anent them; for whoso offereth to do thee let or hindrance, I will hang him over his shop-door." Then he sent for builders and said to them, "Go round about the 144 city with this master-dyer, and whatsoever place pleaseth him, be it shop or Khan or what not, turn out its occupier and build him a dyery after his wish. Whatsoever he biddeth you, that do ye and oppose him not in aught." And he clad him in a handsome suit and gave him two white slaves to serve him, and a horse with housings of brocade and a thousand dinars, saying, "Expend this upon thyself against the building be completed." Accordingly Abu Kir donned the dress and mounting the horse, became as he were an Emir. Moreover the King assigned him a house and bade furnish it; so they furnished it for him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King assigned a house to Abu Kir and bade furnish it and he took up his abode therein. On the morrow he mounted and rode through the city, whilst the architects went before him; and he looked about him till he saw a place which pleased him and said, "This stead is seemly;" whereupon they turned out the owner and carried him to the King, who gave him as the price of his holding, what contented him and more. Then the builders fell to work, whilst Abu Kir said to them, "Build thus and thus and do this and that," till they built him a dyery that had not its like; whereupon he presented himself before the King and informed him that they had done building the dyery and that there needed but the price of the dye-stuffs and gear to set it going. Quoth the King, "Take these four thousand dinars to thy capital and let me see the first fruits of thy dyery." So he took the money and went to the market where, finding dye-stuffs[203] plentiful and well-nigh worthless, he bought all he needed of materials for dyeing; and the King sent him five hundred pieces of stuff, which he set himself to dye of all colours and then he spread them before the door of his dyery. When the folk passed by the shop, they saw 145 a wonder-sight whose like they had never in their lives seen; so they crowded about the entrance, enjoying the spectacle and questioning the dyer and saying, "O master, what are the names of these colours?" Quoth he, "This is red and that yellow

and the other green" and so on, naming the rest of the colours. And they fell to bringing him longcloth and saying to him, "Dye it for us like this and that and take what hire thou seekest." When he had made an end of dyeing the King's stuffs, he took them and went up with them to the Divan; and when the King saw them he rejoiced in them and bestowed abundant bounty on the dyer. Furthermore, all the troops brought him stuffs, saying, "Dye for us thus and thus;" and he dyed for them to their liking, and they threw him gold and silver. After this his fame spread abroad and his shop was called the Sultan's Dyery. Good came in to him at every door and none of the other dyers could say a word to him, but they used to come to him kissing his hands and excusing themselves to him for past affronts they had offered him and saying, "Take us to thine apprentices." But he would none of them for he had become the owner of black slaves and handmaids and had amassed store of wealth. On this wise fared it with Abu Kir; but as regards Abu Sir, after the closet door had been locked on him and his money had been stolen, he abode prostrate and unconscious for three successive days, at the end of which the Concierge of the Khan, chancing to look at the door, observed that it was locked and bethought himself that he had not seen and heard aught of the two companions for some time. So he said in his mind, "Haply they have made off, without paying rent,[204] or perhaps they are dead, or what is to do with them?" And he waited till sunset, when he went up to the door and heard the barber groaning within. He saw the key in the lock; so he opened the door and entering, found Abu Sir lying, groaning, and said to him, "No harm to thee: where is thy friend?" Replied Abu Sir, "By Allah, I came to my senses only this day and called out; but none answered my call. Allah upon thee, O my brother, look for the purse under my head and take from it five half-dirhams and buy me somewhat nourishing, for I am sore 146 anhungered." The porter put out his hand and taking the purse, found it empty and said to the barber, "The purse is empty; there is nothing in it." Whereupon Abu Sir knew that Abu Kir had taken that which was therein and had fled and he asked the porter, "Hast thou not seen my friend?" Answered the doorkeeper, "I have not seen him these three days; and indeed methought you had departed, thou and he." The barber cried, "Not so; but he coveted my money and took it and fled seeing me sick." Then he fell a-weeping and a-wailing but the doorkeeper said to him, "No harm shall befal thee, and Allah will requite him his deed." So he went away and cooked him some broth, whereof he ladled out a plateful and brought it to him; nor did he cease to tend him and maintain him with his own monies for two months' space, when the barber sweated[205] and the Almighty made him whole of his sickness. Then he stood up and said to the porter, "An ever the Most High Lord enable me, I will surely requite thee thy kindness to me; but none requiteth save the Lord of His bounty!" Answered the porter, "Praised be He for thy recovery! I dealt not thus with thee but of desire for the face of Allah the Bountiful." Then the barber went forth of the Khan and threaded the market-streets of the town, till Destiny brought him to the bazar wherein was Abu Kir's dyery, and he saw the vari-coloured stuffs dispread

before the shop and a jostle of folk crowding to look upon them. So he questioned one of the townsmen and asked him, “What place is this and how cometh it that I see the folk crowding together?”; whereto the man answered, saying, “This is the Sultan’s Dyery, which he set up for a foreigner Abu Kir hight; and whenever he dyeth new stuff, we all flock to him and divert ourselves by gazing upon his handiwork, for we have no dyers in our land who know how to stain with these colours; and indeed there befel him with the dyers who are in the city that which befel.”[206] And he went on to tell him all that had passed between Abu Kir and the master-dyers and how he had complained of them to the Sultan who took him by the hand and 147 built him that dyery and gave him this and that: brief, he recounted to him all that had occurred. At this the barber rejoiced and said in himself, “Praised be Allah who hath prospered him, so that he is become a master of his craft! And the man is excusable, for of a surety he hath been diverted from thee by his work and hath forgotten thee; but thou actedst kindly by him and entreatedst him generously, what time he was out of work; so, when he seeth thee, he will rejoice in thee and entreat thee generously, even as thou entreatedst him.” According he made for the door of the dyery and saw Abu Kir seated on a high mattress spread upon a bench beside the doorway, clad in royal apparel and attended by four blackamoor slaves and four white Mamelukes all robed in the richest of raiment. Moreover, he saw the workmen, ten negro slaves, standing at work; for, when Abu Kir bought them, he taught them the craft of dyeing, and he himself sat amongst his cushions, as he were a Grand Wazir or a mighty Monarch putting his hand to naught, but only saying to the men, “Do this and do that.” So the barber went up to him and stood before him, deeming he would rejoice in him when he saw him and salute him and entreat him with honour and make much of him; but, when eye fell upon eye, the dyer said to him, “O scoundrel, how many a time have I bidden thee stand not at the door of the workshop? Hast thou a mind to disgrace me with the folk, thief[207] that thou art? Seize him.” So the blackamoors ran at him and laid hold of him; and the dyer rose up from his seat and said, “Throw him.” Accordingly they threw him down and Abu Kir took a stick and dealt him an hundred strokes on the back; after which they turned him over and he beat him other hundred blows on his belly. Then he said to him, “O scoundrel, O villain, if ever again I see thee standing at the door of this dyery, I will forthwith send thee to the King, and he will commit thee to the Chief of Police, that he may strike thy neck. Begone, may Allah not bless thee!” So Abu Sir departed from him, broken-hearted by reason of the beating and shame that had betided him; whilst the bystanders asked Abu Kir, “What hath this man done?” He answered, “The fellow is a thief, who stealeth the stuffs of folk.”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abu Kir beat Abu Sir and thrust him forth he said to those present, “He is a thief who stealeth the stuffs of folk; he hath robbed me of cloth, how many a time! and I still said in myself:—Allah forgive him! He is a poor man; and I cared not to deal roughly with him; so I used to give my customers the worth of their goods and forbid him gently; but he would not be forbidden: and if he come again, I will send him to the King, who will put him to death and rid the people of his mischief.” And the bystanders fell to abusing the barber after his back was turned. Such was the behaviour of Abu Kir; but as regards Abu Sir, he returned to the Khan, where he sat pondering that which the dyer had done by him and he remained seated till the burning of the beating subsided, when he went out and walked about the markets of the city. Presently, he bethought him to go to the Hammam-bath; so he said to one of the townsfolk, “O my brother, which is the way to the Baths?” Quoth the man, “And what manner of thing may the Baths be?” and quoth Abu Sir, “’Tis a place where people wash themselves and do away their dirt and defilements, and it is of the best of the good things of the world.” Replied the townsman, “Get thee to the sea,” but the barber rejoined, “I want the Hammam-baths.” Cried the other, “We know not what manner of thing is the Hammam, for we all resort to the sea; even the King, when he would wash, betaketh himself to the sea.” When Abu Sir was assured that there was no bath in the city and that the folk knew not the Baths nor the fashion thereof, he betook himself to the King’s Divan and kissing ground between his hands called down blessings on him and said, “I am a stranger and a Bath-man by trade, and I entered thy city and thought to go to the Hammam; but found not one therein. How cometh a city of this comely quality to lack a Hammam, seeing that the bath is of the highest of the delights of this world?” Quoth the King, “What manner of thing is the Hammam?” So Abu Sir proceeded to set forth to him the quality of the bath, saying, “Thy capital will not be a perfect city till there be a Hammam therein.” “Welcome to thee!” said the King and clad him in a dress that had not its like and gave him a horse and two blackamoor 149 slaves, presently adding four handmaids and as many white Mamelukes: he also appointed him a furnished house and honoured him yet more abundantly than he had honoured the dyer. After this he sent builders with him saying to them, “Build him a Hammam in what place soever shall please him.” So he took them and went with them through the midst of the city, till he saw a stead that suited him. He pointed it out to the builders and they set to work, whilst he directed them, and they wrought till they builded him a Hammam that had not its like. Then he bade them paint it, and they painted it rarely, so that it was a delight to the beholders; after which Abu Sir went up to the King and told him that they had made an end of building and decorating the Hammam, adding, “There lacketh naught save the furniture.” The King gave him ten thousand dinars wherewith he furnished the Bath and ranged the napkins on the ropes; and all who passed by the door stared at it and their mind was confounded at its decorations. So the people crowded to this spectacle, whose like they had never in

their lives seen, and solaced themselves by staring at it and saying, “What is this thing?” To which Abu Sir replied, “This is a Hammam;” and they marvelled thereat. Then he heated water and set the bath a-working,[208] and he made a jetting fountain in the great basin, which ravished the wit of all who saw it of the people of the city. Furthermore, he sought of the King ten Mamelukes not yet come to manhood, and he gave him ten boys like moons; whereupon Abu Sir proceeded to shampoo them, saying, “Do in this wise with the bathers.” Then he burnt perfumes and sent out a crier to cry aloud in the city, saying, “O creatures of Allah, get ye to the Baths which be called the Sultan’s Hammam!” So the lieges came thither and Abu Sir bade the slave-boys wash their bodies. The folk went down into the tank and coming forth, seated themselves on the raised pavement, whilst the boys shampooed them, even as Abu Sir had taught them; and they continued to enter the Hammam and do their need therein gratis and go out, without paying, for the space of three days. On the fourth day the barber invited the King, who took horse with his Grandees and rode to the Baths, where he put off his clothes and entered; then Abu Sir came in to him and rubbed his body with the bag-gloves, peeling from his skin dirt-rolls like lamp-wicks and showing them 150 to the King, who rejoiced therein, and clapping his hand upon his limbs heard them ring again for very smoothness and cleanliness[209]; after which thorough washing Abu Sir mingled rose-water with the water of the tank and the King went down therein. When he came forth, his body was refreshed and he felt a lightness and liveliness such as he had never known in his life. Then the barber made him sit on the daïs and the boys proceeded to shampoo him, whilst the censers fumed with the finest lign-aloes.[210] Then said the King, “O master is this the Hammam?”; and Abu Sir said, “Yes.” Quoth the King, “As my head liveth, my city is not become a city indeed but by this Bath,” presently adding, “But what pay takest thou for each person?” Quoth Abu Sir, “That which thou biddest will I take;” whereupon the King cried, “Take a thousand gold pieces for every one who washeth in thy Hammam.” Abu Sir, however, said, “Pardon, O King of the age! All men are not alike, but there are amongst them rich and poor, and if I take of each a thousand dinars, the Hammam will stand empty, for the poor man cannot pay this price.” Asked the King, “How then wilt thou do for the price!”; and the barber answered, “I will leave it to their generosity.[211] Each who can afford aught shall pay that which his soul grudgeth not to give, and we will take from every man after the measure of his means. On this wise will the folk come to us and he who is wealthy shall give according to his station and he who is wealth-less shall give what he can afford. Under such condition the Hammam will still be at work and prosper exceedingly; but a thousand dinars is a Monarch’s gift, and not every man can avail to this.” The Lords 151 of the Realm confirmed Abu Sir’s words, saying, “This is the truth, O King of the age! Thinkest thou that all folk are like unto thee, O glorious King[212]?” The King replied, “Ye say sooth; but this man is a stranger and poor and ’tis incumbent on us to deal generously

with him, for that he hath made in our city this Hammam whose like we have never in our lives seen and without which our city were not adorned nor hath gotten importance; wherefore, an we favour him with increase of fee 'twill not be much." But the Grandees said, "An thou wilt guerdon him be generous with thine own monies, and let the King's bounty be extended to the poor by means of the low price of the Hammam, so the lieges may bless thee; but, as for the thousand dinars, we are the Lords of thy Land, yet do our souls grudge to pay it; and how then should the poor be pleased to afford it?" Quoth the King, "O my Grandees, for this time let each of you give him an hundred dinars and a Mameluke, a slave girl and a blackamoor;" and quoth they, "'Tis well; we will give it; but after to-day whoso entereth shall give him only what he can afford, without grudging." "No harm in that," said the King; and they gave him the thousand gold pieces and three chattels. Now the number of the Nobles who were washed with the King that day was four hundred souls;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the number of the Nobles who were washed with the King that day were four hundred souls; so that the total of that which they gave him was forty thousand dinars, besides four hundred Mamelukes and a like number of negroes and slave-girls.[213] Moreover the King gave him ten thousand dinars, besides ten white slaves and ten handmaidens and a like number of blackamoors; whereupon coming forward Abu Sir kissed the ground before him and said, "O auspicious Sovereign, lord of justice, what place will contain 152 me all these women and slaves?" Quoth the King, "O weak o' wit, I bade not my nobles deal thus with thee but that we might gather together unto thee wealth galore; for may be thou wilt bethink thee of thy country and family and repine for them and be minded to return to thy mother-land; so shalt thou take from our country muchel of money to maintain thyself withal, what while thou livest in thine own country." And quoth Abu Sir, "O King of the age, (Allah advance thee!) these white slaves and women and negroes befit only Kings and hadst thou ordered me ready money, it were more profitable to me than this army; for they must eat and drink and dress, and whatever betideth me of wealth, it will not suffice for their support." The King laughed and said, "By Allah thou speakest sooth! They are indeed a mighty host, and thou hast not the wherewithal to maintain them; but wilt thou sell them to me for an hundred dinars a head?" Said Abu Sir, "I sell them to thee at that price." So the King sent to his treasurer for the coin and he brought it and gave Abu Sir the whole of the price without abatement[214] and in full tale; after which the King restored the slaves to their owners, saying, "Let each of you who knoweth his slaves take them; for they are a gift from me to you." So they obeyed his bidding and took each what belonged to him; whilst Abu Sir said to the King, "Allah ease thee, O King of the age, even as thou hast eased me of these Ghuls, whose bellies none may fill save Allah[215]!" The

King laughed, and said he spake sooth; then, taking the Grandees of his Realm from the Hammam returned to his palace; but the barber passed the night in counting out his gold and laying it up in bags and sealing them; and he had with him twenty black slaves and a like number of Mamelukes and four slave girls to serve him. Now when morning morrowed, he opened the Hammam and sent out a crier to cry, saying, "Whoso entereth the Baths and washeth shall give that which he can afford and which his generosity requireth him to give." Then he seated himself by the pay-chest[216] and customers flocked in upon him, each putting 153 down that which was easy to him, nor had eventide evened ere the chest was full of the good gifts of Allah the Most High. Presently the Queen desired to go to the Hammam, and when this came to Abu Sir's knowledge, he divided the day on her account into two parts, appointing that between dawn and noon to men and that between midday and sundown to women.[217] As soon as the Queen came, he stationed a handmaid behind the pay-chest; for he had taught four slave-girls the service of the Hammam, so that they were become expert bath-women and tire-women. When the Queen entered, this pleased her and her breast waxed broad and she laid down a thousand dinars. Thus his report was noised abroad in the city, and all who entered the bath he entreated with honour, were they rich or poor; good came in upon him at every door and he made acquaintance with the royal guards and got him friends and intimates. The King himself used to come to him one day in every week, leaving with him a thousand dinars and the other days were for rich and poor alike; and he was wont to deal courteously with the folk and use them with the utmost respect. It chanced that the King's sea-captain came in to him one day in the bath; so Abu Sir did off his dress and going in with him, proceeded to shampoo him and entreated him with exceeding courtesy. When he came forth, he made him sherbet and coffee; and when he would have given him somewhat, he swore that he would not accept from him aught. So the captain was under obligation to him, by reason of his exceeding kindness and courtesy and was perplexed how to requite the bath-man his generous dealing. Thus fared it with Abu Sir: but as regards Abu Kir, hearing all the people recounting wonders of the Baths and saying, "Verily, this Hammam is the Paradise of this world! Inshallah, O such an one, thou shalt go with us to-morrow to this delightful bath," he said to himself, "Needs must I fare like the rest of the world, and see this bath that hath taken folk's wits." So he donned his richest dress and mounting a she-mule and bidding the attendance of four white slaves and four blacks, walking before and behind him, he rode to the Hammam. When he alighted at the door, he 154 smelt the scent of burning aloes-wood and found people going in and out and the benches full of great and small. So he entered the vestibule and saw Abu Sir, who rose to him and rejoiced in him: but the dyer said to him, "Is this the way of well-born men? I have opened me a dyery and am become master-dyer of the city and acquainted with the King and have risen to prosperity and authority: yet camest thou not to me nor askest of me nor saidst, Where's my comrade? For my

part I sought thee in vain and sent my slaves and servants to make search for thee in all the Khans and other places; but they knew not whither thou hadst gone, nor could any one give me tidings of thee." Said Abu Sir, "Did I not come to thee and didst thou not make me out a thief and bastinado me and dishonour me before the world?" At this Abu Kir made a show of concern and asked, "What manner of talk is this? Was it thou whom I beat?": and Abu Sir answered, "Yes, 'twas I." Whereupon Abu Kir swore to him a thousand oaths that he knew him not and said, "There was a fellow like thee, who used to come every day and steal the people's stuff, and I took thee for him." And he went on to pretend penitence, beating hand upon hand and saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great? Indeed we have sinned against thee; but would that thou hadst discovered thyself to me and said, I am such an one! Indeed the fault is with thee, for that thou madest not thyself known unto me, more especially seeing that I was distracted for much business." Replied Abu Sir, "Allah pardon thee,[218] O my comrade! This was foreordained in the Secret Purpose, and reparation is with Allah. Enter and put off thy clothes and bathe at thine ease." Said the dyer, "I conjure thee, by Allah, O my brother, forgive me!"; and said Abu Sir, "Allah acquit thee of blame and forgive thee! Indeed this thing was decreed to me from all eternity." Then asked Abu Kir, "Whence gottest thou this high degree?"; and answered Abu Sir, "He who prospered thee prospered me; for I went up to the King and described to him the fashion of the Hammam and he bade me build one." And the dyer said, "Even as thou art beknown of the King, so also am I;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abu Kir and Abu Sir were exchanging reproof and excuse, the dyer said to him, "Even as thou art beknown of the King, so also am I; and, Inshallah,—God willing—I will make him love and favour thee more than ever, for my sake, he knoweth not that thou art my comrade, but I will acquaint him of this and commend thee to him." But Abu Sir said, "There needeth no commendation; for He who moveth man's heart to love still liveth; and indeed the King and all his court affect me and have given me this and that." And he told him the whole tale and said to him, "Put off thy clothes behind the chest and enter the Hammam, and I will go in with thee and rub thee down with the glove." So he doffed his dress and Abu Sir, entering the bath with him, soaped him and gloved him and then dressed him and busied himself with his service till he came forth, when he brought him dinner and sherbets, whilst all the folk marvelled at the honour he did him. Then Abu Kir would have given him somewhat; but he swore that he would not accept aught from him and said to him, "Shame upon such doings! Thou art my

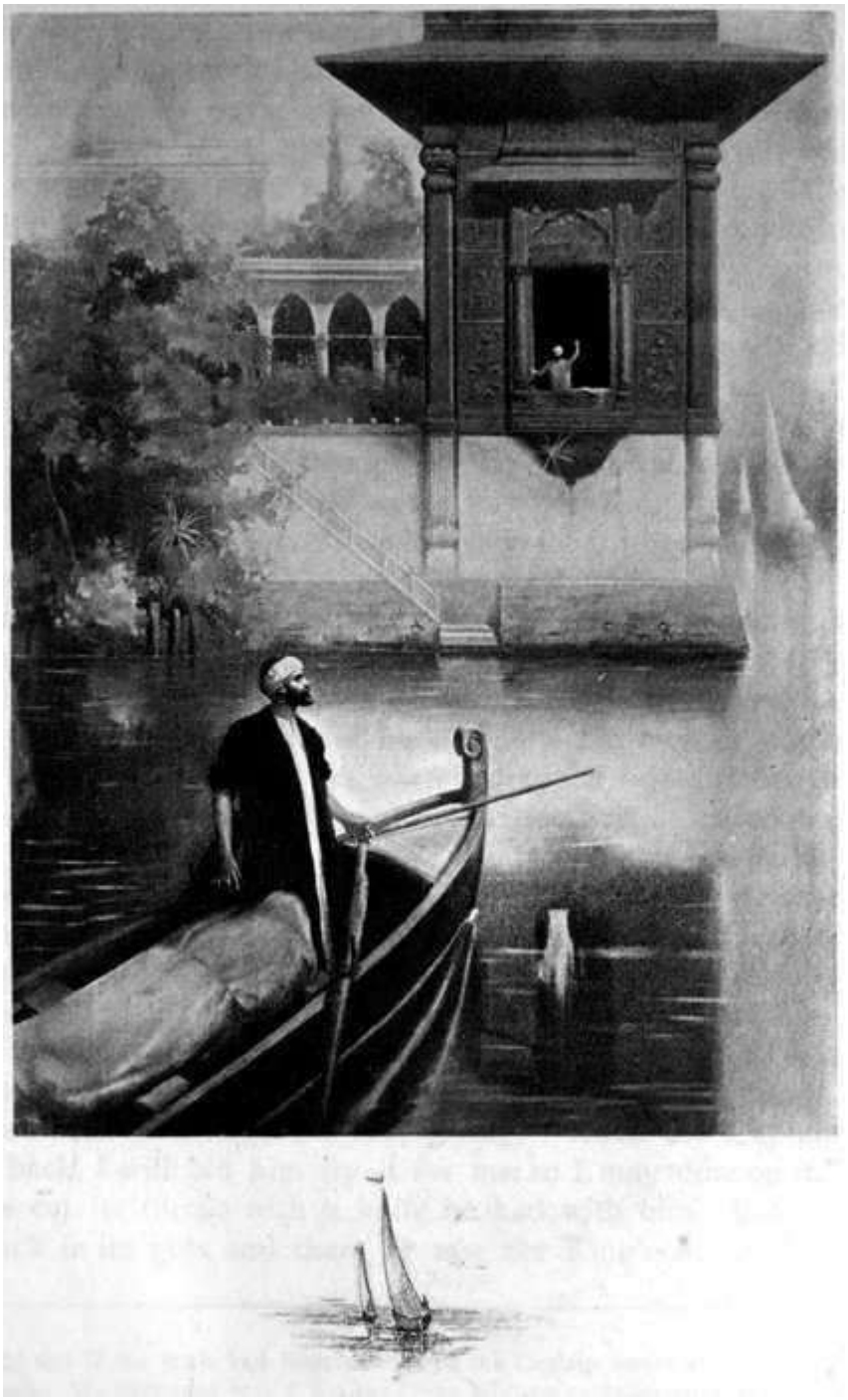
comrade, and there is no difference between us." Then Abu Kir observed, "By Allah, O my comrade, this is a mighty fine Hammam of thine, but there lacketh somewhat in its ordinance." Asked Abu Sir, "And what is that?" and Abu Kir answered, "It is the depilatory,[219] to wit, the paste compounded of yellow arsenic and quicklime which removeth the hair with comfort. Do thou prepare it and next time the King cometh, present it to him, teaching him how he shall cause the hair to fall off by such means, and he will love thee with exceeding love and honour thee." Quoth Abu Sir, "Thou speakest sooth, and Inshallah, I will at once make it." Then Abu Kir left him and mounted his mule and going to the King said to him, "I have a warning to give thee, O King of the age!" "And what is thy warning?" asked the King; and Abu Kir answered, "I hear that thou hast built a Hammam." Quoth the King, "Yes: there came to me a stranger and I builded the Baths for him, even as I builded 156 the dyery for thee; and indeed 'tis a mighty fine Hammam and an ornament to my city;" and he went on to describe to him the virtues of the bath. Quoth the dyer, "Hast thou entered therein?"; and quoth the King, "Yes." Thereupon cried Abu Kir, "Alhamdolillah—praised be God,—who saved thee from the mischief of yonder villain and foe of the Faith, I mean the bath-keeper!" The King enquired, "And what of him?"; and Abu Kir replied, "Know, O King of the age that, an thou enter the Hammam again, after this day, thou wilt surely perish." "How so?" said the King; and the dyer said, "This bath-keeper is thy foe and the foe of the Faith, and he induced thee not to stablish this Bath but because he designed therein to poison thee. He hath made for thee somewhat and he will present it to thee when thou enterest the Hammam, saying:—This is a drug which, if one apply to his parts below the waist, will remove the hair with comfort. Now it is no drug, but a drastic dreg and a deadly poison; for the Sultan of the Christians hath promised this obscene fellow to release to him his wife and children, an he will kill thee; for they are prisoners in the hands of that Sultan. I myself was captive with him in their land, but I opened a dyery and dyed for them various colours, so that they conciliated the King's heart to me and he bade me ask a boon of him. I sought of him freedom and he set me at liberty, whereupon I made my way to this city and seeing yonder man in the Hammam, said to him, "How didst thou effect thine escape and win free with thy wife and children?" Quoth he, "We ceased not to be in captivity, I and my wife and children, till one day the King of the Nazarenes held a court whereat I was present, amongst a number of others; and as I stood amongst the folk, I heard them open out on the Kings and name them, one after other, till they came to the name of the King of this city, whereupon the King of the Christians cried out Alas! and said, "None vexeth me[220] in the world, but the King of such a city![221] Whosoever will contrive me his slaughter I will give him all he shall ask." So I went up to him and said, "An I compass for thee his slaughter, wilt thou set me free, me and my 157 wife and my children?" The King replied "Yes; and I will give thee to boot whatso thou shalt desire." So we agreed upon this and he sent me in

a galleon to this city, where I presented myself to the King and he built me this Hammam. Now, therefore, I have nought to do but to slay him and return to the King of the Nazarenes, that I may redeem my children and my wife and ask a boon of him." Quoth I:—And how wilt thou go about to kill him?; and quoth he:—By the simplest of all devices; for I have compounded him somewhat wherein is poison; so, when he cometh to the bath, I shall say to him:—Take this paste and anoint therewith thy parts below the waist for it will cause the hair[222] to drop off. So he will take it and apply it to himself and the poison will work in him a day and a night, till it reacheth his heart and destroyeth him; and meanwhile I shall have made off and none will know that it was I slew him." "When I heard this," added Abu Kir, "I feared for thee, my benefactor, wherefore I have told thee of what is doing." As soon as the King heard the dyer's story, he was wroth with exceeding wrath and said to him, "Keep this secret." Then he resolved to visit the Hammam, that he might dispel doubt by supplying certainty; and when he entered, Abu Sir doffed his dress and betaking himself as of wont to the service of the King, proceeded to glove him; after which he said to him, "O King of the age, I have made a drug which assisteth in plucking out the lower hair." Cried the King, "Bring it to me": so the barber brought it to him and the King, finding it nauseous of smell, was assured that it was poison; wherefore he was incensed and called out to his guards, saying, "Seize him!" Accordingly they seized him and the King donned his dress and returned to his palace, boiling with fury, whilst none knew the cause of his indignation; for, of the excess of his wrath he had acquainted no one therewith and none dared ask him. Then he repaired to the audience-chamber and causing Abu Sir to be brought before him, with his elbows pinioned, sent for his Sea-captain and said to him, "Take this villain and set him in a sack with two quintals of lime unslacked and tie its mouth over his head. Then lay 158 him in a cock-boat and row out with him in front of my palace, where thou wilt see me sitting at the lattice. Do thou say to me:—Shall I cast him in? and if I answer, "Cast him!" throw the sack into the sea, so the quicklime may be slaked on him to the intent that he shall die drowned and burnt."[223] "Hearkening and obeying;" quoth the Captain and taking Abu Sir from the presence carried him to an island facing the King's palace, where he said to him, "Ho thou, I once visited thy Hammam and thou entreatedst me with honour and accomplishedst all my needs and I had great pleasure of thee: moreover, thou swarest that thou wouldst take no pay of me, and I love thee with a great love. So tell me how the case standeth between thee and the King and what abominable deed thou hast done with him that he is wroth with thee and hath commanded me that thou shouldst die this foul death." Answered Abu Sir, "I have done nothing, nor weet I of any crime I have committed against him which meriteth this!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Sea-captain asked Abu Sir the cause of the King's wrath with him, he replied, "By Allah, O my brother I have committed no crime against him which meriteth this!" Rejoined the Captain, "Verily, thou wast high in rank with the King, such as none ever won before thee, and all who are prosperous are envied. Haply some one was jealous of thy good fortune and threw out certain hints concerning thee to the King, by reason whereof he is become enraged against thee with rage so violent: but be of good cheer; no harm shall befal thee; for, even as thou entreatedst me generously, without acquaintanceship between me and thee, so now I will deliver thee. But, an if I release thee, thou must abide with me on this island till some galleon sail from our city to thy native land, when I will send thee thither therein." Abu Sir kissed his hand and thanked him for that; after which the Captain fetched the quicklime and set it in a sack, together with a great stone, the 159 size of a man, saying, "I put my trust in Allah!"[224] Then he gave the barber a net, saying, "Cast this net into the sea, so haply thou mayst take somewhat of fish. For I am bound to supply the King's kitchen with fish every day; but to-day I have been distracted from fishing by this calamity which hath befallen thee, and I fear lest the cook's boys come to me in quest of fish and find none. So, an thou take aught, they will find it and thou wilt veil my face,[225] whilst I go and play off my practice in front of the palace and feign to cast thee into the sea." Answered Abu Sir, "I will fish the while; go thou and God help thee!" So the Captain set the sack in the boat and paddled till he came under the palace, where he saw the King seated at the lattice and said to him, "O King of the age, shall I cast him in?" "Cast him!" cried the King, and signed to him with his hand, when lo and behold!; something flashed like leven and fell into the sea. Now that which had fallen into the water was the King's seal-ring; and the same was enchanted in such way that, when the King was wroth with any one and was minded to slay him, he had but to sign to him with his right hand, whereon was the signet-ring, and therefrom issued a flash of lightning, which smote the object, and thereupon his head fell from between his shoulders; and the troops obeyed him not, nor did he overcome the men of might save by means of the ring. So, when it dropped from his finger, he concealed the matter and kept silence, for that he dared not say, "My ring is fallen into the sea," for fear of the troops, lest they rise against him and slay him. On this wise it befel the King; but as regards Abu Sir, after the Captain had left him on the island he took the net and casting it into the sea presently drew it up full of fish; nor did he cease to throw it and pull it up full, till there was a great mound of fish before him. So he said in himself, "By Allah, this long while I have not eaten fish!"; and chose himself a large fat fish, saying, "When the Captain cometh back, I will bid him fry it for me, so I may dine on it." Then he cut its throat with a knife he had with him; but the knife stuck in its gills and there he saw the King's signet-ring; 160 for the fish had swallowed it and Destiny had driven it to that island, where it had fallen into the net. He took the ring and drew

it on his little finger,[226] not knowing its peculiar properties. Presently, up came two of the cook's boys in quest of fish and seeing Abu Sir, said to him, "O man, whither is the Captain gone?" "I know not," said he and signed to them with his right hand; when, behold, the heads of both underlings dropped off from between their shoulders. At this Abu Sir was amazed and said, "Would I wot who slew them!" And their case was grievous to him and he was still pondering it, when the Captain suddenly returned and seeing the mound of fishes and two men lying dead and the seal-ring on Abu Sir's finger, said to him, "O my brother, move not thy hand whereon is the signet-ring; else thou wilt kill me." Abu Sir wondered at this speech and kept his hand motionless; whereupon the Captain came up to him and said, "Who slew these two men?" "By Allah, O my brother I wot not!" "Thou sayst sooth; but tell me whence hadst thou that ring?" "I found it in this fish's gills." "True," said the Captain, "for I saw it fall flashing from the King's palace and disappear in the sea, what time he signed towards thee,[227] saying, Cast him in. So I cast the sack into the water, and it was then that the ring slipped from his finger and fell into the sea, where this fish swallowed it, and Allah drave it to thee, so that thou madest it thy prey, for this ring was thy lot; but kennest thou its property?" Said Abu Sir, "I knew not that it had any properties peculiar to it;" and the Captain said, "Learn, then, that the King's troops obey him not save for fear of this signet-ring, because it is spelled, and when he was wroth with any one and had a mind to kill him, he would sign at him therewith and his head would drop from between his shoulders; for there issued a flash of lightning from the ring and its ray smote the object 161 of his wrath, who died forthright." At this, Abu Sir rejoiced with exceeding joy and said to the Captain, "Carry me back to the city;" and he said, "That will I, now that I no longer fear for thee from the King; for, wert thou to sign at him with thy hand, purposing to kill him, his head would fall down between thy hands; and if thou be minded to slay him and all his host, thou mayst slaughter them without let or hindrance." So saying, he embarked him in the boat and bore him back to the city;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Captain embarked with Abu Sir he bore him back to the city, so Abu Sir landed and going up to the palace, entered the council-chamber, where he found the King seated facing his officers, in sore cark and care by reason of the seal-ring and daring not tell any of his folk anent its loss. When he saw Abu Sir, he said to him, “Did we not cast thee into

the sea? How hast thou contrived to come forth of it?" Abu Sir replied, "O King of the age, whenas thou badest throw me into the sea, thy Captain carried me to an island and asked me of the cause of thy wrath against me, saying:—What hast thou done with the King, that he should decree thy death? I answered, By Allah, I know not that I have wrought him any wrong! Quoth he:—Thou wast high in rank with the King, and haply some one envied thee and threw out certain hints concerning thee to him, so that he is become incensed against thee. But when I visited thee in thy Hammam, thou entreatedst me honourably, and I will requite thee thy hospitality to me by setting thee free and sending thee back to thine own land. Then he set a great stone in the sack in my stead and cast it into the sea; but, when thou signedst to him to throw me in, thy seal-ring dropped from thy finger into the main, and a fish swallowed it. Now I was on the island a-fishing, and this fish came up in the net with others; whereupon I took it, intending to broil it; but, when I opened its belly, I found the signet-ring therein; so I took it and put it on my finger. Presently, up came two of the servants of the kitchen, questing fish, and I signed to them with my hand, knowing not 162 the property of the seal-ring, and their heads fell off. Then the Captain came back, and seeing the ring on my finger, acquainted me with its spell; and behold, I have brought it back to thee, for that thou dealtest kindly by me and entreatedst me with the utmost honour, nor is that which thou hast done me of kindness lost upon me. Here is thy ring; take it! But an I have done with thee aught deserving of death, tell me my crime and slay me and thou shalt be absolved of sin in shedding my blood." So saying, he pulled the ring from his finger and gave it to the King who, seeing Abu Sir's noble conduct, took the ring and put it on and felt life return to him afresh. Then he rose to his feet and embracing the barber, said to him, "O man, thou art indeed of the flower of the well-born! Blame me not, but forgive me the wrong I have done thee. Had any but thou gotten hold of this ring, he had never restored it to me." Answered Abu Sir, "O King of the age, an thou wouldst have me forgive thee, tell me what was my fault which drew down thine anger upon me, so that thou commandedst to do me die." Rejoined the King, "By Allah, 'tis clear to me that thou art free and guiltless in all things of offence since thou hast done this good deed; only the dyer denounced thee to me in such and such words;" and he told him all that Abu Kir had said. Abu Sir replied, "By Allah, O King of the age, I know no King of the Nazarenes nor during my days have ever journeyed to a Christian country, nor did it ever come into my mind to kill thee. But this dyer was my comrade and neighbour in the city of Alexandria where life was straitened upon us; therefore we departed thence, to seek our fortunes, by reason of the narrowness of our means at home, after we had recited the Opening Chapter of the Koran together, pledging ourselves that he who got work should feed him who lacked work; and there befel me with him such and such things." Then he went on to relate to the King all that had betided him with Abu Kir the dyer; how he had robbed him of his dirhams and had left him alone and sick in the Khan-closet and how the door-keeper had fed him of his own monies till Allah recovered him of his sickness, when

he went forth and walked about the city with his budget, as was his wont, till he espied a dyery, about which the folk were crowding; so he looked at the door and seeing Abu Kir seated on a bench there, went in to salute him, whereupon he accused him of being a thief and beat him a grievous beating; brief, he told him his whole tale, from first to last, and added, "O King of the 163age, 'twas he who counselled me to make the depilatory and present it to thee, saying:—The Hammam is perfect in all things but that it lacketh this; and know, O King of the age, that this drug is harmless and we use it in our land where 'tis one of the requisites of the bath; but I had forgotten it: so, when the dyer visited the Hammam I entreated him with honour and he reminded me of it, and enjoined me to make it forthwith. But do thou send after the porter of such a Khan and the workmen of the dyery and question them all of that which I have told thee." Accordingly the King sent for them and questioned them one and all and they acquainted him with the truth of the matter. Then he summoned the dyer, saying, "Bring him barefooted, bareheaded and with elbows pinioned!" Now he was sitting in his house, rejoicing in Abu Sir's death; but ere he could be ware, the King's guards rushed in upon him and cuffed him on the nape, after which they bound him and bore him into the presence, where he saw Abu Sir seated by the King's side and the door-keeper of the Khan and workmen of the dyery standing before him. Quoth the door-keeper to him, "Is not this thy comrade whom thou robbedst of his silvers and leftest with me sick in the closet doing such and such by him?" And the workmen said to him, "Is not this he whom thou badest us seize and beat?" Therewith Abu Kir's baseness was made manifest to the King and he was certified that he merited torture yet sorer than the torments of Munkar and Nakír.[228] So he said to his guards, "Take him and parade him about the city and the markets;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King heard the words spoken by the door-keeper of the Caravanserai and the workmen of the dyery, he was certified of the vileness of Abu Kir; so he upbraided him with flout and fleer and said to his guards, "Take him and parade him about the city and the market-streets; then set him in a sack and cast him into the sea." Whereupon quoth Abu Sir, "O King of the age, accept 164my intercession for him, for I pardon him all he hath done with me." But quoth the King, "An thou pardon him all his offences against thee, I cannot pardon him his offences against me." And he cried out, saying, "Take him." So they took him and paraded him about the city, after which they set him in a sack with quicklime and cast him into the sea, and he died, drowned and burnt. Then said the King to the barber, "O Abu Sir, ask of me what thou wilt and it shall be given thee." And he answered, saying, "I ask of thee to send me back to my own country, for I care no longer to tarry here." Then the King gifted him great store of gifts, over and above that which he had whilome bestowed on him; and amongst the rest a

galleon freighted with goods; and the crew of this galleon were Mamelukes; so he gave him these also, after offering to make him his Wazir whereto the barber consented not. Presently he farewelled the King and set sail in his own ship manned by his own crew; nor did he cast anchor till he reached Alexandria and made fast to the shore there. Then they landed and one of his Mamelukes, seeing a sack on the beach, said to Abu Sir, "O my lord, there is a great heavy sack on the sea-shore, with the mouth tied up and I know not what therein." So Abu Sir came up and opening the sack, found therein the remains of Abu Kir, which the sea had borne thither. He took it forth and burying it near Alexandria, built over the grave a place of visitation and endowed it with mortmain writing over the door these couplets:—

Man is known among men as his deeds attest; ✿ Which make noble origin manifest:

Backbite not, lest other men bite thy back; ✿ Who saith aught, the same shall to him be addrest:

Shun immodest words and indecent speech ✿ When thou speakest in earnest or e'en in jest.[229]

We bear with the dog which behaves itself ✿ But the lion is chained lest he prove a pest:

And the desert carcases swim the main ✿ While union-pearls on the sand-bank rest[230]:

No sparrow would hustle the sparrow-hawk, ✿ Were it not by folly and weakness prest:

A-sky is written on page of air, ✿ "Who doth kindly of kindness shall have the best!"

'Ware of gathering sugar from bitter gourd:[231] ✿ 'Twill prove to its origin like in taste.

After this Abu Sir abode awhile, till Allah took him to Himself, and they buried him hard by the tomb of his comrade Abu Kir; wherefore that place was called Abu Kir and Abu Sir; but it is now known as Abu Kir only. This, then, is that which hath reached us of their history, and glory be to Him who endureth for ever and aye and by whose will interchange the night and the day. And of the stories they tell is one anent

40- ABDULLAH[232] THE FISHERMAN AND ABDULLAH THE MERMAN.

There was once a Fisherman named Abdullah, who had a large family, to wit, nine children and their mother, so was he poor, very poor, owning naught save his net. Every day he used to go to the sea a-fishing, and if he caught little, he sold it and spent the price on his children, after the measure of that which Allah vouchsafed him of provision; but, if he caught much, he would cook a good mess of meat and buy fruit and spend without stint till nothing was left him, saying to himself, "The daily bread of to-morrow will come to-morrow." Presently, his wife gave birth to another child, making a total of ten, and it chanced that day that he had nothing at all; so she said to him, "O my master, see and get me somewhat wherewithal I may sustain myself." Quoth he, "I am going (under favour of Almighty Allah) this day seawards to fish on the luck of this new-born child, that we may see its fair fortune;" and quoth she, "Put thy trust in Allah!" So he took his net and went down to the sea-shore, where he cast it on the luck of the little one, saying, "O my God, make his living of ease 166 not of unease, and abundant, not scant!" Then he waited awhile and drew in the net, which came up full of rubbish and sand and pebbles and weeds, and he saw therein no sign of fish neither muchel nor little. He cast it again and waited, then drew it in, but found no catch in it, and threw it a third and a fourth and a fifth time; still not a single fish came up. So he removed to another place beseeching his daily bread of Allah Almighty and thus he kept working till the end of the day, but caught not so much as a minnow;[233] whereat he fell a-marvelling in himself and said self-communing, "Hath Allah then created this new-born child without lot of provision? This may never, never be. He who slitteth the corners of the lips hath pledged Himself for its provision, because Almighty Allah is the Bountiful, the Provider!"[234] So saying, he shouldered his net and turned him homewards, broken-spirited and heavy at heart about his family, for that he had left them without food, more by token that his wife was in the straw. And as he continued trudging along and saying in himself, "How shall I do and what shall I say to the children to-night?" he came to a baker's oven and saw a crowd about it; for the season was one of dearth and in those days food was

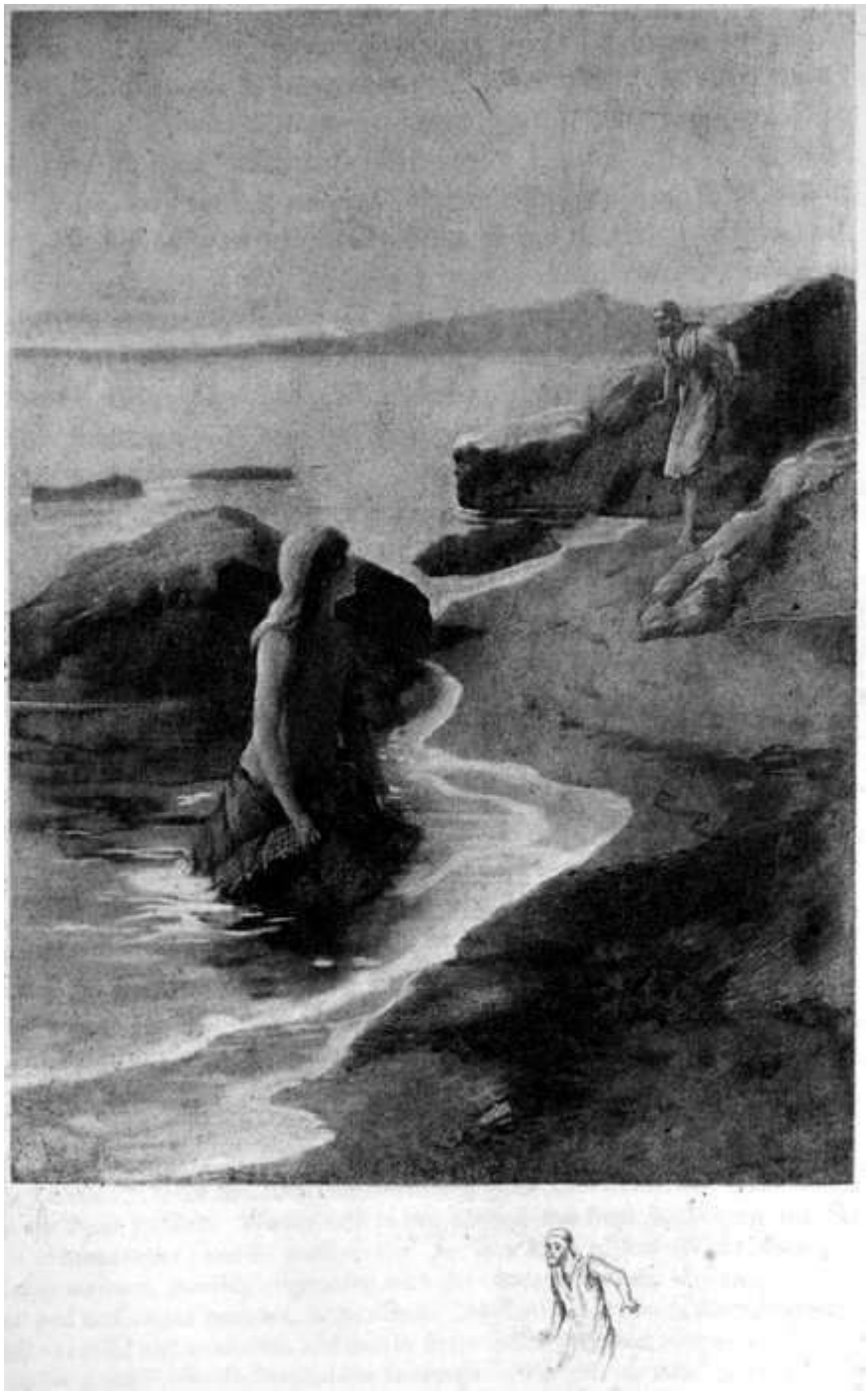
scant with the folk; so people were proffering the baker money, but he paid no heed to any of them, by reason of the dense crowd. The fisherman stood looking and snuffing the smell of the hot bread (and indeed his soul longed for it, by reason of his hunger), till the baker caught sight of him and cried out to him, "Come hither, O fisherman!" So he went up to him, and the baker said, "Dost thou want bread?" But he was silent. Quoth the baker, "Speak out and be not ashamed, for Allah is bountiful. An thou have no silver, I will give thee bread and have patience with thee till weal betide thee." And quoth the fisherman, "By Allah, O master, I have indeed no money! But give me bread enough for my family, and I will leave thee this net in pawn till the morrow." Rejoined the baker, "Nay, my poor fellow, this net is thy shop and the door of thy daily subsistence; so an thou pawn it, wherewithal wilt 167thou fish? Tell me how much will suffice thee?"; and replied the fisherman, "Ten half-dirhams' worth."[235] So he gave him ten Nusfs' worth of bread and ten in silver saying, "Take these ten Nusfs and cook thyself a mess of meat therewith; so wilt thou owe me twenty, for which bring me fish to-morrow; but, an thou catch nothing again, come and take thy bread and thy ten Nusfs, and I will have patience with thee till better luck betide thee,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the baker said to the fisherman, "Take whatso thou needest and I will have patience with thee till better luck betide thee, after the which thou shalt bring me fish for all thou owest me." Said the fisherman, "Almighty Allah reward thee, and requite thee for me with all good!" Then he took the bread and the coins and went away, glad at heart, and buying what he could returned to his wife whom he found sitting up, soothing the children, who were weeping for hunger, and saying to them, "At once your father will be here with what ye may eat." So he set the bread before them and they ate, whilst he told his wife what had befallen him, and she said, "Allah is bountiful."[236] On the morrow, he shouldered his net and went forth of his house, saying, "I beseech thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me this day that which shall whiten my face with the baker!"[237] When he came to the sea-shore, he proceeded to cast his net and pull it in; but there came up no fish therein; and he ceased not to toil thus till ended day but he caught nothing. Then he set out homewards, in great concern, and the way to his house lay past the baker's oven; so he said in himself, "How shall I go home? But I will hasten my pace that the baker may not see me." When he reached the shop, he saw a crowd about it and 168walked the faster, being ashamed to face his creditor; but the baker raised his eyes to him and cried out to him, saying, "Ho, fisherman! Come and take thy bread and spending-money. Meseems thou forgettest." Quoth Abdullah, "By Allah, I had not forgotten; but I was ashamed to face thee, because I have caught no fish this day;" and quoth the baker, "Be not ashamed. Said I not to thee, At thy leisure,[238] till better luck betide thee?" Then he gave him the bread and the ten Nusfs and he returned and

told his wife, who said, “Allah is bountiful. Better luck shall yet betide thee and thou shalt give the baker his due, Inshallah.” He ceased not doing on this wise forty days, betaking himself daily to the sea, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, and returning home without fish; and still he took bread and spending-money of the baker, who never once named the fish to him nor neglected him nor kept him waiting like the folk,[239] but gave him the bread and the ten half-dirhams without delay. Whenever the fisherman said to him, “O my brother, reckon with me,” he would say, “Be off:[240] this is no time for reckoning. Wait till better luck betide thee, and then I will reckon with thee.” And the fisherman would bless him and go away thanking him. On the one-and-fortieth day, he said to his wife, “I have a mind to tear up the net and be quit of this life.” She asked, “Why wilt thou do this?”; and he answered, “Meseems there is an end of my getting my daily bread from the waters. How long shall this last? By Allah, I burn with shame before the baker and I will go no more to the sea, so I may not pass by his oven, for I have none other way home; and every time I pass he calleth me and giveth me the bread and the ten silvers. How much longer shall I run in debt to him?” The wife replied, “Alhamdolillah—lauded be the Lord, the Most High, who hath inclined his heart to thee, so that he giveth thee our daily bread! What dislikest thou in this?”; and the husband rejoined, “I owe him now a mighty great sum of dirhams, and there is no doubt but that he will demand his due.” “Hath he vexed thee with words?” “No, on 169 the contrary, he still refuseth to reckon with me, saying:—Wait till better luck betide thee.” “If he press thee, say to him:—Wait till there come the good luck for which we hope, thou and I.” “And when will the good luck come that we hope for?” “Allah is bountiful.” “Sooth thou speakest!” So saying he shouldered his net and went down to the sea-side, praying, “O Lord provide thou me, though but with one fish, that I may give it to the baker!” And he cast his net into the sea and pulling it in, found it heavy; so he tugged at it till he was tired with sore travail. But when he got it ashore, he found in it a dead donkey swollen and stinking; whereat his senses sickened and he freed it from the net, saying, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Indeed, I can no more! I say to that wife of mine:—There is no more provision for me in the waters; let me leave this craft. And she still answereth me:—Allah is bountiful: good will presently betide thee. Is this dead ass the good whereof she speaketh?” And he grieved with the sorest grief. Then he turned to another place, so he might remove from the stench of the dead donkey, and cast his net there and waited a full hour: then he drew it in and found it heavy. Thereupon quoth he, “Good; we are hauling up all the dead donkeys in the sea and ridding it of its rubbish.[241]” However he gave not over tugging at the net, till blood came from the palms of his hands, and when he got it ashore, he saw a man[242] in it and took him for one of the Ifrits of the lord Solomon, whom he was wont to imprison in cucurbits of brass and cast him into the main, believing that the vessel had burst for length of years and that the Ifrit had come forth and fallen into the net; wherefore he fled from him, crying out and saying, “Mercy,

mercy, O Ifrit of Solomon!" But the Adamite called out to him from within the net and said, 170"Come hither, O fisherman, and flee not from me; for I am human like thyself. Release me, so thou mayst get a recompense for me of Allah." Whenas he heard these words, the fisherman took heart and coming up to him, said to him, "Art thou not an Ifrit of the Jinn?"; and replied the other, "No: I am a mortal and a believer in Allah and His Apostle." Asked the fisherman, "Who threw thee into the sea?"; and the other answered, "I am of the children of the sea, and was going about therein, when thou castest the net over me. We are people who obey Allah's commandments and show loving-kindness unto the creatures of the Almighty, and but that I fear and dread to be of the disobedient, I had torn thy net; but I accept that which the Lord hath decreed unto me; wherefore by setting me free thou becomest my owner and I thy captive. Wilt thou then set me free for the love[243] of Almighty Allah and make a covenant with me and become my comrade? I will come to thee every day in this place, and do thou come to me and bring me a gift of the fruits of the land. For with you are grapes and figs and water-melons and peaches and pomegranates and so forth, and all thou bringest me will be acceptable unto me. Moreover, with us are coral and pearls and chrysolites and emeralds and rubies and other gems, and I will fill thee the basket, wherein thou bringest me the fruit, with precious stones of the jewels of the sea.[244] What sayst thou to this, O my brother?" Quoth the fisherman, "Be the Opening Chapter of the Koran between thee and me upon this!" So they recited together the Fátihah, and the fisherman loosed the Merman from the net and asked him, "What is thy name?" He replied, "My name is Abdullah of the sea; and if thou come hither and see me not, call out and say, "Where art thou, O Abdullah, O Merman?"; and I will be with thee."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah of the sea thus enjoined the other, "An thou come hither and see me not, call out and say, Where art thou, O Abdullah. O Merman? and I will be with thee forthwith. But thou, what is thy name?" Quoth the fisherman, "My name also is Abdullah;" and quoth the other,

"Thou art Abdullah of the land and I am Abdullah of the Sea; but tarry here till I go and fetch thee a present." And the fisherman repented him of having released him and said to himself, "How know I that he will come back to me? Indeed, he beguiled me, so that I loosed him, and now he will laugh at me.[245] Had I kept him, I might have made a show of him for the diversion of the city-folk and taken silver from all men and gone with him to the houses of the great." And he repented him of having set him free and said, "Thou hast let thy prey from thy hand away." But, as he was thus bemoaning his folly in releasing the prisoner, behold, Abdullah the merman returned to him, with both hands full of pearls and coral and smaragds and rubies and other gems, and said to him, "Take these, O my brother, and excuse me; had I a fish-basket[246] I would have filled it for thee." Abdullah the fisherman rejoiced and took the jewels from the Merman who said to him, "Every day come hither, before sunrise," and farewelling him, went down into the sea; whilst the other returned to the city, rejoicing, and stayed not walking till he came to the baker's oven and said to him, "O my brother, good luck is come to us at last; so do thou reckon with me." Answered the baker, "There needeth no reckoning. An thou have aught, give it me: and if thou have naught, take thy bread and spending-money and begone, against weal betide thee." Rejoined the fisherman, "O my friend, indeed weal hath betided me of Allah's bounty, and I owe thee much money; but take this." So saying, he took for him a handful of the pearls and coral and rubies and other jewels he had with him (the handful being about half of the whole), and gave them to the baker, saying, "Give me some ready money to spend 172 this day, till I sell these jewels." So the baker gave him all the money he had in hand and all the bread in his basket and rejoiced in the jewels, saying, "I am thy slave and thy servant." Then he set all the bread on his head and following the fisherman home, gave it to his wife and children, after which he repaired to the market and brought meat and greens and all manner fruit. Moreover, he left his oven and abode with Abdullah all that day, busying himself in his service and fulfilling all his affairs. Said the fisherman, "O my brother, thou weariest thyself;" and the baker replied, "This is my duty, for I am become thy servant and thou hast overwhelmed me with thy boons." Rejoined the fisherman, "'Tis thou who wast my benefactor in the days of dearth and distress." And the baker passed that night with him enjoying good cheer and became a faithful friend to him. Then the fisherman told his wife what had befallen him with the Merman, whereat she rejoiced and said, "Keep thy secret, lest the government come down upon thee;" but he said, "Though I keep my secret from all men, yet will I not hide it from the baker." On the morrow, he rose betimes and, shouldering a basket which he had filled in the evening with all manner fruits, repaired before sunrise to the sea-shore, and setting down the crate on the water-edge called out, "Where art thou, O Abdullah, O Merman?" He answered, "Here am I, at thy service;" and came forth to him. The fisherman gave him the fruit and he took it and plunging into the sea with it, was absent a full hour, after which time he came up, with the fish-basket full of all kinds of gems and jewels. The

fisherman set it on his head and went away; and, when he came to the oven, the baker said to him, "O my lord, I have baked thee forty bunns[247] and have sent them to thy house; and now I will bake some firsts and as soon as all is done, I will bring it to thy house and go and fetch thee greens and meat." Abdullah handed to him three handsful of jewels out of the fish-basket and going home, set it down there. Then he took a gem of price of 173 each sort and going to the jewel-bazar, stopped at the Syndic's shop and said to him, "Buy these precious stones of me." "Show them to me," said the Shaykh. So he showed them to him and the jeweller said, "Hast thou aught beside these?"; and Abdullah replied, "I have a basket-full at home." The Syndic asked, "And where is thine house?" and the fisherman answered, "In such a quarter"; whereupon the Shaykh took the jewels from him and said to his followers, "Lay hold of him, for he is the thief who stole the jewellery of the Queen, the wife of our Sultan." And he bade beat him. So they bastinadoed him and pinioned him; after which the Syndic and all the people of the jewel-market arose and set out for the palace, saying, "We have caught the thief." Quoth one, "None robbed such an one but this villain," and quoth another, "'Twas none but he stole all that was in such an one's house;" and some said this and others said that. All this while he was silent and spake not a word nor returned a reply, till they brought him before the King, to whom said the Syndic, "O King of the age, when the Queen's necklace was stolen, thou sentest to acquaint us of the theft, requiring of us the discovery of the culprit; wherefore I strove beyond the rest of the folk and have taken the thief for thee. Here he standeth before thee, and these be the jewels we have recovered from him." Thereupon the King said to the chief eunuch, "Carry these jewels for the Queen to see, and say to her, Are these thy property thou hast lost?" So the eunuch took the jewels and went in with them to the Queen, who seeing their lustre marvelled at them and sent to the King to say, "I have found my necklace in my own place and these jewels are not my property; nay, they are finer than those of my necklace. So oppress not the man;"—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the King's wife sent to the King to say, "These are not my property; nay, these gems are finer than those of my necklace. So oppress not this man; but, if he will sell them, buy them for thy daughter Umm al-Su'úd,[248] that we may set them in a necklace 174 for her." When the eunuch returned and told the King what the Queen said, he damned the Syndic of the jewellers, him and his company, with the damnation of Ád and Thamúd,[249] and they said to him, "O King of the age, we knew this man for a poor fisherman and deemed such things too much for him,[250] so we supposed that he had stolen them." Cried the King, "O ye filthy villains, begrudge ye a True Believer good fortune? Why did ye not make due enquiry of him? Haply Allah Almighty hath vouchsafed him these things from a source whereupon he reckoned not. Why did ye make him out a thief

and disgrace him amongst the folk? Begone, and may Allah never bless you!" So they went out affrighted and the King said to Abdullah, "O man (Allah bless thee in all He hath bestowed on thee!), no harm shall befal thee; but tell me truly, whence gottest thou these jewels; for I am a King yet have I not the like of them." The fisherman replied, "O King of the age, I have a fish-basket full of them at home and the case is thus and thus." Then he told him of his friendship with the Merman, adding, "We have made a covenant together that I shall bring him every day a basket full of fruit and that he shall fill me the basket with these jewels." Quoth the King, O man this is thy lucky lot; but wealth needeth rank,[251] I will defend thee for the present against men's domineering; but haply I shall be deposed or die and another rule in my stead, and he shall slay thee because of his love of the goods of this world and his covetousness. So I am minded to marry thee to my daughter and make thee my Wazir and bequeath thee the kingdom after me, so none may hanker for thy riches when I am gone. Then said he, "Hie with this man to the Hammam." So they bore him to the Baths and bathed his body and robed him in royal raiment, after which they brought him back to the King, and he made him his Wazir and sent to his house couriers and the soldiers of his guard and all the wives of the notables, who clad his wife and children in Kingly costume and mounting the woman in a horse-litter, with the little child in her lap, walked before her to the palace, escorted by the troops and couriers and officers. They also brought her elder children in to the King 175 who made much of them, taking them in his lap and seating them by his side; for they were nine children male and the King had no son and heir nor had he been blessed with any child save this one daughter, Umm al-Su'ud hight. Meanwhile the Queen entreated Abdullah's wife with honour and bestowed favours on her and made her Waziress to her. Then the King bade draw up the marriage contract between his daughter and Abdullah of the Land[252] who assigned to her, as her dower, all the gems and precious stones in his possession, and they opened the gates of festival. The King commanded by proclamation to decorate the city, in honour of his daughter's wedding. Then Abdullah went in unto the Princess and abated her maidenhead. Next morning the King looked out of the lattice and saw Abdullah carrying on his head a fish-crate full of fruit. So he called to him, "What hast thou there, O my son-in-law, and whither wendest thou?" The fisherman replied, "To my friend Abdullah the Merman;" and the King said, "O my son-in-law, this is no time to go to thy comrade." Quoth Abdullah, "Indeed, I fear to break tryst with him, lest he reckon me a liar and say:—The things of the world have diverted thee from me;" and quoth the King, "Thou speakest sooth: go to thy friend and God help thee!" So he walked through the city on his way to his companion; and, as he went, he heard the folk who knew him say, "There goeth the King's son-in-law to exchange fruit for gems;" whilst those who 176 knew him not said, "Ho, fellow, how much a pound? Come, sell to me." And he answered, saying, "Wait till I come back to thee," for that he would not hurt the feelings of any man.

Then he fared on till he came to the sea-shore and foregathered with his friend Abdullah the Merman, to whom he delivered the fruit, receiving gems in return. He ceased not doing thus till one day, as he passed by the baker's oven, he found it closed; and so he did ten days, during which time the oven remained shut and he saw nothing of the baker. So he said to himself, "This is a strange thing! Would I wot whither the baker went!" Then he enquired of his neighbour, saying, "O my brother, where is thy neighbour the baker and what hath Allah done with him?"; and the other responded, "O my lord, he is sick and cometh not forth of his house." "Where is his house?" asked Abdullah; and the other answered, "In such a quarter." So he fared thither and enquired of him; but, when he knocked at the door, the baker looked out of window and seeing his friend the fisherman, full basket on head, came down and opened the door to him. Abdullah entered and throwing himself on the baker embraced him and wept, saying, "How dost thou, O my friend? Every day, I pass by thine oven and see it unopened; so I asked thy neighbour, who told me that thou wast sick; therefore I enquired for thy house, that I might see thee." Answered the baker, "Allah requite thee for me with all good! Nothing aileth me; but it reached me that the King had taken thee, for that certain of the folk had lied against thee and accused thee of being a robber, wherefore I feared and shut shop and hid myself." "True," said Abdullah and told him all that had befallen him with the King and the Shaykh of the jewellers' bazar, adding "Moreover, the King hath given me his daughter to wife and made me his Wazir;" and, after a pause, "So do thou take what is in this fish-basket to thy share and fear naught." Then he left him, after having done away from him his affright, and returned with the empty crate to the King, who said to him, "O my son-in-law, 'twould seem thou hast not foregathered with thy friend the Merman to-day." Replied Abdullah, "I went to him but that which he gave me I gave to my gossip the baker, to whom I owe kindness." "Who may be this baker?" asked the King; and the fisherman answered, "He is a benevolent man, who did with me thus and thus in the days of my poverty and never neglected me a single day nor hurt my feelings." Quoth the King, "What is his name?"; and quoth the 177 fisherman "His name is Abdullah the Baker; and my name is Abdullah of the Land and that of my friend the merman Abdullah of the Sea." Rejoined the King, "And my name also is Abdullah; and the servants of Allah[253] are all brethren. So send and fetch thy friend the baker, that I may make him my Wazir of the left."[254] So he sent for the baker who speedily came to the presence, and the King invested him with the Wazirial uniform and made him Wazir of the left, making Abdullah of the Land his Wazir of the right.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the King made his son-in-law, Abdullah of the Land, Wazir of the right and Abdullah the baker Wazir of the left. In such condition the fisherman abode a whole year, every day carrying for the

Merman the crate full of fruit and receiving it back, full of jewels; and when fruit failed from the gardens, he carried him raisins and almonds and filberts and walnuts and figs and so forth; and all that he brought for him the Merman accepted and returned him the fish-basket full of jewels according to his custom. Now it chanced one day that he carried him the crate, full of dry[255] fruits as was his wont, and his friend took them from him. Then they sat down to converse, Abdullah the fisherman on the beach and Abdullah the Merman in the water near the shore, and discoursed; and the talk went round between them, till it fell upon the subject of sepulchres; whereat quoth the Merman, "O my brother, they say that the Prophet (whom Allah assain and save!) is buried with you on the land. Knowest thou his tomb?" Abdullah replied, "Yes; it lieth in a city called Yathrib.[256]" Asked 178 the Merman, "And do the people of the land visit it?" "Yes," answered the fisherman, and the other said, "I give you joy, O people of the land, of visiting[257] that noble Prophet and compassionate, which whoso visiteth meriteth his intercession! Hast thou made such visitation, O my brother?" Replied the fisherman, "No: for I was poor and had not the necessary sum[258] to spend by the way, nor have I been in easy case but since I knew thee and thou bestowedst on me this good fortune. But such visitation behoveth me after I have pilgrimed to the Holy House of Allah[259] and naught withholdeth me therefrom but my love to thee, because I cannot leave thee for one day." Rejoined the Merman, "And dost thou set the love of me before the visitation of the tomb of Mohammed (whom Allah assain and save!), who shall intercede for thee on the Day of Review before Allah and shall save thee from the Fire and through whose intercession thou shalt enter Paradise? And dost thou, for the love of the world, neglect to visit the tomb of thy Prophet[260] Mohammed, whom God bless and preserve?" Replied Abdullah, "No, by Allah, I set the visitation of the Prophet's tomb above all else, and I crave thy leave to pray before it this year." The Merman rejoined, "I grant thee leave, on condition that when thou shalt stand by his sepulchre thou salute him for me with the Salam. Furthermore I have a trust to give thee; so come 179 thou with me into the sea, that I may carry thee to my city and entertain thee in my house and give thee a deposit; which when thou takest thy station by the Prophet's tomb, do thou lay thereon, saying:—O apostle of Allah, Abdullah the Merman saluteth thee and sendeth thee this present, imploring thine intercession to save him from the Fire." Said the fisherman, "O my brother, thou wast created in the water and water is thy abiding-place and doth thee no hurt, but, if thou shouldst come forth to the land, would any harm betide thee?" The Merman replied, "Yes; my body would dry up and the breezes of the land would blow upon me and I should die." Rejoined the fisherman, "And I, in like manner, was created on the land and the land is my abiding-place; but, an I went down into the sea, the water would enter my belly and choke me and I should die." Retorted the other, "Have no fear for that, for I will bring thee an ointment, wherewith when thou hast anointed thy body, the water will do thee no hurt, though thou

shouldst pass the lave of thy life going about in the great deep: and thou shalt lie down and rise up in the sea and naught shall harm thee." Quoth the fisherman, "An the case be thus, well and good; but bring me the ointment, so that I may make trial of it;" and quoth the Merman, "So be it;" then, taking the fish-basket disappeared in the depths. He was absent awhile, and presently returned with an unguent as it were the fat of beef, yellow as gold and sweet of savour. Asked the fisherman, "What is this, O my brother?"; and answered the Merman, "'Tis the liver-fat of a kind of fish called the Dandán,[261] which is the biggest of all fishes and the fiercest of our foes. His bulk is greater than that of any beast of the land, and were he to meet a camel or an elephant, he would swallow it at a single mouthful." Abdullah enquired, "O my brother, what doth this baleful beast?"; and the Merman replied, "He eateth of the beasts of the sea. Hast thou not heard the saying:—Like the fishes of the sea: forcible eateth feeble?[262]" "True; but have you many of these Dandans in the sea?" "Yes, there be many of them with us. None can tell their tale save Almighty Allah." 180 "Verily, I fear lest, if I go down with thee into the deep a creature of this kind fall in with me and devour me." "Have no fear: when he seeth thee, he will know thee for a son of Adam and will fear thee and flee. He dreadeth none in the sea as he dreadeth a son of Adam; for that an he eateth a man he dieth forthright, because human fat is a deadly poison to this kind of creature; nor do we collect its liver-speck save by means of a man, when he falleth into the sea and is drowned; for that his semblance becometh changed and ofttimes his flesh is torn; so the Dandan eateth him, deeming him the same of the denizens of the deep, and dieth. Then we light upon our enemy dead and take the speck of his liver and grease ourselves so that we can over-wander the main in safety. Also, wherever there is a son of Adam, though there be in that place an hundred or two hundred or a thousand or more of these beasts, all die forthright an they but hear him——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

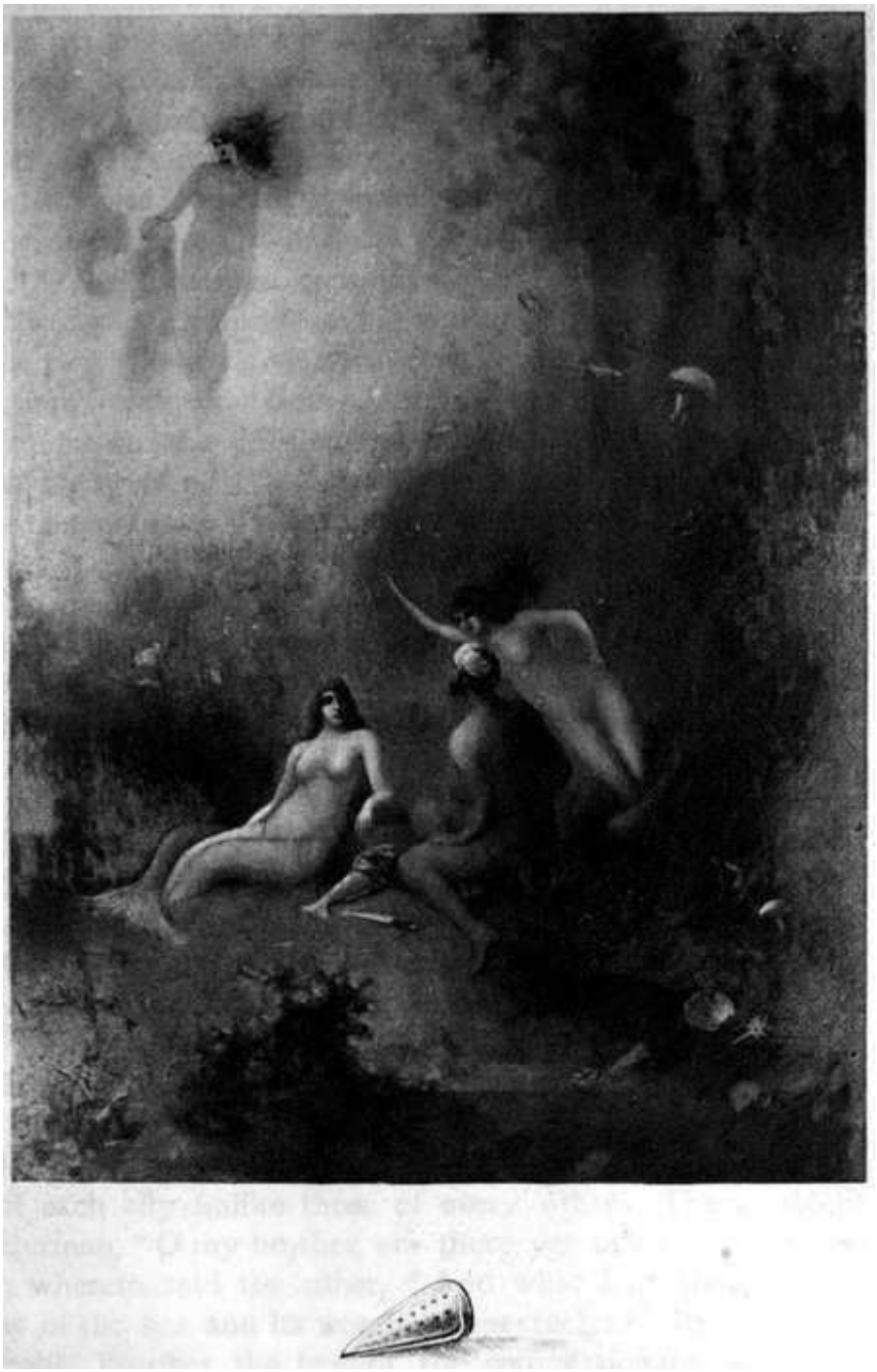
She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah of the Sea said to Abdullah of the Land, "And if a thousand or more of this kind hear an Adamite cry a single cry, forthright all die nor hath one of them power to remove from his place; so, whenever a son of Adam falleth into the sea, we take him and anoint him with this fat and go round about the depths with him, and whenever we see a Dandan or two or three or more, we bid him cry out and they all die forthright for his once crying." Quoth the fisherman, "I put my trust in Allah;" and, doffing his clothes, buried them in a hole which he dug in the beach; after which he rubbed his body from head to heels with that ointment. Then he descended into the water and diving, opened his eyes and the brine did him no hurt. So he walked right and left, and if he would, he rose to the sea-face, and if he would, he sank to the base. And he beheld the water as it were a tent over his head; yet it wrought him no hurt. Then said the Merman to him,

"What seest thou, O my brother?"; and said he, "O my brother, I see naught save weal[263]; and indeed thou spakest truth in that 181 which thou saidst to me; for the water doth me no hurt." Quoth the Merman, "Follow me." So he followed him and they ceased not faring on from place to place, whilst Abdullah discovered before him and on his right and left mountains of water and solaced himself by gazing thereon and on the various sorts of fish, some great and some small, which disported themselves in the main. Some of them favoured buffaloes[264] others oxen and others dogs and yet others human beings; but all to which they drew near fled, whenas they saw the fisherman, who said to the Merman, "O my brother, how is it that I see all the fish, to which we draw near, flee from us afar?" Said the other, "Because they fear thee, for all things that Allah hath made fear the son of Adam.[265]" The fisherman ceased not to divert himself with the marvels of the deep, till they came to a high mountain and fared on beside it. Suddenly, he heard a mighty loud cry and turning, saw some black thing, the bigness of a camel or bigger, coming down upon him from the liquid mountain and crying out. So he asked his friend, "What is this, O my brother?"; and the Merman answered, "This is the Dandan. He cometh in search of me, seeking to devour me; so cry out at him, O my brother, ere he reach us; else he will snatch me up and devour me." Accordingly Abdullah cried out at the beast and behold, it fell down dead; which when he saw, he said, "Glorified be the perfection of God and His praise! I smote it not with sword nor knife; how cometh it that, for all the vastness of the creature's bulk, it could not bear my cry, but died?" Replied the Merman, "Marvel not, for, by Allah, O my brother, were there a thousand or two thousand of these creatures, yet could they not endure the cry of a son of Adam." Then they walked on, till 182 they made a city, whose inhabitants the fisherman saw to be all women, there being no male among them; so he said to his companion, "O my brother, what city is this and what are these women?" "This is the city of women; for its inhabitants are of the women of the sea." "Are there any males among them?" "No!" "Then how do they conceive and bear young, without males[266]?" "The King of the sea banisheth them hither and they conceive not neither bear children. All the women of the sea, with whom he is wroth, he sendeth to this city, and they cannot leave it; for, should one of them come forth therefrom, any of the beasts of the sea that saw her would eat her. But in other cities of the main there are both males and females." Thereupon asked the fisherman, "Are there then other cities than this in the sea?"; and the Merman answered, "There are many." Quoth the fisherman, "And is there a Sultan over you in the sea?" "Yes," quoth the Merman. Then said Abdullah "O my brother, I have indeed seen many marvels in the main!" But the Merman said, "And what hast thou seen of its marvels[267]? Hast thou not heard the saying:—The marvels of the sea are more manifold than the marvels of the land?" "True," rejoined the fisherman and fell to gazing upon those women, whom he saw with faces like moons and hair like women's hair, but their hands and feet were in their middle and they had tails like

fishes' tails. Now when the Merman had shown him the people of the city, he carried him forth therefrom and fore-walked him to another city, which he found full of folk, both males and females, formed like the women aforesaid and having tails; but there was neither selling nor buying amongst them, as with the people of the land, nor were they clothed, but went all naked and with their shame uncovered. Said Abdullah "O my brother, I see males and females alike with their shame exposed[268]," and the other said, "This is because the folk of the sea have no clothes." Asked 183 the fisherman, "And how do they when they marry?" The Merman answered, "They do not marry; but every one who taketh a liking to a female doth his will of her." Quoth Abdullah, "This is unlawful! Why doth he not ask her in marriage and dower her and make her a wedding festival and marry her, in accordance with that which is pleasing to Allah and His Apostle?"; and quoth the other, "We are not all of one religion: some of us are Moslems, believers in The Unity, others Nazarenes and what not else; and each marrieth in accordance with the ordinances of his creed; but those of us who marry are mostly Moslems." The fisherman continued, "Ye are naked and have neither buying nor selling among you: of what then is your wives' dowry? Do ye give them jewels and precious stones?" The Merman rejoined, "Gems with us are only stones without worth: but upon the Moslem who is minded to marry they impose a dowry of a certain number of fishes of various kinds that he must catch, a thousand or two thousand, more or less, according to the agreement between himself and the bride's father. As soon as he bringeth the amount required, the families of the bride and bridegroom assemble and eat the marriage-banquet; after which they bring him in to his bride, and he catcheth fish and feedeth her; or, if he be unable, she catcheth fish and feedeth him." Enquired the fisherman, "And how if a woman commit adultery?"; and the other replied, "If a woman be convicted of this case, they banish her to the City of Women; and if she be with child by her gallant, they leave her till she be delivered; then, if she give birth to a girl, they banish her with her, calling her adulteress, daughter of adulteress, and she abideth a maid till she die; but, if the woman give birth to a male child, they carry it to the Sultan of the Sea, who putteth it to death." Abdullah marvelled at this and the Merman carried him to another city and thence to another and yet another, till he had diverted him with the sight of eighty cities, and he saw the people of each city unlike those of every other. Then said he to the Merman, "O my brother, are there yet other cities in the main?"; whereto said the other, "And what hast thou seen of the cities of the sea and its wondrous spectacles? By the virtue of the noble Prophet, the benign, the compassionate, were I to show thee every day a thousand cities for a thousand years, and in each city a thousand marvels, I should not have shown thee one carat of the four-and-twenty carats of the cities of the sea 184 and its miracles! I have but shown thee our own province and country, nothing more." The fisherman thus resumed, "O my brother, since this is the case, what I have seen sufficeth me, for I am a-weary of eating fish, and these fourscore

days I have been in thy company, thou hast fed me, morning and night, upon nothing but raw fish, neither broiled nor boiled." "And what is broiled and boiled?" "We broil fish with fire and boil it in water and dress it in various ways and make many dishes of it." "And how should we come by fire in the sea? We know not broiled nor boiled nor aught else of the kind." "We also fry it in olive-oil and oil of sesame[269]." "How should we come by olive-oil and oil of sesame in the sea? Verily we know nothing of that thou namest." "True, but O my brother, thou hast shown me many cities; yet hast thou not shown me thine own city." "As for mine own city, we passed it a long way, for it is near the land whence we came, and I left it and came with thee hither, thinking only to divert thee with the sight of the greater cities of the sea." "That which I have seen of them sufficeth me; and now I would have thee show me thine own city." "So be it," answered Abdullah of the Sea; and, returning on his traces, carried him back thither and said to him, "This is my city." Abdullah of the Land looked and saw a city small by comparison with those he had seen; then he entered with his comrade of the deep and they fared on till they came to a cave. Quoth the Merman, "This is my house and all the houses in the city are like this, caverns great and small in the mountains; as are also those of every other city of the sea. For whoso is minded to make him a house must repair to the King and say to him, 'I wish to make me a house in such a place.' Whereupon the King sends with him a band of the fish called 'Peckers,'[270] which have beaks that crumble the hardest rock, appointing for their wage a certain quantum of fish. They betake themselves to the mountain chosen by the intended owner and therein pierce the house, whilst the owner catcheth fish for them and feedeth them, till the cave is finished, when they wend their 185 ways and the house-owner taketh up his abode therein. On such wise do all the people of the sea; they traffic not one with other nor serve each other save by means of fish; and their food is fish and they themselves are a kind of fish[271]." Then he said to him, "Enter!" So Abdullah entered and the Merman cried out, saying, "Ho, daughter mine!" when behold, there came to him a damsel with a face like the rondure of the moon and hair long, hips heavy, eyes black-edged and waist slender; but she was naked and had a tail. When she saw Abdullah of the Land she said to her sire, "O my father, what is this No[272]-tail thou hast brought with thee?" He replied, "O my daughter this is my friend of the land, from whom I used to bring thee the fruits of the ground. Come hither and salute him with the salam." So she came forward and saluted the fisherman with loquent tongue and eloquent speech; and her father said to her, "Bring meat for our guest, by whose visit a blessing hath betided us[273]:" whereupon she brought him two great fishes, each the bigness of a lamb, and the Merman said to him, "Eat." So he ate for stress of hunger, despite himself; because he was tired of eating fish and they had naught else save fish. Before long, in came the Merman's wife, who was beautiful of form and favour and with her two children, each having in his hand a young fish, which he craunched as a man would craunch a cucumber. When she saw the fisherman with her husband, she said, "What is this No-

Tail?" And she and her sons and their sister came up to him and fell to examining the back parts of Abdullah of the Land, and saying, "Yea, by Allah, he is tailless!"; and they laughed at him. So he said to the Merman, "O my brother, hast thou brought me hither to make me a butt and a laughing-stock for thy children and thy consort?"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah of the Land said to Abdullah of the Sea, "O my 186brother, hast thou brought me hither to make me a butt and a laughing-stock for thy children and thy consort?" Cried the Merman, "Pardon, O my brother! Those who have no tails are rare among us, and whenever one such is found, the Sultan taketh him, to make fun of him, and he abideth a marvel amongst us, and all who see him laugh at him. But, O my brother, excuse these young children and this woman, for they lack wits." Then he cried out to his family, saying, "Silence!"; so they were afraid and held their peace; whilst he went on to soothe Abdullah's mind. Presently, as they were talking, behold, in came some ten Mermen, tall and strong and stout, and said to him, "O Abdullah, it hath reached the King that thou hast with thee a No-tail of the No-tails of the earth." Answered the Merman, "Yes; and this is he; but he is not of us nor of the children of the sea. He is my friend of the land and hath come to me as a guest and I purpose to carry him back to the land." Quoth they, "We cannot depart but with him; so, an thou have aught to say, arise and come with him before the King; and whatso thou wouldst say to us, say thou that same to the King." Then quoth the Merman to the fisherman, "O my brother, my excuse is manifest, and we may not disobey the King: but go thou with me to him and I will do my best to deliver thee from him, Inshallah! Fear not, for he deemeth thee of the children of the sea; but, when he seeth thee, he will know thee to be of the children of the land, and he will surely entreat thee honourably and restore thee to the land." And Abdullah of the Land replied, "'Tis thine to decide, I will trust in Allah and wend with thee." So he took him and carried him to the King, who, when he saw him, laughed at him and said, "Welcome to the No-tail!" And all who were about the King began to laugh at him and say, "Yea, by Allah, he is tailless!" Then Abdullah of the Sea came forward and acquainted the King with the fisherman's case, saying, "This man is of the children of the land and he is my comrade and cannot live amongst us, for that he loveth not the eating of fish, except it be fried or boiled; wherefore I desire that thou give me leave to restore him to the land." Whereto the King replied, "Since the case is so, and he cannot live among us, I give thee leave to restore him to his place, after due entertainment," presently adding, "Bring him the guest-meal." So they brought him fish of various kinds and colours and he ate, in obedience to the royal behest; after which the King said to him, 187"Ask a boon of me." Quoth he, "I ask of thee that thou give me jewels;" and the King said, "Carry him to the jewel-house and let him choose that whereof he hath need." So his friend carried him to the jewel-house and he picked out whatso he would, after which the Merman brought him back to his own city and pulling out a purse, said to him, "Take this deposit and lay it on the tomb of the Prophet, whom Allah save and assain!" And he took it, knowing not what was therein. Then the Merman went forth with him, to bring him back to land, and by the way he heard singing and merrymaking and saw a table spread with fish and folk eating and singing and holding mighty high festival. So

Abdullah of the Land said to his friend, “What aileth these people to rejoice thus? Is there a wedding among them?” Replied Abdullah of the Sea, “Nay; one of them is dead.” Asked the fisherman, “Then do ye, when one dieth amongst you, rejoice for him and sing and feast?”; and the Merman answered, “Yes: and ye of the land, what do ye?” Quoth Abdullah of the Land, “When one dieth amongst us, we weep and keen for him and the women beat their faces and rend the bosoms of their raiment, in token of mourning for the dead.” But Abdullah the Merman stared at him with wide eyes and said to him, “Give me the deposit!” So he gave it to him. Then he set him ashore and said to him, “I have broken off our companionship and our amity; wherefore from this day forward thou shalt no more see me, nor I see thee.” Cried the fisherman, “Why sayst thou this?”; and the other said, “Are ye not, O folk of the land, a deposit of Allah?” “Yes.” “Why then,” asked the Merman, “is it grievous to you that Allah should take back His deposit and wherefore weep ye over it? How can I entrust thee with a deposit for the Prophet (whom Allah save and assain!), seeing that, when a child is born to you, ye rejoice in it, albeit the Almighty setteth the soul therein as a deposit; and yet, when he taketh it again, it is grievous to you and ye weep and mourn? Since it is hard for thee to give up the deposit of Allah, how shall it be easy to thee to give up the deposit of the Prophet?[274] Wherefore we need not your companionship.” Saying 188 thus he left him and disappeared in the sea. Thereupon Abdullah of the Land donned his dress and taking the jewels, went up to the King, who met him lovingly and rejoiced at his return saying, “How dost thou, O my son-in-law, and what is the cause of thine absence from me this while?” So he told him his tale and acquainted him with that which he had seen of marvels in the sea, whereat the King wondered. Then he told him what Abdullah the Merman had said[275]; and the King replied, “Indeed ’twas thou wast at fault to tell him this.” Nevertheless, he continued for some time to go down to the shore and call upon Abdullah of the Sea, but he answered him not nor came to him; so, at last, he gave up all hope of him and abode, he and the King his father-in-law and the families of them both in the happiest of case and the practice of righteous ways, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Severer of societies and they died all. Wherefore glory be to the Living, who dieth not, whose is the empire of the Seen and the Unseen, who over all things is Omnipotent and is gracious to His servants and knoweth their every intent! And amongst the tales they tell is one anent

41- TALE OF HARUN AL-RASHID AND ABU HASAN, THE MERCHANT OF OMAN.

The Caliph Harun Al-Rashid was one night wakeful exceedingly; so he called Masrur and said to him as soon as he came, “Fetch me Ja’afar in haste.” Accordingly, he went out and returned with the Wazir, to whom said the Caliph, “O Ja’afar wakefulness hath mastered me this night and forbiddeth sleep from me, nor wot I what shall drive it away from me.” Replied Ja’afar, “O Commander of the Faithful, the wise say:—Looking on a mirror, entering the Hammam-bath and hearkening unto song banish care and chagrin.” He rejoined, “O Ja’afar I have done all this, but it hath brought me naught of relief, and I swear by my pious forbears unless thou contrive that which shall abate from me this insomny, I will smite thy neck.” Quoth Ja’afar, “O Commander 189 of the Faithful, wilt thou do that which I shall counsel thee?” whereupon quoth the Caliph, “And what is that thou counselleth?” He replied, “It is that thou take boat with us and drop down Tigris River with the tide to a place called Karn al-Sirat, so haply we may hear what we never heard or see what we never saw, for ’tis said:—The solace of care is in one of three things; that a man see what he never before saw or hear what he never yet heard or tread an earth he erst hath never trodden. It may be this shall be the means of remedying thy restlessness, O Commander of the Faithful, Inshallah! There, on either sides of the river, are windows and balconies one facing other, and it may be we shall hear or see from one of these somewhat wherewith our hearts may be heartened.” Ja’afar’s counsel pleased the Caliph, so he rose from his place and taking with him the Wazir and his brother Al-Fazl and Isaac[276] the boon-companion and Abu Nowas and Abu Dalaf[277] and Masrur the Sworder——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph arose from his seat with Ja’afar and the rest of the party, all entered the wardrobe, where they donned

merchant's gear. Then they went down to the Tigris and embarking in a gilded boat, dropped down with the stream, till they came to the place they sought, when they heard the voice of a damsel singing to the lute and chanting these couplets:—

To him when the wine cup is near I declare, ✿ While in coppice loud shrilleth and trilleth Hazár,
"How long this repining from joys and delight? ✿ Wake up for this life is a borrowed ware!"
Take the cup from the hand of the friend who is dear ✿ With languishing eyelids and languorous air.
I sowed on his cheek a fresh rose, which amid ✿ His side-locks the fruit of granado-tree bare.
190 Thou wouldst deem that the place where he tare his fair cheek[278] ✿ Were ashes, while cheeks hues incendiary wear.
Quoth the blamer, "Forget him! But where's my excuse ✿ When his side-face is growing the downiest hair[279]?"

When the Caliph heard this, he said, "O Ja'afar, how goodly is that voice!"; and the Wazir replied, "O our lord, never smote my hearing aught sweeter or goodlier than this singing! But, good my lord, hearing from behind a wall is only half hearing; how would it be an we heard it from behind a curtain?" Quoth the Caliph, "Come, O Ja'afar, let us play the parasites with the master of this house; and haply we shall look upon the songstress, face to face;" and quoth Ja'afar, "I hear and I obey." So they landed and sought admittance; when behold, there came out to them a young man, fair of favour, sweet of speech and fluent of tongue, who said to them, "Well come and welcome, O lords that honour me with your presence! Enter in all comfort and convenience!" So they went in (and he with them) to a saloon with four faces, whose ceiling was decorated with gold and its walls adorned with ultramarine.[280] At its upper end was a daïs, whereon stood a goodly row of seats[281] and thereon sat an hundred damsels like moons. The house-master cried out to them and they came down from their seats. Then he turned to Ja'afar and said to him "O my lord, I know not the honourable of you from the more honourable: Bismillah! deign he that is highest in rank among you favour me by taking the head of the room, and let his brethren sit each in his several stead." So they sat down, each according to his degree, whilst Masrur abode standing before them in their service; and the host asked them, "O my guests, with your leave, shall I set somewhat of food before you?" and they answered, "Yes." Hearing this he bade his handmaids bring food, whereupon four damsels with girded waists placed in front of them a table, whereon were rare meats of that which flieth 191 and walketh earth and swimmeth seas, sand-grouse and quails and chickens and pigeons; and written on the raised edge of the tray were verses such as sorted with the entertainment. So they ate till they had enough and washed their hands, after which said the young man, "O my lords, if you have any want, let us know it, that we may have the honour of satisfying it." They replied, "'Tis well: we came not to thy dwelling save for the sake of a voice we heard from behind the wall of thy house, and we would fain hear it again and know her to whom it belongeth. So, an thou deem right to vouchsafe us this favour, it will be of the generosity of thy nature, and after we will return whence we came." Quoth the host, "Ye are welcome;" and, turning to a

black slave-girl, said to her, “Fetch me thy mistress such an one.” So she went away and returning with a chair of chinaware, cushioned with brocade, set it down: then withdrew again and presently returned with a damsel, as she were the moon on the night of its full, who sat down on the chair. Then the black girl gave her a bag of satin wherefrom she brought out a lute, inlaid with gems and jacinths and furnished with pegs of gold.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the damsel came forward, she took her seat upon the chair and brought out from its case a lute and behold, it was inlaid with gems and jacinths and furnished with pegs of gold. Then she tuned its strings, even as saith the poet of her and her lute in these lines:—

She sits it in lap like a mother fond ✿ And she strikes the strings that can make it speak:

And ne’er smiteth her right an injurious touch ✿ But her left repairs of her right the wreak.[282]

Then she strained the lute to her bosom, binding over it as mother bendeth over babe, and swept the strings which complained as 192 child to mother complaineth; after which she played upon it and began improvising these couplets:—

An Time my lover restore me I’ll blame him fain, ✿ Saying, “Pass, O my dear, the bowl and in passing drain

The wine which hath never mixed with the heart of man ✿ But he passes to joy from annoy and to pleasure from pain.”

Then Zephyr arose to his task of sustaining the cup: ✿ Didst e’er see full Moon that in hand the star hath ta’en?[283]

How oft I talked thro’ the night, when its rounded Lune ✿ Shed on darkness of Tigris ’bank a beamy rain!

And when Luna sank in the West ’twas as though she’d wave ✿ O’er the length of the watery waste a gilded glaive.

When she had made an end of her verse, she wept with sore weeping and all who were in the place wept aloud till they were well-nigh dead; nor was there one of them but took leave of his wits and rent his raiment and beat his face, for the goodliness of her singing. Then said Al-Rashid, “This damsel’s song verily denoteth that she is a lover departed from her beloved.” Quoth her master, “She hath lost father and mother;” but quoth the Caliph, “This is not the weeping of one who hath lost mother and father, but the yearning of one who hath lost him she loveth.” And he was delighted with her singing and said to Isaac, “By Allah, never saw I her like!”; and Isaac said, “O my lord, indeed I marvel at her with utterest marvel and am beside myself for delight.” Now Al-Rashid with all this stinted not to look upon the house-master and note his charms and the daintiness of his fashion; but he saw on his face a pallor as he would die; so he turned to him and said, “Ho, youth!” and the other said, “Adsum!—at thy service, O my lord,” The Caliph asked, “Knowest thou who we are?”; and he answered, “No.” Quoth Ja’afar, “Wilt thou that I tell thee the names of each of us?”; and quoth the young man “Yes;” when the Wazir said, “This is the

Commander of the Faithful, descendant of the uncle of the Prince of the Apostles," and named to him the others of the company; after which quoth Al-Rashid, "I wish that thou acquaint me with the cause of the paleness of thy face, whether it be acquired or natural from thy birth-tide." Quoth he, "O Prince of True Believers, my case is wondrous and my affair marvellous; [193]were it graven with gravers on the eye-corners it were a warner to whoso will be warned." Said the Caliph, "Tell it to me: haply thy healing may be at my hand." Said the young man, "O Commander of the Faithful, lend me thine ears and give me thy whole mind." And he, "Come; tell it me, for thou makest me long to hear it." So the young man began:—Know then, O Prince of True Believers, that I am a merchant of the merchants of the sea and come from Oman city, where my sire was a trader and a very wealthy trader having thirty ships trafficking upon the main, whose yearly hire was thirty thousand dinars; and he was a generous man and had taught me writing and all whereof a wight hath need. When his last hour drew near, he called me to him and gave me the customary charge; then Almighty Allah took him and admitted him to His mercy and may He continue the Commander of the Faithful on life! Now my late father had partners trading with his coin and voyaging on the ocean. So one day, as I sat in my house with a company of merchants, a certain of my servants came in to me and said, "O my lord, there is at the door a man who craveth admittance to thee!" I gave leave and he came in, bearing on his head a something covered. He set it down and uncovered it, and behold it was a box wherein were fruits out of season and herbs conserved in salt and fresh, such as are not found in our land. I thanked him and gifted him with an hundred dinars, and he went away grateful. Then I divided these things amongst my friends and guests who were present and asked them whence they came. Quoth they, "They come from Bassorah," and praised them and went on to portray the beauties of Bassorah and all agreed that there was naught in the world goodlier than Baghdad and its people. Then they fell to describing Baghdad and the fine manners of its folk and the excellence of its air and the beauty of its ordinance, till my soul longed for it and all my hopes clave to looking upon it. So I arose and selling my houses and lands, ships and slaves, negroes and handmaids, I got together my good, to wit, a thousand thousand dinars, besides gems and jewels, wherewith I freighted a vessel and setting out therein with the whole of the property, voyaged awhile. Then I hired a barque and embarking therein with all my monies sailed up the river some days till we arrived at Baghdad. I enquired where the merchants abode and what part was pleasantest for domicile and was answered, "The Karkh quarter." So I went thither and hiring a house in a thoroughfare called the Street of [194]Saffron, transported all my goods to it and took up my lodging therein for some time. At last one day which was a Friday, I sallied forth to solace myself taking with me somewhat of coin. I went first to a cathedral-mosque, called the Mosque of Mansur, where the Friday service was held, and when we had made an end of congregational prayers, I fared forth with the folk to a place

hight Karn al-Sirat, where I saw a tall and goodly mansion, with a balcony overlooking the river-bank and pierced with a lattice-window. So I betook myself thither with a company of folk and sighted there an old man sitting, handsomely clad and exhaling perfumes. His beard forked upon his breast in two waves like silver-wire, and about him were four damsels and five pages. So I said to one of the folk, "What is the name of this old man and what is his business?"; and the man said, "His name is Táhir ibn al-Aláa, and he is a keeper of girls: all who go into him eat and drink and look upon fair faces." Quoth I, "By Allah, this long while have I wandered about in search of something like this!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant cried, "By Allah this long while I have gone about in search of something like this!" So I went up to the Shaykh, O Commander of the Faithful, and saluting him said to him, "O my lord, I need somewhat of thee!" He replied, "What is thy need?" and I rejoined, "'Tis my desire to be thy guest to-night." He said, "With all my heart; but, O my son, with me are many damsels, some whose night is ten dinars, some forty and others more. Choose which thou wilt have." Quoth I, "I choose her whose night is ten dinars." And I weighed out to him three hundred dinars, the price of a month; whereupon he committed me to a page, who carried me to a Hammam within the house and served me with goodly service. When I came out of the Bath he brought me to a chamber and knocked at the door, whereupon out came a handmaid, to whom said he, "Take thy guest!" She met me with welcome and cordiality, laughing and rejoicing, and brought me into a mighty fine room decorated with gold. I considered her and saw her like the moon on the night of its fulness having in attendance on her two damsels as they were 195 constellations. She made me sit and seating herself by my side, signed to her slave-girls who set before us a tray covered with dishes of various kinds of meats, pullets and quails and sand-grouse and pigeons. So we ate our sufficiency, and never in my life ate I aught more delicious than this food. When we had eaten she bade remove the tray and set on the service of wine and flowers, sweetmeats and fruits; and I abode with her a month in such case. At the end of that time, I repaired to the Bath; then, going to the old man, I said to him, "O my lord, I want her whose night is twenty dinars." "Weigh down the gold," said he. So I fetched money and weighed out to him six hundred dinars for a month's hire, whereupon he called a page and said to him, "Take thy lord here." Accordingly he carried me to the Hammam and thence to the door of a chamber, whereat he knocked and there came out a handmaid, to whom quoth he, "Take thy guest!" She received me with the goodliest reception and I found in attendance on her four slave-girls, whom she commanded to bring food. So they fetched a tray spread with all manner meats, and I

ate. When I had made an end of eating and the tray had been removed, she took the lute and sang thereto these couplets:—

O waftings of musk from the Babel-land! ✿ Bear a message from me which my longings have planned:
My troth is pledged to that place of yours, ✿ And to friends there 'biding—a noble band;
And wherein dwells she whom all lovers love ✿ And would hend, but she cometh to no man's hand.

I abode with her a month, after which I returned to the Shaykh and said to him, "I want the forty dinar one." "Weigh out the money," said he. So I weighed out to him twelve hundred dinars, the mensual hire, and abode with her one month as it were one day, for what I saw of the comeliness of her semblance and the goodliness of her converse. After this I went to the Shaykh one evening and heard a great noise and loud voices; so I asked him, "What is to do?"; and he answered, saying, "This is the night of our remarkablest nights, when all souls embark on the river and divert themselves by gazing one upon other. Hast thou a mind to go up to the roof and solace thyself by looking at the folk?" "Yes," answered I, and went up to the terrace-roof,[284] whence I could see a 196 gathering of people with flambeaux and cressets, and great mirth and merriment. Then I went up to the end of the roof and beheld there, behind a goodly curtain, a little chamber in whose midst stood a couch of juniper[285]-wood plated with shimmering gold and covered with a handsome carpet. On this sat a lovely young lady, confounding all beholders with her beauty and comeliness and symmetry and perfect grace, and by her side a youth, whose hand was on her neck; and he was kissing her and she kissing him. When I saw them, O Prince of True Believers, I could not contain myself nor knew where I was, so dazed and dazzled was I by her beauty: but, when I came down, I questioned the damsel with whom I was and described the young lady to her. "What wilt thou with her?" asked she; and I, "She hath taken my wit." "O Abu al-Hasan, hast thou a mind to her?" "Ay, by Allah! for she hath captivated my heart and soul." "This is the daughter of Tahir ibn al-Alaa; she is our mistress and we are all her handmaids; but knowest thou, O Abu al-Hasan, what be the price of her night and her day?" "No!" "Five hundred dinars, for she is a regret to the heart of Kings!"[286] "By Allah, I will spend all I have on this damsel!" So saying I lay, heartsore for desire, through the livelong night till the morning, when I repaired to the Hammam and presently donned a suit of the richest royal raiment and betaking myself to Ibn al-Alaa, said to him, "O my lord, I want her whose night is five hundred dinars." Quoth he, "Weigh down the money." So I weighed out to him fifteen thousand dinars for a month's hire and he took them and said to the page, "Carry him to thy mistress such an one!" Accordingly he took me and carried me to an apartment, than which my eyes never saw a goodlier on the earth's face and there I found the young lady seated. When I saw her, O Commander of the Faithful, my reason was confounded with her beauty, for she was like the full moon on its fourteenth night,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man continued to describe before the Prince of True Believers the young lady's characteristics, saying:—She was like the full moon on her fourteenth night, a model of grace and symmetry and loveliness. Her speech shamed the tones of the lute, and it was as it were she whom the poet meant in these verses:—

She cried while played in her side Desire, ✿ And Night o'er hung her with blackest blee:—

"O Night shall thy murk bring me ne'er a chum ✿ To tumble and futter this coynte of me?"

And she smote that part with her palm and sighed ✿ Sore sighs and a weeping continued she:—

"As the toothstick beautifies teeth e'en so ✿ Must prickle to coynte as a toothstick be.

O Moslems, is never a stand to your tools, ✿ To assist a woman's necessity?"

Thereat rose upstanding beneath its clothes ✿ My yard, as crying, "At thee! at thee!"

And I loosed her trouser-string, startling her: ✿ "Who art thou?" and I said, "A reply to thy plea!"

And began to stroke her with wrist-thick yard, ✿ Hurting hinder cheeks by its potency:

And she cried as I rose after courses three ✿ "Suit thy gree the stroke!" and I—"suit thy gree!"

And how excellent is the saying of another![287]—

A fair one, to idolaters if she her face should show, They'd leave their idols and her face for only Lord would know.

If in the Eastward she appeared unto a monk, for sure, He'd cease from turning to the West and to the East bend low;

And if into the briny sea one day she chanced to spit, Assuredly the salt sea's floods straight fresh and sweet would grow.

And that of another:—

I looked at her one look and that dazed me ✿ Such rarest gifts of mind and form to see,

When doubt inspired her that I loved her, and ✿ Upon her cheeks the doubt showed showily.

198 I saluted her and she said to me, "Well come and welcome, and fair welcome!"; and taking me by the hand, O Prince of True Believers, made me sit down by her side; whereupon, of the excess of my desire, I fell a-weeping for fear of severance and pouring forth the tears of the eye, recited these two couplets:—

I love the nights of parting though I joy not in the same ✿ Time haply may exchange them for the boons of Union-day:

And the days that bring Union I unlove for single thought, ✿ Seeing everything in life lacking steadfastness of stay.

Then she strave to solace me with soft sweet speech, but I was drowned in the deeps of passion, fearing even in union the pangs of disunion, for excess of longing and ecstasy of passion; and I bethought me of the lowe of absence and estrangement and repeated these two couplets:—

I thought of estrangement in her embrace ✿ And my eyes rained tears red as 'Andam-wood.

So I wiped the drops on that long white neck; ✿ For camphor[288] is wont to stay flow of blood.

Then she bade bring food and there came four damsels, high-bosomed girls and virginal, who set before us food and fruits and confections and flowers and wine, such as befit none save kings. So, O Commander of the Faithful, we ate, and sat over our wine, compassed about with blooms and herbs of sweet savour, in a chamber suitable only for kings. Presently, one of her maids brought her a silken bag, which she opened and taking thereout a lute, laid it in her lap and smote its strings, whereat it complained as child complaineth to mother, and she sang these two couplets:—

Drink not pure wine except from hand of slender youth ✿ Like wine for daintiness and like him eke the wine:

For wine no joyance brings to him who drains the cup ✿ Save bring the cup-boy cheek as fair and fain and fine.

So, I abode with her, O Commander of the Faithful, month after month in similar guise, till all my money was spent; wherefore I began to bethink me of separation as I sat with her one day and 199 my tears railed down upon my cheeks like rills, and I became not knowing night from light. Quoth she, "Why dost thou weep?"; and quoth I, "O light of mine eyes, I weep because of our parting." She asked, "And what shall part me and thee, O my lord?"; and I answered, "By Allah, O my lady, from the day I came to thee, thy father hath taken of me, for every night, five hundred dinars, and now I have nothing left. Right soothfast is the saw:—Penury maketh strangerhood at home and money maketh a home in strangerhood; and indeed the poet speaks truth when he saith:—

Lack of good is exile to man at home; ✿ And money shall house him where'er he roam."

She replied, "Know that it is my father's custom, whenever a merchant abideth with him and hath spent all his capital, to entertain him three days; then doth he put him out and he may return to us nevermore. But keep thou thy secret and conceal thy case and I will so contrive that thou shalt abide with me till such time as Allah will;[289] for, indeed, there is in my heart a great love for thee. Thou must know that all my father's money is under my hand and he wotteth not its full tale; so, every morning, I will give thee a purse of five hundred dinars which do thou offer to my sire, saying:—Henceforth, I will pay thee only day by day. He will hand the sum to me, and I will give it to thee again, and we will abide thus till such time as may please Allah."[289] Thereupon I thanked her and kissed her hand; and on this wise, O Prince of True Believers, I abode with her a whole year, till it chanced on a certain day that she beat one of her handmaids grievously and the slave-girl said, "By Allah, I will assuredly torture thy heart, even as thou hast tortured me!" So she went to the girl's father and exposed to him all that had passed, first and last, which when Tahir ibn

Alaa heard he arose forthright and coming in to me, as I sat with his daughter, said, "Ho, such an one!"; and I said, "At thy service." Quoth he, "'Tis our wont, when a merchant grow poor with us, to give him hospitality three days; but thou hast had a year with us, eating and drinking and doing what thou wouldst." Then he turned to his pages and cried to them, "Pull off his clothes." They did as he bade them and 200 gave me ten dirhams and an old suit worth five silvers; after which he said to me, "Go forth; I will not beat thee nor abuse thee; but wend thy ways and if thou tarry in this town, thy blood be upon thine own head." So I went forth, O Commander of the Faithful, in my own despite, knowing not whither to hie, for had fallen on my heart all the trouble in the world and I was occupied with sad thought and doubt. Then I bethought me of the wealth which I had brought from Oman and said in myself, "I came hither with a thousand thousand dinars, part price of thirty ships, and have made away with it all in the house of yonder ill-omened man, and now I go forth from him, bare and broken-hearted! But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Then I abode three days in Baghdad, without tasting meat or drink, and on the fourth day seeing a ship bound for Bassorah, I took passage in her of the owner, and when we reached our port, I landed and went into the bazar, being sore anhungered. Presently, a man saw me, a grocer, whom I had known aforetime, and coming up to me, embraced me, for he had been my friend and my father's friend before me. Then he questioned me of my case, seeing me clad in those tattered clothes; so I told him all that had befallen me, and he said, "By Allah, this is not the act of a sensible man! But after this that hath befallen thee what dost thou purpose to do?" Quoth I, "I know not what I shall do," and quoth he, "Wilt thou abide with me and write my outgo and income and thou shalt have two dirhams a day, over and above thy food and drink?" I agreed to this and abode with him, O Prince of True Believers, selling and buying, till I had gotten an hundred dinars; when I hired me an upper chamber by the river-side, so haply a ship should come up with merchandise, that I might buy goods with the dinars and go back with them to Baghdad. Now it fortuned that one day, there came ships with merchandise, and all the merchants resorted to them to buy, and I went with them on board, when behold, there came two men out of the hold and setting themselves chairs on the deck, sat down thereon. The merchants addressed themselves to the twain with intent to buy, and the man said to one of the crew, "Bring the carpet." Accordingly he brought the carpet and spread it, and another came with a pair of saddle-bags, whence he took a budget and emptied it on the carpet; and our sights were dazzled with that which issued therefrom of pearls and corals and jacinths and carnelians and other jewels of all sorts and 201 colours.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young merchant, after recounting to the Caliph the matter of the bag and its containing jewels of all sorts,

continued:—Presently, O Commander of the Faithful, said one of the men on the chairs, “O company of merchants, we will sell but this to-day, by way of spending-money, for that we are weary.” So the merchants fell to bidding one against other for the jewels and bid till the price reached four hundred dinars. Then said to me the owner of the bag (for he was an old acquaintance of mine, and when he saw me, he came down to me and saluted me), “Why dost thou not speak and bid like the rest of the merchants?” I said, “O my lord, by Allah, the shifts of fortune have run against me and I have lost my wealth and have only an hundred dinars left in the world.” Quoth he, “O Ománi, after this vast wealth, can only an hundred dinars remain to thee?” And I was abashed before him and my eyes filled with tears; whereupon he looked at me and indeed my case was grievous to him. So he said to the merchants, “Bear witness against me that I have sold all that is in this bag of various gems and precious stones to this man for an hundred gold pieces, albeit I know them to be worth so many thousand dinars, and this is a present from me to him.” Then he gave me the saddle-bag and the carpet, with all the jewels that were thereon, for which I thanked him, and each and every of the merchants present praised him. Presently I carried all this to the jewel-market and sat there to sell and buy. Now among the precious stones was a round amulet of the handiwork of the masters,[290] weighing half a pound: it was red of the brightest, a carnelian on both whose sides were graven charact and characters, like the tracks of ants; but I knew not its worth. I sold and bought a whole year, at the end of which I took the amulet[291] and said, “This hath been with me some while, and I 202 know not what it is nor what may be its value.” So I gave it to the broker who took it and went round with it and returned, saying, “None of the merchants will give me more than ten dirhams for it.” Quoth I, “I will not sell it at that price;” and he threw it in my face and went away. Another day I again offered it for sale and its price reached fifteen dirhams; whereupon I took it from the broker in anger and threw it back into the tray. But a few days after, as I sat in my shop, there came up to me a man, who bore the traces of travel, and saluting me, said, “By thy leave, I will turn over what thou hast of wares.” Said I, “’Tis well,” and indeed, O Commander of the Faithful, I was still wroth by reason of the lack of demand for the talisman. So the man fell to turning over my wares, but took nought thereof save the amulet, which when he saw, he kissed his hand and cried, “Praised be Allah!” Then said he to me, “O my lord, wilt thou sell this?”; and I replied, “Yes,” being still angry. Quoth he, “What is its price?” And I asked, “How much wilt thou give?” He answered, “Twenty dinars”: so I thought he was making mock of me and exclaimed, “Wend thy ways.” But he resumed, “I will give thee fifty dinars for it.” I made him no answer, and he continued, “A thousand dinars.” But I was silent, declining to reply, whilst he laughed at my silence and said, “Why dost thou not return me an answer?” “Hie thee home,” repeated I and was like to quarrel with him. But he bid thousand after thousand, and I still made him no reply, till he said, “Wilt thou sell it for twenty thousand dinars?” I still thought he was mocking me; but the people gathered about me and all of them

said, “Sell to him, and if he buy not, we will all up and at him and drub him and thrust him forth the city.” So quoth I to him, “Wilt thou buy or dost thou jest?”; and quoth he, “Wilt thou sell or dost thou joke?” I said, “I will sell if thou wilt buy;” then he said, “I will buy it for thirty thousand dinars; take them and make the bargain;” so I cried to the bystanders, “Bear witness against him,” adding to him, “But on condition that thou acquaint me with the virtues and profit of this amulet for which thou payest all this money.” He answered, “Close the bargain, and I will tell thee this;” I rejoined, “I sell it to thee;” and he retorted, “Allah be witness of that which thou sayst and testimony!” Then he brought out the gold and giving it to me took the amulet, and set it in his bosom; after which he turned to me and asked, “Art thou content?” Answered I, “Yes,” and he said to the people, “Bear witness 203 against him that he hath closed the bargain and touched the price, thirty thousand dinars.” Then he turned to me and said, “Harkye, my poor fellow, hadst thou held back from selling, by Allah I would have bidden thee up to an hundred thousand dinars, nay, even to a thousand thousand!” When I heard these words, O Commander of the Faithful, the blood fled my face, and from that day there overcame it this pallor thou seest. Then said I to him, “Tell me the reason of this and what is the use of this amulet.” And he answered, saying, “Know that the King of Hind hath a daughter, never was seen a thing fairer than she, and she is possessed with a falling sickness.[292]” So the King summoned the Scribes and men of science and Divines, but none of them could relieve her of this. Now I was present in the assembly; so I said to him, “O King, I know a man called Sa’adu’lláh the Babylonian, than whom there is not on the face of the earth one more masterly in these matters, and if thou see fit to send me to him, do so.” Said he, “Go to him;” and quoth I, “Bring me a piece of carnelian.” Accordingly he gave me a great piece of carnelian and an hundred thousand dinars and a present, which I took, and with which I betook myself to the land of Babel. Then I sought out the Shaykh and when he was shown to me I delivered to him the money and the present, which he accepted and sending for a lapidary, bade him fashion the carnelian into this amulet. Then he abode seven months in observation of the stars, till he chose out an auspicious time for engraving it, when he graved upon it these talismanic characters which thou seest, and I took it and returned with it to the King.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young man said to the Commander of the Faithful:—So after the Shaykh had spoken, I took this talisman and returned with it to the King. Now the Princess was bound with four chains, and 204 every night a slave-girl lay with her and was found in the morning with her throat cut. The King took the amulet and laid it upon his daughter who was straightway made whole. At this he rejoiced with exceeding joy and invested me with a vest of honour and gave alms of much money; and he caused set the amulet in the

Princess's necklace. It chanced, one day, that she embarked with her women in a ship and went for a sail on the sea. Presently, one of her maids put out her hand to her, to sport with her, and the necklace brake asunder and fell into the waves. From that hour the possessor[293] of the Princess returned to her, wherefore great grief betided the King and he gave me much money, saying, "Go thou to Shaykh Sa'adu'llah and let him make her another amulet, in lieu of that which is lost." I journeyed to Babel, but found the old man dead; whereupon I returned and told the King, who sent me and ten others to go round about in all countries, so haply we might find a remedy for her: and now Allah hath caused me happen on it with thee." Saying these words, he took from me the amulet, O Commander of the Faithful, and went his ways. Such, then, is the cause of the wanness of my complexion. As for me, I repaired to Baghdad, carrying all my wealth with me, and took up my abode in the lodgings where I lived whilome. On the morrow, as soon as it was light, I donned my dress and betook myself to the house of Tahir ibn al-Alaa, that haply I might see her whom I loved, for the love of her had never ceased to increase upon my heart. But when I came to his home, I saw the balcony broken down and the lattice builded up; so I stood awhile, pondering my case and the shifts of Time, till there came up a serving-man, and I questioned him, saying, "What hath God done with Tahir ibn al-Alaa?" He answered, "O my brother, he hath repented to Almighty Allah.[294]" Quoth I, "What was the cause of his repentance?"; and quoth he, "O my brother, in such a year there came to him a merchant, by name Abu al-Hasan the Omani, who abode with his daughter awhile, till his wealth was all spent, when the old man turned him out, broken-hearted. Now the girl loved him with exceeding love, and when she was parted from him, she sickened of a sore sickness and came nigh upon death. As soon as her father knew how it was with her, he sent after and sought for Abu al-Hasan through the lands, pledging 205 himself to bestow upon whoso should produce him an hundred thousand dinars; but none could find him nor come on any trace of him; and she is now hard upon death." Quoth I, "And how is it with her sire?" and quoth the servant, "He hath sold all his girls, for grief of that which hath befallen him, and hath repented to Almighty Allah." Then asked I, "What wouldst thou say to him who should direct thee to Abu al-Hasan the Omani?"; and he answered, "Allah upon thee, O my brother, that thou do this and quicken my poverty and the poverty of my parents[295]!" I rejoined, "Go to her father and say to him, Thou owest me the reward for good news, for that Abu al-Hasan the Omani standeth at the door." With this he set off trotting, as he were a mule loosed from the mill, and presently came back, accompanied by Shaykh Tahir himself, who no sooner saw me than he returned to his house and gave the man an hundred thousand dinars which he took and went away blessing me. Then the old man came up and embraced me and wept, saying, "O my lord, where hast thou been absent all this while? Indeed, my daughter hath been killed by reason of her separation from thee; but come with me into the house." So we entered and he prostrated himself in gratitude to the Almighty, saying, "Praised be Allah who hath

reunited us with thee!" Then he went in to his daughter and said to her, "The Lord hath healed thee of this sickness;" and said she, "O my papa, I shall never be whole of my sickness, save I look upon the face of Abu al-Hasan." Quoth he, "An thou wilt eat a morsel and go to the Hammam, I will bring thee in company with him." Asked she, "Is it true that thou sayst?"; and he answered, "By the Great God, 'tis true!" She rejoined, "By Allah, if I look upon his face, I shall have no need of eating!" Then said he to his page, "Bring in thy lord." Thereupon I entered, and when she saw me, O Prince of True Believers, she fell down in a swoon, and presently coming to herself, recited this couplet:—

Yea, Allah hath joinèd the parted twain, ✿ When no thought they thought e'er to meet again.

Then she sat upright and said, "By Allah, O my lord, I had not deemed to see thy face ever more, save it were in a dream!" So she embraced me and wept, and said, "O Abu al-Hasan, now will 206 I eat and drink." The old man her sire rejoiced to hear these words and they brought her meat and drink and we ate and drank, O Commander of the Faithful. After this, I abode with them awhile, till she was restored to her former beauty, when her father sent for the Kazi and the witnesses and bade write out the marriage-contract between her and me and made a mighty great bride-feast; and she is my wife to this day and this is my son by her." So saying he went away and returned with a boy of rare beauty and symmetry of form and favour to whom said he, "Kiss the ground before the Commander of the Faithful." He kissed ground before the Caliph, who marvelled at his beauty and glorified his Creator; after which Al-Rashid departed, he and his company, saying, "O Ja'afar, verily, this is none other than a marvellous thing, never saw I nor heard I aught more wondrous." When he was seated in the palace of the Caliphate, he cried, "O Masrur!" who replied, "Here am I, O my lord!" Then said he, "Bring the year's tribute of Bassorah and Baghdad and Khorasan, and set it in this recess.[296]" Accordingly he laid the three tributes together and they were a vast sum of money, whose tale none might tell save Allah. Then the Caliph bade draw a curtain before the recess and said to Ja'afar, "Fetch me Abu al-Hasan." Replied Ja'afar, "I hear and obey," and going forth, returned presently with the Omani, who kissed ground before the Caliph, fearing lest he had sent for him because of some fault that he had committed when he was with him in his house. Then said Al-Rashid, "Harkye, O Omani!" and he replied, "Adsum, O Prince of True Believers! May Allah ever bestow his favours upon thee!" Quoth the Caliph, "Draw back yonder curtain." Thereupon Abu al-Hasan drew back the curtain from the recess and was confounded and perplexed at the mass of money he saw there. Said Al-Rashid, "O Abu al-Hasan, whether is the more, this money or that thou didst lose by the amulet[297]?"; and he answered, "This is many times the greater, O Commander of the Faithful!" Quoth the Caliph, "Bear witness, all ye who are present, that I give this money to this young man." So Abu 207 al-Hasan kissed ground and was abashed and wept before the Caliph for excess of joy. Now when he wept, the tears ran down from

his eyelids upon his cheeks and the blood returned to its place and his face became like the moon on the night of its fulness. Whereupon quoth the Caliph, “There is no god but *the* God! Glory be to Him who decreeth change upon change and is Himself the Everlasting who changeth not!” Saying these words, he bade fetch a mirror and showed Abu al-Hasan his face therein, which when he saw, he prostrated himself, in gratitude to the Most High Lord. Then the Caliph bade transport the money to Abu al-Hasan’s house and charged the young man not to absent himself from him, so he might enjoy his company as a cup-companion. Accordingly he paid him frequent visits, till Al-Rashid departed to the mercy of Almighty Allah; and glory be to Him who dieth not the Lord of the Seen and the Unseen! And among tales they tell is one touching

42- IBRAHIM AND JAMILAH.[298]

Al-Khasíb,[299] Wazir of Egypt, had a son named Ibrahím, than whom there was none goodlier, and of his fear for him, he suffered him not to go forth, save to the Friday prayers. One day, as the youth was returning from the mosque, he came upon an old man, with whom were many books; so he lighted down from his horse and seating himself beside him, began to turn over the tomes and examine them. In one of them he espied the semblance of a woman which all but spoke, never was seen on the earth's face one more beautiful; and as this captivated his reason and confounded his wit, he said to the old man, "O Shaykh, sell me this picture." 208 The bookseller kissed ground between his hands and said, "O my lord, 'tis thine without price.[300]" Ibrahim gave him an hundred dinars and taking the book in which was the picture, fell to gazing upon it and weeping night and day, abstaining from meat and drink and sleep. Then said he in his mind, "An I ask the bookseller of the painter of this picture, haply he will tell me; and if the original be living, I will seek access to her; but, if it be only a picture, I will leave doting upon it and plague myself no more for a thing which hath no real existence."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the youth Ibrahim said in his mind, "An I ask the bookseller of the painter of this picture, haply he will tell me; and, if it be only a picture, I will leave doting upon it and plague myself no more for a thing which hath no real existence." So on the next Friday he betook himself to the bookseller, who sprang up to receive him, and said to him, "Oh uncle, tell me who painted this picture." He replied, "O my lord, a man of the people of Baghdad painted it, by name Abu al-Kásim al-Sandaláni who dwelleth in a quarter called Al-Karkh; but I know not of whom it is the portraiture." So Ibrahim left him without acquainting any of his household with his case, and returned to the palace, after praying the Friday prayers. Then he took a bag and filling it with gold and gems to the value of thirty thousand dinars, waited till the morning, when he went out, without telling any, and presently overtook a caravan. Here he saw a Badawi and asked him, "O uncle, what distance is between me and Baghdad?"; and the other answered, "O my son, where art thou, and where is Baghdad[301]? Verily, between thee and it is two months' journey." Quoth Ibrahim, "O nuncle, an thou wilt guide me to Baghdad, I will give thee an hundred dinars and this mare under me that is worth other thousand gold pieces;" and

quoth the Badawi, “Allah be witness of what we say! Thou shalt not lodge this night but with me.” 209 So Ibrahim agreed to this and passed the night with him. At break of dawn, the Badawi took him and fared on with him in haste by a near road, in his greed for the mare and the promised good; nor did they leave wayfaring till they came to the walls of Baghdad, when said the wildling, “Praised be Allah for safety! O my lord, this is Baghdad.” Whereat Ibrahim rejoiced with exceeding joy and alighting from the mare, gave her to the Desert-man, together with the hundred dinars. Then he took the bag and entering the city walked on, enquiring for the quarter Al-Karkh and the station of the merchants, till Destiny drave him to a by-way, wherein were ten houses, five fronting five, and at the farther end was a two-leaved door with a silver ring. By the gate stood two benches of marble, spread with the finest carpets, and on one of them sat a man of handsome aspect and reverend, clad in sumptuous clothing and attended by five Mamelukes like moons. When the youth Ibrahim saw the street, he knew it by the description the bookseller had given him; so he salamed to the man, who returned his salutation and bidding him welcome, made him sit down and asked him of his case. Quoth Ibrahim, “I am a stranger man and desire of thy favour that thou look me out a house in this street where I may take up my abode.” With this the other cried out, saying, “Ho, Ghazálah[302]!”; and there came forth to him a slave-girl, who said, “At thy service, O my lord!” Said her master, “Take some servants and fare ye all and every to such a house and clean it and furnish it with whatso is needful for this handsome youth.” So she went forth and did his bidding; whilst the old man took the youth and showed him the house; and he said, “O my lord, how much may be the rent of this house?” The other answered, “O bright of face, I will take no rent of thee whilst thou abidest therein.” Ibrahim thanked him for this and the old man called another slave-girl, whereupon there came forth to him a damsel like the sun, to whom said he, “Bring chess.” So she brought it and one of the servants set the cloth;[303] whereupon said the Shaykh to Ibrahim, “Wilt thou play with me?”; and he answered, “Yes.” So they played several games and Ibrahim beat him, when his adversary exclaimed, “Well done, O youth! 210 Thou art indeed perfect in qualities. By Allah, there is not one in Baghdad can beat me, and yet thou hast beaten me!” Now when they had made ready the house and furnished it with all that was needful, the old man delivered the keys to Ibrahim and said to him, “O my lord, wilt thou not enter my place and eat of my bread?” He assented and walking in with him, found it a handsome house and a goodly, decorated with gold and full of all manner pictures and furniture galore and other things, such as tongue faileth to set out. The old man welcomed him and called for food, whereupon they brought a table of the make of Sana’a of Al-Yaman and spread it with all manner rare viands, than which there was naught costlier nor more delicious. So Ibrahim ate his sufficiency, after which he washed his hands and proceeded to inspect the house and furniture. Presently, he turned to look for the leather bag, but found it not and said in himself, “There is no

Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! I have eaten a morsel worth a dirham or two and have lost a bag wherein is thirty thousand dinars' worth: but I seek aid of Allah!" And he was silent and could not speak——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the youth Ibrahim saw that his bag was lost, he was silent and could not speak for the greatness of his trouble. Presently his host brought the chess and said to him, "Wilt thou play with me?"; and he said, "Yes." So they played and the old man beat him. Ibrahim cried, "Well done!" and left playing and rose: upon which his host asked him, "What aileth thee, O youth?" whereto he answered, "I want the bag." Thereupon the Shaykh rose and brought it out to him, saying, "Here it is, O my lord. Wilt thou now return to playing with me?" "Yes," replied Ibrahim. Accordingly they played and the young man beat him. Quoth the Shaykh, "When thy thought was occupied with the bag, I beat thee: but, now I have brought it back to thee, thou beatest me. But, tell me, O my son, what countryman art thou:" Quoth Ibrahim, "I am from Egypt," and quoth the oldster, "And what is the cause of thy coming to Baghdad?"; whereupon Ibrahim brought out the portrait and said to him, "Know, O uncle, 211 that I am the son of Al-Khasib, Wazir of Egypt, and I saw with a bookseller this picture, which bewildered my wit. I asked him who painted it and he said, "He who wrought it is a man, Abu al-Kasim al-Sandalani hight, who dwelleth in a street called the Street of Saffron in the Karkh quarter of Baghdad." So I took with me somewhat of money and came hither alone, none knowing of my case; and I desire of the fulness of thy favour that thou direct me to Abu al-Kasim, so I may ask him of the cause of his painting this picture and whose portrait it is. And whatsoever he desireth of me, I will give him that same." Said his host, "By Allah, O my son, I am Abu al-Kasim al-Sandalani, and this is a prodigious thing how Fate hath thus driven thee to me!" Now when Ibrahim heard these words, he rose to him and embraced him and kissed his head and hands, saying, "Allah upon thee, tell me whose portrait it is!" The other replied, "I hear and I obey," and rising, opened a closet and brought out a number of books, wherein he had painted the same picture. Then said he, "Know, O my son, that the original of this portrait is my cousin, the daughter of my father's brother, whose name is Abú al-Lays.[304] She dwelleth in Bassorah of which city her father is governor, and her name is Jamílah—the beautiful. There is not on the face of the earth a fairer than she; but she is averse from men and cannot hear the word 'man' pronounced in her presence. Now I once repaired to my uncle, to the intent that he should marry me to her, and was lavish of wealth to him; but he would not consent thereto: and when his daughter knew of this she was indignant and sent to me to say, amongst other things:—An thou have wit, tarry not in this town; else wilt thou perish and thy sin shall be on thine own neck.[305] For she is a virago of viragoes. Accordingly I left Bassorah, broken-hearted,

and limned this likeness of her in books and scattered them abroad in various lands, so haply they might fall into the hands of a comely youth like thyself and he contrive access to her and peradventure she might fall in love with him, purposing to take a promise of him that, when he should have possession of her, he would show her to me, though I look but for a moment from afar off." When Ibrahim son of Al-Khasib heard these words, he bowed his head awhile in thought and Al-Sandalani said to him, "O my son, I have not 212 seen in Baghdad a fairer than thou, and meseems that, when she seeth thee, she will love thee. Art thou willing, therefore, in case thou be united with her and get possession of her, to show her to me, if I look but for a moment from afar?" Ibrahim replied, "Yes;" and the painter rejoined, "This being so, tarry with me till thou set out." But the youth retorted, "I cannot tarry longer; for my heart with love of her is all afire." "Have patience three days," said the Shaykh, "till I fit thee out a ship, wherein thou mayst fare to Bassorah." Accordingly he waited whilst the old man equipped him a craft and stored therein all that he needed of meat and drink and so forth. When the three days were past, he said to Ibrahim, "Make thee ready for the voyage; for I have prepared thee a packet-boat furnished with all thou requirest. The craft is my property and the seamen are of my servants. In the vessel is what will suffice thee till thy return, and I have charged the crew to serve thee till thou come back in safety." Thereupon Ibrahim farewelled his host and embarking, sailed down the river till he came to Bassorah, where he pulled out an hundred dinars for the sailors, but they said, "We have gotten our hire of our lord." However he replied, "Take this by way of largesse; and I will not acquaint him therewith." So they took it and blessed him. Then the youth landed and entering the town asked, "Where do the merchants lodge?" and was answered, "In a Khan called the Khan of Hamadán."[306] So he walked to the market wherein stood the Khan, and all eyes were fixed upon him and men's sight was attracted to him by reason of his exceeding beauty and loveliness. He entered the caravanserai, with one of the sailors in his company; and, asking for the porter, was directed to an aged man of reverend aspect. He saluted him and the doorkeeper returned his greeting; after which Ibrahim said to him, "O uncle, hast thou a nice chamber?" He replied, "Yes," and taking him and the sailor, opened to them a handsome room decorated with gold, and said, "O youth, this chamber befitteth thee." Ibrahim pulled out two dinars and gave them to him, saying, "Take these to key-money."[307] And the 213 porter took them and blessed him. Then the youth Ibrahim sent the sailor back to the ship and entered the room, where the doorkeeper abode with him and served him, saying, "O my lord, thy coming hath brought us joy!" Ibrahim gave him a dinar, and said, "Buy us herewith bread and meat and sweetmeats and wine." Accordingly the doorkeeper went to the market; and, buying ten dirhams' worth of victual, brought it back to Ibrahim and gave him the other ten dirhams. But he cried to him, "Spend them on thyself;" whereat the porter rejoiced with passing joy. Then he ate a scone with a little kitchen[308] and gave the rest to the concierge,

adding, “Carry this to the people of thy household.” The porter carried it to his family and said to them, “Methinketh there is not on the face of the earth a more generous than the young man who has come to lodge with us this day, nor yet a pleasanter than he. An he abide with us, we shall grow rich.” Then he returned to Ibrahim and found him weeping; so he sat down and began to rub[309] his feet and kiss them, saying, “O my lord, wherefore weepest thou? May Allah not make thee weep!” Said Ibrahim, “O uncle, I have a mind to drink with thee this night;” and the porter replied, “Hearing and obeying!” So he gave him five dinars and said, “Buy us fresh fruit and wine;” and presently added other five, saying, “With these buy also for us dessert[310] and flowers and five fat fowls and bring me a lute.” The doorkeeper went out and, buying what he had ordered, said to his wife, “Strain this wine and cook us this food and look thou dress it daintily, for this young man overwhelmeth us with his bounties.” She did as he bade her, to the utmost of desire; and he took the victuals and carried them to Ibrahim son of the Sultan.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that then they ate and drank and made merry, and Ibrahim wept and repeated the following verses:—

214 O my friend! an I rendered my life, my sprite, ✿ My wealth and whatever the world can unite;

Nay, th’ Eternal Garden and Paradise[311] ✿ For an hour of Union my heart would buy’t!

Then he sobbed a great sob and fell down a-swoon. The porter sighed, and when he came to himself, he said to him, “O my lord, what is it gars thee weep and who is she to whom thou alludest in these verses? Indeed, she cannot be but as dust to thy feet.” But Ibrahim arose and for all reply brought out a parcel of the richest raiment that women wear and said to him, “Take this to thy Harim.” So he carried it to his wife and she returned with him to the young man’s lodging and behold, she found him weeping, quoth the doorkeeper to him, “Verily, thou breakest our hearts! Tell us what fair one thou desirest, and she shall be naught save thy handmaid.” Quoth he, “O uncle, know that I am the son of Al-Khasib, Wazir of Egypt, and I am enamoured of Jamilah, daughter of Abu al-Lays the Governor.” Exclaimed the porters wife, “Allah! Allah! O my brother, leave this talk, lest any hear of us and we perish. Verily there is not on earth’s face a more masterful than she, nor may any name to her the word ‘man,’ for she is averse from men. Wherefore, O my son, turn from her to other than her.” Now when Ibrahim heard this, he wept with sore weeping and the doorkeeper said to him, “I have nothing save my life; but that I will risk for thy love and find thee a means of winning thy will.” Then the twain went out from him, and on the morrow he betook himself to the Hammam and donned a suit of royal raiment, after which he returned to his lodging, when behold, the porter and his wife came in to him and said, “Know, O my lord, that there is a humpbacked tailor here who seweth for the lady Jamilah. Go thou to him and acquaint him with thy case; haply he will show thee the

way of attaining thine aim." So the youth Ibrahim arose and betaking himself to the shop of the humpbacked tailor, went in to him and found with him ten Mamelukes as they were moons. He saluted them with the salam, and they returned his greeting and bade him welcome and made him sit down; and indeed they rejoiced in him and were amazed at his charms and loveliness, especially the 215 hunchback who was confounded at his beauty of form and favour. Presently he said to the Gobbo, "I desire that thou sew me up my pocket;" and the tailor took a needleful of silk and sewed up his pocket which he had torn purposely; whereupon Ibrahim gave him five dinars and returned to his lodging. Quoth the tailor, "What thing have I done for this youth, that he should give me five gold pieces?" And he passed the night, pondering his beauty and generosity. And when morning morrowed Ibrahim repaired to the shop and saluted the tailor, who returned his salam and welcomed him and made much of him. Then he sat down and said to the hunchback, "O uncle, sew up my pocket, for I have rent it again." Replied the tailor, "On my head and eyes, O my son," and sewed it up; whereupon Ibrahim gave him ten ducats and he took them, amazed at his beauty and generosity. Then said he, "By Allah, O youth, for this conduct of thine needs must be a cause, this is no matter of sewing up a pocket. But tell me the truth of thy case. An thou be in love with one of these boys,[312] by Allah, there is not among them a comelier than thou, for they are each and every as the dust at thy feet; and behold, they are all thy slaves and at thy command. Or if it be other than this, tell me." Replied Ibrahim, "O uncle, this is no place for talk, for my case is wondrous and my affair marvellous." Rejoined the tailor, "An it be so, come with me to a place apart." So saying, he rose up in haste and took the youth by the hand and carrying him into a chamber behind the shop, said, "Now tell me thy tale, O youth!" Accordingly Ibrahim related his story first and last to the tailor, who was amazed at his speech and cried, "O youth, fear Allah for thyself:[313] indeed she of whom thou speakest is a virago and averse from men. Wherefore, O my brother, do thou guard thy tongue, else thou wilt destroy thyself." When Ibrahim heard the hunchback's words, he wept with sore weeping and clinging to the tailor's skirts said, "Help me, O my uncle, or I am a dead man; for I have left my kingdom and the kingdom of my father and grandfather and am become a stranger in the lands and lonely; nor can I endure without her." When the tailor saw how it was with him, he pitied him and said, "O my son, I have but my life and that I will venture for thy love, for thou makest my heart ache. But by to-morrow I will contrive 216 thee somewhat whereby thy heart shall be solaced." Ibrahim blessed him and returning to the khan, told the doorkeeper what the hunchback had said, and he answered, "Indeed, he hath dealt kindly with thee." Next morning, the youth donned his richest dress and taking a purse of gold, repaired to the Gobbo and saluted him. Then he sat down and said, "O uncle, keep thy word with me." Quoth the hunchback, "Arise forthright and take thee three fat fowls and three ounces[314] of sugar-candy and two small jugs which do thou fill with wine; also a cup.

Lay all these in a budget[315] and to-morrow, after the morning-prayers, take boat with them, saying to the boatman:—I would have thee row me down the river below Bassorah. An he say to thee, "I cannot go farther than a parasang" do thou answer:—As thou wilt; but, when he shall have come so far, lure him on with money to carry thee farther; and the first flower-garden thou wilt descry after this will be that of the lady Jamilah. Go up to the gate as soon as thou espiest it and there thou wilt see two high steps, carpeted with brocade, and seated thereon a Quasimodo like me. Do thou complain to him of thy case and crave his favour: belike he will have compassion on thy condition and bring thee to the sight of her, though but for a moment from afar. This is all I can do for thee; and unless he be moved to pity for thee, we be dead men, I and thou. This then is my rede and the matter rests with the Almighty." Quoth Ibrahim, "I seek aid of Allah; whatso He willeth becometh; and there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah!" Then he left the hunchback tailor and returned to his lodging where, taking the things his adviser had named, he laid them in a bag. On the morrow, as soon as it was day, he went down to Tigris bank, where he found a boatman asleep; so he awoke him and giving him ten sequins, bade him row him down the river below Bassorah. Quoth the man, "O my lord, it must be on condition that I go no farther than a parasang; for if I pass that distance by a span, I am a lost man, and thou too." And quoth Ibrahim, "Be it as thou wilt." Thereupon he took 217 him and dropped down the river with him till he drew near the flower-garden, when he said to him, "O my son, I can go no farther; for, if I pass this limit, we are both dead men." Hereat Ibrahim pulled out other ten dinars and gave them to him, saying, "Take this spending-money and better thy case therewithal." The boatman was ashamed to refuse him and fared on with him crying, "I commit the affair to Allah the Almighty!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the youth Ibrahim gave the boatman other ten dinars, the man took them, saying, "I commit the affair to Allah the Almighty!" and fared on with him down stream. When they came to the flower-garden, the youth sprang out of the boat, in his joy, a spring of a spear's cast from the land, and cast himself down, whilst the boatman turned and fled. Then Ibrahim fared forward and found all as it had been described by the Gobbo: he also saw the garden-gate open, and in the porch a couch of ivory, whereon sat a humpbacked man of pleasant presence, clad in gold-laced clothes and hending in hand a silvern mace plated with gold. So he hastened up to him and seizing his hand kissed it; whereupon asked the hunchback, "Who art thou and whence comest thou and who brought thee hither, O my son?" And indeed, when the man saw Ibrahim Khasib-son, he was amazed at his beauty. He answered, "O uncle, I am an ignorant lad and a stranger;" and he wept. The hunchback had pity on him and taking him up on the

couch, wiped away his tears and said to him, “No harm shall come to thee. An thou be in debt, may Allah settle thy debt: and if thou be in fear, may Allah appease thy fear!” Replied Ibrahim, “O uncle, I am neither in fear nor am I in debt, but have money in plenty, thanks to Allah.” Rejoined the other, “Then, O my son, what is thy need that thou venturest thyself and thy loveliness to a place wherein is destruction?” So he told him his story and disclosed to him his case, whereupon the man bowed his head earthwards awhile, then said to him, “Was he who directed thee to me the humpbacked tailor?” “Yes,” answered Ibrahim, and the keeper said, “This is my brother, and he is a blessed man!” presently adding, “But, O my son, had not affection for thee sunk 218 into my heart, and had I not taken compassion on thee, verily thou wert lost, thou and my brother and the doorkeeper of the Khan and his wife. For know that this flower-garden hath not its like on the face of the earth and that it is called the Garden of the Wild Heifer,[316] nor hath any entered it in all my life long, save the Sultan and myself and its mistress Jamilah; and I have dwelt here twenty years and never yet saw any else attain to this stead. Every forty days the Lady Jamilah cometh hither in a bark and landeth in the midst of her women, under a canopy of satin, whose skirts ten damsels hold up with hooks of gold, whilst she entereth, and I see nothing of her. Natheless, I have but my life and I will risk it for the sake of thee.” Herewith Ibrahim kissed his hand and the keeper said to him, “Sit by me, till I devise somewhat for thee.” Then he took him by the hand and carried him into the flower-garden which, when he saw, he deemed it Eden, for therein were trees intertwining and palms high towering and waters welling and birds with various voices carolling. Presently, the keeper brought him to a domed pavilion and said to him, “This is where the Lady Jamilah sitteth.” So he examined it and found it of the rarest of pleasances, full of all manner paintings in gold and lapis lazuli. It had four doors, whereto man mounted by five steps, and in its centre was a cistern of water, to which led down steps of gold all set with precious stones. Amiddlewards the basin was a fountain of gold, with figures, large and small, and water jetting in gerbes from their mouths; and when, by reason of the issuing forth of the water, they attuned themselves to various tones, it seemed to the hearer as though he were in Eden. Round the pavilion ran a channel of water, turning a Persian wheel[317] whose buckets[318] were silvern covered with brocade. To the left of the pavilion[319] was a lattice of silver, giving upon a green park, wherein were all manner wild cattle and gazelles and hares, and on the right hand was another lattice, 219 overlooking a meadow full of birds of all sorts, warbling in various voices and bewildering the hearers’ wits. Seeing all this the youth was delighted and sat down in the doorway by the gardener, who said to him, “How seemeth to thee my garden?” Quoth Ibrahim, “’Tis the Paradise of the world!” Whereat the gardener laughed. Then he rose and was absent awhile and presently returned with a tray, full of fowls and quails and other dainties including sweetmeats of sugar, which he set before Ibrahim, saying, “Eat thy sufficiency.” So he ate his fill,

whereat the keeper rejoiced and cried, “By Allah, this is the fashion of Kings and sons of Kings[320]!” Then said he, “O Ibrahim, what hast thou in yonder bag?” Accordingly he opened it before him and the keeper said, “Carry it with thee; ’twill serve thee when the Lady Jamilah cometh; for when once she is come, I shall not be able to bring thee food.” Then he rose and taking the youth by the hand, brought him to a place fronting the pavilion, where he made him an arbour[321] among the trees and said to him, “Get thee up here, and when she cometh thou wilt see her and she will not see thee. This is the best I can do for thee and on Allah be our dependence! Whenas she singeth, drink thou to her singing, and whenas she departeth thou shalt return in safety whence thou camest, Inshallah!” Ibrahim thanked him and would have kissed his hand, but he forbade him. Then the youth laid the bag in the arbour and the keeper said to him, “O Ibrahim, walk about and take thy pleasure in the garth and eat of its fruits, for thy mistress’s coming is appointed to be to-morrow.” So he solaced himself in the garden and ate of its fruits; after which he nighted with the keeper. And when morning morrowed and showed its sheen and shone, he prayed the dawn-prayer and presently the keeper came to him with a pale face, and said to him, “Rise, O my son, and go up into the arbour: for the slave-girls are come to order the place, and she cometh after them;”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the keeper came to Ibrahim Khasib-son in the Garden he said to him, 220“Rise, O my son, and go up into the arbour; for the slave-girls are come to order the place and she cometh after them. So beware lest thou spit or sneeze or blow thy nose[322]; else we are dead men, I and thou.” Hereupon Ibrahim rose and went up into his nest, whilst the keeper fared forth, saying, “Allah grant thee safety, O my son!” Presently behold, up came four slave-girls, whose like none ever saw, and entering the pavilion, doffed their outer dresses and washed it. Then they sprinkled it with rose-water and incensed it with ambergris and aloes-wood and spread it with brocade. After these came fifty other damsels, with instruments of music, and amongst them Jamilah, within a canopy of red brocade, whose skirts the handmaidens bore up with hooks of gold, till she had entered the pavilion, so that Ibrahim saw naught of her nor of her raiment. So he said to himself, “By Allah, all my travail is lost! But needs must I wait to see how the case will be.” Then the damsels brought meat and drink and they ate and drank and washed their hands, after which they set her a royal chair and she sat down; and all played on instruments of music and with ravishing voices incomparably sang. Presently, out ran an old woman, a duenna, and clapped hands and danced, whilst the girls pulled her about, till the curtain was lifted and forth came Jamilah laughing. Ibrahim gazed at her and saw that she was clad in costly robes and ornaments, and on her head was a crown set with pearls and gems. About her long fair neck she wore a necklace of

unions and her waist was clasped with a girdle of chrysolite bugles, with tassels of rubies and pearls. The damsels kissed ground before her, and, 221 "When I considered her" (quoth Ibrahim), "I took leave of my senses and wit and I was dazed and my thought was confounded for amazement at the sight of loveliness whose like is not on the face of the earth. So I fell into a swoon and coming to myself, weeping-eyed, recited these two couplets:—

I see thee and close not mine eyes for fear ✿ Lest their lids prevent me beholding thee:

An I gazed with mine every glance these eyne ✿ Ne'er could sight all the loveliness moulding thee."

Then said the old Kahramánah[323] to the girls, "Let ten of you arise and dance and sing." And Ibrahim when looking at them said in himself, "I wish the lady Jamilah would dance." When the handmaidens had made an end of their pavane, they gathered round the Princess and said to her, "O my lady, we long for thee to dance amongst us, so the measure of our joy may be fulfilled, for never saw we a more delicious day than this." Quoth Ibrahim to himself, "Doubtless the gates of Heaven are open[324] and Allah hath granted my prayer." Then the damsels bussed her feet and said to her, "By Allah, we never saw thee broadened of breast as to-day!" Nor did they cease exciting her, till she doffed her outer dress and stood in a shift of cloth of gold,[325] broidered with various jewels, showing breasts which stood out like pomegranates and unveiling a face as it were the moon on the night of fulness. Then she began to dance, and Ibrahim beheld motions he had never in his life seen their like, for she showed such wondrous skill and marvellous invention, that she made men forget the dancing of bubbles in wine-cups and called to mind the inclining of the turbands from head[326]-tops: even as saith of her the poet[327]:—

A dancer whose form is like branch of Bán! ✿ Flies my soul well nigh as his steps I greet:

While he dances no foot stands still and meseems ✿ That the fire of my heart is beneath his feet.

222 And as quoth another[328]:—

A dancer whose figure is like a willow-branch: my soul almost quitteth me at the sight of her movements.

No foot can remain stationary at her dancing, she is as though the fire of my heart were beneath her feet.

Quoth Ibrahim:—As I gazed upon her, she chanced to look up and caught sight of me whereupon her face changed and she said to her women, "Sing ye till I come back to you." Then, taking up a knife half a cubit long, she made towards me, crying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Now when I saw this, I well-nigh lost my wits; but, whenas she drew near me and face met face, the knife dropped from her hand, and she exclaimed, "Glory to Him who changeth men's hearts!" Then said she to me, "O youth, be of good cheer, for thou art safe from what thou dost fear!" Whereupon I fell to weeping, and she to wiping away my tears with her hand and saying, "O youth, tell me who thou art, and what brought thee hither." I kissed the ground before her and seized her skirt; and she said, "No harm shall come to thee; for, by Allah, no male hath ever filled mine eyes[329] but thyself! Tell me, then, who thou art." So I recited to her my story from first to last,

whereat she marvelled and said to me, “O my lord, I conjure thee by Allah, tell me if thou be Ibrahim bin al-Khasib?” I replied, “Yes!” and she threw herself upon me, saying, “O my lord, ’twas thou madest me averse from men; for, when I heard that there was in the land of Egypt a youth than whom there was none more beautiful on earth’s face, I fell in love with thee by report, and my heart became enamoured of thee, for that which reached me of thy passing comeliness, so that I was, in respect of thee, even as saith the poet:—

Mine ear forewent mine eye in loving him; ✿ For ear shall love before the eye at times.

“So praised be Allah who hath shown thy face! But, by the Almighty, had it been other than thou, I had crucified the keeper of the garden and the porter of the Khan and the tailor and him who had recourse to them!” And presently she added, “But how 223 shall I contrive for somewhat thou mayst eat, without the knowledge of my women?” Quoth I, “With me is somewhat we may eat and drink;” and I opened the bag before her. She took a fowl and began to morsel me and I to morsel her; which when I saw, it seemed to me that this was a dream. Then I brought out wine and we drank, what while the damsels sang on; nor did they leave to do thus from morn to noon, when she rose and said, “Go now and get thee a boat and await me in such a place, till I come to thee: for I have no patience left to brook severance.” I replied, “O my lady, I have with me a ship of my own, whose crew are in my hire, and they await me.” Rejoined she, “This is as we would have it,” and returning to her women,—— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Lady Jamilah returned to her women, she said to them, “Come, let us go back to our palace.” They replied, “Why should we return now, seeing that we use to abide here three days?” Quoth she, “I feel an exceeding oppression in myself, as though I were sick, and I fear lest this increase upon me.”[330] So they answered, “We hear and obey,” and donning their walking-dresses went down to the river-bank and embarked in a boat; whereupon behold, the keeper of the garden came up to Ibrahim and said to him, knowing not what had happened, “O Ibrahim, thou hast not had the luck to enjoy the sight of her, and I fear lest she have seen thee, for ’tis her wont to tarry here three days.” Replied Ibrahim, “She saw me not nor I her; for she came not forth of the pavilion.”[331] Rejoined the keeper, “True, O my son, for, had she seen thee, we were both dead men: but abide with me till she come again next week, and thou shalt see her and take thy fill of looking at her.” Replied the Prince, “O my lord, I have with 224 me money and fear for it: I also left men behind me and I dread lest they take advantage of my absence.”[332] He retorted, “O my son ’tis grievous to me to part with thee;” and he embraced and farewelled him. Then Ibrahim returned to the Khan where he lodged, and foregathering with the doorkeeper, took of him all his property and the porter said, “Good news, Inshallah!”[333] But Ibrahim said, “I have found no way to my

want, and now I am minded to return to my people." Whereupon the porter wept; then taking up his baggage, he carried them to the ship and abade him adieu. Ibrahim repaired to the place which Jamilah had appointed him and awaited her there till it grew dark, when, behold, she came up, disguised as a bully-boy with rounded beard and waist bound with a girdle. In one hand she held a bow and arrows and in the other a bared blade, and she asked him, "Art thou Ibrahim, son of Al-Khasib, lord of Egypt?" "He I am," answered the Prince; and she said, "What ne'er-do-well art thou, who comest to debauch the daughters of Kings? Come: speak with the Sultan."[334] Therewith (quoth Ibrahim) I fell down in a swoon and the sailors died[335] in their skins for fear; but, when she saw what had betided me, she pulled off her beard and throwing down her sword, ungirdled her waist whereupon I knew her for the Lady Jamilah and said to her, "By Allah, thou hast rent my heart in sunder!"[336] adding to the boatmen, "Hasten the vessel's speed." So they shook out the sail and putting off, fared on with all diligence; nor was it many days ere we made Baghdad, where suddenly we saw a ship lying by the river-bank. When her sailors saw us, they cried out to our crew, saying, "Ho, such an one and such an one, we give you joy of your safety!" Then they drave their ship against our craft and I looked and in the other boat beheld Abu al-Kasim al-Sandalani who when he saw us exclaimed, "This is what I sought: go ye in God's keeping; as for me, I have a need to be satisfied!" Then he turned to me and said, 225"Praised be Allah for safety! Hast thou accomplished thine errand?" I replied, "Yes!" Now Abu al-Kasim had a flambeau before him; so he brought it near our boat,[337] and when Jamilah saw him, she was troubled and her colour changed: but, when he saw her, he said, "Fare ye in Allah's safety. I am bound to Bassorah, on business for the Sultan; but the gift is for him who is present."[338] Then he brought out a box of sweetmeats, wherein was Bhang and threw it into our boat: whereupon quoth I to Jamilah, "O coolth of mine eyes, eat of this." But she wept and said, "O Ibrahim, wottest thou who that is?" and said I, "Yes, 'tis such an one." Replied she, "He is my first cousin, son of my father's brother[339] who sought me aforetime in marriage of my sire; but I would not accept of him. And now he is gone to Bassorah and most like he will tell my father of us." I rejoined, "O my lady he will not reach Bassorah, till we are at Mosul." But we knew not what lurked for us in the Secret Purpose. Then (continued Ibrahim) I ate of the sweetmeat, but hardly had it reached my stomach when I smote the ground with my head; and lay there till near dawn, when I sneezed and the Bhang issued from my nostrils. With this, I opened my eyes and found myself naked and cast out among ruins; so I buffeted my face and said in myself, "Doubtless this is a trick Al-Sandalani hath played me." But I knew not whither I should wend, for I had upon me naught save my bag-trousers.[340] However, I rose and walked on a little, till I suddenly espied the Chief of Police coming towards me, with a posse of men with swords and targes;[341] whereat I took fright and seeing a ruined Hammam hid myself there. Presently, my foot stumbled upon something; so I put my hand to it, and it became befouled with blood. I wiped my hand upon my bag-

trousers, unknowing what had befouled it, and put it out a second time, 226 when it fell upon a corpse whose head came up in my hand. I threw it down, saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"; and I took refuge in one of the corner-cabinets of the Hammam. Presently the Wali stopped at the bath-door and said, "Enter this place and search." So ten of them entered with cressets, and I of my fear retired behind a wall and looking upon the corpse, saw it to be that of a young lady[342] with a face like the full moon; and her head lay on one side and her body clad in costly raiment on the other. When I saw this, my heart fluttered with affright. Then the Chief of Police entered and said, "Search the corners of the bath." So they entered the place wherein I was, and one of them seeing me, came up hending in hand a knife half a cubit long. When he drew near me, he cried, "Glory be to God, the Creator of this fair face! O youth, whence art thou?" Then he took me by the hand and said, "O youth, why slewest thou this woman?" Said I, "By Allah, I slew her not, nor wot I who slew her, and I entered not this place but in fear of you!" And I told him my case, adding, "Allah upon thee, do me no wrong, for I am in concern for myself!" Then he took me and carried me to the Wali who, seeing the marks of blood on my hand said, "This needeth no proof: strike off his head!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ibrahim continued:—Then they carried me before the Wali and he, seeing the bloodstains on my hand, cried, "This needeth no proof: strike off his head!" Now hearing these words, I wept with sore weeping the tears streaming from my eyes and recited these two couplets[343]:—

We trod the steps that for us were writ, ✿ And whose steps are written he needs must tread;
And whose death is decreed in one land to be ✿ He ne'er shall perish in other stead.

227 Then I sobbed a single sob and fell a-swoon; and the headsman's heart was moved to ruth for me and he exclaimed, "By Allah, this is no murtherer's face!" But the Chief said, "Smite his neck." So they seated me on the rug of blood and bound my eyes; after which the sworder drew his sword and asking leave of the Wali, was about to strike off my head, whilst I cried out, "Alas, my strangerhood!" when lo and behold! I heard a noise of horse coming up and a voice calling aloud, "Leave him! Stay thy hand, O Sworder!" Now there was for this a wondrous reason and a marvellous cause; and 'twas thus. Al-Khasib, Wazir of Egypt, had sent his Head Chamberlain to the Caliph Harun al-Rashid with presents and a letter, saying, "My son hath been missing this year past, and I hear that he is in Baghdad; wherefore I crave of the bounty of the Viceregent of Allah that he make search for tidings of him and do his endeavour to find him and send him back to me with the Chamberlain." When the Caliph read the missive, he commanded the Chief of Police to search out the truth of the matter, and he ceased not to enquire after Ibrahim, till it was told him

that he was at Bassorah, whereupon he informed the Caliph, who wrote a letter to the viceroy and giving it to the Chamberlain of Egypt, bade him repair to Bassorah and take with him a company of the Wazir's followers. So, of his eagerness to find the son of his lord, the Chamberlain set out forthright and happened by the way upon Ibrahim, as he stood on the rug of blood. When the Wali saw the Chamberlain, he recognised him and alighted to him and as he asked, "What young man is that and what is his case?" The Chief told him how the matter was and the Chamberlain said (and indeed he knew him not for the son of the Sultan[344]) "Verily this young man hath not the face of one who murthereth." And he bade loose his bonds; so they loosed him and the Chamberlain said, "Bring him to me!" and they brought him, but the officer knew him not his beauty being all gone for the horrors he had endured. Then the Chamberlain said to him, "O youth, tell me thy case and how cometh this slain woman with thee." Ibrahim looked at him and knowing him, said to him, "Woe to thee! Dost thou not know 228 me? Am I not Ibrahim, son of thy lord? Haply thou art come in quest of me." With this the Chamberlain considered him straitly and knowing him right well, threw himself at his feet; which when the Wali saw, his colour changed; and the Chamberlain cried to him, "Fie upon thee, O tyrant! Was it thine intent to slay the son of my master Al-Khasib, Wazir of Egypt?" The Chief of Police kissed his skirt, saying "O my lord,[345] how should I know him? We found him in this plight and saw the girl lying slain by his side." Rejoined the Chamberlain, "Out on thee! Thou art not fit for the office. This is a lad of fifteen and he hath not slain a sparrow; so how should he be a murtherer? Why didst thou not have patience with him and question him of his case?" Then the Chamberlain and the Wali cried to the men, "Make search for the young lady's murtherer." So they re-entered the bath and finding him, brought him to the Chief of Police, who carried him to the Caliph and acquainted him with that which had occurred. Al-Rashid bade slay the slayer and sending for Ibrahim, smiled in his face and said to him, "Tell me thy tale and that which hath betided thee." So he recounted to him his story from first to last, and it was grievous to the Caliph, who called Masrur his Sworder, and said to him, "Go straightway and fall upon the house of Abu al-Kasim al-Sandalani and bring me him and the young lady." The eunuch went forth at once and breaking into the house, found Jamilah bound with her own hair and nigh upon death; so he loosed her and taking the painter, carried them both to the Caliph, who marvelled at Jamilah's beauty. Then he turned to Al-Sandalani and said, "Take him and cut off his hands, wherewith he beat this young lady; then crucify him and deliver his monies and possessions to Ibrahim." They did his bidding, and as they were thus, behold, in came Abu al-Lays governor of Bassorah, the Lady Jamilah's father, seeking aid of the Caliph against Ibrahim bin al-Khasib Wazir of Egypt and complaining to him that the youth had taken his daughter. Quoth Al-Rashid, "He hath been the means of delivering her from torture and slaughter." Then he sent for Ibrahim, and when he came, he said 229 to Abu al-Lays,

"Wilt thou not accept of this young man, son of the Soldan of Egypt, as husband to thy daughter?" Replied Abu al-Lays, "I hear and I obey Allah and thee, O Commander of the Faithful;" whereupon the Caliph summoned the Kazi and the witnesses and married the young lady to Ibrahim. Furthermore, he gave him all Al-Sandalani's wealth and equipped him for his return to his own country, where he abode with Jamilah in the utmost of bliss and the most perfect of happiness, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies; and glory be to the Living who dieth not! They also relate, O auspicious King, a tale anent

43- ABU AL-HASAN OF KHORASAN.[346]

The Caliph Al-Mu'tazid Bi 'llah[347] was a high-spirited Prince and a noble-minded lord; he had in Baghdad six hundred Wazirs and of the affairs of the folk naught was hidden from him. He went forth one day, he and Ibn Hamdún,[348] to divert himself with observing his lieges and hearing the latest news of the people; and, being overtaken with the heats of noonday, they turned aside from the main thoroughfare into a little by-street, at the upper end whereof they saw a handsome and high-builded mansion, discoursing of its owner with the tongue of praise. They sat down at the gate to take rest, and presently out came two eunuchs as they were moons on their fourteenth night. Quoth one of them to his fellow, "Would Heaven some guest would seek admission this day! My master will not eat but with guests and 230 we are come to this hour and I have not yet seen a soul." The Caliph marvelled at their speech and said, "This is a proof of the house-master's liberality: there is no help but that we go in to him and note his generosity, and this shall be a means of favour betiding him from us." So he said to the eunuch, "Ask leave of thy lord for the admission of a company[349] of strangers." For in those days it was the Caliph's wont, whenas he was minded to observe his subjects, to disguise himself in merchant's garb. The eunuch went in and told his master, who rejoiced and rising, came out to them in person. He was fair of favour and fine of form and he appeared clad in a tunic of Níshápúr[350] silk and a gold laced mantle; and he dripped with scented waters and wore on his hand a signet ring of rubies. When he saw them, he said to them, "Well come and welcome to the lords who favour us with the utmost of favour by their coming!" So they entered the house and found it such as would make a man forget family and fatherland for it was like a piece of Paradise."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Caliph entered the mansion, he and the man with him, they saw it to be such as would make one forget family and fatherland, for it was like a piece of Paradise. Within it was a flower-garden, full of all kinds of trees, confounding sight and its dwelling-places were furnished with costly furniture. They sat down and the Caliph fell to gazing at the house and the household gear. (Quoth Ibn Hamdún), I looked at the Caliph and saw his countenance change, and being wont to know from his face 231 whether he was amused or anangered, said to myself, "I wonder what hath vexed him." Then they

brought a golden basin and we washed our hands, after which they spread a silken cloth and set thereon a table of rattan. When the covers were taken off the dishes, we saw therein meats rare as the blooms of Prime in the season of their utmost scarcity, twofold and single, and the host said, “Bismillah, O my lords! By Allah, hunger pricketh me; so favour me by eating of this food, as is the fashion of the noble.” Thereupon he began tearing fowls apart and laying them before us, laughing the while and repeating verses and telling stories and talking gaily with pleasant sayings such as sorted with the entertainment. We ate and drank, then removed to another room, which confounded beholders with its beauty and which reeked with exquisite perfumes. Here they brought us a tray of fruits freshly-gathered and sweetmeats the finest flavoured, whereat our joys increased and our cares ceased. But withal the Caliph (continued Ibn Hamdun) ceased not to wear a frowning face and smiled not at that which gladdened all souls, albeit it was his wont to love mirth and merriment and the putting away of cares, and I knew that he was no envious wight and oppressor. So I said to myself, “Would Heaven I knew what is the cause of his moroseness and why we cannot dissipate his ill-humour!” Presently they brought the tray of wine which friends doth conjoin and clarified draughts in flagons of gold and crystal and silver, and the host smote with a rattan-wand on the door of an inner chamber, whereupon behold, it opened and out came three damsels, high-bosomed virginity with faces like the sun at the fourth hour of the day, one a lutist, another a harpist and the third a dancer-artiste. Then he set before us dried fruits and confections and drew between us and the damsels a curtain of brocade, with tassels of silk and rings of gold. The Caliph paid no heed to all this, but said to the host, who knew not who was in his company, “Art thou noble?”[351] Said he, “No, my lord; I am but a man of the sons of the merchants and am known among the folk as Abú al-Hasan Ali, son of Ahmad of Khorasan.” Quoth the Caliph, “Dost thou know me, O man?”; and quoth he, “By Allah, O my lord, I have no knowledge of either of your honours!” Then said I to him, “O man, this is the Commander of the Faithful, 232 Al-Mu’tazid Bi’llah grandson of Al-Mutawakkil alà’llah.”[352] Whereupon he rose and kissed the ground before the Caliph, trembling for fear of him, and said, “O Prince of True Believers, I conjure thee, by the virtue of thy pious forbears, an thou have seen in me any shortcomings or lack of good manners in thy presence, do thou forgive me!” Replied the Caliph, “As for that which thou hast done with us of honouring and hospitality nothing could have exceeded it; and as for that wherewith I have to reproach thee here, an thou tell me the truth respecting it and it commend itself to my sense, thou shalt be saved from me; but, an thou tell me not the truth, I will take thee with manifest proof and punish thee with such punishment as never yet punished any.” Quoth the man, “Allah forbid that I tell thee a lie! But what is it that thou reproachest to me, O Commander of the Faithful?” Quoth the Caliph, “Since I entered thy mansion and looked upon its grandeur, I have noted the furniture and vessels therein, nay even to thy clothes, and behold, on all of them is the name of my grandfather Al-Mutawakkil ala

’llah.”[353] Answered Abu al-Hasan, “Yes, O Commander of the Faithful (the Almighty protect thee), truth is thine inner garb and sincerity is thine outer garment and none may speak otherwise than truly in thy presence.” The Caliph bade him be seated and said, “Tell us.” So he began, “Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that my father belonged to the markets of the money-changers and druggists and linendrapers and had in each bazar a shop and an agent and all kinds of goods. Moreover, behind the money-changer’s shop he had an apartment, where he might be private, appointing the shop for buying and selling. His wealth was 233 beyond count and to his riches there was none amount; but he had no child other than myself, and he loved me and was tenderly fain of me. When his last hour was at hand, he called me to him and commended my mother to my care and charged me to fear Almighty Allah. Then he died, may Allah have mercy upon him and continue the Prince of True Believers on life! And I gave myself up to pleasure and eating and drinking and took to myself comrades and intimates. My mother used to forbid me from this and to blame me for it, but I would not hear a word from her, till my money was all gone, when I sold my lands and houses and naught was left me save the mansion wherein I now dwell, and it was a goodly stead, O Commander of the Faithful. So I said to my mother, “I wish to sell the house;” but she said, “O my son, an thou sell it, thou wilt be dishonoured and wilt have no place wherein to take shelter.” Quoth I, “’Tis worth five thousand dinars, and with one thousand of its price I will buy me another house and trade with the rest.” Quoth she, “Wilt thou sell it to me at that price?”; and I replied, “Yes.” Whereupon she went to a coffer and opening it, took out a porcelain vessel, wherein were five thousand dinars. When I saw this meseemed the house was all of gold and she said to me, “O my son, think not that this is of thy father’s good. By Allah, O my son, it was of my own father’s money and I have treasured it up against a time of need; for, in thy father’s day I was a wealthy woman and had no need of it.” I took the money from her, O Prince of True Believers, and fell again to feasting and carousing and merrymaking with my friends, unheeding my mother’s words and admonitions, till the five thousand dinars came to an end, when I said to her, “I wish to sell the house.” Said she, “O my son, I forbade thee from selling it before, of my knowledge that thou hadst need of it; so how wilt thou sell it a second time?” Quoth I, “Be not longsome of speech with me, for I must and will sell it;” and quoth she, “Then sell it to me for fifteen thousand dinars, on condition that I take charge of thine affairs.” So I sold her the house at that price and gave up my affairs into her charge, whereupon she sought out the agents of my father and gave each of them a thousand dinars, keeping the rest in her own hands and ordering the outgo and the income. Moreover she gave me money to trade withal and said to me, “Sit thou in thy father’s shop.” So I did her bidding, O Commander of the Faithful, and took up my abode in the chamber behind the shop in the market of the money-changers, 234 and my friends came and bought of me and I sold to them; whereby I made good cheape and my wealth increased. When

my mother saw me in this fair way, she discovered to me that which she had treasured up of jewels and precious stones, pearls, and gold, and I bought back my houses and lands that I had squandered and my wealth became great as before. I abode thus for some time, and the factors of my father came to me and I gave them stock-in-trade, and I built me a second chamber behind the shop. One day, as I sat there, according to my custom, O Prince of True Believers, there came up to me a damsel, never saw eyes a fairer than she of favour, and said, "Is this the private shop of Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ahmad al-Khorasani?" Answered I, "Yes," and she asked, "Where is he?" "He am I," said I, and indeed my wit was dazed at the excess of her loveliness. She sat down and said to me, "Bid thy page weigh me out three hundred dinars." Accordingly I bade him give her that sum and he weighed it out to her and she took it and went away, leaving me stupefied. Quoth my man to me, "Dost thou know her?"; and quoth I, "No, by Allah!" He asked, "Then why didst thou bid me give her the money?"; and I answered, "By Allah, I knew not what I said, of my amazement at her beauty and loveliness!" Then he rose and followed her, without my knowledge, but presently returned, weeping and with the mark of a blow on his face. I enquired of him what ailed him, and he replied, "I followed the damsel, to see whither she went; but, when she was aware of me, she turned and dealt me this blow and all but knocked out my eye." After this, a month passed, without her coming, O Commander of the Faithful, and I abode bewildered for love of her; but, at the end of this time, she suddenly appeared again and saluted me, whereat I was like to fly for joy. She asked me how I did and said to me, "Haply thou saidst to thyself, What manner of trickstress is this, who hath taken my money and made off?" Answered I, "By Allah, O my lady, my money and my life are all thy very own!" With this she unveiled herself and sat down to rest, with the trinkets and ornaments playing over her face and bosom. Presently, she said to me, "Weigh me out three hundred dinars." "Hearkening and obedience," answered I and weighed out to her the money. She took it and went away and I said to my servant, "Follow her." So he followed her, but returned dumbstruck, and some time passed without my seeing her. But, as I was sitting one day, behold, she came up to me 235 and after talking awhile, said to me, "Weigh me out five hundred dinars, for I have need of them." I would have said to her, "Why should I give thee my money?"; but my love immense hindered me from utterance; for, O Prince of True Believers, whenever I saw her, I trembled in every joint and my colour paled and I forgot what I would have said and became even as saith the poet:—

"'Tis naught but this! When a-sudden I see her ✿ Mumchance I bide nor a word can say her."

So I weighed out for her the five hundred ducats, and she took them and went away; whereupon I arose and followed her myself, till she came to the jewel-bazar, where she stopped at a man's shop and took of him a necklace. Then she turned and seeing me, said, "Pay him five hundred dinars for me." When the jeweller saw me, he rose to me and made much of me, and I said to him, "Give her the necklace and set down the

price to me." He replied, "I hear and obey," and she took it and went away;——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abu Hasan the Khorasani thus pursued his tale:—So I said to the jeweller, "Give her the necklace and set down the price to me." Then she took it and went away; but I followed her, till she came to the Tigris and boarded a boat there, whereupon I signed with my hand to the ground, as who should say, "I kiss it before thee." She went off laughing, and I stood watching her, till I saw her land and enter a palace, which when I considered, I knew it for the palace of the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil. So I turned back, O Commander of the Faithful, with all the cares in the world fallen on my heart, for she had of me three thousand dinars, and I said to myself, "She hath taken my wealth and ravished my wit, and peradventure I shall lose my life for her love." Then I returned home and told my mother all that had befallen me, and she said, "O my son, beware how thou have to do with her after this, or thou art lost." When I went to my shop, my factor in the drug-market, 236 who was a very old man, came to me and said, "O my lord, how is it that I see thee changed in case and showing marks of chagrin? Tell me what aileth thee." So I told him all that had befallen me with her and he said, "O my son, this is indeed one of the handmaidens of the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and haply she is the Caliph's favourite concubine: so do thou reckon the money as spent for the sake of Almighty Allah[354] and occupy thyself no more with her. An she come again, beware lest she have to do with thee and tell me of this, that I may devise thee some device lest perdition betide thee." Then he fared forth and left me with a flame of fire in my heart. At the end of the month behold, she came again and I rejoiced in her with exceeding joy. Quoth she, "What ailed thee to follow me?"; and quoth I, "Excess of passion that is in my heart urged me to this," and I wept before her. She wept for ruth of me and said, "By Allah, there is not in thy heart aught of love-longing but in my heart is more! Yet how shall I do? By Allah, I have no resource save to see thee thus once a month." Then she gave me a bill saying, "Carry this to such an one of such a trade who is my agent and take of him what is named therein." But I replied, "I have no need of money; be my wealth and my life thy sacrifice!" Quoth she, "I will right soon contrive thee a means of access to me, whatever trouble it cost me." Then she farewelled me and fared forth, whilst I repaired to the old druggist and told him what had passed. He went with me to the palace of Al-Mutawakkil which I knew for that which the damsel had entered; but the Shaykh was at a loss for a device. Presently he espied a tailor sitting with his prentices at work in his shop, opposite the lattice giving upon the river bank and said to me, "Yonder is one by whom thou shalt win thy wish; but first tear thy pocket and go to him and bid him sew it up. When he hath done this, give him ten dinars." "I hear and obey," answered I and taking with me two pieces[355] of Greek brocade, went to the tailor and bade him make of them four suits,

two with long-sleeved coats and two without. When he had finished cutting them out and sewing them, I gave him to his hire much more than of wont, and he put 237 out his hand to me with the clothes; but I said, “Take them for thyself and for those who are with thee.” And I fell to sitting with him and sitting long: I also bespoke of him other clothes and said to him, “Hang them out in front of thy shop, so the folk may see them and buy them.” He did as I bade him, and whoso came forth of the Caliph’s palace and aught of the clothes pleased him, I made him a present thereof, even to the doorkeeper. One day of the days the tailor said to me, “O my son, I would have thee tell me the truth of thy case; for thou hast bespoken of me an hundred costly suits, each worth a mint of money, and hast given the most of them to the folk. This is no merchant’s fashion, for a merchant calleth an account for every dirham, and what can be the sum of thy capital that thou givest these gifts and what thy gain every year? Tell me the truth of thy case, that I may assist thee to thy desire;” presently adding, “I conjure thee by Allah, tell me, art thou not in love?” “Yes,” replied I; and he said, “With whom?” Quoth I, “With one of the handmaids of the Caliph’s palace;” and quoth he, “Allah put them to shame! How long shall they seduce the folk? Knowest thou her name?” Said I, “No;” and said he, “Describe her to me.” So I described her to him and he cried, “Out on it! This is the lutanist of the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil and his pet concubine. But she hath a Mameluke[356] and do thou make friends with him; it may be he shall become the means of thy having access to her.” Now as we were talking, behold, out walked the servant in question from the palace, as he were a moon on the fourteenth night; and, seeing that I had before me the clothes which the tailor had made me, and they were of brocade of all colours, he began to look at them and examine them. Then he came up to me and I rose and saluted him. He asked, “Who art thou?” and I answered, “I am a man of the merchants.” Quoth he, “Wilt thou sell these clothes?”; and quoth I, “Yes.” So he chose out five of them and said to me, “How much these five?” Said I, “They are a present to thee from me in earnest of friendship between me and thee.” At this he rejoiced and I went home and fetching a suit embroidered with jewels and jacinths, worth three thousand dinars, returned therewith and gave it to him. He accepted it and carrying me into a room within the palace, said to me, “What is thy name among the merchants?” 238 Said I, “I am a man of them.[357]” He continued, “Verily I misdoubt me of thine affair.” I asked, “Why so?” and he answered, “Because thou hast bestowed on me a costly gift and won my heart therewith, and I make certain that thou art Abu al-Hasan of Khorasan the Shroff.” With this I fell a-weeping, O Prince of True Believers; and he said to me, “Why dost thou weep? By Allah, she for whom thou weepest is yet more longingly in love with thee than thou with her! And indeed her case with thee is notorious among all the palace women. But what wouldst thou have?” Quoth I, “I would have thee succour me in my calamity.” So he appointed me for the morrow and I returned home. As soon as I rose next morning, I betook myself to him and waited in his chamber till he

came in and said to me, “Know that yesternight when, after having made an end of her service by the Caliph, she returned to her apartment, I related to her all that had passed between me and thee and she is minded to foregather with thee. So stay with me till the end of the day.” Accordingly I stayed with him till dark, when the Mameluke brought me a shirt of gold-inwoven stuff and a suit of the Caliph’s apparel and clothing me therein, incensed me[358] and I became like the Commander of the Faithful. Then he brought me to a gallery with rows of rooms on either side and said to me, “These are the lodgings of the Chief of the slave-girls; and when thou passest along the gallery, do thou lay at each door a bean, for ’tis the custom of the Caliph to do this every night——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Mameluke said to Abu Hasan, “When thou passest along the gallery set down at each door a bean for ’tis the custom of the Caliph so to do, till thou come to the second passage on thy right hand, when thou wilt see a door with a marble threshold.[359] Touch 239 it with thy hand or, an thou wilt, count the doors which are so many, and enter the one whose marks are thus and thus. There thy mistress will see thee and take thee in with her. As for thy coming forth, verily Allah will make it easy to me, though I carry thee out in a chest.” Then he left me and returned, whilst I went on, counting the doors and laying at each a bean. When I had reached the middle of the gallery, I heard a great clatter and saw the light of flambeaux coming towards me. As the light drew near me, I looked at it and behold, the Caliph himself, came surrounded by the slave-girls carrying waxen lights, and I heard one of the women[360] say to another, “O my sister, have we two Caliphs? Verily, the Caliph whose perfumes and essences I smelt, hath already passed by my room and he hath laid the bean at my door, as his wont; and now I see the light of his flambeaux, and here he cometh with them.” Replied the other, “Indeed this is a wondrous thing, for disguise himself in the Caliph’s habit none would dare.” Then the light drew near me, whilst I trembled in every limb; and up came an eunuch, crying out to the concubines and saying, “Hither!” Whereupon they turned aside to one of the chambers and entered. Then they came out again and walked on till they came to the chamber of my mistress and I heard the Caliph say, “Whose chamber is this?” They answered, “This is the chamber of Shajarat al-Durr.” And he said, “Call her.” So they called her and she came out and kissed the feet of the Caliph, who said to her, “Wilt thou drink to-night?” Quoth she, “But for thy presence and the looking on thine auspicious countenance, I would not drink, for I incline not to wine this night.” Then quoth the Commander of the Faithful to the eunuch, “Bid the treasurer give her such necklace;” and he commanded to enter her chamber. So the waxen lights entered before him and he followed them into the apartment. At the same moment, behold, there came up a damsel, the lustre of whose face outshone that of the flambeau in her

hand, and drawing near she said, “Who is this?” Then she laid hold of me and carrying me into one of the chambers, said to me, “Who art thou?” I kissed the ground before her saying, “I implore thee by Allah, O my lady, spare my blood and have ruth on me and commend thyself unto Allah by saving my life!”; and I wept for fear of death. Quoth she, [240]“Doubtless, thou art a robber;” and quoth I, “No, by Allah, I am no robber. Seest thou on me the signs of thieves?” Said she, “Tell me the truth of thy case and I will put thee in safety.” So I said, “I am a silly lover and an ignorant, whom passion and my folly have moved to do as thou seest, so that I am fallen into this slough of despond.” Thereat cried she, “Abide here till I come back to thee;” and going forth she presently returned with some of her handmaid’s clothes wherein she clad me and bade me follow her; so I followed her till she came to her apartment and commanded me to enter. I went in and she led me to a couch, whereon was a mighty fine carpet, and said, “Sit down here: no harm shall befal thee. Art thou not Abu al-Hasan Ali the Khorasani, the Shroff?” I answered, “Yes,” and she rejoined, “Allah spare thy blood given thou speak truth! An thou be a robber, thou art lost, more by token that thou art dressed in the Caliph’s habit and incensed with his scents. But, an thou be indeed Abu al-Hasan, thou art safe and no hurt shall happen to thee, for that thou art the friend of Shajarat al-Durr, who is my sister and ceaseth never to name thee and tell us how she took of thee money, yet wast thou not chagrined, and how thou didst follow her to the river bank and madest sign as thou wouldst kiss the earth in her honour; and her heart is yet more aflame for thee than is thine for her. But how camest thou hither? Was it by her order or without it? She hath indeed imperilled thy life[361]. But what seekest thou in this assignation with her?” I replied, “By Allah, O my lady, ’tis I who have imperilled my own life, and my aim in foregathering with her is but to look on her and hear her pretty speech.” She said, “Thou hast spoken well;” and I added, “O my lady, Allah is my witness when I declare that my soul prompteth me to no offence against her honour.” Cried she, “In this intent may Allah deliver thee! Indeed compassion for thee hath gotten hold upon my heart.” Then she called her handmaid and said to her, “Go to Shajarat al-Durr and say to her:—Thy sister saluteth thee and biddeth thee to her; so favour her by coming to her this night, according to thy custom, for her breast is straitened.” The slave-girl went out and presently returning, told her mistress that Shajarat al-Durr said, “May Allah bless me with thy long life and make me thy ransom! By Allah, hadst thou bidden me to other [241]than this, I had not hesitated; but the Caliph’s migraine constraineth me and thou knowest my rank with him.” But the other said to her damsel, “Return to her and say:—Needs must thou come to my mistress upon a private matter between thee and her!” So the girl went out again and presently returned with the damsel, whose face shone like the full moon. Her sister met her and embraced her; then said she, “Ho, Abu al-Hasan, come forth to her and kiss her hands!” Now I was in a closet within the apartment; so I walked out, O Commander of the Faithful, and when my mistress saw me, she threw

herself upon me and strained me to her bosom, saying, “How camest thou in the Caliph’s clothes and his ornaments and perfumes? Tell me what hath befallen thee.” So I related to her all that had befallen me and what I had suffered for affright and so forth; and she said, “Grievous to me is what thou hast endured for my sake and praised be Allah who hath caused the issue to be safety, and the fulfilment of safety is in thy entering my lodging and that of my sister.” Then she carried me to her own apartment, saying to her sister, “I have covenanted with him that I will not be united to him unlawfully; but, as he hath risked himself and incurred these perils, I will be earth for his treading and dust to his sandals!”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the damsel to her sister, “I have covenanted with him that I will not be united to him unlawfully; but, as he hath risked himself and incurred these perils, I will be earth for his treading and dust to his sandals!” Replied her sister, “In this intent may Allah deliver him!”; and my mistress rejoined, “Soon shalt thou see how I will do, so I may lawfully foregather with him and there is no help but that I lavish my heart’s blood to devise this.” Now as we were in talk, behold, we heard a great noise and turning, saw the Caliph making for her chamber, so engrossed was he by the thought of her; whereupon she took me, O Prince of True Believers and hid me in a souterrain[362] and shut down the trap-door upon me. Then she 242 went out to meet the Caliph, who entered and sat down, whilst she stood between his hands to serve him, and commanded to bring wine. Now the Caliph loved a damsel by name Banjah, who was the mother of Al-Mu’tazz bi ’llah[363]; but they had fallen out and parted; and in the pride of her beauty and loveliness she would not make peace with him, nor would Al-Mutawakkil, for the dignity of the Caliphate and the kingship, make peace with her neither humble himself to her, albeit his heart was aflame with passion for her, but sought to solace his mind from her with her mates among the slave-girls and with going in to them in their chambers. Now he loved Shajarat al-Durr’s singing: so he bade her sing, when she took the lute and tuning the strings sang these verses:—

The world-tricks I admire betwixt me and her; ✿ How, us parted, the World would to me incline:
I shunned thee till said they, “He knows not Love;” ✿ I sought thee till said they, “No patience is mine!”
Then, O Love of her, add to my longing each night ✿ And, O Solace, thy comforts for Doomsday assign!
Soft as silk is her touch and her low sweet voice ✿ Twixt o’er much and o’er little aye draweth the line:
And eyne whereof Allah said “Be ye!” and they ✿ Became to man’s wit like the working of wine.

When the Caliph heard these verses, he was pleasured with exceeding pleasure, and I also, O Commander of the Faithful, was pleasured in my hiding-place, and but for the bounty of Almighty Allah, I had cried out and we had been disgraced. Then she sang also these couplets:—

I embrace him, yet after him yearns my soul ✿ For his love, but can aught than embrace be nigher?

I kiss his lips to assuage my lowe; ✿ But each kiss gars it glow with more flaming fire;

'Tis as though my vitals aye thirst unquencht ✿ Till I see two souls mixt in one entire.

The Caliph was delighted and said, "O Shajarat al-Durr, ask a 243 boon of me." She replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, I ask of thee my freedom, for the sake of the reward thou wilt obtain therein.[364]" Quoth he, "Thou art free for the love of Allah;" whereupon she kissed ground before him. He resumed, "Take the lute and sing me somewhat on the subject of my slave-girl, of whom I am enamoured with warmest love: the folk seek my pleasure and I seek hers." So she took the lute and sang these two couplets:—

My charmer who spellest my piety[365] ✿ On all accounts I'll have thee, have thee,

Or by humble suit which besitteth Love ✿ Or by force more fitting my sovranty.

The Caliph admired these verses and said, "Now, take up thy lute and sing me a song setting out my case with three damsels who hold the reins of my heart and make rest depart; and they are thyself and that wilful one and another I will not name, who hath not her like.[366] So she took the lute and playing a lively measure, sang these couplets:—

Three lovely girls hold my bridle-rein ✿ And in highest stead my heart over-reign.

I have none to obey amid all mankind ✿ But obeying them I but win disdain:

This is done through the Kingship of Love, whereby ✿ The best of my kingship they made their gain.

The Caliph marvelled with exceeding marvel at the aptness of these verses to his case and his delight inclined him to reconciliation with the recalcitrant damsel. So he went forth and made for her chamber whither a slave-girl preceded him and announced to her the coming of the Caliph. She advanced to meet him and kissed the ground before him; then she kissed his feet and he was reconciled to her and she was reconciled to him. Such was the case with the Caliph; but as regards Shajarat al-Durr, she came to me rejoicing and said, "I am become a free woman by thy blessed coming! Surely Allah will help me in that which I shall contrive, so I may foregather with thee in lawful way." And 244 I said, "Alhamdolillah!" Now as we were talking, behold her Mameluke-eunuch entered and we related to him that which had passed, when he said, "Praised be Allah who hath made the affair to end well, and we implore the Almighty to crown His favours with thy safe faring forth the palace!" Presently appeared my mistress's sister, whose name was Fátir, and Shajarat al-Durr said to her, "O my sister, how shall we do to bring him out of the palace in safety; for indeed Allah hath vouchsafed me manumission and, by the blessing of his coming, I am become a free woman." Quoth Fatir, "I see nothing for it but to dress him in woman's gear." So she brought me a suit of women's clothes and clad me therein; and I went out forthwith, O Commander of the Faithful; but, when I came to the midst of the palace, behold, I found the Caliph seated there, with the eunuchs in attendance upon

him. When he saw me, he misdoubted of me with exceeding doubt, and said to his suite, “Hasten and bring me yonder handmaiden who is faring forth.” So they brought me back to him and raised the veil from my face, which when he saw, he knew me and questioned me of my case. I told him the whole truth, hiding naught, and when he heard my story, he pondered my case awhile, without stay or delay, and going into Shajarat al-Durr’s chamber, said to her, “How couldst thou prefer before me one of the sons of the merchants?” She kissed ground between his hands and told him her tale from first to last, in accordance with the truth; and he hearing it had compassion upon her and his heart relented to her and he excused her by reason of love and its circumstances. Then he went away and her eunuch came in to her and said, “Be of good cheer; for, when thy lover was set before the Caliph, he questioned him and he told him that which thou toldest him, word by word.” Presently the Caliph returned and calling me before him, said to me, “What made thee dare to violate the palace of the Caliphate?” I replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, ’twas my ignorance and passion and my confidence in thy clemency and generosity that drave me to this.” And I wept and kissed the ground before him. Then said he, “I pardon you both,” and bade me be seated. So I sat down and he sent for the Kazi Ahmad ibn Abi Duwád[367] and married me to 245 her. Then he commanded to make over all that was hers to me and they displayed her to me[368] in her lodging. After three days, I went forth and transported all her goods and gear to my own house; so every thing thou hast seen, O Commander of the Faithful, in my house and whereof thou misdoubtest, is of her marriage-equipage. After this, she said to me one day, “Know that Al-Mutawakkil is a generous man and I fear lest he remember us with ill mind, or that some one of the envious remind him of us; wherefore I purpose to do somewhat that may ensure us against this.” Quoth I, “And what is that?;” and quoth she, “I mean to ask his leave to go the pilgrimage and repent[369] of singing.” I replied, “Right is this rede thou redest;” but, as we were talking, behold, in came a messenger from the Caliph to seek her, for that Al-Mutawakkil loved her singing. So she went with the officer and did her service to the Caliph, who said to her, “Sever not thyself from us;”[370] and she answered, “I hear and I obey.” Now it chanced one day, after this, she went to him, he having sent for her, as was his wont; but, before I knew, she came back, with her raiment rent and her eyes full of tears. At this I was alarmed, misdoubting me that he had commanded to seize upon us, and said, “Verily we are Allah’s and unto Him shall we return! Is Al-Mutawakkil wroth with us?” She replied, “Where is Al-Mutawakkil? Indeed Al-Mutawakkil’s rule is ended and his trace is blotted out!” Cried I, “Tell me what has happened;” and she, “He was seated behind the curtain, drinking, with Al-Fath bin Khákán[371] and Sadakah bin Sadakah, when his son Al-Muntasir fell upon him, with a company of the Turks,[372] and slew him; and merriment was turned to misery and joy to weeping and wailing for annoy. So I fled, I and the slave-girl, and Allah saved us.” When I heard this, O Commander of the Faithful, I arose forthright and went down stream to Bassorah, where the

news 246 reached me of the falling out of war between Al-Muntasir and Al-Musta'ín bi 'llah;[373] wherefore I was affrighted and transported my wife and all my wealth to Bassorah. This, then, is my tale, O Prince of True Believers, nor have I added to or taken from it a single syllable. So all that thou seest in my house, bearing the name of thy grandfather Al-Mutawakkil, is of his bounty to us, and the fount of our fortune is from thy noble sources;[374] for indeed ye are people of munificence and a mine of beneficence." The Caliph marvelled at his story and rejoiced therein with joy exceeding: and Abu al-Hasan brought forth to him the lady and the children she had borne him, and they kissed ground before the Caliph, who wondered at their beauty. Then he called for inkcase and paper and wrote Abu al-Hasan a patent of exemption from taxes on his lands and houses for twenty years. Moreover, he rejoiced in him and made him his cup-companion, till the world parted them and they took up their abode in the tombs, after having dwelt under palace-domes; and glory be to Allah, the King Merciful of doom. And they also tell a tale concerning

44- KAMAR AL-ZAMAN AND THE JEWELLER'S WIFE.[375]

There was once, in time of old, a merchant hight Abd al-Rahmán, whom Allah had blessed with a son and daughter, and for their 247much beauty and loveliness, he named the girl Kaubab al-Sabáh and the boy Kamar al-Zamán.[376] When he saw what Allah had vouchsafed the twain of beauty and loveliness, brilliancy and symmetry, he feared for them the evil eyes[377] of the espiers and the jibing tongues of the jealous and the craft of the crafty and the wiles of the wicked and shut them up from the folk in a mansion for the space of fourteen years, during which time none saw them 248save their parents and a slave-girl who served them. Now their father could recite the Koran, even as Allah sent it down, as also did his wife, wherefore the mother taught her daughter to read and recite it and the father his son till both had gotten it by heart. Moreover, the twain learned from their parents writing and reckoning and all manner of knowledge and polite letters and needed no master. When Kamar al-Zaman came to years of manhood, the wife said to her husband, "How long wilt thou keep thy son Kamar al-Zaman sequestered from the eyes of the folk? Is he a girl or a boy?" He answered, "A boy." Rejoined she, "An he be a boy, why dost thou not carry him to the bazar and seat him in thy shop, that he may know the folk and they know him, to the intent that it may become notorious among men that he is thy son, and do thou teach him to sell and to buy. Peradventure somewhat may befal thee; so shall the folk know him for thy son and he shall lay his hand on thy leavings. But, an thou die, as the case now is, and he say to the folk:—I am the son of the merchant Abd al-Rahman, verily they will not believe him, but will cry, We have never seen thee and we knew not that he had a son, wherefore the government will seize thy goods and thy son will be despoiled. In like manner the girl; I mean to make her known among the folk, so may be some one of her own condition may ask her in marriage and we will wed her to him and rejoice in her." Quoth he, "I did thus of my fear for them from the eyes of the folk——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Merchant's wife spake to him in such wise, he replied, "I did thus of my fear for them from the eyes of

the folk and because I love them both and love is jealous exceedingly and well saith he who spoke these verses:—

Of my sight I am jealous for thee, of me, ✿ Of thyself, of thy stead, of thy destiny:

Though I shrined thee in eyes by the craze of me ✿ In such nearness irk I should never see:

Though thou wert by my side all the days of me ✿ Till Doomsday I ne'er had enough of thee.

249 Said his wife, "Put thy trust in Allah, for no harm betideth him whom He protecteth, and carry him with thee this very day to the shop." Then she clad the boy in the costliest clothes and he became a seduction to all who on him cast sight and an affliction to the heart of each lover wight. His father took him and carried him to the market, whilst all who saw him were ravished with him and accosted him, kissing his hand and saluting him with the salam. Quoth one, "Indeed the sun hath risen in such a place and blazeth in the bazar," and another, "The rising-place of the full moon is in such a quarter;" and a third, "The new moon of the Festival[378] hath appeared to the creatures of Allah." And they went on to allude to the boy in talk and call down blessings upon him. But his father scolded the folk for following his son to gaze upon him, because he was abashed at their talk, but he could not hinder one of them from talking; so he fell to abusing the boy's mother and cursing her because she had been the cause of his bringing him out. And as he gazed about he still saw the folk crowding upon him behind and before. Then he walked on till he reached his shop and opening it, sat down and seated his son before him: after which he again looked out and found the thoroughfare blocked with people for all the passers-by, going and coming, stopped before the shop to stare at that beautiful face and could not leave him; and all the men and women crowded in knots about him, applying to themselves the words of him who said:—

Thou madest Beauty to spoil man's sprite ✿ And saidst, "O my servants, fear My reprove:"

But lovely Thou lovest all loveliness ✿ How, then, shall thy servants refrain from Love?

When the merchant Abd al-Rahman saw the folk thus crowding about him and standing in rows, both women and men, to fix eyes upon his son, he was sore ashamed and confounded and knew not what to do; but presently there came up from the end of the bazar a man of the wandering Dervishes, clad in haircloth, the garb of the pious servants of Allah and seeing Kamar al-Zaman sitting there as he were a branch of Bán springing from a mound of saffron, poured forth copious tears and recited these two couplets:—

250 A wand uprising from a sandy knoll, ✿ Like full moon shining brightest sheen, I saw;

And said, "What is thy name?" Replied he "Lúlú" ✿ "What (asked I) Lily?" and he answered "Lá, lá!"[379]

Then the Dervish fell to walking, now drawing near and now moving away,[380] and wiping his gray hairs with his right hand, whilst the heart of the crowd was cloven asunder for awe of him. When he looked upon the boy, his eyes were dazzled and his wit confounded, and exemplified in him was the saying of the poet:—

While that fair-faced boy abode in the place, ✿ Moon of breakfast-fête he lit by his face,[381]
Lo! there came a Shaykh with leisurely pace ✿ A reverend trusting to Allah's grace,
And ascetic signals his gait display'd.
He had studied Love both by day and night ✿ And had special knowledge of Wrong and Right;
Both for lad and lass had repined his sprite, ✿ And his form like toothpick was lean and slight,
And old bones with faded skin were o'erlaid.
In such arts our Shaykh was an Ajamí[382] ✿ With a catamite ever in company;
In the love of woman, a Platonist he[383] ✿ But in either versed to the full degree,
And Zaynab to him was the same as Zayd.[384]
Distraught by the Fair he adored the Fair ✿ O'er Spring-camp wailed, bewept ruins bare.[385]
251 Dry branch thou hadst deemed him for stress o' care, ✿ Which the morning breeze swayeth here and there,
For only the stone is all hardness made!
In the lore of Love he was wondrous wise ✿ And wide awake with all-seeing eyes.
Its rough and its smooth he had tried and tries ✿ And hugged buck and doe in the self-same guise
And with greybeard and beardless alike he play'd.[386]

Then he came up to the boy and gave him a root[387] of sweet basil, whereupon his father put forth his hand to his pouch and brought out for him some small matter of silver, saying, "Take thy portion, O Dervish, and wend thy ways." He took the dirhams, but sat down on the masonry-bench alongside the shop and opposite the boy and fell to gazing upon him and heaving sigh upon sigh, whilst his tears flowed like springs founting. The folk began to look at him and remark upon him, some saying, "All Dervishes are lewd fellows," and other some, "Verily, this Dervish's heart is set on fire for love of this lad." Now when Abd al-Rahman saw this case, he arose and said to the boy, "Come, O my son, let us lock up the shop and hie us home, for it booteth not to sell and buy this day; and may Almighty Allah requite thy mother that which she hath done with us, for she was the cause of all this!" Then said he, "O Dervish, rise, that I may shut my shop." So the Dervish rose and the merchant shut his shop and taking his son, walked away. The Dervish and the folk followed them, till they reached their place, when the boy went in and his father, turning to the Dervish, said to him, "What wouldst thou, O Dervish, and why do I see thee weep?" He replied, "O my lord, I would fain be thy guest this night, for the guest is the guest of Almighty Allah." Quoth the merchant, "Welcome to the guest of God: enter, O Dervish!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the merchant, the father of Kamar al-Zaman, heard the saying of the Dervish, "I am Allah's guest," he replied, "Welcome to the guest of God: enter, O Dervish!" But he said to himself,

"An the beggar be enamoured of the boy and sue him for sin, needs must I slay him this very night and bury him secretly. But, an there be no lewdness in him, the guest shall eat his portion." Then he brought him into a saloon, where he left him with Kamar al-Zaman, after he had said privily to the lad, "O my son, sit thou beside the Dervish when I am gone out and sport with him and provoke him to love-liesse and if he seek of thee lewdness, I who will be watching you from the window overlooking the saloon will come down to him and kill him." So, as soon as Kamar al-Zaman was alone in the room with the Dervish, he sat down by his side and the old man began to look upon him and sigh and weep. Whenever the lad bespake him, he answered him kindly, trembling the while and would turn to him groaning and crying, and thus he did till supper was brought in, when he fell to eating, with his eyes on the boy but refrained not from shedding tears. When a fourth part of the night was past and talk was ended and sleep-tide came, Abd al-Rahman said to the lad, "O my son, apply thyself to the service of thine uncle the Dervish and gainsay him not:" and would have gone out; but the Dervish cried to him, "O my lord, carry thy son with thee or sleep with us." Answered the merchant, "Nay, my son shall lie with thee: haply thy soul may desire somewhat, and he will look to thy want and wait upon thee." Then he went out leaving them both together, and sat down in an adjoining room which had a window giving upon the saloon. Such was the case with the merchant; but as to the lad, as soon as his sire had left them, he came up to the Dervish and began to provoke him and offer himself to him, whereupon he waxed wroth and said, "What talk is this, O my son? I take refuge with Allah from Satan the Stoned! O my Lord, indeed this is a denial of Thee which pleaseth Thee not! Avaunt from me, O my son!" So saying, the Dervish arose and sat down at a distance; but the boy followed him and threw himself upon him, saying, "Why, O Dervish, wilt thou deny thyself the joys of my possession, and I with a heart that loveth thee?" Hereupon the Dervish's anger 253redoubled and he said, "An thou refrain not from me, I will summon thy sire and tell him of thy doings." Quoth the lad, "My father knoweth my turn for this and it may not be that he will hinder me: so heal thou my heart. Why dost thou hold off from me? Do I not please thee?" Answered the Dervish, "By Allah, O my son, I will not do this, though I be hewn in pieces with sharp-edged swords!"; and he repeated the saying of the poet:—

Indeed my heart loves all the lovely boys ✿ As girls; nor am I slow to such delight,

But, though I sight them every night and morn, ✿ I'm neither of Lot's folk[389] nor wencher-wight.

Then he shed tears and said, "Arise, open the door, that I may wend my way, for I will lie no longer in this lodging." Therewith he rose to his feet; but the boy caught hold of him, saying, "Look at the fairness of my face and the cramoisy of my cheeks and the softness of my sides and the lusciousness of my lips." Moreover he discovered to him calves that would shame wine and cup-carrier[389] and gazed on him with fixed glance that would baffle enchanter and enchantments; for he was passing

of loveliness and full of blandishment, even as saith of him one of the poets who sang:—

I can't forget him, since he rose and showed with fair design ✿ Those calves of legs whose pearly shine make light in nightly gloom:

Wonder not an my flesh uprise as though 'twere Judgment-day ✿ When every shank shall barèd be and that is Day of Doom.[390]

Then the boy displayed to him his bosom, saying, "Look at my breasts which be goodlier than the breasts of maidens and my lip-dews are sweeter than sugar-candy. So quit scruple and asceticism and cast off devoutness and abstinence and take thy 254fill of my possession and enjoy my loveliness. Fear naught, for thou art safe from hurt, and leave this hebetude for 'tis a bad habit." And he went on to discover to him his hidden beauties, striving to turn the reins of his reason with his bendings in graceful guise, whilst the Dervish turned away his face and said, "I seek refuge with Allah! Have some shame, O my son[391]! This is a forbidden thing I deem and I will not do it, no, not even in dream." The boy pressed upon him, but the Dervish got free from him and turning towards Meccah addressed himself to his devotions. Now when the boy saw him praying, he left him till he had prayed a two-bow prayer and saluted,[392] when he would have accosted him again; but the Dervish again repeated the intent[393] and prayed a second two-bow prayer, and thus he did a third and a fourth and a fifth time. Quoth the lad, "What prayers are these? Art thou minded to take flight upon the clouds? Thou lettest slip our delight, whilst thou passest the whole night in the prayer-niche." So saying, he threw himself upon the Dervish and kissed him between the eyes; but the Shaykh said, O my son, put Satan away from thine estate and take upon thee obedience of the Compassionate." Quoth the other, "An thou do not with me that which I desire, I will call my sire and say to him, The Dervish is minded to do lewdness with me. Whereupon he will come in to thee and beat thee till thy bones be broken upon thy flesh." All this while Abd al-Rahman was watching with his eyes and hearkening with his ears, and he was certified that there was no frowardness in the Dervish and he said to himself, "Were he a lewd fellow, he had not stood out against all this importunity." The boy continued to beguile the Dervish and every time he expressed purpose of prayer, he interrupted him, till at last he waxed wroth with passing wrath and was rough with him and beat him. Kamar al-Zaman wept and his father came in and having wiped away his tears and comforted him said to the 255Dervish, "O my brother, since thou art in such case, why didst thou weep and sigh when thou sawest my son? Say me, is there a reason for this?" He replied, "There is;" and Abd al-Rahman pursued, "When I saw thee weep at his sight, I deemed evil of thee and bade the boy do with thee thus, that I might try thee, purposing in myself, if I saw thee sue him for sin, to come in upon thee and kill thee. But, when I saw what thou didst, I knew thee for one of those who are virtuous to the end. Now Allah upon thee, tell me the cause of thy weeping!" The Dervish sighed and

said, “O my lord, chafe not a closed[394] wound.” But the merchant said, “There is no help but thou tell me;” and the other began:—Know thou that I am a Dervish who wander in the lands and the countries, and take warning by the display[395] of the Creator of Night and Day. It chanced that one Friday I entered the city of Bassorah in the undurn.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Dervish said to the merchant:—Know, then, that I a wandering mendicant chanced one Friday to enter the city of Bassorah in the undurn and saw the shops open and full of all manner of wares and meat and drink; but the place was deserted and therein was neither man nor woman nor girl nor boy: nor in the markets and the main streets was there dog or cat nor sounded sound nor friend was found. I marvelled at this and said to myself, “I wonder whither the people of the city be gone with their cats and dogs and what hath Allah done with them?” Now I was anhungred so I took hot bread from a baker’s oven and going into the shop of an oilman, spread the bread with clarified butter and honey and ate. Then I entered the shop of a sherbet-seller and drank what I would; after which, seeing a coffee-shop open, I went in and found the pots on the fire, full of coffee;[396] but there was no one there. So I drank my fill and said, “Verily, this is a 256 wondrous thing! It seemeth as though Death had stricken the people of this city and they had all died this very hour, or as if they had taken fright at something which befel them and fled, without having time to shut their shops.” Now whilst pondering this matter, lo! I heard a sound of a band of drums beating; whereat I was afraid and hid myself for a while: then, looking out through a crevice, I saw damsels, like moons, come walking through the market, two by two, with uncovered heads and faces displayed. They were in forty pairs, thus numbering fourscore and in their midst a young lady, riding on a horse that could hardly move his legs for that which was upon it of silvern trappings and golden and jewelled housings. Her face was wholly unveiled, and she was adorned with the costliest ornaments and clad in the richest of raiment and about her neck she wore a collar of gems and on her bosom were necklaces of gold; her wrists were clasped with bracelets which sparkled like stars, and her ankles with bangles of gold set with precious stones. The slave-girls walked before her and behind and on her right and left and in front of her was a damsel bearing in baldric a great sword, with grip of emerald and tassels of jewel-encrusted gold. When that young lady came to where I lay hid, she pulled up her horse and said, “O damsels, I hear a noise of somewhat within yonder shop: so do ye search it, lest haply there be one hidden there, with intent to enjoy a look at us, whilst we have our faces unveiled.” So they searched the shop opposite the coffee-house[397] wherein I lay hid, whilst I abode in terror; and presently I saw them come forth with a man and they said to her, “O our lady, we found a man there and here he is before thee.” Quoth she

to the damsel with the sword, “Smite his neck.” So she went up to him and struck off his head; then, leaving the dead man lying on the ground, they passed on. When I saw this, I was affrighted; but my heart was taken with love of the young lady. After an hour or so, the people reappeared and every one who had a shop entered it; whilst the folk began to come and go about the bazars and gathered around the slain man, staring at him as a curiosity. Then I crept forth from my hiding place by stealth, and none took note of me, but love of that lady had gotten possession of my heart, and I began to enquire of her privily. None, however, gave me news of her; so I left Bassorah, 257 with vitals yearning for her love; and when I came upon this thy son, I saw him to be the likest of all creatures to the young lady; wherefore he reminded me of her and his sight revived the fire of passion in me and kindled anew in my heart the flames of love-longing and distraction. And such is the cause of my shedding tears!” Then he wept with sore weeping till he could no more and said, “O my lord, I conjure thee by Allah, open the door to me, so I may gang my gate!” Accordingly Abd al-Rahman opened the door and he went forth. Thus fared it with him; but as regards Kamar al-Zaman, when he heard the Dervish’s story, his heart was taken with love of the lady and passion gat the mastery of him and raged in him longing and distraction; so, on the morrow, he said to his sire, “All the sons of the merchants wander about the world to attain their desire, nor is there one of them but his father provideth for him a stock-in-trade wherewithal he may travel and traffic for gain. Why, then, O my father, dost thou not outfit me with merchandise, so I may fare with it and find my luck?” He replied, “O my son, such merchants lack money; so they send their sons to foreign parts for the sake of profit and pecuniary gain and provision of the goods of the world. But I have monies in plenty nor do I covet more: why then should I exile thee? Indeed, I cannot brook to be parted from thee an hour, more especially as thou art unique in beauty and loveliness and perfect grace and I fear for thee.” But Kamar al-Zaman said, “O my father, nothing will serve but thou must furnish me with merchandise wherewithal to travel; else will I fly from thee at unawares though without money or merchandise. So, an thou wish to solace my heart, make ready for me a stock-in-trade, that I may travel and amuse myself by viewing the countries of men.” Abd al-Rahman, seeing his son enamoured of travel, acquainted his wife with this, saying, “Verily thy son would have me provide him with goods, so he may fare therewith to far regions, albeit Travel is Travail.[398]” Quoth she, “What is there to displease thee in this? Such is the wont of the sons of the merchants and they all vie one with other in glorifying globe-trotting and gain.” Quoth he, “Most of the merchants are poor and seek growth of good; but I have wealth galore.” She replied, “More of a good 258 thing hurteth not; and, if thou comply not with his wish, I will furnish him with goods of my own monies.” Quoth Abd al-Rahman, “I fear strangerhood for him, inasmuch as travel is the worst of trouble;” but she said, “There is no harm in strangerhood for him when it leadeth to gaining good; and, if we

consent not, our son will go away and we shall seek him and not find him and be dishonoured among the folk." The merchant accepted his wife's counsel and provided his son with merchandise to the value of ninety thousand gold pieces, whilst his mother gave him a purse containing forty bezel-stones, jewels of price, the least of the value of one of which was five hundred ducats, saying, "O my son, be careful of this jewellery for 'twill be of service to thee." Thereupon Kamar al-Zaman took the jewels and set out for Bassorah,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman took the jewels and set out for Bassorah after he had laid them in a belt, which he buckled about his waist; and he stayed not till there remained aught but a day's journey between that city and himself; when the Arabs came out upon him and stripped him naked and slew his men and servants; but he lay himself down among the slain and wallowed in their blood, so that the wildlings took him for dead and left him without even turning him over and made off with their booty. When the Arabs had gone their ways, Kamar al-Zaman arose, having naught left but the jewels in his girdle, and fared on nor ceased faring till he came to Bassorah. It chanced that his entry was on a Friday and the town was void of folk, even as the Dervish had informed him. He found the market-streets deserted and the shops wide open and full of goods; so he ate and drank and looked about him. Presently, he heard a band of drums beating and hid himself in a shop, till the slave-girls came up, when he looked at them; and, seeing the young lady riding amongst them, love and longing overcame him and desire and distraction overpowered him, so that he had no force to stand. After awhile, the people reappeared and the bazars filled. Whereupon he went to the market and repairing to a jeweller and pulling out one of his forty gems sold 259 it for a thousand dinars, wherewith he returned to his place and passed the night there; and when morning morrowed he changed his clothes and going to the Hammam came forth as he were the full moon. Then he sold other four stones for four thousand dinars and sauntered solacing himself about the main streets of Bassorah, clad in the costliest of clothes; till he came to a market, where he saw a barber's shop. So he went in to the barber who shaved his head; and, clapping up an acquaintance with him, said to him, "O my father, I am a stranger in these parts and yesterday I entered this city and found it void of folk, nor was there in it any living soul, man nor Jinni. Then I saw a troop of slave-girls and amongst them a young lady riding in state:" and he went on to tell him all he had seen. Said the barber, "O my son, hast thou told any but me of this?"; and he said, "No." The other rejoined, "Then, O my son, beware thou mention this before any but me; for all folk cannot keep a secret and thou art but a little lad and I fear lest the talk travel from man to man, till it reach those whom it concerneth and they slay thee. For know, O my son, that this thou hast seen, none ever kenned nor knew in other than

this city. As for the people of Bassorah they are dying of this annoy; for every Friday forenoon they shut up the dogs and cats, to hinder them from going about the market-streets, and all the people of the city enter the cathedral-mosques, where they lock the doors on them,[399] and not one of them can pass about the bazar nor even look out of casement; nor knoweth any the cause of this calamity. But, O my son, to-night I will question my wife concerning the reason thereof, for she is a midwife and entereth the houses of the notables and knoweth all the city news. So Inshallah, do thou come to me to-morrow and I will tell thee what she shall have told me." With this Kamar al-Zaman pulled out a handful of gold and said to him, "O my father, take this gold and give it to thy wife, for she is become my mother." Then he gave him a second handful, saying, "Take this for thyself." Whereupon quoth the barber, "O my son, sit thou in thy place, till I go to 260 my wife and ask her and bring thee news of the true state of the case." So saying, he left him in the shop and going home, acquainted his wife with the young man's case, saying, "I would have thee tell me the truth of this city-business, so I may report it to this young merchant, for he hath set his heart on weeting the reason why men and beasts are forbidden the market-streets every Friday forenoon; and methinks he is a lover, for he is open-handed and liberal, and if we tell him what he would trow, we shall get great good of him." Quoth she, "Go back and say to him:—Come, speak with thy mother, my wife, who sendeth her salam to thee and saith to thee, Thy wish is won." Accordingly he returned to the shop, where he found Kamar al-Zaman sitting awaiting him and repeated him the very words spoken by his spouse. Then he carried him in to her and she welcomed him and bade him sit down; whereupon he pulled out an hundred ducats and gave them to her, saying, "O my mother, tell me who this young lady may be." Said she, "Know, O my son, that there came a gem to the Sultan of Bassorah from the King of Hind, and he was minded to have it pierced. So he summoned all the jewellers in a body and said to them, I wish you to drill me this jewel. Whoso pierceth it, I will give him whatsoever he shall ask; but if he break it, I will cut off his head. At this they were afraid and said, O King of the age, a jewel is soon spoilt and there are few who can pierce them without injury, for most of them have a flaw. So do not thou impose upon us a task to which we are unable; for our hands cannot avail to drill this jewel. However, our Shaykh[400] is more experienced than we." Asked the King, "And who is your Shaykh?"; and they answered, "Master Obayd: he is more versed than we in this art and hath wealth galore and of skill great store. Therefore do thou send for him to the presence and bid him pierce thee this jewel." Accordingly the King sent for Obayd and bade him pierce the jewel, imposing on him the condition aforesaid. He took it and pierced it to the liking of the King, who said to him, "Ask a boon of me, O master!"; and said he, "O King of the age, allow me delay till to-morrow." Now the reason of this was that he wished to take counsel with his wife, who is the young lady thou sawest riding in procession; for he loveth her with exceeding love, and of the

greatness of his affection for her, he doth naught without consulting 261 her; wherefore he put off asking till the morrow. When he went home, he said to her:—"I have pierced the King a jewel and he hath granted me a boon which I deferred asking till to-morrow, that I might consult thee. Now what dost thou wish, that I may ask it?" Quoth she, "We have riches such as fires may not consume; but, an thou love me, ask of the King to make proclamation in the streets of Bassorah that all the townsfolk shall every Friday enter the mosques, two hours before the hour of prayer, so none may abide in the town at all great or small except they be in the mosques or in the houses and the doors be locked upon them, and that every shop of the town be left open. Then will I ride with my slave-women through the heart of the city and none shall look on me from window or lattice; and every one whom I find abroad I will kill."[401] So he went in to the King and begged of him this boon, which he granted him and caused proclamation to be made amongst the Bassorites——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Jeweller begged his boon, the King bade proclamation be made amongst the Bassorites to the effect aforesaid, but the people objected that they feared for their goods from the cats and dogs; wherefore he commanded to shut the animals up till the folk should come forth from the Friday prayers. So the jeweller's wife fell to sallying forth every Friday, two hours before the time of congregational prayer, and riding in state through the city with her women; during which time none dareth pass through the market-place nor look out of casement or lattice. "This, then, is what thou wouldest know and I have told thee who she is; but, O my son, was it thy desire only to have news of her or hast thou a mind to meet her?" Answered he, "O my mother, 'tis my wish to foregather with her." Quoth she, "Tell me what valuables thou hast with thee"; and quoth he, "O my mother, I have with me precious stones of four sorts, the first worth five hundred dinars each, the second seven hundred, the third eight hundred 262 and the fourth a thousand ducats." She asked, "Art thou willing to spend four of these?"; and he answered, "I am ready to spend all of them." She rejoined, "Then, arise, O my son, and go straight to thy lodging and take a bezel-gem of those worth five hundred sequins, with which do thou repair to the jewel market and ask for the shop of Master Obayd, the Shaykh of the Jewellers. Go thither and thou wilt find him seated in his shop, clad in rich clothes, with workmen under his hand. Salute him and sit down on the front shelf of his shop;[402] then pull out the jewel and give it to him, saying, "O master, take this stone and fashion it into a seal-ring for me with gold. Make it not large, a Miskál[403] in weight and no more; but let the fashion of it be thy fairest." Then give him twenty dinars and to each of his prentices a dinar. Sit with him awhile and talk with him and if a beggar approach thee, show thy generosity by giving him a dinar, to the intent that he may affect thee, and after this, leave him and return to thy

place. Pass the night there, and next morning, take an hundred dinars and bring them and give them to thy father the barber, for he is poor." Quoth Kamar al-Zaman, "Be it so," and returning to his caravanserai, took a jewel worth five hundred gold pieces and went with it to the jewel-bazar. There he enquired for the shop of Master Obayd, Shaykh of the Jewellers, and they directed him thereto. So he went thither and saw the Shaykh, a man of austere aspect and robed in sumptuous raiment with four journeymen under his hand. He addressed him with "Peace be upon you!" and the jeweller returned his greeting and welcoming him, made him sit down. Then he brought out the jewel and said, "O master, I wish thee to make me this jewel into a seal-ring with gold. Let it be the weight of a Miskal and no more, but fashion it excellently." Then he pulled out twenty dinars and gave them to him, saying, "This is the fee for chasing and the price of the ring shall remain."[404] And he gave each of the apprentices a gold piece, wherefore they loved him, and so did Master Obayd. Then he sat talking with the jeweller and whenever a beggar came up to him, he gave him a gold piece and they all marvelled at his generosity. Now Master Obayd had tools 263 at home, like those he had in the shop, and whenever he was minded to do any unusual piece of work, it was his custom to carry it home and do it there, that his journeymen might not learn the secrets of his wonderful workmanship.[405] His wife used to sit before him, and when she was sitting thus and he looking upon her,[406] he would fashion all manner of marvellously wroughten trinkets, such as were fit for none but kings. So he went home and sat down to mould the ring with admirable workmanship. When his wife saw him thus engaged, she asked him, "What wilt thou do with this bezel-gem?"; and he answered, "I mean to make it into a ring with gold, for 'tis worth five hundred dinars." She enquired, "For whom?"; and he answered, "For a young merchant, who is fair of face, with eyes that wound with desire, and cheeks that strike fire and mouth like the seal of Sulaymán and cheeks like the bloom of Nu'mán and lips red as coralline and neck like the antelope's long and fine. His complexion is white dashed with red and he is well-bred, pleasant and generous and doth thus and thus." And he went on to describe to her now his beauty and loveliness and then his perfection and bounty and ceased not to vaunt his charms and the generosity of his disposition, till he had made her in love with him; for there is no sillier cuckold than he who vaunteth to his wife another man's handsome looks and unusual liberality in money matters. So, when desire rose high in her, she said to him, "Is aught of my charms found in him?" Said he, "He hath all thy beauties; and he is thy counterpart in qualities. Meseemeth his age is even as thine and but that I fear to hurt thy feelings, I would say that he is a thousand times handsomer than thou art." She was silent, yet the fire of fondness was kindled in her heart. And the jeweller ceased not to talk with her and to set out Kamar al-Zaman's charms before her till he had made an end of moulding the ring; when he gave it to her and she put it on her finger, which it fitted exactly. Quoth she, "O my lord, my heart loveth this ring and I

long for it to be mine and will not take it from my 264finger." Quoth he, "Have patience! The owner of it is generous, and I will seek to buy it of him, and if he will sell it, I will bring it to thee. Or if he have another such stone, I will buy it and fashion it for thee into a ring like this."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Sixty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the jeweller said to his wife, "Have patience! The owner of it is generous and I will seek to buy it of him; and, if he will sell it, I will bring it to thee; or, if he have another such stone I will buy it and fashion it for thee into a ring like this." On this wise it fared with the jeweller and his wife; but as regards Kamar al-Zaman, he passed the night in his lodging and on the morrow he took an hundred dinars and carried them to the old woman, the barber's wife, saying to her, "Accept these gold pieces," and she replied, "Give them to thy father." So he gave them to the barber and she asked, "Hast thou done as I bade thee?" He answered, "Yes," and she said, "Go now to the Shaykh, the jeweller, and if he give thee the ring, put it on the tip of thy finger and pull it off in haste and say to him, O master, thou hast made a mistake; the ring is too tight. He will say, O merchant, shall I break it and mould it again larger? And do thou say, It booteth not to break it and fashion it anew. Take it and give it to one of thy slave-women. Then pull out another stone worth seven hundred dinars and say to him, Take this stone and set it for me, for 'tis handsomer than the other. Give him thirty dinars and to each of the prentices two, saying, These gold pieces are for the chasing and the price of the ring shall remain. Then return to thy lodging for the night and on the morrow bring me two hundred ducats, and I will complete thee the rest of the device." So the youth went to the jeweller, who welcomed him and made him sit down in his shop; and he asked him, "Hast thou done my need?" "Yes," answered Obayd and brought out to him the seal-ring; whereupon he set it on his finger-tip and pulling it off in haste, cried, "Thou hast made a mistake, O master;" and threw it to him, saying, "'Tis too strait for my finger." Asked the jeweller, "O merchant, shall I make it larger?" But he answered, "Not so; take it as a gift and give it to one of thy 265slave-girls. Its worth is trifling, some five hundred dinars; so it booteth not to fashion it over again." Then he brought out to him another stone worth seven hundred sequins and said to him, "Set this for me: 'tis a finer gem." Moreover he gave him thirty dinars and to each of his workmen two. Quoth Obayd, "O my lord we will take the price of the ring when we have made it."[407] But Kamar al-Zaman said, "This is for the chasing, and the price of the ring remains over." So saying, he went away home, leaving the jeweller and his men amazed at the excess of his generosity. Presently the jeweller returned to his wife and said, "O Halímah,[408] never did I set eyes on a more generous than this young man, and as for thee, thy luck is good, for he hath given me the ring without price, saying, Give it to one of thy slave-women." And he told her what had passed, adding, "Methinks

this youth is none of the sons of the merchants, but that he is of the sons of the Kings and Sultans." Now the more he praised him, the more she waxed in love-longing, passion and distraction for him. So she took the ring and put it on her finger, whilst the jeweller made another one, a little larger than the first. When he had finished moulding it, she put it on her finger, under the first, and said, "Look, O my lord, how well the two rings show on my finger! I wish they were both mine." Said he, "Patience! It may be I shall buy thee this second one." Then he lay that night and on the morrow he took the ring and went to his shop. As for Kamar al-Zaman, as soon as it was day, he repaired to the barber's wife and gave her two hundred dinars. Quoth she, "Go to the jeweller and when he giveth thee the ring, put it on thy finger and pull it off again in haste, saying:—Thou hast made a mistake, O master! This ring is too large. A master like thee, when the like of me cometh to him with a piece of work, it behoveth him to take right measure; and if thou hadst measured my finger, thou hadst not erred. Then pull out another stone worth a thousand dinars and say to him:—Take this and set it, and give this ring to one of thy slave-women. Give him forty ducats and to each of his journeyman three, saying, This is for the chasing, and for the cost 266of the ring, that shall remain. And see what he will say. Then bring three hundred dinars and give them to thy father the barber, that he may mend his fortune withal, for he is a poor man." Answered Kamar al-Zaman, "I hear and obey," and betook himself to the jeweller, who welcomed him and making him sit down, gave him the ring. He took it and put it on his finger; then pulled it off in haste and said, "It behoveth a master like thee, when the like of me bringeth him a piece of work, to take his measure. Hadst thou measured my finger, thou hadst not erred; but take it and give it to one of thy slave-women." Then he brought out to him a stone worth a thousand sequins and said to him, "Take this and set it in a signet-ring for me after the measure of my finger." Quoth Obayd, "Thou hast spoken sooth and art in the right;" and took his measure, whereupon he pulled out forty gold pieces and gave them to him, saying, "Take these for the chasing and the price of the ring shall remain." Cried the jeweller, "O my lord, how much hire have we taken of thee! Verily, thy bounty to us is great!" "No harm," replied Kamar al-Zaman and sat talking with him awhile and giving a dinar to every beggar who passed by the shop. Then he left him and went away, whilst the jeweller returned home and said to his wife, "How generous is this young merchant! Never did I set eyes on a more open-handed or a comelier than he, no, nor a sweeter of speech." And he went on to recount to her his charms and generosity and was loud in his praise. Cried she, "O thou lack-tact,[409] since thou notest these qualities in him, and indeed he hath given thee two seal-rings of price, it behoveth thee to invite him and make him an entertainment and entreat him lovingly. When he seest that thou affectest him and cometh to our place, we shall surely get great good of him; and if thou grudge him the banquet do thou bid him and I will entertain him of my monies." Quoth he, "Dost thou know me to be niggardly, that thou sayest this Say?"; and quoth she, "Thou art no niggard, but thou lackest tact. Invite him this very night

and come not without him. An he refuse, conjure him by the divorce oath and be persistent with him." "On my head and eyes," answered he and moulded the ring till he had finished it, after which he passed the night and 267went forth on the morrow to his shop and sat there. On this wise it was with him; but as for Kamar al-Zaman, he took three hundred dinars and carrying them to the old wife, gave them to her for the barber, her husband. Said she, "Most like he will invite thee to his house this day; and if he do this and thou pass the night there, tell me in the morning what befalleth thee and bring with thee four hundred dinars and give them to thy father." Answered he, "Hearing and obeying;" and as often as he ran out of money, he would sell some of his stones. So he repaired to the jeweller, who rose to him and received him with open arms, greeted him heartily and clapped up companionship with him. Then he gave him the ring, and he found it after the measure of his finger and said to the jeweller, "Allah bless thee, O prince of artists! The setting is conformable but the stone is not to my liking."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman said to the jeweller, "The setting is conformable to my wishes, but the stone is not to my liking. I have a handsomer than this: so take the seal-ring and give it to one of thy slave-women." Then he gave him a fourth stone and an hundred dinars, saying, "Take thy hire and excuse the trouble we have given thee." Obayd replied, "O merchant, all the trouble thou hast given us thou hast requited us and hast overwhelmed us with thy great bounties: and indeed my heart is taken with love of thee and I cannot brook parting from thee. So, Allah upon thee, be thou my guest this night and heal my heart." He rejoined, "So be it; but needs must I go to my Khan, that I may give a charge to my domestics and tell them that I shall sleep abroad to-night, so they may not expect me." "Where dost thou lodge?" asked the jeweller; and he answered, "In such a Khan." Quoth Obayd, "I will come for thee there;" and quoth the other, "'Tis well." So the jeweller repaired to the Khan before sundown, fearing lest his wife should be anangered with him, if he returned home without his guest; and, carrying Kamar al-Zaman to his house, seated him in a saloon that had not its match. Halimah saw him, as he entered, and was 268ravished with him. They talked till supper was served when they ate and drank; after which appeared coffee and sherbets, and the jeweller ceased not to entertain him with talk till eventide, when they prayed the obligatory prayers. Then entered a handmaid with two cups[410] of night drink, which when they had drunk, drowsiness overcame them and they slept. Presently in came the jeweller's wife and seeing them asleep, looked upon Kamar al-Zaman's face and her wit was confounded at his beauty. Said she, "How can he sleep who loveth the fair?" and, turning him over on his back, sat astraddle upon his breast. Then, in the mania of her passion for him, she rained down kisses on his cheeks, till she left a

mark upon them and they became exceeding red and his cheek bones shone; and, she sucked his lips, till the blood ran out into her mouth; but with all this, her fire was not quenched nor her thirst assuaged. She ceased not to kiss and clip him and twine leg with leg, till the fore-brow of Morn grew white and the dawn broke forth in light; when she put in his pocket four cockals[411] and went away. Then she sent her maid with something like snuff, which she applied to their nostrils and they sneezed and awoke, when the slave-girl said, "O my lords, prayer is a duty; so rise ye and pray the dawn-prayer." And she brought them basin and ewer.[412] Quoth Kaman al-Zamar "O master, 'tis late and we have overslept ourselves;" and quoth the jeweller, "O my friend verily the air of this room is heavy; for, whenever I sleep in it, this happens to me." Rejoined Kamar al-Zaman, "True," and proceeded to make the Wuzu ablution; but, when he put the water to his face, his cheeks and lips burned him. Cried he, "Prodigious! If the air of the room be heavy and we have been drowned in sleep, what aileth my cheeks and lips that they burn 269 me?" And he said to the jeweller, "O master, my cheeks and lips burn me." The other replied, "I guess this cometh of the mosquito-bites." "Strange!" said Kamar al-Zaman. "Hath this thing happened to thee?" Replied Obayd, "No! But whenever I have by me a guest like thee, he complaineth in the morning of the mosquito-bites, and this happeneth only when he is like thee beardless. If he be bearded the mosquitoes sting him not, and naught hindereth them from me but my beard. It seems mosquitoes love not bearded men."[413] Rejoined Kamar al-Zaman, "True." Then the maid brought them early breakfast and they broke their fast and went out. Kamar al-Zaman betook himself to the old woman, who exclaimed, when she saw him, "I see the marks of joyance on thy face: tell me what thou hast seen." Said he, "I have seen nothing. Only I supped with the house-master in a saloon and prayed the night-prayer, after which we fell asleep and woke not till morning." She laughed and said, "What be those marks on thy cheeks and lips?" He answered, "'Twas the mosquitoes of the saloon that did this with me;" and she rejoined, "'Tis well. But did the same thing betide the house master?" He retorted, "Nay; but he told me that the mosquitoes of that saloon molest not bearded men, but sting those only who have no hair on face, and that whenever he hath for guest one who is beardless, the stranger awaketh complaining of the mosquito-bites; whereas an he have a beard, there befalleth him naught of this." Said she, "Sooth thou speakest: but say me, sawest thou aught save this?" And he answered, "I found four cockals in my pocket." Quoth she, "Show them to me." So he gave them to her and she laughed and said, "Thy mistress laid these in thy pocket." He asked, "How so?" And she answered, "'Tis as if she said to thee, in the language of signs:[414]—An thou wert in love, thou wouldst not sleep, for a lover sleepeth not: but thou has not ceased to be a child and fit for nothing but to play with these cockals. So what drave thee to fall in love with the fair? Now she came to thee by night and finding thee asleep, scored thy cheeks with her kisses and left thee this sign. But that will not suffice her of thee and she will certainly send her husband to invite thee again

to-night; so, when thou goest home with him, hasten not to fall asleep, and on the morrow bring me five 270 hundred dinars and come and acquaint me with what hath passed, and I will perfect for thee the device." Answered he, "I hear and obey," and went back to the Khan. Thus it befel him; but as regards the jeweller's wife, she said to her husband, "Is the guest gone?" Answered he, "Yes, but, O Halimah,[415] the mosquitoes plagued him last night and scarified his cheeks and lips, and indeed I was abashed before him." She rejoined, "This is the wont of the mosquitoes of our saloon; for they love none save the beardless. But do thou invite him again to-night." So he repaired to the Khan where the youth abode, and bidding him, carried him to his house, where they ate and drank and prayed the night-prayer in the saloon, after which the slave-girl entered and gave each of them a cup of night-drink,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the slave-girl went in to the twain and gave each of them a cup of night-drink, and they drank and fell asleep. Presently, in came Halimah and said, "O good-for-nothing, how canst thou sleep and call thyself a lover? A lover sleepeth not!" Then she mounted on his breast and ceased not to come down upon him with kisses and caresses, biting and sucking his lips and so forth, till the morning, when she put in his pocket a knife and sent her handmaid to arouse them. And when the youth awoke, his cheeks were on fire, for excess of redness, and his lips like coral, for dint of sucking and kissing. Quoth the jeweller, "Did the mosquitoes plague thee last night?"; and quoth the other, "Nay!"; for he now knew the conceit and left complaining. Then he felt the knife in his pocket and was silent; but when he had broken his fast and drunk coffee, he left the jeweller and going to the Khan; took five hundred dinars of gold and carried them to the old woman, to whom he related what had passed, saying, "I slept despite myself, and when I woke at dawn I found nothing but a knife in my pocket." Exclaimed the old trot, "May Allah protect thee from her this next night! For she saith to thee by this sign, An thou sleep again, I will cut thy throat. Thou wilt once more be bidden to 271 the jeweller's house to-night,[416] and if thou sleep, she will slay thee." Said he, "What is to be done?"; and said she, "Tell me what thou atest and drankest before sleeping." Quoth he, "We supped as was our wont and prayed the night-prayer, after which there came in to us a maid, who gave each of us a cup of night-drink, which when I had drunk, I fell asleep and awoke not till the morning." Quoth the old woman, "The mischief is in the cup: so, when the maid giveth it to thee, take it from her, but drink not and wait till the master of the house have drunken and fallen asleep; then say to her, Give me a draught of water, and she will go to fetch thee the gugglet. Then do thou empty the cup behind the pillow and lie down and feign sleep. So when she cometh back with the gugglet, she will deem that thou hast fallen asleep, after having drunk off the cup, and will leave thee; and presently the case will appear to

thee; but beware of disobeying my bidding." Answered he, "I hear and I obey," and returned to the Khan. Meanwhile the jeweller's wife said to her husband, "A guest's due honour is three nights' entertainment: so do thou invite him a third time"; whereupon he betook himself to the youth and inviting him, carried him home and sat down with him in the saloon. When they had supped and prayed the night-prayer, behold, in came the handmaid and gave each of them a cup. Her master drank and fell asleep; but Kamar al-Zaman forbore to drink, whereupon quoth the maid, "Wilt thou not drink, O my lord?" Answered he, "I am athirst, bring me the gugglet." Accordingly she went to fetch it, and he emptied the cup behind the pillow and lay down. When the slave girl returned, she saw him lying down and going to her mistress said, "He hath drunk off the cup and fallen asleep;" whereupon quoth Halimah to herself, "Verily, his death is better than his life." Then, taking a sharp knife, she went in to him, saying, "Three times, and thou notedst not the sign, O fool![417] So now I will rip up thy maw." When he saw her making for him knife in hand, he opened his eyes and rose, laughing; whereupon said she, "'Twas not of thine own wit, that thou camest at the meaning of the sign, but by the help of some wily cheat; so tell me whence thou hadst this knowledge." "From an old woman," replied he, "between whom and me befel such and such;" and he told her 272 all that had passed. Quoth she, "To-morrow go thou forth from us and seek her and say, Hast thou any further device in store? And if she answer, I have, do thou rejoin, Then do thy best that I may enjoy her publicly. But, if she say, I have no means of doing that, and this is the last of my devices, put her away from thy thought, and to-morrow night my husband will come to thee and invite thee. Do thou come with him and tell me and I will consider what remaineth to be done." Answered he, "There is no harm in that!" Then he spent the rest of the night with her in embracing and clipping, plying the particle of copulation in concert[418] and joining the conjunctive with the conjoined,[419] whilst her husband was as a cast-out nunnation of construction.[420] And they ceased not to be thus till morning, when she said to him, "'Tis not a night of thee that will content me, nor a day; no, nor yet a month nor a year; but it's my intent to abide with thee the rest of my life. Wait, however, till I play my husband a trick which would baffle the keenest-witted and win for us our wishes. I will cause doubt to enter into him, so that he shall divorce me, whereupon I will marry thee and go with thee to thine own country; I will also transport all his monies and hoards to thy lodging and will contrive thee the ruin of his dwelling-place and the blotting out of his traces. But do thou hearken to my speech and obey me in that I shall say to thee and gainsay me not." He replied, "I hear and I obey: in me there is none opposition." Then said she, "Go to the Khan and, when 273 my husband cometh to thee and inviteth thee, say to him:—O my brother, a son of Adam is apt to be burdensome, and when his visits grow over frequent, both generous and niggard loathe him.[421] How then shall I go with thee every night and lie I and thee, on the saloon? An thou wax not chagrined

with me, thy Harim will bear me grudge, for that I hinder thee from thine. Therefore if thou have a mind to my company, take me a house beside thine own and we will abide thus, now I sitting with thee till the time of sleep, and now with me thou. Then I will go to my place and thou to thy Harim and this will be a better rede than that I hinder thee from thy Harim every night. Then will he come to me and take counsel with me, and I will advise him to turn out our neighbour, for the house wherein he liveth is our house and he renteth it of us; and once thou art in the house, Allah will make easy to us the rest of our scheme." And presently she added, "Go now and do as I bid thee." Answered he, "I hear and obey;" whereupon she left him and went away, whilst he lay down and feigned to be asleep. Presently, the handmaid came and aroused them; and when the jeweller awoke, he said to his guest, "O merchant have the mosquitoes worried thee?" He replied, "No," and Obayd said, "Belike thou art grown used to them." Then they broke their fast and drank coffee, after which they fared forth to their affairs, and Kamar al-Zaman betook himself to the old crone, and related to her what had passed,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Kamar al-Zaman betook himself to the old crone, he related to 274her what had passed, saying, “She spake to me this and that, and I answered her thus and thus. Now say me, hast thou any farther device for bringing me to enjoy her publicly?” Quoth she, “O my son, here

endeth my contrivance, and now I am at the term of my devices." Upon this he left her and returned to the Khan where, as eventide evened, the jeweller came to him and invited him. He said, "I cannot go with thee." Asked the merchant, "Why so? I love thee and cannot brook separation from thee. Allah upon thee come with me!" The other replied, "An it be thy wish to continue our comradeship and keep up the friendship betwixt thee and me, take me a house by the side of thine own, and when thou wilt, thou shalt pass the evening with me and I with thee; but, as soon as the time of sleep cometh, each of us shall hie him to his own home and lie there." Quoth Obayd, "I have a house adjoining mine, which is my own property: so go thou with me to-night and to-morrow I will have the house untenanted for thee." Accordingly he went with him and they supped and prayed the night-prayer, after which the jeweller drank the cup of drugged[422] liquor and fell asleep: but in Kamar al-Zaman's cup there was no trick; so he drank it and slept not. Then came the jeweller's wife and sat chatting with him through the dark hours, whilst her husband lay like a corpse. When he awoke in the morning as of wont, he sent for his tenant and said to him, "O man, quit me the house, for I have need of it." "On my head and eyes," answered the other and voided the house to him, whereupon Kamar al-Zaman took up his abode therein and transported thither all his baggage. The jeweller passed that evening with him, then went to his own house. On the next day, his wife sent for a cunning builder and bribed him with money to make her an underground-way[423] from her chamber to Kamar al-Zaman's house, with a trap-door under the earth. So, before the youth was ware, she came in to him with two bags of money and he said to her, "Whence comest thou?" She showed him the tunnel and said to him, "Take these two bags of his money." 275 Then she sat with him, the twain toying and tumbling together till the morning, when she said, "Wait for me, till I go to him and wake him, so he may go to his shop, and I return to thee." He sat expecting her, whilst she went away and awoke her husband, who made the Wuzu-ablution and prayed and went to his shop. As soon as he was gone, she took four bags and, carrying them through the Souterrain to Kamar al-Zaman, said to him, "Store these up;" then she sat with him awhile, after which she retired to her home and he betook himself to the bazar. When he returned at sundown, he found in his house ten purses and jewels and much besides. Presently the jeweller came to him and carried him to his own house, where they passed the evening in the saloon, till the handmaid came in according to custom, and brought them the drink. Her master drank and fell asleep, whilst naught betided Kamar al-Zaman for that his cup was wholesome and there was no trick therein. Then came Halimah who sat down a-toying with him, whilst the slave-girl transported the jeweller's goods to Kamar al-Zaman's house by the secret passage. Thus they did till morning, when the handmaid awoke her lord and gave them to drink coffee, after which they went each his own way. On the third day the wife brought out to him a knife of her husband's, which he had chased and wrought with his own hand, and which he priced at five hundred dinars. But there was no knife like it and because of

the eagerness with which folk sought it of him, he had laid it up in a chest and could not bring himself to sell it to any one in creation. Quoth she, "Take this knife and set it in thy waist-shawl and go to my husband and sit with him. Then pull out the knife and say to him, "O master, look at this knife I bought to-day and tell me if I have the worst or the best of the bargain. He will know it, but will be ashamed to say to thee, This is my knife; so he will ask thee, Whence didst thou buy it and for how much?; and do thou make answer:—I saw two Levantines[424] disputing and one said to the other, Where hast thou been? Quoth his companion, I have been with my mistress, and whenever I foregather with her, she giveth me ten dirhams; but this day she said to me, My hand is empty of silver for thee to-day, but take this knife of my husband's. So I took it and intend to 276 sell it. The knife pleased me and hearing his tale I said to him, Wilt thou sell it to me? when he replied, Buy. So I got it of him for three hundred gold pieces and I wonder whether it was cheap or dear. And note what he will say to thee. Then talk with him awhile and rise and come back to me in haste. Thou wilt find me awaiting thee at the tunnel-mouth, and do thou give me the knife." Replied Kamar al-Zaman, "I hear and I obey," and taking the knife set it in his waist-shawl. Then he went to the shop of the jeweller, who saluted him with the salam and welcomed him and made him sit down. He spied the knife in his waist-shawl, at which he wondered and said to himself, "That is my knife: who can have conveyed it to this merchant?" And he fell a-musing and saying in his mind, "I wonder an it be my knife or a knife like it!" Presently Kamar al-Zaman pulled it out and said to him, "Harkye, master; take this knife and look at it." Obayd took it and knew it right well, but was ashamed to say, "This is my knife;"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say,

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the jeweller took the knife from Kamar al-Zaman, he knew it, but was ashamed to say, "This is my knife." So he asked, "Where didst thou buy it?" Kamar al-Zaman answered as Halimah had charged him, and the jeweller said, "The knife was cheap at that price, for it is worth five hundred dinars." But fire flamed in his heart and his hands were tied from working at his craft. Kamar al-Zaman continued to talk with him, whilst he was drowned in the sea of solicitudes, and for fifty words wherewith the youth bespoke him, he answered him but one; for his heart ached and his frame was racked and his thoughts were troubled and he was even as saith the poet:—

I have no words though folk would have me talk ✿ And who bespeak me find me thought-waylaid:
Plunged in the Care-sea's undiscovered depths, ✿ Nor aught of difference see 'twixt man and maid!

When Kamar al-Zaman saw his case thus changed, he said to him, "Belike thou art busy at this present," and leaving him, returned 277 in hottest haste to his own house,

where he found Halimah standing at the passage-door awaiting him. Quoth she "Hast thou done as I bade thee?"; and quoth he, "Yes." She asked, "What said he to thee?"; and he answered, "He told me that the knife was cheap at that price, for that it was worth five hundred dinars: but I could see that he was troubled; so I left him and know not what befel him after that." Cried she, "Give me the knife and reck thou not of him." Then she took the knife and restoring it to its place, sat down. Now after Kamar al-Zaman's departure fire flamed in the jeweller's heart and suspicion was sore upon him and he said to himself, "Needs must I get up and go look for the knife and cut down doubt with certainty." So he rose and repaired to his house and went in to his wife, snorting like a dragon;[425] and she said to him, "What mattereth thee, O my lord?" He asked, "Where is my knife?" and she answered, "In the chest," and smote hand upon breast, saying, "O my grief! Belike thou hast fallen out with some one and art come to fetch the knife to smite him withal." Said he, "Give me the knife. Let me see it." But said she, "Not till thou swear to me that thou wilt not smite any one therewith." So he swore this to her and she opened the chest and brought out to him the knife and he fell to turning it over, saying, "Verily, this is a wondrous thing!" Then quoth he to her, "Take it and lay it back in its place;" and she, "Tell me the meaning of all this." He answered, "I saw with our friend a knife like this," and told her all that had passed between himself and the youth, adding, "But, when I saw it in the chest, my suspicion ended in certainty." Said she, "Haply thou misdoubtedst of me and deemedst that I was the Levantine's mistress and had given him the knife." He replied, "Yes; I had my doubts of this; but, when I saw the knife, suspicion was lifted from my heart." Rejoined she, "O man, there is now no good in thee!" And he fell to excusing himself to her, till he appeased her; after which he fared forth and returned to his shop. Next day, she gave Kamar al-Zaman her husband's watch, which he had made with his own hand and whereof none had the like, saying, "Go to his shop and sit by his side and say to him:—I saw again to-day him whom I saw yesterday. He had a watch in his hand and said to me, Wilt thou buy this watch? Quoth I, Whence hadst thou it?; and quoth he, I was with my mistress 278 and she gave me this watch. So I bought it of him for eight-and-fifty gold pieces. Look at it: is it cheap at that price or dear? Note what he shall say to thee; then return to me in haste and give me the watch." So Kamar al-Zaman repaired to the jeweller and did with him as she had charged him. When Obayd saw the watch, he said, "This is worth seven hundred ducats;" and suspicion entered into him. Then the youth left him and returning to the wife, gave her back the watch. Presently, her husband suddenly came in snorting, and said to her, "Where is my watch?" Said she, "Here it is;" and he cried, "Give it to me." So she brought it to him and he exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!"; and she too exclaimed, "O man, there is something the matter with thee. Tell me what it is." He replied, "What shall I say? Verily, I am bewildered by these chances!" And he recited these couplets[426]:—

Although the Merciful be doubtless with me,
Yet am I sore bewildered, for new griefs
Have compassed me about, or ere I knew it,
I have endured till Patience self became
Impatient of my patience.—I have endured
Waiting till Heaven fulfil my destiny.—
I have endured till e'en endurance owned
How I bore up with her; (a thing more bitter
Than bitter aloes) yet though a bitterer thing
Is not, than is that drug, it were more bitter
To me should Patience leave me unsustained.

Then said he to his wife, "O woman, I saw with the merchant our friend, first my knife, which I knew, for that its fashion was a device of my own wit, nor doth its like exist; and he told me of it a story that troubled the heart: so I came back and found it at home. Again to-day I see him with the watch, whose fashion also is of my own device, nor is there the fellow of it in Bassorah, 279 and of this also he told me a story that saddened my heart. Wherefore I am bewildered in my wit and know not what is to come to me." Quoth she, "The purport of thy speech is that thou suspectedst me of being the friend of that merchant and his leman, and eke of giving him thy good; so thou camest to question me and make proof of my perfidy; and, had I not shown thee the knife and the watch, thou hadst been certified of my treason. But since, O man, thou deemest me this ill deme, henceforth I will never again break with thee bread nor drain with thee drink, for I loathe thee with the loathing of prohibition.[427]" So he gentled her and excused himself till he had appeased her and returned, repenting him of having bespoken her thus, to his shop, where he sat——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the jeweller quitted his wife, he repented having bespoken her thus and, returning to his shop, he sat there in disquiet sore and anxiety galore, between belief and unbelief. About eventide he went home alone, not bringing Kamar al-Zaman with him: whereupon quoth his wife, "Where is the merchant?"; and quoth he, "In his lodgings." She asked, "Is the friendship between thee and him grown cold?" and he answered, "By Allah, I have taken a dislike to him, because of that which hath betided me from him."[428] Quoth she, "Go fetch him, to please me." So he arose and went in to Kamar al-Zaman in his house; where he saw his own goods strewn about and knew them. At this sight, fire was kindled in his heart and he fell a-sighing. Quoth the youth, "How is it that I see thee melancholy?" Obayd was ashamed to say, "Here are my goods in thy house: who brought them hither?"; so he replied only, "A vexation hath betided me; but come

thou with me to my house, that we may solace ourselves there." The other rejoined, "Let me be in my place: I will not go with thee." But the jeweller conjured him to come 280 and took him to his house, where they supped and passed the evening together, Kamar al-Zaman talking with the jeweller, who was drowned in the sea of solicitude and for a hundred words, wherewith the guest bespoke him, answered him only one word. Presently, the handmaid brought them two cups of drink, as usual, and they drank; whereupon the jeweller fell asleep, but the youth abode on wake, because his cup was not drugged. Then came Halimah and said to her lover, "How deemest thou of yonder cornuted, who is drunken in his heedlessness and weeteth not the wiles of women? There is no help for it but that I cozen him into divorcing me. To-morrow, I will disguise myself as a slave-girl and walk after thee to his shop, where do thou say to him, O master, I went to-day into the Khan of Al-Yasirjíyah, where I saw this damsel and bought her for a thousand dinars. Look at her for me and tell me whether she was cheap at that price or dear. Then uncover to him my face and breasts and show all of me to him; after which do thou carry me back to thy house, whence I will go to my chamber by the secret passage, so I may see the issue of our affair with him." Then the twain passed the night in mirth and merriment, converse and good cheer, dalliance and delight till dawn, when she returned to her own place and sent the handmaid to arouse her lawful lord and her lover. Accordingly they arose and prayed the dawn-prayer and brake their fast and drank coffee, after which Obayd repaired to his shop and Kamar al-Zaman betook himself to his own house. Presently, in came Halimah to him by the tunnel, in the guise of a slave-girl, and indeed she was by birth a slave-girl.[429] Then he went out and she walked behind him, till he came to the jeweller's shop and saluting him, sat down and said, "O master, I went into the Khan of Al-Yasirjiyah to-day, to look about me, and saw this damsel in the broker's hands. She pleased me; so I bought her for a thousand dinars and I would have thee look upon her and see if she be cheap at that price or no." So saying, he uncovered her face and the jeweller saw her to be his own wife, clad in her 281 costliest clothes, tricked out in her finest trinkets and kohl'd and henna'd, even as she was wont to adorn herself before him in the house. He knew with full knowledge her face and dress and trinkets, for those he had wrought with his own hand, and he saw on her fingers the seal-rings he had newly made for Kamar al-Zaman, whereby he was certified with entire assurance that she was indeed his very wife. So he asked her, "What is thy name, O slave-girl?"; and she answered, "Halimah," naming to him her own name; whereat he was amazed and said to the youth, "For how much didst thou buy her?" He replied, "For a thousand dinars"; and the jeweller rejoined, "Thou hast gotten her gratis; for her rings and clothes and trinkets are worth more than that." Said Kamar al-Zaman, "May Allah rejoice thee with good news! Since she pleaseth thee, I will carry her to my house;" and Obayd said, "Do thy will." So he took her off to his house, whence she passed through the secret passage to her own apartment and sat there.

Meanwhile, fire flamed in the jeweller's heart and he said to himself, "I will go see my wife. If she be at home, this slave-girl must be her counterpart, and glory be to Him who alone hath no counterpart! But, if she be not at home, 'tis she herself without a doubt." Then he set off running, and coming to his house, found his wife sitting in the same clothes and ornaments he had seen upon her in the shop; whereupon he beat hand upon hand, saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" "O man," asked she, "art thou mad or what aileth thee? 'Tis not thy wont to do thus, and needs must it be that something hath befallen thee." Answered he, "If thou wilt have me tell thee be not vexed." Quoth she, "Say on"; so he said, "Our friend the merchant hath bought a slave-girl, whose shape is as thy shape and her height as thy height; moreover, her name is even as thy name and her apparel is the like of thine apparel. Brief, she resembleth thee in all her attributes, and on her fingers are seal-rings like thy seal-rings and her trinkets are as thy trinkets. So, when he displayed her to me, methought it was thyself and I was perplexed concerning my case. Would we had never seen this merchant nor companied with him; and would he had never left his own country and we had not known him, for he hath troubled my life which before was serene, causing ill-feeling to succeed good faith and making doubt to enter into my heart." Said she, "Look in my face, belike I am she who was with him and he is my lover and I disguised myself as a slave-girl 282 and agreed with him that he should display me to thee, so he might lay a snare for thee." He replied, "What words are these? Indeed, I never suspected that thou wouldst do the like of this deed." Now this jeweller was unversed in the wiles of women and knew not how they deal with men, nor had he heard the saying of him who said:—

A heart bore thee off in chase of the fair, ✿ As fled Youth and came Age wi' his hoary hair:

Laylà troubles me and love-joys are far; ✿ And rival and risks brings us cark and care.

An would'st ask me of woman, behold I am ✿ In physic of womankind wise and ware:

When grizzleth man's head and his monies fail, ✿ His lot in their love is a poor affair.

Nor that of another:[430]—

Gainsay women; he obeyeth Allah best, who saith them nay And he prospers not who giveth them his bridle-rein to sway;

For they'll hinder him from winning to perfection in his gifts, Though a thousand years he study, seeking after wisdom's way.

And a third:—

Women Satans are, made for woe of man: ✿ To Allah I fly from such Satanesses!

Whom they lure by their love he to grief shall come ✿ And lose bliss of world and the Faith that blesses.

Said she, "Here am I sitting in my chamber; so go thou to him forthright and knock at the door and contrive to go in to him quickly. An thou see the damsel with him 'tis a slave-girl of his who resembleth me (and Glory be to Him who hath no resemblance![431]) But, an thou see no slave-girl with him, then am I myself she whom

thou sawest with him in the shop, and thine ill thought of me will be stablished." "True," answered Obayd, and went out leaving her, whereupon she passed through the hidden passage and seating herself by Kamar al-Zaman, told him what had passed, saying, "Open the door quickly and show me to him." [283]Now, as they were talking, behold, there came a knocking at the door. Quoth Kamar al-Zaman, "Who is at the door?"; and quoth the jeweller, "I, thy friend; thou displayedst to me thy slave-girl in the bazar, and I rejoiced for thee in her, but my joy in her was not completed; so open the door and let me look at her again." Rejoined he, "So be it," and opened the door to him, whereupon he saw his wife sitting by him. She rose and kissed their hands; and he looked at her; then she talked with him awhile and he saw her not to be distinguished from his wife in aught and said, "Allah createth whatso He will." Then he went away more disheartened than before and returned to his own house where he saw his wife sitting, for she had foregone him thither by the souterrain.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young lady forewent her spouse by the souterrain as he fared through the door and sat down in her upper chamber;[432] so as soon as he entered she asked him, "What hast thou seen?" and he answered, "I found her with her master; and she resembleth thee." Then said she, "Off to thy shop and let this suffice thee of ignoble suspicion and never again deem ill of me." Said he, "So be it: accord me pardon for what is past." And she, "Allah grant thee grace!";[433] whereupon he kissed her right and left and went back to his shop. Then she again betook herself to Kamar al-Zaman through the underground passage, with four bags of money, and said to him, "Equip thyself at once for the road and be ready to carry off the money without delay, against I devise for thee the device I have in mind." So he went out and purchased mules and loaded them and made ready a travelling litter, he also bought Mamelukes and eunuchs and sending, without let or hindrance, the whole without the city, returned to Halimah and said to her, "I have made an end of my affairs." Quoth she, "And I on my side am ready; for I have transported to thy house all the rest of his monies and treasures and have left him nor little nor much, whereof he may [284]avail himself. All this is of my love for thee, O dearling of my heart, for I would sacrifice my husband to thee a thousand times. But now it behoveth, thou go to him and farewell him, saying:—I purpose to depart after three days and am come to bid thee adieu: so do thou reckon what I owe thee for the hire of the house, that I may send it to thee and acquit my conscience. Note his reply and return to me and tell me; for I can no more: I have done my best, by cozening him, to anger him with me and cause him to put me away, but I find him none the less infatuated with me. So nothing will serve us but to depart to thine own country." And quoth he, "O rare! an but swevens prove true!"[434] Then he went to the jeweller's shop and sitting down by him, said to him, "O master, I set out for home in three days'

time, and am come to farewell thee. So I would have thee reckon what I owe thee for the hire of the house, that I may pay it to thee and acquit my conscience." Answered Obayd, "What talk is this? Verily, 'tis I who am indebted to thee. By Allah, I will take nothing from thee for the rent of the house, for thou hast brought down blessings upon us! However, thou desolatest me by thy departure, and but that it is forbidden to me, I would certainly oppose thee and hinder thee from returning to thy country and kinsfolk." Then he took leave of him, whilst they both wept with sore weeping and the jeweller went with him, and when they entered Kamar al-Zaman's house, there they found Halimah who stood before them and served them; but when Obayd returned home, he found her sitting there; nor did he cease to see her thus in each house in turn, for the space of three days, when she said to Kamar al-Zaman, "Now have I transported to thee all that he hath of monies and hoards and carpets and things of price, and there remaineth with him naught save the slave-girl, who used to come in to you with the night-drink: but I cannot part with her, for that she is my kinswoman and she is dear to me as a confidante. So I will beat her and be wroth with her and when my spouse cometh home, I will say to him:—I can no longer put up with this slave-girl nor stay in the house with her; so take her and sell her. Accordingly he will sell her and do thou buy her, that we may carry her with us." Answered he, "No harm in that." So she beat the girl and when the jeweller came in, he found her 285 weeping and asked her why she wept. Quoth she, "My mistress hath beaten me." He then went in to his wife and said to her, "What hath that accursed girl done, that thou hast beaten her?" She replied, "O man, I have but one word to say to thee, and 'tis that I can no longer bear the sight of this girl; so take her and sell her, or else divorce me." Quoth he, "I will sell her that I may not cross thee in aught;" and when he went out to go to the shop he took her and passed with her by Kamar al-Zaman. No sooner had he gone out than his wife slipped through the underground passage to Kamar al-Zaman, who placed her in the litter, before the Shaykh her husband reached him. When the jeweller came up and the lover saw the slave-girl with him, he asked him, "What girl is this?"; and the other answered, "'Tis my slave-girl who used to serve us with the night-drink; she hath disobeyed her mistress who is wroth with her and hath bidden me sell her." Quoth the youth, "An her mistress have taken an aversion to her, there is for her no abiding with her; but sell her to me, that I may smell your scent in her, and I will make her handmaid to my slave Halimah." "Good," answered Obayd: "take her." Asked Kamar al-Zaman, "What is her price?"; but the jeweller said, "I will take nothing from thee, for thou hast been bountiful to us." So he accepted her from him and said to Halimah, "Kiss thy lord's hand." Accordingly, she came out from the litter and kissing Obayd's hand, remounted, whilst he looked hard at her. Then said Kamar al-Zaman, "I commend thee to Allah, O Master Obayd! Acquit my conscience of responsibility.[435]" Answered the jeweller, "Allah acquit thee! and carry thee safe to thy family!" Then he bade him farewell and went to his shop weeping, and indeed it was grievous to him to part from Kamar al-

Zaman, for that he had been his friend and friendship hath its debtorship; yet he rejoiced in the dispelling of the doubts which had befallen him anent his wife, since the young man was now gone and his suspicions had not been stablished. Such was his case; but as regards Kamar al-Zaman, the young lady said to him, "An thou wish for safety, travel with me by other than the wonted way."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Halimah said to Kamar al-Zaman, "An thou wish for safety, travel with me by other than the wonted way," he replied, "Hearing and obeying;" and, taking a road other than that used by folk, fared on without ceasing from region to region till he reached the confines of Egypt-land[436] and sent his sire a letter by a runner. Now his father the merchant Abd al-Rahman was sitting in the market among the merchants, with a heart on fire for separation from his son, because no news of the youth had reached him since the day of his departure; and while he was in such case the runner came up and cried, "O my lords, which of you is called the merchant Abd al-Rahman?" They said, "What wouldst thou of him?"; and he said, "I have a letter for him from his son Kamar al-Zaman, whom I left at Al-Arísh.[437]" At this Abd al-Rahman rejoiced and his breast was broadened and the merchants rejoiced for him and gave him joy of his son's safety. Then he opened the letter and read as follows:—"From Kamar al-Zaman to the merchant Abd al-Rahman. And after Peace be upon thee and upon all the merchants! An ye ask concerning us, to Allah be the praise and the thanks. Indeed we have sold and bought and gained and are come back in health, wealth and weal." Whereupon Abd al-Rahman opened the door[438] 287 of rejoicing and made banquets and gave feasts and entertainments galore, sending for instruments of music and addressing himself to festivities after rarest fashion. When Kamar al-Zaman came to Al-Sálihiyah,[439] his father and all the merchants went forth to meet him, and Abd al-Rahman embraced him and strained him to his bosom and sobbed till he swooned away. When he came to himself he said, "Oh, 'tis a boon day O my son, whereon the Omnipotent Protector hath reunited us with thee!" And he repeated the words of the bard:—

The return of the friend is the best of all boons, ✿ And the joy-cup circles o' morns and noons:

So well come, welcome, fair welcome to thee, ✿ The light of the time and the moon o' full moons.

Then, for excess of joy, he poured forth a flood of tears from his eyes and he recited also these two couplets:—

The Moon o' the Time,[440] shows unveilèd light; ✿ And, his journey done, at our door doth alight:

His locks as the nights of his absence are black ✿ And the sun upstands from his collar's[441] white.

Then the merchants came up to him and saluting him, saw with him many loads and servants and a travelling litter enclosed in a spacious circle.[442] So they took him and

carried him home; and when Halimah came forth from the litter, his father held her a seduction to all who beheld her. So they opened her an upper chamber, as it were a treasure from which the talismans had been loosed;[443] and when his mother saw her, she was ravished with her 288 and deemed her a Queen of the wives of the Kings. So she rejoiced in her and questioned her; and she answered, "I am wife to thy son;" and the mother rejoined, "Since he is wedded to thee we must make thee a splendid marriage-feast, that we may rejoice in thee and in my son." On this wise it befel her; but as regards the merchant Abd al-Rahman, when the folk had dispersed and each had wended his way, he foregathered with his son and said to him, "O my son, what is this slave-girl thou hast brought with thee and for how much didst thou buy her[444]?" Kamar al-Zaman said, "O my father, she is no slave-girl; but 'tis she who was the cause of my going abroad." Asked his sire, "How so?"; and he answered, "'Tis she whom the Dervish described to us the night he lay with us; for indeed my hopes clave to her from that moment and I sought not to travel save on account of her. The Arabs came out upon me by the way and stripped me and took my money and goods, so that I entered Bassorah alone and there befel me there such and such things;" and he went on to relate to his parent all that had befallen him from commencement to conclusion. Now when he had made an end of his story, his father said to him, "O my son, and after all this didst thou marry her?" "No; but I have promised her marriage." "Is it thine intent to marry her?" "An thou bid me marry her, I will do so; otherwise I will not marry her." Thereupon quoth his father, "An thou marry her, I am quit of thee in this world and in the next, and I shall be incensed against thee with sore indignation. How canst thou wed her, seeing that she hath dealt thus with her husband? For, even as she did with her spouse for thy sake, so will she do the like with thee for another's sake, because she is a traitress and in a traitor there is no trusting. Wherefore an thou disobey me, I shall be wroth with thee; but, an thou give ear to my word, I will seek thee out a girl handsomer than she, who shall be pure and pious, and marry thee to her, though I spend all my substance upon her; and I will make thee a wedding without equal and will glory in thee and in her; for 'tis better that folk should say, Such an one hath married such an one's daughter, than that they say, He hath wedded a slave-girl sans birth or worth." And he went on to persuade his son to give up marrying her, by citing in support 289 of his say, proofs, stories, examples, verses and moral instances, till Kamar al-Zaman exclaimed, "O my father, since the case is thus, 'tis not right and proper that I marry her." And when his father heard him speak on such wise, he kissed him between the eyes, saying, "Thou art my very son, and as I live, O my son, I will assuredly marry thee to a girl who hath not her equal!" Then the merchant set Obayd's wife and her handmaid in a chamber high up in the house and, before locking the door upon the twain, he appointed a black slave-girl to carry them their meat and drink and he said to Halimah, "Ye shall abide imprisoned in this chamber, thou and thy maid, till I find one who will buy you, when I will sell you to

him. An ye resist, I will slay ye both, for thou art a traitress, and there is no good in thee." Answered she, "Do thy will: I deserve all thou canst do with me." Then he locked the door upon them and gave his Harim a charge respecting them, saying, "Let none go up to them nor speak with them, save the black slave-girl who shall give them their meat and drink through the casement of the upper chamber." So she abode with her maid, weeping and repenting her of that which she had done with her spouse. Meanwhile Abd al-Rahman sent out the marriage-brokers to look out a maid of birth and worth for his son, and the women ceased not to make search, and as often as they saw one girl, they heard of a fairer than she, till they came to the house of the Shaykh al-Islam[445] and saw his daughter. In her they found a virgin whose equal was not in Cairo for beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace, and she was a thousand-fold handsomer than the wife of Obayd. So they told Abd al-Rahman of her and he and the notables repaired to her father and sought her in wedlock of him. Then they wrote out the marriage contract and made her a splendid wedding; after which Abd al-Rahman gave bride-feasts and held open house forty days. On the first day, he invited the doctors of the law and they held a splendid nativity[446]: and on the morrow, he invited all the 290 merchants, and so on during the rest of the forty days, making a banquet every day to one or other class of folk, till he had bidden all the Olema and Emirs and Antients[447] and Magistrates, whilst the kettle-drums were drummed and the pipes were piped and the merchant sat to greet the guests, with his son by his side, that he might solace himself by gazing on the folk, as they ate from the trays. Each night Abd al-Rahman illuminated the street and the quarter with lamps and there came every one of the mimes and jugglers and mountebanks and played all manner play; and indeed it was a peerless wedding. On the last day he invited the Fakirs, the poor and the needy, far and near, and they flocked in troops and ate, whilst the merchant sat, with his son by his side.[448] And among the paupers, behold, entered Shaykh Obayd the jeweller and he was naked and weary and bare on his face the marks of wayfare. When Kamar al-Zaman saw him, he knew him and said to his sire, "Look, O my father, at yonder poor man who is but now come in by the door." So he looked and saw him clad in worn clothes and on him a patched gown[449] worth two dirhams: his face was yellow and he was covered with dust and was as he were an offcast of the pilgrims.[450] He was groaning as groaneth a sick man in need, walking with a tottering gait and swaying now to the right and then to the left, and in him was realized his saying who said[451]:—

Lack-gold abaseth man and doth his worth away, Even as the setting sun that pales with ended day.
He passeth 'mongst the folk and fain would hide his head; And when alone, he weeps with tears that never stay.
Absent, none taketh heed to him or his concerns; Present, he hath no part in life or pleasance aye.
By Allah, whenas men with poverty are cursed, But strangers midst their kin and countrymen are they!

291 And the saying of another:—

The poor man fares by everything opposed: ✿ On him to shut the door Earth ne'er shall fail:

Thou seest men abhor him sans a sin, ✿ And foes he finds tho' none the cause can tell:
The very dogs, when sighting wealthy man, ✿ Fawn at his feet and wag the flattering tail;
Yet, an some day a pauper loon they sight, ✿ All at him bark and, gnashing fangs, assail.

And how well quoth a third:—

If generous youth be blessed with luck and wealth, ✿ Displeasures fly his path and perils fleet:
His enviers pimp for him and par'site-wise ✿ E'en without tryst his mistress hastes to meet.
When loud he farts they say "How well he sings!" ✿ And when he fizzles[452] cry they, "Oh, how sweet!"

——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when his son said to Abd al-Rahman, "Look at yonder pauper!" he asked, "O my son, who is this?" And Kamar al-Zaman answered, "This is Master Obayd the jeweller, husband of the woman who is imprisoned with us." Quoth Abd al-Rahman, "Is this he of whom thou toldest me?"; and quoth his son, "Yes; and indeed I wot him right well." Now the manner of Obayd's coming thither was on this wise. When he had farewelled Kamar al-Zaman, he went to his shop and thence going home, laid his hand on the door, whereupon it opened and he entered and found neither his wife nor the slave-girl, but saw the house in sorriest plight, quoting in mute speech his saying who said[453]:—

292 The chambers were like a bee-hive well stocked: when their bees quitted it, they became empty.

When he saw the house void, he turned right and left and presently went round about the place, like a madman, but came upon no one. Then he opened the door of his treasure-closet, but found therein naught of his money nor his hoards; whereupon he recovered from the intoxication of fancy and shook off his infatuation and knew that it was his wife herself who had turned the tables upon him and outwitted him with her wiles. He wept for that which had befallen him, but kept his affair secret, so none of his foes might exult over him nor any of his friends be troubled, knowing that, if he disclosed his secret, it would bring him naught but dishonour and contumely from the folk; wherefore he said in himself, "O Obayd, hide that which hath betided thee of affliction and ruination; it behoveth thee to do in accordance with his saying who said:—

If a man's breast with bane he hides be straitenèd, ✿ The breast that tells its hidden bale is straiter still."

Then he locked up his house and, making for his shop, gave it in charge of one of his apprentices to whom said he, "My friend the young merchant hath invited me to accompany him to Cairo, for solacing ourselves with the sight of the city, and sweareth that he will not march except he carry us with him, me and my wife. So, O my son, I make thee my steward in the shop, and if the King ask for me, say thou to him:—He is gone with his Harim to the Holy House of Allah[454]." Then he sold some

of his effects and bought camels and mules and Mamelukes, together with a slave-girl[455], and placing her in a litter, set out from Bassorah after ten days. His friends farewelled him and none doubted but that he had taken his wife and gone on the Pilgrimage, and the folk rejoiced in this, for that Allah had delivered them from being shut up in the mosques and houses every Friday. Quoth some of them, "Allah grant he may never return to Bassorah, so we may no more be boxed up in the mosques and houses 293every Friday!"; for that this usage had caused the people of Bassorah exceeding vexation. Quoth another, "Methinks he will not return from this journey, by reason of the much-praying of the people of Bassorah against him[456]." And yet another, "An he return, 'twill not be but in reversed case[457]." So the folk rejoiced with exceeding joy in the jeweller's departure, after they had been in mighty great chagrin, and even their cats and dogs were comforted. When Friday came round, however, the crier proclaimed as usual that the people should repair to the mosques two hours before prayer-time or else hide themselves in their houses, together with their cats and dogs; whereat their breasts were straitened and they assembled in general assembly and betaking themselves to the King's divan, stood between his hands and said, "O King of the age, the jeweller hath taken his Harim and departed on the pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah: so the cause of our restraint hath ceased to be, and why therefore are we now shut up?" Quoth the King, "How came this traitor to depart without telling me? But, when he cometh back from his journey, all will not be save well[458]: so go ye to your shops and sell and buy, for this vexation is removed from you." Thus far concerning the King and the Bassorites; but as for the jeweller, he fared on ten days' journey, and as he drew near Baghdad, there befel him that which had befallen Kamar al-Zaman, before his entering Bassorah; for the Arabs[459] came out upon him and stripped him and took all he had and he escaped only by feigning himself dead. As soon as they were gone, he rose and fared on, naked as he was, till he came to a village, where Allah inclined to him the hearts of certain kindly folk, who covered his shame with some old clothes; and he asked his way, begging from town to town, till he reached the city of Cairo the God-guarded. There, burning with hunger, he went about alms-seeking in the market-streets, till one of the townsfolk said to him, "O poor man, off with thee to the house of the wedding-festival and eat and drink; for to-day there is open table 294for paupers and strangers." Quoth he, "I know not the way thither": and quoth the other, "Follow me and I will show it to thee." He followed him, till he brought him to the house of Abd al-Rahman and said to him, "This is the house of the wedding; enter and fear not, for there is no doorkeeper at the door of the festival." Accordingly he entered and Kamar al-Zaman knew him and told his sire who said, "O my son, leave him at this present: belike he is anhungered: so let him eat his sufficiency and recover himself and after we will send for him." So they waited till Obayd had eaten his fill and washed his hands and drunk coffee and sherbets of sugar flavoured with musk and ambergris and was about to go

out, when Abd al-Rahman sent after him a page who said to him, “Come, O stranger, and speak with the merchant Abd al-Rahman.” “Who is he?” asked Obayd; and the man answered, “He is the master of the feast.” Thereupon the jeweller turned back, thinking that he meant to give him a gift, and coming up to Abd al-Rahman, saw his friend Kamar al-Zaman and went nigh to lose his senses for shame before him. But Kamar al-Zaman rose to him and embracing him, saluted him with the salam, and they both wept with sore weeping. Then he seated him by his side and Abd al-Rahman said to his son, “O destitute of good taste, this is no way to receive friends! Send him first to the Hammam and despatch after him a suit of clothes of the choicest, worth a thousand dinars[4601].” Accordingly they carried him to the bath, where they washed his body and clad him in a costly suit, and he became as he were Consul of the Merchants. Meanwhile the bystanders questioned Kamar al-Zaman of him, saying, “who is this and whence knowest thou him?” Quoth he, 295“This is my friend, who lodged me in his house and to whom I am indebted for favours without number, for that he entreated me with exceeding kindness. He is a man of competence and condition and by trade a jeweller, in which craft he hath no equal. The King of Bassorah loveth him dearly and holdeth him in high honour and his word is law with him.” And he went on to enlarge before them on his praises, saying, “Verily, he did with me thus and thus and I have shame of him and know not how to requite him his generous dealing with me.” Nor did he leave to extol him, till his worth was magnified to the bystanders and he became venerable in their eyes; so they said, “We will all do him his due and honour him for thy sake. But we would fain know the reason why he hath departed his native land and the cause of his coming hither and what Allah hath done with him, that he is reduced to this plight?” Replied Kamar al-Zaman, “O folk, marvel not, for a son of Adam is still subject to Fate and Fortune, and what while he abideth in this world, he is not safe from calamities. Indeed he spake truly who said these couplets:—

The world tears man to shreds, so be thou not ✿ Of those whom lure of rank and title draws:
Nay; ’ware of slips and turn from sin aside ✿ And ken that bane and bale are worldly laws:
How oft high Fortune falls by least mishap ✿ And all things bear inbred of change a cause!

Know that I entered Bassorah in yet iller case and worse distress than this man, for that he entered Cairo with his shame hidden by rags; but I indeed came into his town with my nakedness uncovered, one hand behind and another before; and none availed me but Allah and this dear man. Now the reason of this was that the Arabs stripped me and took my camels and mules and loads and slaughtered my pages and serving-men; but I lay down among the slain and they thought that I was dead, so they went away and left me. Then I arose and walked on, mother-naked, till I came to Bassorah where this man met me and clothed me and lodged me in his house; he also furnished me with money, and all I have brought back with me I owe to none save to Allah’s goodness and his goodness. When I departed, he gave me great store of wealth and I

returned to the city of my birth with a heart at ease. I left him in competence and condition, and haply there hath befallen him some bale of the banes of Time, that hath 296 forced him to quit his kinsfolk and country, and there happened to him by the way the like of what happened to me. There is nothing strange in this; but now it behoveth me to requite him his noble dealing with me and do according to the saying of him who saith:—

O who praisest Time with the fairest appraise, ✿ Knowest thou what Time hath made and unmade?

What thou dost at least be it kindly done,[461] ✿ For with pay he pays shall man be repaid.

As they were talking and telling the tale, behold, up came Obayd as he were Consul[462] of the Merchants; whereupon they all rose to salute him and seated him in the place of honour. Then said Kamar al-Zaman to him, "O my friend, verily, thy day[463] is blessed and fortunate! There is no need to relate to me a thing that befel me before thee. If the Arabs have stripped thee and robbed thee of thy wealth, verily our money is the ransom of our bodies, so let not thy soul be troubled; for I entered thy city naked and thou clothedst me and entreatedst me generously, and I owe thee many a kindness. But I will requite thee.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-eighth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Kamar al-Zaman said to Master Obayd the jeweller, "Verily I entered thy city naked and thou clothedst me and I owe thee many a kindness. But I will requite thee and do with thee even as thou didst with me; nay, more: so be of good cheer and eyes clear of tear." And he went on to soothe him and hinder him from speech, lest he should name his wife and what she had done with him; nor did he cease to ply him with saws and moral instances and verses and conceits and stories and legends and console him, till the jeweller saw his drift and took the hint and kept silence concerning the past, diverting himself with the tales and rare anecdotes he heard and repeating in himself these lines:—

297 On the brow of the World is a writ; an thereon thou look, ✿ Its contents will compel thine eyes tears of blood to rain:

For the World never handed to humans a cup with its right, ✿ But with left it compelled them a beaker of ruin to drain.

Then Kamar al-Zaman and his father took Obayd and carrying him into the saloon of the Harim, shut themselves up with him; and Abd al-Rahman said to him, "We did not hinder thee from speaking before the folk, but for fear of dishonour to thee and to us: but now we are private; so tell me all that hath passed between thee and thy wife and my son." So he told him all, from beginning to end, and when he had made an end of his story, Abd al-Rahman asked him, "Was the fault with my son or with thy wife?" He answered, "By Allah, thy son was not to blame, for men must needs lust

after women, and 'tis the bounden duty of women to defend themselves from men. So the sin lieth with my wife, who played me false and did with me these deeds[464]." Then Abd al-Rahman arose and taking his son aside, said to him, "O my son, we have proved his wife and know her to be a traitress; and now I mean to prove him and see if he be a man of honour and manliness, or a wittol.[465]" "How so?" asked Kamar al-Zaman; and Abd al-Rahman answered, "I mean to urge him to make peace with his wife, and if he consent thereto and forgive her, I will smite him with a sword and slay him and kill her after, her and her maid, for there is no good in the life of a cuckold and a quean[466]; but, if he turn from her with aversion I will marry him to thy sister and give him more of wealth than that thou tookest from him." Then he went back to Obayd and said to him, "O master, verily, the commerce of women requireth patience and magnanimity and whoso loveth them hath need of fortitude, for that they order themselves viper-wise towards men and evilly entreat them, by reason of their superiority over them in beauty and loveliness: 298 wherefore they magnify themselves and belittle men. This is notably the case when their husbands show them affection; for then they requite them with hauteur and coquetry and harsh dealing of all kinds. But, if a man be wroth whenever he seeth in his wife aught that offendeth him, there can be no fellowship between them; nor can any hit it off with them who is not magnanimous and long-suffering; and unless a man bear with his wife and requite her foul doing with forgiveness, he shall get no good of her conversation. Indeed, it hath been said of them:—Were they in the sky, the necks of men would incline them-wards; and he who hath the power and pardoneth, his reward is with Allah. Now this woman is thy wife and thy companion and she hath long consorted with thee; wherefore it behoveth that thou entreat her with indulgence which in fellowship is of the essentials of success. Furthermore, women fail in wit and Faith,[467] and if she have sinned, she repenteth and Inshallah she will not again return to that which she whilome did. So 'tis my rede that thou make peace with her and I will restore thee more than the good she took; and if it please thee to abide with me, thou art welcome, thou and she, and ye shall see naught but what shall joy you both; but, an thou seek to return to thine own land. For that which falleth out between a man and his wife is manifold, and it behoveth thee to be indulgent and not take the way of the violent." Said the jeweller, "O my lord, and where is my wife?" and said Abd al-Rahman, "She is in that upper chamber, go up to her and be easy with her, for my sake, and trouble her not; for, when my son brought her hither, he would have married her, but I forbade him from her and shut her up in yonder room, and locked the door upon her saying in myself:—Haply her husband will come and I will hand her over to him safe; for she is fair of favour, and when a woman is like unto this one, it may not be that her husband will let her go. What I counted on is come about and praised be Allah Almighty for thy reunion with thy wife! As for my son, I have sought him another woman in 299 marriage and have married him to her: these banquets and rejoicings are

for his wedding, and to-night I bring him to his bride. So here is the key of the chamber where thy wife is: take it and open the door and go in to her and her handmaid and be buxom with her. There shall be brought you meat and drink and thou shalt not come down from her till thou have had thy fill of her." Cried Obayd, "May Allah requite thee for me with all good, O my lord!" and taking the key, went up, rejoicing. The other thought his words had pleased him and that he consented thereto; so he took the sword and following him unseen, stood to espy what should happen between him and his wife. This is how it fared with the merchant Abd al-Rahman; but as for the jeweller, when he came to the chamber-door, he heard his wife weeping with sore weeping for that Kamar al-Zaman had married another than her, and the handmaid saying to her, "O my lady, how often have I warned thee and said, Thou wilt get no good of this youth: so do thou leave his company. But thou heededst not my words and spoiledst thy husband of all his goods and gavest them to him. After the which thou forsookest thy place, of thine fondness and infatuation for him, and camest with him to this country. And now he hath cast thee out from his thought and married another and hath made the issue of thy foolish fancy for him to be durance vile." Cried Halimah, "Be silent, O accursed! Though he be married to another, yet some day needs must I occur to his thought. I cannot forget the nights I have spent in his company and in any case I console myself with his saying who said:—

O my lords, shall he to your mind occur ✿ Who recurs to you only sans other mate?

Grant Heaven you ne'er shall forget his state ✿ Who for state of you forgot own estate!

It cannot be but he will bethink him of my affect and converse and ask for me, wherefore I will not turn from loving him nor change from passion for him, though I perish in prison; for he is my love and my leach[468] and my reliance is on him that he will yet return to me and deal fondly with me." When the jeweller heard his wife's words, he went in to her and said to her, "O traitress, 300 thy hope in him is as the hope of Iblis[469] in Heaven. All these vices were in thee and I knew not thereof; for, had I been ware of one single vice, I had not kept thee with me an hour. But now I am certified of this in thee, it behoveth me to do thee die, although they put me to death for thee, O traitress!" and he clutched her with both hands and repeated these two couplets:—

O fair ones forth ye cast my faithful love ✿ With sin, nor had ye aught regard for right:

How long I fondly clung to you, but now ✿ My love is loathing and I hate your sight.

Then he pressed hardly upon her windpipe and brake her neck, whereupon her handmaid cried out "Alas, my mistress!" Said he, "O harlot, 'tis thou who art to blame for all this, for that thou knewest this evil inclination to be in her and toldest me not.[470]" Then he seized upon her and strangled her. All this happened while Abd al-Rahman stood, brand in hand, behind the door espying with his eyes and hearing with his ears. Now when Obayd the jeweller had done this, apprehension came upon

him and he feared the issue of his affair and said to himself, “As soon as the merchant learneth that I have killed them in his house, he will surely slay me; yet I beseech Allah that He appoint the taking of my life to be while I am in the True Belief!” And he abode bewildered about his case and knew not what to do; but, as he was thus behold, in came Abd al-Rahman from his lurking-place without the door and said to him, “No harm shall befal thee, for indeed thou deservest safety. See this sword in my hand. ’Twas in my mind to slay thee, hadst thou made peace with her and 301 restored her to favour, and I would also have slain her and the maid. But since thou hast done this deed, welcome to thee and again welcome! And I will reward thee by marrying thee to my daughter, Kamar al-Zaman’s sister.” Then he carried him down and sent for the woman who washed the dead: whereupon it was bruited abroad that Kamar al-Zaman had brought with him two slave-girls from Bassorah and that both had deceased. So the people began to condole with him saying, “May thy head live!” and “May Allah compensate thee!” And they washed and shrouded them and buried them, and none knew the truth of the matter. Then Abd al-Rahman sent for the Shaykh al-Islam and all the notables and said, “O Shaykh, draw up the contract of marriage between my daughter Kaukab al-Saláh[471] and Master Obayd the jeweller and set down that her dowry hath been paid to me in full.” So he wrote out the contract and Abd al-Rahman gave the company to drink of sherbets, and they made one wedding festival for the two brides the daughter of the Shaykh al-Islam and Kamar al-Zaman’s sister; and paraded them in one litter on one and the same night; after which they carried Kamar al-Zaman and Obayd in procession together and brought them in to their brides.[472] When the jeweller went in to Abd al-Rahman’s daughter, he found her handsomer than Halimah and a thousand-fold lovelier. So he took her maidenhead and on the morrow, he went to the Hammam with Kamar al-Zaman. Then he abode with them awhile in pleasance and joyance, after which he began to yearn for his native land: so he went in to Abd al-Rahman and said to him, “O uncle, I long for my own country, for I have there estates and effects, which I left in charge of one of my prentices; and I am minded to journey thither that I may sell my properties and return to thee. So wilt thou give me leave to go to my country for that purpose?” Answered the merchant, “O my son, I give thee leave to do this and there be no fault in thee or blame to thee for these words, for ‘Love of mother-land is a part of Religion’; and he who hath not good in his own country hath none in other folks’ country. But, haply, an thou depart without 302 thy wife, when thou art once come to thy native place, it may seem good to thee to settle there, and thou wilt be perplexed between returning to thy wife and sojourning in thine own home; so it were the righter rede that thou carry thy wife with thee; and after, an thou desire to return to us, return and welcome to you both; for we are folk who know not divorce and no woman of us marrieth twice, nor do we lightly discard a man.”[473] Quoth Obayd, “Uncle, I fear me thy daughter will not consent to journey with me to my own country.” Replied Abd al-Rahman, “O my son,

we have no women amongst us who gainsay their spouses, nor know we a wife who is wroth with her man." The jeweller cried, "Allah bless you and your women!" and going in to his wife, said to her, "I am minded to go to my country: what sayst thou?" Quoth she, "Indeed, my sire had the ordering of me, whilst I was a maid, and when I married, the ordering all passed into the hands of my lord and master, nor will I gainsay him." Quoth Obayd, "Allah bless thee and thy father, and have mercy on the womb that bare thee and the loins that begat thee!" Then he cut his thongs[474] and applied himself to making ready for his journey. His father-in-law gave him much good and they took leave each of other, after which the jeweller and his wife journeyed on without ceasing, till they reached Bassorah where his kinsmen and comrades came out to meet him, doubting not but that he had been in Al-Hijáz. Some rejoiced at his return, whilst others were vexed, and the folk said one to another, "Now will he straiten us again every Friday, as before, and we shall be shut up in the mosques and houses, even to our cats and our dogs." On such wise it fared with him; but as regards the King of Bassorah, when he heard of his return, he was wroth with him; and sending for him, upbraided him and said to him, "Why didst thou depart, without letting me know of thy departure? Was I unable to give thee somewhat wherewith thou mightest have succoured thyself in thy pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah?" Replied the jeweller, "Pardon, O my lord! By Allah, I went not on the pilgrimage! but there have befallen me such and such things." Then he told him all that had befallen him 303 with his wife and with Abd al-Rahman of Cairo and how the merchant had given him his daughter to wife, ending with these words, "And I have brought her to Bassorah." Said the King, "By the Lord, did I not fear Allah the Most High, I would slay thee and marry this noble lady after thy death, though I spent on her mints of money, because she befitteth none but Kings. But Allah hath appointed her of thy portion and may He bless thee in her! So look thou use her well." Then he bestowed largesse on the jeweller, who went out from before him and abode with his wife five years, after which he was admitted to the mercy of the Almighty. Presently the King sought his widow in wedlock; but she refused, saying, "O King, never among my kindred was a woman who married again after her husband's death; wherefore I will never take another husband, nor will I marry thee, no, though thou kill me." Then he sent to her one who said, "Dost thou seek to go to thy native land?" And she answered, "An thou do good, thou shalt be requited therewith." So he collected for her all the jeweller's wealth and added unto her of his own, after the measure of his degree. Lastly he sent with her one of his Wazirs, a man famous for goodness and piety, and an escort of five hundred horse, who journeyed with her, till they brought her to her father; and in his home she abode, without marrying again, till she died and they died all. So, if this woman would not consent to replace her dead husband with a Sultan, how shall she be compared with one who replaced her husband, whilst he was yet alive, with a youth of unknown extraction and condition, and especially when this was in lewd carriage and not by way of lawful marriage? So

he who deemeth all women alike,[475] there is no remedy 304 for the disease of his insanity. And glory be to Him to whom belongeth the empire of the Seen and the Unseen and He is the Living, who dieth not! And among the tales they tell, O auspicious King, is one of

45- ABDULLAH BIN FAZIL AND HIS BROTHERS[476]

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid was one day examining the tributes of his various provinces and viceroyalties, when he observed that the contributions of all the countries and regions had come into the treasury, except that of Bassorah which had not arrived that year. So he held a Divan because of this and said, “Hither to me with the Wazir Ja’afar;” and when they brought him into the presence he thus bespoke him, “The tributes of all the provinces have come into the treasury, save that of Bassorah, no part whereof hath arrived.” Ja’afar replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, belike there hath befallen the governor of Bassorah something that hath diverted him from sending the tribute.” Quoth the Caliph, “The time of the coming of the tribute was twenty days ago; what then, can be his excuse for that, in this time, he hath neither sent it nor sent to show cause for not doing so?” And quoth the Minister, “O Commander of the Faithful, if it please thee, we will send him a messenger.” Rejoined the Caliph, “Send him Abu Ishak al-Mausili,[477] the boon companion,” and Ja’afar, “Hearkening 305 and obedience to Allah and to thee, O Prince of True Believers!” Then he returned to his house and summoning Abu Ishak, wrote him a royal writ and said to him, “Go to Abdullah bin Fazil, Viceroy of Bassorah, and see what hath diverted him from sending the tribute. If it be ready, do thou receive it from him in full and bring it to me in haste, for the Caliph hath examined the tributes of the provinces and findeth that they are all come in, except that of Bassorah: but an thou see that it is not ready and he make an excuse to thee, bring him back with thee, that he may report his excuse to the Caliph with his own tongue.” Answered Abu Ishak, “I hear and I obey;” and taking with him five thousand horse of Ja’afar’s host set out for Bassorah. Now when Abdullah bin Fazil heard of his approach, he went out to meet him with his troops, and led him into the city and carried him to his palace, whilst the escort encamped without the city walls, where he appointed to them all whereof they stood in need. So Abu Ishak entered the audience-chamber and sitting down on the throne, seated the governor beside himself, whilst the notables sat round him, according to their several degrees. After salutation with the salam Abdullah bin Fazil said to him, “O my lord, is there for thy coming to us any cause?;” and said Abu Ishak, “Yes, I come to seek the tribute; for the Caliph enquireth of it and the time of its coming is gone by.” Rejoined Abdullah bin Fazil, “O my lord, would Heaven thou hadst not wearied thyself nor taken upon thyself the hardships of the journey! For the tribute is ready in full tale and complete, and I purpose to despatch it to-morrow. But, since thou art come, I will entrust it to thee, after I have entertained thee three days;

and on the fourth day I will set the tribute between thine hands. But it behoveth us now to offer thee a present in part requital of thy kindness and the goodness of the Commander of the Faithful." There is no harm in that," said Abu Ishak. So Abdullah bin Fazil dismissed the Divan and carrying him into a saloon that had not its match, bade set a tray of food before him and his companions. They ate and drank and made merry and enjoyed themselves; after which the tray was removed and there came coffee and sherbets. They sat conversing till a third part of the night was past, when they spread for Abu Ishak bedding on an ivory couch inlaid with gold glittering sheeny. So he lay down and the viceroy lay down beside him on another couch; but wakefulness possessed Abu Ishak and he fell to meditating on the metres of prosody and poetical composition, for 306 that he was one of the primest of the Caliph's boon-companions and he had a mighty fine fore-arm[478] in producing verses and pleasant stories; nor did he leave to lie awake improvising poetry till half the night was past. Presently, behold, Abdullah bin Fazil arose, and girding his middle, opened a locker,[479] whence he brought out a whip; then, taking a lighted waxen taper, he went forth by the door of the saloon.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Seventy-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abdullah bin Fazil went forth by the door of the saloon deeming Abu Ishak asleep, the Caliph's cup-companion, seeing this, marvelled and said in himself, "Whither wendeth Abdullah bin Fazil with that whip? Perhaps he is minded to punish some body. But needs must I follow him and see what he will do this night." So he arose and went out after him softly, very softly, that he might not be seen and presently saw him open a closet and take thence a tray containing four dishes of meat and bread and a gugglet of water. Then he went on, carrying the tray and secretly followed by Abu Ishak, till he came to another saloon and entered, whilst the cup-companion stood behind the door and, looking through the chink, saw a spacious saloon, furnished with the richest furniture and having in its midst a couch of ivory plated with gold glittering sheeny, to which two dogs were made fast with chains of gold. Then Abdullah set down the tray in a corner and tucking up his sleeves, loosed the first dog, which began to struggle in his hands and put its muzzle to the floor, as it would kiss the ground before him, whining the while in a weak voice. Abdullah tied its paws behind its back and throwing it on the ground, drew forth the whip and beat it with a painful beating and a pitiless. The dog struggled, but could not get free, and Abdullah ceased not to beat it with the same whip till it left groaning and lay without consciousness. Then he took it and tied it up in its place, and unbinding the second dog, did with him as he had done with the first; after which he pulled out a 307 kerchief and fell to wiping away their tears and

comforting them, saying, “Bear me not malice; for by Allah, this is not of my will, nor is it easy to me! But it may be Allah will grant you relief from this strait and issue from your affliction.” And he prayed for the twain what while Abu Ishak the cup-companion stood hearkening with his ears and espying with his eyes, and indeed he marvelled at his case. Then Abdullah brought the dogs the tray of food and fell to morselling them with his own hand, till they had enough, when he wiped their muzzles and lifting up the gugglet, gave them to drink; after which he took up the tray, gugglet and candle and made for the door. But Abu Ishak forewent him and making his way back to his couch, lay down; so that he saw him not, neither knew that he had walked behind him and watched him. Then the governor replaced the tray and the gugglet in the closet and returning to the saloon, opened the locker and laid the whip in its place; after which he doffed his clothes and lay down. But Abu Ishak passed the rest of that night pondering this affair neither did sleep visit him for excess of wonderment, and he ceased not to say in himself, “I wonder what can be the meaning of this!” Nor did he leave wondering till day break, when they arose and prayed the dawn-prayer. Then they set the breakfast[480] before them and they ate and drank coffee, after which they went out to the divan. Now Abu Ishak’s thought was occupied with this mystery all day long but he concealed the matter and questioned not Abdullah thereof. Next night, he again followed the governor and saw him do with the two dogs as on the previous night, first beating them and then making his peace with them and giving them to eat and to drink; and so also he did the third night. On the fourth day he brought the tribute to Abu Ishak who took it and departed, without opening the matter to him. He fared on, without ceasing, till he came to Baghdad, where he delivered the tribute to the Caliph, who questioned him of the cause of its delay. Replied he, “O Commander of the Faithful, I found that the governor of Bassorah had made ready the tribute and was about to despatch it; and 308 had I delayed a day, it would have met me on the road. But, O Prince of True Believers, I had a wondrous adventure with Abdullah bin Fazil; never in my life saw I its like.” “And what was it, O Abu Ishak?” asked the Caliph. So he replied, “I saw such and such;” and, brief, acquainted him with that which the governor had done with the two dogs, adding, “After such fashion, I saw him do three successive nights, first beating the dogs, then making his peace with them and comforting them and giving them to eat and drink, I watching him, and he seeing me not.” Asked the Caliph, “Didst thou question him of the cause of this?”; and the other answered, “No, as thy head liveth, O Commander of the Faithful.” Then said Al-Rashid, “O Abu Ishak, I command thee to return to Bassorah and bring me Abdullah bin Fazil and the two dogs.” Quoth he, “O Commander of the Faithful, excuse me from this; for indeed Abdullah entertained me with exceedingly hospitable entertainment and I became ware of this case with chance undesigned and acquainted thee therewith. So how can I go back to him and bring him to thee? Verily, if I return to him, I shall find me no face for shame of him; wherefore ’twere meet that thou send him another than myself,

with a letter under thine own hand, and he shall bring him to thee, him and the two dogs." But quoth the Caliph, "If I send him other than thyself, peradventure he will deny the whole affair and say, I've no dogs. But if I send thee and thou say to him, I saw them with mine own eyes, he will not be able to deny that. Wherefore nothing will serve but that thou go and fetch him and the two dogs; otherwise I will surely slay thee."[481]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eightieth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid said to Abu Ishak, "Nothing will serve but that thou go and fetch him and the two dogs; otherwise I will surely slay thee." Abu Ishak replied, "Hearing and obeying, 309 O Commander of the Faithful: Allah is our aidance and good is the Agent. He spake sooth who said, "Man's wrong is from the tongue;[482] and 'tis I who sinned against myself in telling thee. But write me a royal rescript[483] and I will go to him and bring him back to thee." So the Caliph gave him an autograph and he took it and repaired to Bassorah. Seeing him come in the governor said, "Allah forfend us from the mischief of thy return, O Abu Ishak! How cometh it I see thee return in haste? Peradventure the tribute is deficient and the Caliph will not accept it?" Answered Abu Ishak, "O Emir Abdullah, my return is not on account of the deficiency of the tribute, for 'tis full measure and the Caliph accepteth it; but I hope that thou wilt excuse me, for that I have failed in my duty as thy guest and indeed this lapse of mine was decreed of Allah Almighty." Abdullah enquired, "And what may be the lapse?" and he replied, "Know that when I was with thee, I followed thee three following nights and saw thee rise at midnight and beat the dogs and return; whereat I marvelled, but was ashamed to question thee thereof. When I came back to Baghdad, I told the Caliph of thine affair, casually and without design, whereupon he charged me to return to thee, and here is a letter under his hand. Had I known that the affair would lead to this, I had not told him, but Destiny foreordained thus." And he went on to excuse himself to him; whereupon said Abdullah, "Since thou hast told him this, I will bear out thy report with him, lest he deem thee a liar, for thou art my friend. Were it other than thou, I had denied the affair and given him the lie. But now I will go with thee and carry the two dogs with me, though this be to me ruin-rife and the ending of my term of life." Rejoined the other, "Allah will veil[484] thee, even as thou hast veiled my face with the Caliph!" Then Abdullah took a present beseeming the Commander of the Faithful and mounting the dogs with him, each on a camel, bound with chains[485] of gold, journeyed with Abu Ishak to Baghdad, where he went in to the Caliph and kissed ground before him. He deigned bid him sit; so he sat down and brought the two dogs before Al-Rashid, who said to him, "What be these dogs, 310 O Emir Abdullah?" Whereupon they fell to kissing the floor between his hands and wagging their tails and weeping, as if complaining to him. The Caliph marvelled at

this and said to the governor, “Tell me the history of these two dogs and the reason of thy beating them and after entreating them with honour.” He replied, “O Vicar of Allah, these be no dogs, but two young men, endowed with beauty and seemliness, symmetry and shapeliness, and they are my brothers and the sons of my father and mother.” Asked the Caliph, “How is it that they were men and are become dogs?”; and he answered, “An thou give me leave, O Prince of True Believers, I will acquaint thee with the truth of the circumstance.” Said Al-Rashid, “Tell me and ’ware of leasing, for ’tis of the fashion of the hypocrites, and look thou tell truth, for that is the Ark[486] of safety and the mark of virtuous men.” Rejoined Abdullah, “Know then, O viceregent of Allah, when I tell thee the story of these dogs, they will both bear witness against me: an I speak sooth they will certify it and if I lie they will give me the lie.” Cried the Caliph, “These are of the dogs; they cannot speak nor answer; so how can they testify for thee or against thee?” But Abdullah said to them, “O my brothers, if I speak a lying word, do ye lift your heads and stare with your eyes; but, if I say sooth hang down your heads and lower your eyes.” Then said he to the Caliph:—Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that we are three brothers by one mother and the same father. Our sire’s name was Fazil and he was so named because his mother bare two sons at one birth, one of whom died forthright and the other twin remained alive, wherefore his sire named him Fazil—the Remainder. His father brought him up and reared him well, till he grew to manhood when he married him to our mother and died. Our mother conceived a first time and bare this my first brother, whom our sire named Mansúr; then she conceived again and bare this my second brother, whom he named Násir[487]; after which she conceived a third time and bare me, whom he named Abdullah. My 311 father reared us all three till we came to man’s estate, when he died, leaving us a house and a shop full of coloured stuffs of all kinds, Indian and Greek and Khorásáni and what not, besides sixty thousand dinars. We washed him and buried him to the ruth of his Lord, after which we built him a splendid monument and let pray for him prayers for the deliverance of his soul from the fire and held perlections of the Koran and gave alms on his behalf, till the forty days[488] were past; when I called together the merchants and nobles of the folk and made them a sumptuous entertainment. As soon as they had eaten, I said to them, “O merchants, verily this world is ephemeral, but the next world is eternal, and extolled be the perfection of Him who endureth always after His creatures have passed away! Know ye why I have called you together this blessed day?” And they answered, “Extolled be Allah sole Scient of the hidden things.[489]” Quoth I, “My father died, leaving much of money, and I fear lest any have a claim against him for a debt or a pledge[490] or what not else, and I desire to discharge my father’s obligations towards the folk. So whoso hath any demand on him, let him say:—He oweth me so and so, and I will satisfy it to him, that I may acquit the responsibility of my sire.[491]” The merchants replied, “O Abdullah, verily the goods of this world stand not in stead of those of the world to come, and we are no fraudful folk, but all of us know the lawful

from the unlawful and fear Almighty Allah and abstain from devouring the substance of the orphan. We know that thy father (Allah have mercy on him!) still let his money lie with the folk,[492] nor did he suffer any man's claim on him to go un-quitted, 312 and we have ever heard him declare:—I am fearful of the people's substance. He used always to say in his prayers, O my God, Thou art my stay and my hope! Let me not die while in debt. And it was of his wont that, if he owed any one aught, he would pay it to him, without being pressed, and if any owed him aught he would not dun him, but would say to him, At thy leisure. If his debtor were poor, he would release him from his liability and acquit him of responsibility; and if he were not poor and died in his debt, he would say, Allah forgive him what he owed me! And we all testify that he owed no man aught." Quoth I, "May Allah bless you!" Then I turned to these my brothers and said, "Our father owed no man aught and hath left us much money and stuffs, besides the house and the shop. Now we are three and each of us is entitled to one third part. So shall we agree to waive division and wone copartners in our wealth and eat together and drink together, or shall we apportion the stuffs and the money and take each his part?" Said they, "We will divide them and take each his share." (Then Abdullah turned to the two dogs and said to them, "Did it happen thus, O my brothers?"; and they bowed their heads and lowered their eyes, as to say, "Yes.") Abdullah continued:—I called in a departitor from the Kazi's court, O Prince of True Believers, and he distributed amongst us the money and the stuffs and all our father had left, allotting the house and shop to me in exchange for a part of the coin and clothes to which I was entitled. We were content with this; so the house and shop fell to my share, whilst my brothers took their portion in money and stuffs. I opened the shop and stocking it with my stuffs bought others with the money apportioned to me, over and above the house and shop, till the place was full, and I sat selling and buying. As for my brothers, they purchased stuffs and hiring a ship, set out on a voyage to the far abodes of folk. Quoth I, "Allah aid them both! As for me, my livelihood is ready to my hand and peace is priceless." I abode thus a whole year, during which time Allah opened the door of fortune to me and I gained great gains, till I became possessed of the like of that which our father had left us. One day, as I sat in my shop, with two fur pelisses on me, one of sable and the other of meniver,[493] for 313 it was the season of winter and the time of the excessive cold, behold, there came up to me my two brothers, each clad in a ragged shirt and nothing more, and their lips were white with cold, and they were shivering. When I saw them in this plight, it was grievous to me and I mourned for them——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-first Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah bin Fazil continued to the Caliph:—When I saw them in this plight, it was grievous to me and I mourned for them and my reason fled my head. So I rose and embraced them and

wept over their condition: then I put on one of them the pelisse of sable and on the other the fur coat of meniver and, carrying them to the Hammam, sent thither for each of them a suit of apparel such as befitted a merchant worth a thousand.[494] When they had washed and donned each his suit, I carried them to my house where, seeing them well nigh famished, I set a tray of food before them and ate with them, caressing them and comforting them. (Then he again turned to the two dogs and said to them, "Was this so, O my brothers?"; and they bent their heads and lowered their eyes.) So Abdullah continued:—When they had eaten, O Vicar of Allah, quoth I to them, "What hath befallen you and where are your goods?"; and quoth they, "We fared up the river,[495] till we came to a city called Cufa, where we sold for ten dinars the piece of stuff that had cost half a ducat and that which cost us a ducat for twenty. So we profited greatly and bought Persian stuffs at the rate of ten sequins per piece of silk worth forty in Bassorah. Thence we removed to a city called Al-Karkh[496] where we sold and bought 314 and made gain galore and amassed of wealth great store." And they went on to set forth to me the places and the profits. So I said to them, "Since ye had such good luck and lot, how cometh it that I see you return naked?" They sighed and answered, "O our brother, some one must have evileyed us, and in travel there is no trusting. When we had gotten together these monies and goods, we freighted a ship therewith and set sail, intending for Bassorah. We fared on three days and on the fourth day we saw the sea rise and fall and roar and foam and swell and dash, whilst the waves clashed together with a crash, striking out sparks like fire[497] in the darks. The winds blew contrary for us and our craft struck upon the point of a bill-projected rock, where it brake up and plunged us into the river, and all we had with us was lost in the waters. We abode struggling on the surface a day and a night, till Allah sent us another ship, whose crew picked us up and we begged our way from town to town, suffering mighty sore hardships and selling our body-clothes piecemeal, to buy us food, till we drew near Bassorah; nor did we make the city till we had drained the draught of a thousand miseries. But, had we come safely off with that which was by us, we had brought back riches that might be evened with those of the King: but this was fore ordained to us of Allah." I said, "O my brothers, let not your hearts be grieved, for wealth is the ransom of bodies and safety is property. Since Allah hath written you of the saved, this is the end of desire, for want and wealth are but as it were illusions of dreams and God-gifted is he who said:—

If a man from destruction can save his head ✿ Let him hold his wealth as a slice of nail.

I continued, "O my brothers we will suppose that our sire died to-day and left us all this wealth that is with me, for I am right willing to share it with you equally." So I fetched a departitor from the Kazi's court and brought out to him all my money, which he distributed into three equal parts, and we each took one. Then said I to them, "O my brothers, Allah blesseth a man in his daily bread, if he be in his own country: so let each of you open him a shop and sit therein to get his living; and he to whom

aught is ordained in the Secret Purpose,[498] needs must he get it." Accordingly, 315 I helped each of them to open a shop and filled it for him with goods, saying to them, "Sell and buy and keep your monies and spend naught thereof; for all ye need of meat and drink and so forth I will furnish to you." I continued to entreat them generously, and they fell to selling and buying by day and returning at eventide to my house where they lay the night; nor would I suffer them to expend aught of their own substance. But, whenever I sat talking with them, they would praise travel and proclaim its pleasures and vaunt the gains they had made therein; and they ceased not to urge me to accompany them in travelling over foreign parts. (Then he said to the dogs, "Was this so, O my brothers?" and they again bowed their heads and lowered their eyes in confirmation of his words). He continued:—On such wise, O Vicar of Allah, they continued to urge me and tempt me to travel by vaunting the great gains and profit to be obtained thereby till I said to them, "Needs must I fare with you for your sake!" Then I entered into a contract of partnership with them and we chartered a ship and packing up all manner of precious stuffs and merchandise of every kind, freighted it therewith; after which we embarked in it all we needed and, setting sail from Bassorah, launched out into the dashing sea, swollen with clashing surge whereinto whoso entereth is lone and lorn and whence whoso cometh forth is as a babe new-born. We ceased not sailing on till we came to a city of the cities, where we sold and bought and made great cheape. Thence we went on to another place, and we ceased not to pass from land to land and port to port, selling and buying and profiting, till we had gotten us great wealth and much advantage. Presently, we came to a mountain,[499] where the captain cast anchor and said to us, "O passengers, go ye ashore; ye shall be saved from this day,[500] and make search; it may be ye shall find water." So all landed I amongst the crowd, and dispersed about the island in search of water. As for me, I climbed to the top of the mountain, and whilst I went along, lo and behold! I saw a white snake fleeing and followed by a black dragon, foul of favour and frightful of form, hotly pursuing her. Presently he overtook her and clipping her, seized her by the head and wound his tail about her tail, whereupon she cried out and I 316 knew that he purposed to rape her. So I was moved to ruth for her and taking up a lump of granite,[5011] five pounds or more in weight, hurled it at the dragon. It smote him on the head and crushed it, and ere I knew, the white snake changed and became a young girl bright with beauty and loveliness and brilliancy and perfect grace, as she were the shining full moon, who came up to me and kissing my hands, said to me, "Allah veil thee with twofold veils, one from shame in this world and the other from the flame in the world to come on the day of the Great Upstanding, the day when neither wealth nor children shall avail save to him who shall come to Allah with a sound heart!"[502] And presently she continued, "O mortal, thou hast saved my honour and I am indebted to thee for kindness, wherefore it behoveth me to requite thee." So saying, she signed with her hand to the earth, which opened and she descended

thereinto: then it closed up again over her and by this I knew that she was of the Jinn. As for the dragon, fire was kindled in him and consumed him and he became ashes. I marvelled at this and returned to my comrades, whom I acquainted with whatso I had seen, and we passed the night in the island. On the morrow the Captain weighed anchor and spread the sails and coiled the ropes and we sailed till the shore faded from our gaze. We fared on twenty days, without seeing or land or bird, till our water came to an end and quoth the Rais to us, "O folk, our fresh water is spent." Quoth we, "Let us make for land; haply we shall find water." But he exclaimed, "By Allah, I have lost my way and I know not what course will bring me to the seaboard." Thereupon betided us sore chagrin and we wept and besought Almighty Allah to guide us into the right course. We passed that night in the sorriest case: but God-gifted is he who said:—

How many a night have I spent in woes ✿ That would grizzle the suckling-babe with fear:

317 But morrowed not morn ere to me there came ✿ 'Aidance from Allah and victory near.'[503]

But when the day arose in its sheen and shone, we caught sight of a high mountain and rejoiced therein. When we came to its skirts, the Captain said to us, "O folk, go ashore and seek for water." So we all landed and sought water but found none, whereat we were sore afflicted because we were suffering for want of it. As for me, I climbed up to the mountain-top and on the other side thereof I saw a spacious circle[504] distant from us an hour's journey or more. Presently I called my companions and as soon as they all rejoined me, said to them "Look at yonder basin behind this mountain; for I see therein a city high of base and a strong-cornered place girt with sconce and rampartry, pasturage and lea and doubtless it wanteth not water and good things. So hie we thither and fetch drink therefrom and buy what we need of provisions, meat and fruit, and return. But they said, "We fear lest the city-folk be Kafirs ascribing to Allah partners and enemies of The Faith and lay hand on us and take us captive or else slay us; so should we cause the loss of our own lives, having cast ourselves into destruction and evil emprise. Indeed, the proud and presumptuous are never praiseworthy, for that they ever fare in danger of calamities, even as saith of such an one a certain poet:—

Long as earth is earth, long as sky is sky, ✿ The o'erproud is blamed tho' from risk he fly!

So we will not expose ourselves to peril." I replied, "O folk, I have no authority over you; so I will take my brothers and go to yonder city." But my brothers said to me, "We also fear this thing and will not go with thee." Quoth I, "As for me, I am resolved to go thither, and I put my trust in Allah and accept whatsoever He shall decree to me. Do ye therefore await me, whilst I wend thither and return to you twain."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-second Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah said, "Do ye twain await me whilst I wend thither and return to you." So I left them and walked on till I came to the gate of the place and saw it a city of building wondrous and projection marvellous, with boulevards high-towering and towers strong-builded and palaces high-soaring. Its portals were of Chinese iron, rarely gilded and graven on such wise as confounded the wit. I entered the gateway and saw there a stone bench, whereon sat a man bearing on his fore-arm a chain of brass, whereto hung fourteen keys; so I knew him to be the porter of the city and that it had fourteen gates. I drew near him and said to him, "Peace be with thee!"; but he returned not my salam and I saluted him a second and a third time; but he made me no reply. Then I laid my hand on his shoulder and said to him, "Ho thou, why dost thou not return my salam? Art thou asleep or deaf or other than a Moslem, that thou refrainest from exchanging the salutation?" But he answered me not neither stirred; so I considered him and saw that he was stone. Quoth I, "Verily an admirable matter! This is a stone wroughten in the semblance of a son of Adam and wanting in naught save speech!" Then I left him and entering the city, beheld a man standing in the road: so I went up to him and scrutinised him and found him stone. Presently, as I walked adown the broadways, and saw that this was every where the case, I met an old woman bearing on her head a bundle of clothes ready for washing; so I went up to her and examining her, saw that she was stone, and the bundle of clothes on her head was stone also.[505] Then I fared for the market, where I saw an oilman with his scales set up and fronted by various kinds of wares such as cheese and so forth, all of stone. Moreover, I saw all manner of tradesmen seated in their shops and men and women and children, some standing and some sitting; but they were all stone; and the stuffs were like spiders' webs. I amused myself with looking upon them, and as often as I laid hold upon a piece of stuff, it powdered in my hands like dust dispread. Presently I saw some chests and 319 opening one of them, found it full of gold in bags; so I laid hold upon the bags, but they crumbled away in my grasp, whilst the gold abode unchanged. I carried off of it what I could carry and said to myself, "Were my brothers with me, they might take of this gold their fill and possess themselves of these hoards which have no owner." Then I entered another shop and found therein more than this, but could bear away no more than I had borne. I left this market and went on to another and thence to another and another, much enjoying the sight of all manner of creatures of various kinds, all several stones, even to the dogs and the cats, till I came to the goldsmiths' bazar, where I saw men sitting in their shops, with their stock-in-trade about them, some in their hands and others in crates of wickerwork. When I saw this, O Commander of the Faithful, I threw down the gold and loaded myself with goldsmiths' ware, as much as I could carry. Then I went on to the jewel-market and saw there the jewellers seated in

their shops, each with a tray before him, full of all sorts of precious stones, jacinths and diamonds and emeralds and balass rubies and so forth: but all the shop-keepers were stones; whereupon I threw away the goldsmiths' ware and carried off as many jewels as I could carry, regretting that my brothers were not with me, so they might take what they would of those costly gems. Then I left the jewel-market and went on till I came to a great door, quaintly gilded and decorated after the fairest fashion, within which were wooden benches and in the porch sat eunuchs, and body-guards; horsemen, and footmen and officers of police each and every robed in the richest of raiment; but they were all stones. I touched one of them and his clothes crumbled away from his body like cobwebs. Then I passed through the door and saw a palace without equal for its building and the goodliness of the works that were therein. Here I found an audience-chamber, full of Grandees and Wazirs and Officers and Emirs, seated upon chairs and every one of them stone. Moreover, I saw a throne of red gold, crusted with pearls and gems, and seated thereon a son of Adam arrayed in the most sumptuous raiment and bearing on his head a Chosröan[506] crown, diademed with the finest stones that shed a light like the light of day; but, when I came up to him, I found him stone. Then I went on to the gate of the Harim and entering, found myself in the Queen's presence-chamber, wherein I saw a throne 320 of red gold, inlaid with pearls and gems, and the Queen seated thereon. On her head she wore a crown diademed with finest jewels, and round about her were women like moons, seated upon chairs and clad in the most sumptuous clothing of all colours. There also the eunuchry, with their hands upon their breasts,[507] were standing in the attitude of service, and indeed this hall confounded the beholder's wits with what was therein of quaint gilding and rare painting and curious carving and fine furniture. There hung the most brilliant lustres[508] of limpid crystal, and in every globe[509] of the crystal was an unique jewel, whose price money might not fulfil. So I threw down that which was with me, O Prince of True Believers, and fell to taking of these jewels what I could carry, bewildered as to what I should bear away and what I should leave; for indeed I saw the place as it were a treasure of the treasures of the cities. Presently I espied a wicket[510] standing open and within it a staircase: so I entered and mounting forty steps, heard a human voice reciting the Koran in a low tone. I walked towards that sound till I came to the main door hung with a silken curtain, laced with wires of gold whereon were strung pearls and coral and rubies and cut emeralds which gave forth a light like the light of stars. The voice came from behind the curtain: so I raised it and discovered a gilded door, whose beauty amazed the mind. I passed through the door and found myself in a saloon as it were a hoard upon earth's surface[511] and therein a girl as she were the sun shining fullest sheen in the zenith of a sky serene. She was robed in the costliest of raiment and decked with ornaments the most precious that could be and withal she was of passing beauty and loveliness, 321 a model of symmetry and seemliness, of elegance and perfect grace, with waist slender and hips

heavy and dewy lips such as heal the sick and eyelids lovely in their langour, as it were she of whom the sayer spake when he said:—

My best salam to what that robe enrobes of symmetry, ✿ And what that blooming garth of cheek enguards of rosy blee:

It seems as though the Pleiades depend upon her brow; ✿ And other lights of Night in knots upon her breast we see:

Did she but don a garment weft of Rose's softest leaf, ✿ The leaf of Rose would draw her blood[512] when pluckt that fruit from tree:

And did she crache in Ocean's face, next Morn would see a change ✿ To sweeter than the honeycomb of what was briny sea:

And did she deign her favours grant to grey-beard staff-en-propped ✿ He'd wake and rend the lion's limbs for might and valiancy.

322 Then Abdullah continued:—O Prince of True Believers, as soon as I saw that girl I fell passionately in love with her and going straight up to her, found her seated on a high couch, reciting by heart and in grateful memory the Book of Allah, to whom belong honour and glory! Her voice was like the harmony of the gates of Heaven, when Rizwan openeth them, and the words came from her lips like a shower of gems; whilst her face was with beauty dight, bright and blossom-white, even as saith the poet of a similar sight:—

O thou who gladdenest man by speech and rarest quality; ✿ Grow longing and repine for thee and grow beyond degree!

In thee two things consume and melt the votaries of Love; ✿ The dulcet song of David joined with Joseph's brilliancy.

When I heard her voice of melody reciting the sublime Koran, my heart quoted from her killing glances, 'Peace, a word from a compassionating Lord;'[513] but I stammered[514] in my speech and could not say the salam-salutation aright, for my mind and sight were confounded and I was become as saith the bard:—

Love-longing urged me not except to trip in speech o'er free; ✿ Nor, save to shed my blood I passed the campment's boundary:

I ne'er will hear a word from those who love to rail, but I ✿ Will testify to love of him with every word of me.

Then I hardened myself against the horrors of repine and said to her, "Peace be with thee, O noble Lady, and treasured jewel! Allah grant endurance to the foundation of thy fortune fair and upraise the pillars of thy glory rare!" Said she, "And on thee 323 from me be peace and salutation and high honour, O Abdullah, O son of Fazil! Well come and welcome and fair welcome to thee, O dearling mine and coolth of mine eyne!" Rejoined I, "O my lady, whence wottest thou my name and who art thou and what case befel the people of this city, that they are become stones? I would have thee tell me the truth of the matter, for indeed I am admiring at this city and its citizens and that I have found none alive therein save thyself. So, Allah upon thee, tell me the cause of all this, according to the truth!" Quoth she, "Sit, O Abdullah, and Inshallah, I will talk with thee and acquaint thee in full with the facts of my case and

of this place and its people; and there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" So I sat me down by her side and she said to me, "Know, O Abdullah, (may Allah have mercy on thee!) that I am the daughter of the King of this city and that it is my sire whom thou sawest seated on the high stead in the Divan, and those who are round about him were the Lords of his land and the Guards of his empery. He was a King of exceeding prowess and had under his hand a thousand thousand and sixty thousand troopers. The number of the Emirs of his Empire was four-and-twenty thousand, all of them Governors and Dignitaries. He was obeyed by a thousand cities, besides towns, hamlets and villages; and sconces and citadels, and the Emirs[515] of the wild Arabs under his hand were a thousand in number, each commanding twenty thousand horse. Moreover, he had monies and treasures and precious stones and jewels and things of price, such as eye never saw nor of which ear ever heard.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

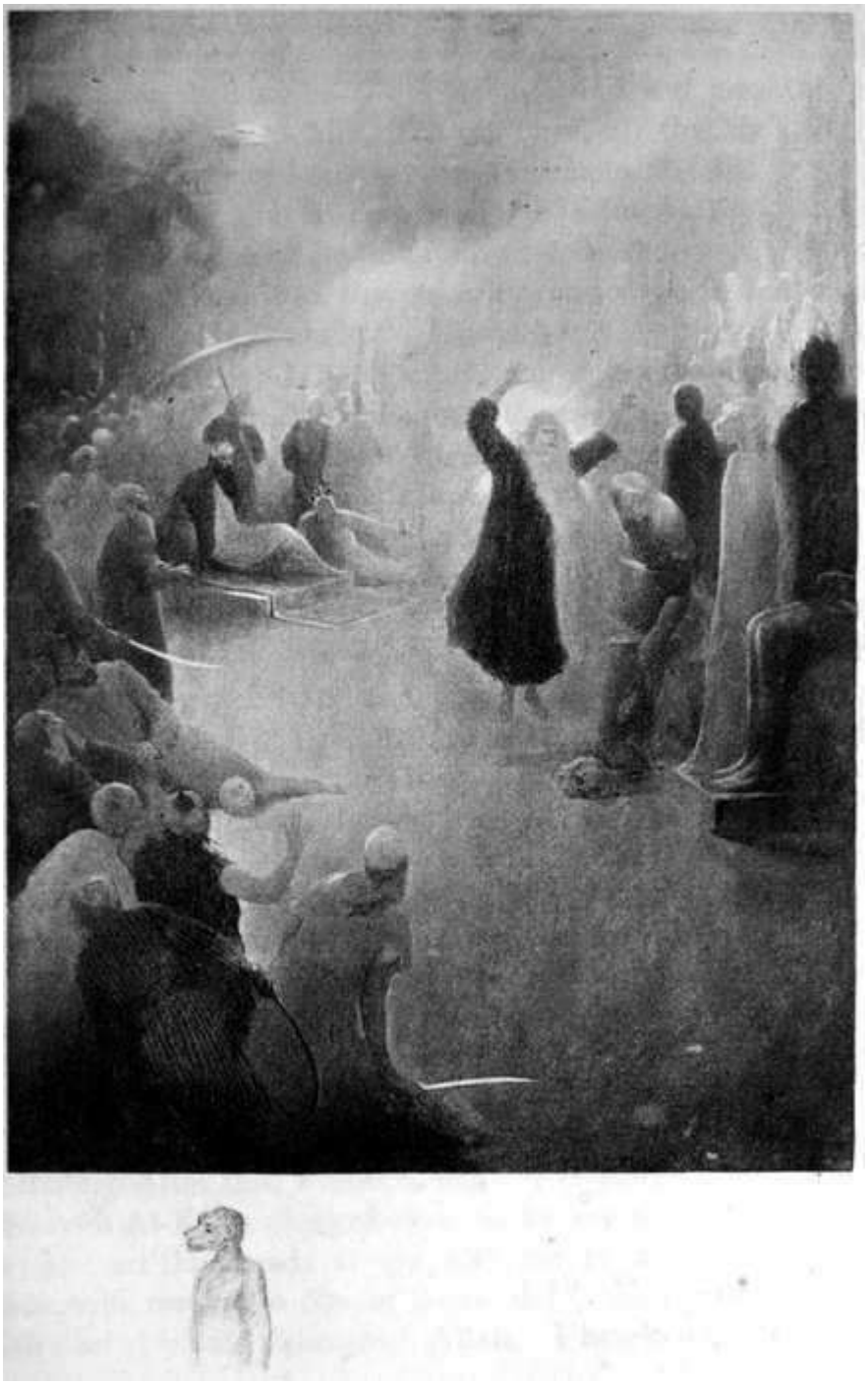
Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Princess, daughter to the King of the Stone-city, thus continued:—Verily, O Abdullah my father had monies and hoards, such as eye never saw and of which ear never heard. He used to debel Kings and do to death champions and braves in battle and in the field of fight, so that the Conquerors feared him and the Chosroës[516] humbled 324 themselves to him. For all this, he was a miscreant in creed ascribing to Allah partnership and adoring idols, instead of the Lord of worship; and all his troops were of images fain in lieu of the All-knowing Sovereign. One day of the days as he sat on the throne of his Kingship, compassed about with the Grandees of his realm, suddenly there came in to him a Personage, whose face illumined the whole Divan with its light. My father looked at him and saw him clad in a garb of green,[517] tall of stature and with hands that reached beneath his knees. He was of reverend aspect and awesome and the light[518] shone from his face. Said he to my sire, "O rebel, O idolater, how long wilt thou take pride in worshipping idols and abandoning the service of the All-knowing King? Say:—I testify that there is no god but *the* God and that Mohammed is His servant and His messenger. And embrace Al-Islam, thou and thy tribe; and put away from you the worship of idols, for they neither suffice man's need nor intercede. None is worshipful save Allah alone, who raised up the heavens without columns and spread out the earths like carpets in mercy to His creatures."[519] Quoth my father, "Who art thou, O man who rejectest the worship of idols, that thou sayst thus? Fearest thou not that the idols will be wroth with thee?" He replied, "The idols are stones; their anger cannot prejudice me nor their favour profit me. So do thou set in my presence thine idol which thou adorest and bid all thy folk bring each his image: and when they are all present, do ye pray them to be wroth with me and I will pray my Lord to be wroth with them, and ye shall descry the difference between the anger of the creature and

that of the Creator. For your idols, ye fashioned them yourselves and the Satans clad themselves therewith as with clothing, and they it is who spake to you from within the bellies of the images,[520] for your idols are made and the maker is my God to whom naught is impossible. An the True appear to you, do ye follow it, and if the False appear to you do ye leave it." Cried they, "Give us a proof of thy god, 325 that we may see it;" and quoth he, "Give me proof of *your* gods." So the King bade every one who worshipped his Lord in image-form to bring it, and all the armies brought their idols to the Divan. Thus fared it with them; but as for me, I was sitting behind a curtain, whence I could look upon my father's Divan, and I had an idol of emerald whose bigness was as the bigness of a son of Adam. My father demanded it, so I sent it to the Divan, where they set it down beside that of my sire, which was of jacinth, whilst the Wazir's idol was of diamond.[521] As for those of the Grandees and Notables, some were of balass-ruby and some of carnelian, others of coral or Comorin aloes-wood and yet others of ebony or silver or gold; and each had his own idol, after the measure of his competence; whilst the idols of the common soldiers and of the people were some of granite, some of wood, some of pottery and some of mud; and all were of various hues yellow and red; green, black and white. Then said the Personage to my sire, "Pray your idol and these idols to be wroth with me." So they aligned the idols in a Divan,[522] setting my father's idol on a chair of gold at the upper end, with mine by its side, and ranking the others each according to the condition of him who owned it and worshipped it. Then my father arose and prostrating himself to his own idol, said to it, "O my god, thou art the Bountiful Lord, nor is there among the idols a greater than thyself. Thou knowest that this person cometh to me, attacking thy divinity and making mock of thee; yea, he avoucheth that he hath a god stronger than thou and ordereth us leave adoring thee and adore his god. So be thou wrath with him, O my god!" And he went on to supplicate the idol; but the idol returned him no reply neither bespoke him with aught of speech; whereupon quoth he, "O my god, this is not of thy wont, for thou usedst to answer me, when I addressed thee. How cometh it that I see 326 thee silent and speaking not? Art thou unheeding or asleep?[523] Awake; succour me and speak to me!" And he shook it with his hand; but it spake not neither stirred from its stead. Thereupon quoth the Personage, "What aileth thine idol that it speaketh not?"; and quoth the King, "Methinks he is absent-minded or asleep." Exclaimed the other, "O enemy of Allah, how canst thou worship a god that speaketh not nor availeth unto aught and not worship my God, who to prayers deigns assent and who is ever present and never absent, neither unheeding nor sleeping, whom conjecture may not ween, who seeth and is not seen and who over all things terrene is omnipotent? Thy god is powerless and cannot guard itself from harm; and indeed a stoned Satan had clothed himself therewith as with a coat that he might debauch thee and delude thee. But now hath its devil departed; so do thou worship Allah and testify that there is no god but He and that none is worshipful nor worship-worth but Himself; neither

is there any good but His good. As for this thy god, it cannot ward off hurt from it; so how shall it ward off harm from thee? See with thine own eyes its impotence." So saying, he went up to the idol and dealt it a cuff on the neck, that it fell to the ground; whereupon the King waxed wroth and cried to the bystanders, "This froward atheist hath smitten my god. Slay him!" So they would have arisen to smite him, but none of them could stir from his place. Then he propounded to them Al-Islam; but they refused to become Moslems and he said, "I will show you the wroth of my Lord." Quoth they, "Let us see it!" So he spread out his hands and said, "O my God and my Lord, Thou art my stay and my hope; answer Thou my prayer against these lewd folk, who eat of Thy good and worship other gods. O Thou the Truth, O Thou of All-might, O Creator of Day and Night, I beseech Thee to turn these people into stones, for Thou art the Puissant nor is aught impossible to Thee, and Thou over all things are omnipotent!" And Allah transformed the people of this city into stones; but, as for me, when I saw the manifest proof of His deity, 327 I submitted myself to Him and was saved from that which befel the rest. Then the Personage drew near me and said "Felicity[524] was fore-ordained of Allah to thee and in this a purpose had He." And he went on to instruct me and I took unto him the oath and covenant.[525] I was then seven years of age and am now thirty years old. Then said I to him, "O my lord, all that is in the city and all its citizens are become stones by thine effectual prayer, and I am saved, for that I embraced Al-Islam at thy hands. Wherefore thou art become my Shaykh; so do thou tell me thy name and succour me with thy security and provide me with provision whereon I may subsist." Quoth he, "My name is Abu al-'Abbás al-Khizr"; and he planted me a pomegranate-tree, which forthright grew up and foliaged, flowered and fruited, and bare one pomegranate; whereupon quoth he, "Eat of that wherewith Allah the Almighty provideth thee and worship Him with the worship which is His due." Then he taught me the tenets of Al-Islam and the canons of prayer and the way of worship, together with the recital of the Koran, and I have now worshipped Allah in this place three-and-twenty years. Each day the tree yieldeth me a pomegranate which I eat and it sustaineth me from tide to tide; and every Friday, Al-Khizr (on whom be peace!) cometh to me and 'tis he who acquainted me with thy name and gave me the glad tidings of thy soon coming hither, saying to me, "When he shall come to thee, entreat him with honour and obey his bidding and gainsay him not; but be thou to him wife and he shall be to thee man, and wend with him whitherso he will." So, when I saw thee, I knew thee and such is the story of this city and of its people, and the Peace!" Then she showed me the pomegranate-tree, whereon was one granado, which she took and eating one-half thereof herself, gave me the other to eat, and never did I taste aught sweeter or more savoury or more satisfying than that pomegranate. After this, I said to her, "Art thou content, even as the Shaykh Al-Khizr charged thee, to be my wife and take me to mate; and art thou ready to go with me to my own country and abide with me in the city of Bassorah?" She replied, "Yes, Inshallah: an it please Almighty Allah. I hearken to thy

word 328 and obey thy hest without gainsaying." Then I made a binding covenant with her and she carried me into her father's treasury, whence we took what we could carry and going forth that city, walked on till we came to my brothers, whom I found searching for me. They asked, "Where hast thou been? Indeed thou hast tarried long from us, and our hearts were troubled for thee." And the captain of the ship said to me, "O merchant Abdullah, the wind hath been fair for us this great while, and thou hast hindered us from setting sail." And I answered, "There is no harm in that: ofttimes slow[526] is sure and my absence hath wrought us naught but advantage, for indeed, there hath betided me therein the attainment of our hopes and God-gifted is he who said:—



I weet not, whenas to a land I fare ✿ In quest of good, what I shall there obtain;
Or gain I fare with sole desire to seek; ✿ Or loss that seeketh me when seek I gain.

Then said I to them, "See what hath fallen to me in this mine absence;" and displayed to them all that was with me of treasures and told them what I had beheld in the City of Stone, adding, "Had ye hearkened to me and gone with me, ye had gotten of these

things great gain."——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-fourth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah bin Fazil said to his shipmates and to his two brothers, "Had ye gone with me, ye had gotten of these things great gain." But they said, "By Allah, had we gone, we had not dared to go in to the King of the city!" Then I said to my brothers, "No harm shall befal you; for that which I have will suffice us all and this is our lot.[527]" So I divided my booty into four parts according to our number and gave one to each of my brothers and to the Captain, taking the fourth for myself, setting aside somewhat for the servants and sailors, who rejoiced and blessed me: 329 and all were content with what I gave them, save my brothers who changed countenance and rolled their eyes. I perceived that lust of lucre had gotten hold of them both; so I said to them, "O my brothers, methinketh what I have given you doth not satisfy you; but we are brothers and there is no difference between us. My good and yours are one and the same thing, and if I die none will inherit of me but you." And I went on to soothe them. Then I bore the Princess on board the galleon and lodged her in the cabin, where I sent her somewhat to eat and we sat talking, I and my brothers. Said they, "O our brother, what wilt thou do with that damsel of surpassing beauty?" And I replied, "I mean to contract marriage with her, as soon as I reach Bassorah and make a splendid wedding and go in to her there." Exclaimed one of them, "O my brother, verily, this young lady excelleth in beauty and loveliness and the love of her is fallen on my heart; wherefore I desire that thou give her to me and I will espouse her." And the other cried, "I too desire this: give her to me, that I may espouse her." "O my brothers," answered I, "indeed she took of me an oath and a covenant that I would marry her myself; so, if I give her to one of you, I shall be false to my oath and to the covenant between me and her, and haply she will be broken-hearted, for she came not with me but on condition that I marry her. So how can I wed her to other than myself? As for your both loving her, I love her more than you twain, for she is my treasure-trove, and as for my giving her to one of you, that is a thing which may not be. But, if we reach Bassorah in safety, I will look you out two girls of the best of the damsels of Bassorah and demand them for you in marriage and pay the dower of my own monies and make one wedding and we will all three go into our brides on the same night. But leave ye this damsel, for she is of my portion." They held their peace, and I thought they were content with that which I had said. Then we fared onwards for Bassorah, and every day I sent her meat and drink; but she came not forth of the cabin, whilst I slept between my brothers on deck. We sailed thus forty days, till we sighted Bassorah city and rejoiced that we were come near it. Now I trusted in my brothers and was at my ease with them, for none knoweth the hidden future save Allah the Most High; so I

lay down to sleep that night; but, as I abode drowned in slumber, I suddenly found myself caught up by these my brothers, one seizing me by the legs and the other by the arms, for they had taken counsel together to drown me in 330 the sea for the sake of the damsel. When I saw myself in their hands, I said to them, "O my brothers, why do ye this with me?" And they replied, "Ill-bred that thou art, wilt thou barter our affection for a girl?: we will cast thee into the sea, because of this." So saying, they threw me overboard. (Here Abdullah turned to the dogs and said to them, "Is this that I have said true O my brothers or not?"; and they bowed their heads and fell awhining, as if confirming his speech; whereat the Caliph wondered). Then Abdullah resumed;—O Commander of the Faithful, when they threw me into the sea, I sank to the bottom; but the water bore me up again to the surface, and before I could think, behold a great bird, the bigness of a man, swooped down upon me and snatching me up, flew up with me into upper air. I fainted and when I opened my eyes, I found myself in a strong-pillared place, a high-builded palace, adorned with magnificent paintings and pendants of gems of all shapes and hues. Therein were damsels standing with their hands crossed over their breasts and, behold in their midst was a lady seated on a throne of red gold, set with pearls and gems, and clad in apparel whereon no mortal might open his eyes, for the lustre of the jewels wherewith they were decked. About her waist she wore a girdle of jewels no money could pay their worth and on her head a three-fold tiara dazing thought and wit and dazzling heart and sight. Then the bird which had carried me thither shook and became a young lady bright as sun raying light. I fixed my eyes on her and behold, it was she whom I had seen in snake form on the mountain and had rescued from the dragon which had wound his tail around her. Then said to her the lady who sat upon the throne, "Why hast thou brought hither this mortal?"; and she replied, "O my mother, this is he who was the means of veiling my honour[528] among the maidens of the Jinn." Then quoth she to me, "Knowest thou who I am?"; and quoth I, "No." Said she, I am she who was on such a mountain, where the black dragon strave with me and would have forced my honour, but thou slewest him." And I said, "I saw but a white snake with the dragon." She rejoined, "'Tis I who was the white snake; but I am the daughter of the Red King, Sovran of the Jann and my name is Sa'ídah.[529] She who 331 sitteth there is my mother and her name is Mubárakah, wife of the Red King. The black dragon who attacked me and would have done away my honour was Wazir to the Black King, Darfíl by name, and he was foul of favour. It chanced that he saw me and fell in love with me; so he sought me in marriage of my sire, who sent to him to say, "Who art thou, O scum of Wazirs, that thou shouldst wed with Kings' daughters?" Whereupon he was wroth and sware an oath that he would assuredly do away my honour, to spite my father. Then he fell to tracking my steps and following me whithersoever I went, designing to ravish me; wherefore there befel between him and my parent mighty fierce wars and bloody jars, but my sire could not prevail against him, for that he was fierce as

fraudful and as often as my father pressed hard upon him and seemed like to conquer he would escape from him, till my sire was at his wits' end. Every day I was forced to take new form and hue; for, as often as I assumed a shape, he would assume its contrary, and to whatsoever land I fled he would snuff my fragrance and follow me thither, so that I suffered sore affliction of him. At last I took the form of a snake and betook myself to the mountain where thou sawest me; whereupon he changed himself to a dragon and pursued me, till I fell into his hands, when he strove with me and I struggled with him, till he wearied me and mounted me, meaning to have his lustful will of me: but thou camest and smotest him with the stone and slewest him. Then I returned to my own shape and showed myself to thee, saying:—I am indebted to thee for a service such as is not lost save with the son of adultery.[530] So, when I saw thy brothers do with thee this treachery and throw thee into the sea, I hastened to thee and saved thee from destruction, and now honour is due to thee from my mother and my father." Then she said to the Queen, "O my mother, do thou honour him as deserveth he who saved my virtue." So the Queen said to me, "Welcome, O mortal! Indeed thou hast done us a kindly deed which meriteth honour." Presently she ordered me a treasure-suit,[531] worth a mint of money, and store of gems and precious stones, and said, "Take him and carry him in to the King." Accordingly, they carried me in to the King in his Divan, 332 where I found him seated on his throne, with his Marids and guards before him; and when I saw him my sight was blent for that which was upon him of jewels; but when he saw me, he rose to his feet and all his officers rose also, to do him worship. Then he saluted me and welcomed me and entreated me with the utmost honour, and gave me of that which was with him of good things; after which he said to some of his followers, "Take him and carry him back to my daughter, that she may restore him to the place whence she brought him." So they carried me back to the Lady Sa'idah, who took me up and flew away with me and my treasures. On this wise fared it with me and the Princess; but as regards the Captain of the galleon, he was aroused by the splash of my fall, when my brothers cast me into the sea, and said, "What is that which hath fallen overboard?" Whereupon my brothers fell to weeping and beating of breasts and replied, "Alas, for our brother's loss! He thought to do his need over the ship's side[532] and fell into the water!" Then they laid their hands on my good, but there befel dispute between them because of the damsel, each saying, "None shall have her but I." And they abode jangling and wrangling each with other and remembered not their brother nor his drowning and their mourning for him ceased. As they were thus, behold Sa'idah alighted with me in the midst of the galleon——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-fifth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah bin Fazil continued, "As they were thus, behold, Sa'idah alighted with me in the midst of the

galleon and when my brothers saw me, they embraced me and rejoiced in me, saying, "O our brother, how hast thou fared in that which befel thee? Indeed our hearts have been occupied with thee." Quoth Sa'idah, "Had ye any heart-yearnings for him or had ye loved him, ye had not cast him into the sea; but choose ye now what death ye will die." Then she seized on them and would have slain 333 them; but they cried out, saying, "In thy safeguard, O our brother!" Thereupon I interceded and said to her, "I claim of thine honour not to kill my brothers." Quoth she, "There is no help but that I slay them, for they are traitors." But I ceased not to speak her fair and conciliate her till she said, "To content thee, I will not kill them, but I will enchant them." So saying, she brought out a cup and filling it with sea-water, pronounced over it words that might not be understood; then saying, "Quit this human shape for the shape of a dog;" she sprinkled them with the water, and immediately they were transmewed into dogs, as thou seest them, O Vicar of Allah." Whereupon he turned to the dogs and said to them, "Have I spoken the truth, O my brothers?" And they bowed their heads, as they would say, "Thou hast spoken sooth." At this he continued, "Then she said to those who were in the galleon:—Know ye that Abdullah bin Fazil here present is become my brother and I shall visit him once or twice every day: so, whoso of you crosseth him or gainsayeth his bidding or doth him hurt with hand or tongue, I will do with him even as I have done with these two traitors and bespell him to a dog, and he shall end his days in that form, nor shall he find deliverance." And they all said to her, "O our lady, we are his slaves and his servants every one of us and will not disobey him in aught." Moreover, she said to me, "When thou comest to Bassorah, examine all thy property and if there lack aught thereof, tell me and I will bring it to thee, in whose hands and in what place soever it may be, and will change him who took it into a dog. When thou hast magazined thy goods, clap a collar[533] of wood on the neck of each of these two traitors and tie them to the leg of a couch and shut them up by themselves. Moreover, every night, at midnight, do thou go down to them and beat each of them a bout till he swoon away; and if thou suffer a single night to pass without beating them, I will come to thee and drub thee a sound drubbing, after which I will drub them." And I answered, "To hear is to obey." Then said she, "Tie them up with ropes 334 till thou come to Bassorah." So I tied a rope about each dog's neck and lashed them to the mast, and she went her way. On the morrow we entered Bassorah and the merchants came out to meet me and saluted me, and no one of them enquired of my brothers. But they looked at the dogs and said to me, "Ho, such and such,[534] what wilt thou do with these two dogs thou hast brought with thee?" Quoth I, "I reared them on this voyage and have brought them home with me." And they laughed at them, knowing not that they were my brothers. When I reached my house, I put the twain in a closet and busied myself all that night with the unpacking and disposition of the bales of stuffs and jewels. Moreover, the merchants were with me being minded to offer me the salam; wherefore I was occupied with them and forgot

to beat the dogs or chain them up. Then without doing them aught of hurt, I lay down to sleep, but suddenly and unexpectedly there came to me the Red King's daughter Sa'idah and said to me, "Did I not bid thee clap chains on their necks and give each of them a bout of beating?" So saying, she seized me and pulling out a whip, flogged me till I fainted away, after which she went to the place where my brothers were and with the same scourge beat them both till they came nigh upon death. Then said she to me, "Beat each of them a like bout every night, and if thou let a night pass without doing this, I will beat thee;" and I replied, "O my lady, to-morrow I will put chains on their necks, and next night I will beat them nor will I leave them one night unbeaten." And she charged me strictly to beat them and disappeared. When the morning morrowed it being no light matter for me to put fetters of iron on their necks, I went to a goldsmith and bade him make them collars and chains of gold. He did this and I put the collars on their necks and chained them up, as she bade me; and next night I beat them both in mine own despite. This befel in the Caliphate of Al-Mahdi,[535] third of the sons of Al-Abbas, and I commended myself to him by sending him 335 presents, so he invested me with the government and made me viceroy of Bassorah. On this wise I abode some time and after a while I said to myself, "Haply her wrath is grown cool;" and left them a night unbeaten, whereupon she came to me and beat me a bout whose burning I shall never forget long as I live. So, from that time to this, I have never left them a single night unbeaten during the reign of Al-Mahdi; and when he deceased and thou camest to the succession, thou sentest to me, confirming me in the government of Bassorah. These twelve years past have I beaten them every night, in mine own despite, and after I have beaten them, I excuse myself to them and comfort them and give them to eat and drink; and they have remained shut up, nor did any of the creatures of Allah know of them, till thou sentest to me Abu Ishak the boon-companion, on account of the tribute, and he discovered my secret and returning to thee, acquainted thee therewith. Then thou sentest him back to fetch me and them; so I answered with 'Hearkening and obedience,' and brought them before thee, whereupon thou questionedst me and I told thee the truth of the case; and this is my history." The Caliph marvelled at the case of the two dogs and said to Abdullah, "Hast thou at this present forgiven thy two brothers the wrong they did thee, yea or nay?" He replied, "O my lord, may Allah forgive them and acquit them of responsibility in this world and the next! Indeed, 'tis I who stand in need of their forgiveness, for that these twelve years past I have beaten them a grievous bout every night!" Rejoined the Caliph, "O Abdullah, Inshallah, I will endeavour for their release and that they may become men again, as they were before, and I will make peace between thee and them; so shall you live the rest of your lives as brothers loving one another; and like as thou hast forgiven them, so shall they forgive thee. But now take them and go down with them to thy lodging and this night beat them not, and to-morrow there shall be naught save weal." Quoth Abdullah, "O my lord, as thy head liveth, if I leave them one night unbeaten, Sa'idah will come to me and beat me, and I

have no body to brook beating." 336 Quoth the Caliph, "Fear not, for I will give thee a writing under my hand.[536] An she come to thee, do thou give her the paper and if, when she has read it, she spare thee, the favour will be hers; but, if she obey not my bidding, commit thy business to Allah and let her beat thee a bout and suppose that thou hast forgotten to beat them for one night and that she beateth thee because of that: and if it fall out thus and she thwart me, as sure as I am Commander of the Faithful, I will be even with her." Then he wrote her a letter on a piece of paper, two fingers broad, and sealing it with his signet-ring, gave it to Abdullah, saying, "O Abdullah, if Sa'idah come, say to her:—The Caliph, King of mankind, hath commanded me to leave beating them and hath written me this letter for thee; and he saluteth thee with the salam. Then give her the warrant and fear no harm." After which he exacted of him an oath and a solemn pledge that he would not beat them. So Abdullah took the dogs and carried them to his lodging, saying to himself, "I wonder what the Caliph will do with the daughter of the Sovran of the Jinn, if she cross him and trounce me to-night! But I will bear with a bout of beating for once and leave my brothers at rest this night, though for their sake I suffer torture." Then he bethought himself awhile, and his reason said to him, "Did not the Caliph rely on some great support, he had never forbidden me from beating them." So he entered his lodging and doffed the collars from the dogs' necks, saying, "I put my trust in Allah," and fell to comforting them and saying, "No harm shall befal you; for the Caliph, fifth[537] of the sons of Al-Abbas, hath pledged himself for your deliverance and I have forgiven you. An it please Allah the Most High, the time is come and ye shall be delivered this blessed night; so rejoice ye in the prospect of peace and gladness." When they heard these words, they fell to whining with the whining of dogs,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



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Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-sixth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah bin Fazil said to his brothers, “Rejoice ye in the prospect of comfort and gladness.” And when they heard his words they fell to whining with the whining of dogs, and rubbed their jowls against his feet, as if blessing him and humbling themselves before him. He mourned

over them and took to stroking their backs till supper time; and when they set on the trays he bade the dogs sit. So they sat down and ate with him from the tray, whilst his officers stood gaping and marvelling at his eating with dogs and all said, "Is he mad or are his wits gone wrong? How can the Viceroy of Bassorah city, he who is greater than a Wazir, eat with dogs? Knoweth he not that the dog is unclean[538]?" And they stared at the dogs, as they ate with him as servants eat with their lords,[539] knowing not that they were his brothers; nor did they cease staring at them, till they had made an end of eating, when Abdullah washed his hands and the dogs also put out their paws and washed; whereupon all who were present began to laugh at them and to marvel, saying, one to other, "Never in our lives saw we dogs eat and wash their paws after eating!" Then the dogs sat down on the divans beside Abdullah, nor dared any ask him of this; and thus the case lasted till midnight, when he dismissed the attendants and lay down to sleep and the dogs with him, each on a couch; whereupon the servants said one to other, "Verily, he hath lain down to sleep and the two dogs are lying with him." Quoth another, "Since he hath eaten with the dogs from the same tray, there is no harm in their sleeping with him; and this is naught save the fashion of madmen." Moreover, they ate not anything of the food which remained in the tray, saying, "'Tis unclean." Such was their case; but as for Abdullah, ere he could think, the earth clave asunder and out rose Sa'idah, who said to him, "O Abdullah, why hast thou not beaten them this night and why hast thou undone the collars from their necks? Hast thou 338acted on this wise perversely and in mockery of my commandment? But I will at once beat thee and spell thee into a dog like them." He replied, "O my lady, I conjure thee by the graving upon the seal-ring of Solomon David-son (on the twain be peace!) have patience with me till I tell thee my cause and after do with me what thou wilt." Quoth she, "Say on," and quoth he, "The reason of my not punishing them is only this. The King of mankind, the Commander of the Faithful, the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, ordered me not to beat them this night and took of me oaths and covenants to that effect; and he saluteth thee with the salam and hath committed to me a mandate under his own hand, which he bade me give thee. So I obeyed his order for to obey the Commander of the Faithful is obligatory; and here is the mandate. Take it and read it and after work thy will." She replied, "Hither with it!" So he gave her the letter and she opened it and read as follows, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate! From the King of mankind, Harun al-Rashid, to the daughter of the Red King, Sa'idah! But, after. Verily, this man hath forgiven his brothers and hath waived his claim against them, and we have enjoined them to reconciliation. Now, when reconciliation ruleth, retribution is remitted, and if you of the Jinn contradict us in our commandments, we will contrary you in yours and traverse your ordinances; but, an ye obey our bidding and further our orders, we will indeed do the like with yours. Wherefore I bid thee hurt them no hurt, and if thou believe in Allah and in His Apostle, it behoveth thee to obey and us to command.[540] So an thou spare them, I will requite thee with that whereto my Lord

shall enable me; and the token of obedience is that thou remove thine enchantment from these two men, so they may come before me to-morrow, free. But an thou release them not, I will release them in thy despite, by the aid of Almighty Allah." When she had read the letter, she said, "O Abdullah, I will do nought till I go to my sire and show him the mandate of the monarch of mankind and return to thee with the answer in haste." So saying, she signed with her hand to the earth, which clave open and she disappeared therein, whilst Abdullah's heart was like to fly for joy and he said, "Allah advance the Commander of the Faithful!" As for Sa'idah, she went in to her father; and, acquainting him with that which had passed, gave 339 him the Caliph's letter, which he kissed and laid on his head. Then he read it and understanding its contents said, "O my daughter, verily, the ordinance of the monarch of mankind obligeth us and his commandments are effectual over us, nor can we disobey him: so go thou and release the two men forthwith and say to them:—Ye are freed by the intercession of the monarch of mankind. For, should he be wroth with us, he would destroy us to the last of us; so do not thou impose on us that which we are unable." Quoth she, "O my father, if the monarch of mankind were wroth with us, what could he do with us?"; and quoth her sire, "He hath power over us for several reasons. In the first place, he is a man and hath thus pre-eminence over us[541]; secondly he is the Vicar of Allah; and thirdly, he is constant in praying the dawn-prayer of two bows[542]; therefore were all the tribes of the Jinn assembled together against him from the Seven Worlds they could do him no hurt. But he, should he be wroth with us would pray the dawn-prayer of two bows and cry out upon us one cry, when we should all present ourselves before him obediently and be before him as sheep before the butcher. If he would, he could command us to quit our abiding-places for a desert country wherein we might not endure to sojourn; and if he desired to destroy us, he would bid us destroy ourselves, whereupon we should destroy one another. Wherefore we may not disobey his bidding for, if we did this, he would consume us with fire nor could we flee from before him to any asylum. Thus is it with every True Believer who is persistent in praying the dawn-prayer of two bows; his commandment is effectual over us: so be not thou the means of our destruction, because of two mortals, but go forthright and release them, ere the anger of the Commander of the Faithful fall upon us." So she returned to Abdullah and acquainted him with her father's words, saying, "Kiss for us the hands of the Prince of True Believers and seek his approval for us." Then she brought out the tasse and filling it with water, conjured over it and uttered words which might not be understood; after which she sprinkled the dogs with the water saying, "Quit the form of dogs and return to the shape of men!" Whereupon they became men as before and the spell of the enchantment was loosed from them. Quoth they, "I testify that 340 there is no god but *the* God and I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God!" Then they fell on their brother's feet and hands, kissing them and beseeching his forgiveness: but he said, "Do ye forgive me;" and

they both repented with sincere repentance, saying, “Verily, the damned Devil lured us and covetise deluded us: but our Lord hath requited us after our deserts, and forgiveness is of the signs of the noble.” And they went on to supplicate their brother and weep and profess repentance for that which had befallen him from them[543]. Then quoth he to them, “What did ye with my wife whom I brought from the City of Stone?” Quoth they, “When Satan tempted us and we cast thee into the sea, there arose strife between us, each saying, I will have her to wife. Now when she heard these words and beheld our contention, she knew that we had thrown thee into the sea; so she came up from the cabin and said to us:—Contend not because of me, for I will not belong to either of you. My husband is gone into the sea and I will follow him. So saying, she cast herself overboard and died.” Exclaimed Abdullah, “In very sooth she died a martyr[544]! But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!” Then he wept for her with sore weeping and said to his brothers, “It was not well of you to do this deed and bereave me of my wife.” They answered, “Indeed, we have sinned, but our Lord hath requited us our misdeed and this was a thing which Allah decreed unto us, ere He created us.” And he accepted their excuse; but Sa’idah said to him, “Have they done all these things to thee and wilt thou forgive them?” He replied, “O my sister, whoso hath power[545] and spareth, for Allah’s reward he prepareth.” Then said she, “Be on thy guard against them, for they are traitors;” and farewelled him and fared forth.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah, when Sa’idah warned him and blessed him and went her ways, 341 passed the rest of the night with his brothers and on the morrow, he sent them to the Hammam and clad each of them, on his coming forth, in a suit worth a hoard of money. Then he called for the tray of food and they set it before him and he ate, he and his brothers. When his attendants saw the twain and knew them for his brothers they saluted them and said to him, “O our lord, Allah give thee joy of thy reunion with thy dear brothers! Where have they been this while?” He replied, “It was they whom ye saw in the guise of dogs; praise be to Allah who hath delivered them from prison and grievous torment!” Then he carried them to the Divan of the Caliph and kissing ground before Al-Rashid wished him continuance of honour and fortune and surcease of evil and enmity.” Quoth the Caliph, “Welcome, O Emir Abdullah! Tell me what hath befallen thee.” And quoth he, “O Commander of the Faithful (whose power Allah increase!) when I carried my brothers home to my lodging, my heart was at rest concerning them, because thou hadst pledged thyself to their release and I said in myself, “Kings fail not to attain aught for which they strain, inasmuch as the divine favour aideth them.” So I took off the collars from their necks, putting my trust in Allah, and ate with them from the same tray, which when my suite

saw, they made light of my wit and said each to other, “He is surely mad! How can the governor of Bassorah who is greater than the Wazir, eat with dogs?” Then they threw away what was in the tray, saying, “We will not eat the dogs’ orts.” And they went on befool my reason, whilst I heard their words, but returned them no reply because of their unknowing that the dogs were my brothers. When the hour of sleep came, I sent them away and addressed myself to sleep; but, ere I was ware, the earth clave in sunder and out came Sa’idah, the Red King’s daughter, enraged against me, with eyes like fire.” And he went on to relate to the Caliph all what had passed between him and her and her father and how she had transmewed his brothers from canine to human form, adding, “And here they are before thee, O Commander of the Faithful!” The Caliph looked at them and seeing two young men like moons, said, “Allah requite thee for me with good, O Abdullah, for that thou hast acquainted me with an advantage[546] I 342 knew not! Henceforth, Inshallah, I will never leave to pray these two-bow orisons before the breaking of the dawn, what while I live.” Then he reproved Abdullah’s brothers for their past transgressions against him and they excused themselves before the Caliph, who said, “Join hands[547] and forgive one another and Allah pardon what is past!” Upon which he turned to Abdullah and said to him, “O Abdullah, make thy brothers thine assistants and be careful of them.” Then he charged them to be obedient to their brother and bade them return to Bassorah after he had bestowed on them abundant largesse. So they went down from the Caliph’s Divan whilst he rejoiced in this advantage he had obtained by the action aforesaid, to wit, persistence in praying two inclinations before dawn, and exclaimed, He spake truth who said, “The misfortune of one tribe fortuneth another tribe.”[548] On this wise befel it to them from the Caliph; but as regards Abdullah, he left Baghdad carrying with him his brothers in all honour and dignity and increase of quality, and fared on till they drew near Bassorah, when the notables and chief men of the place came out to meet them and after decorating the city brought them thereinto with a procession which had not its match and all the folk shouted out blessings on Abdullah as he scattered amongst them silver and gold. None, however, took heed to his brothers; wherefore jealousy and envy entered their hearts, for all he entreated them tenderly as one tenders an ophthalmic eye; but the more he cherished them, the more they redoubled in hatred and envy of him: and indeed it is said on the subject:—

I’d win good will of every one, but whoso envies me ✿ Will not be won on any wise and makes mine office hard:
How gain the gree of envious wight who coveteth my good, ✿ When naught will satisfy him save to see my good go marr’d?

Then he gave each a concubine that had not her like, and eunuchs and servants and slaves white and black, of each kind forty. He also gave each of them fifty steeds all thoroughbreds and they got them guards and followers; and he assigned to them revenues and appointed them solde and stipends and made them his assistants, 343 saying to them, “O my brothers, I and you are equal and there is no

distinction between me and you twain,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-eighth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Abdullah assigned stipends to his brothers and made them his assistants, saying, "O my brothers, I and you are equal and there is no distinction between me and you twain, and after Allah and the Caliph, the commandment is mine and yours. So rule you at Bassorah in my absence and in my presence, and your commandments shall be effectual; but look that ye fear Allah in your ordinances and beware of oppression, which if it endure depopulateth; and apply yourselves to justice, for justice, if it be prolonged, peopleth a land. Oppress not the True Believers, or they will curse you and ill report of you will reach the Caliph, wherefore dishonour will betide both me and you. Go not therefore about to violence any, but whatso ye greed for of the goods of the folk, take it from my goods, over and above that whereof ye have need; for 'tis not unknown to you what is handed down in the Koran of prohibition versets on the subject of oppression and Allah-gifted is he who said these couplets:—

Oppression ambusheth in sprite of man ✿ Whom naught withholdeth save the lack of might:
The sage shall ne'er apply his wits to aught ✿ Until befitting time direct his sight:
The tongue of Wisdom woneth in the heart; ✿ And in his mouth the tongue of foolish wight.
Who at occasion's call lacks power to rise ✿ Is slain by feeblest who would glut his spite.
A man may hide his blood and breed, but aye ✿ His deeds on darkest hiddens cast a light.
Wights of ill strain with ancestry as vile ✿ Have lips which never spake one word aright:
And who committeth case to hands of fool ✿ In folly proveth self as fond and light;
And who his secret tells to folk at large ✿ Shall rouse his foes to work him worst despight.
Suffice the generous what regards his lot ✿ Nor meddles he with aught regards him not.

344 And he went on to admonish his brothers and bid them to equity and forbid them from tyranny, doubting not but they would love him the better for his boon of good counsel[549] and he relied upon them and honoured them with the utmost honour; but notwithstanding all his generosity to them, they only waxed in envy and hatred of him, till, one day, the two being together alone, quoth Nasir to Mansur, "O my brother, how long shall we be mere subjects of our brother Abdullah, and he in this estate of lordship and worship? After being a merchant, he is become an Emir, and from being little, he is grown great: but we, we grow not great nor is there aught of respect or degree left us; for, behold, he laugheth at us and maketh us his assistants! What is the meaning of this? Is it not that we are his servants and under his subjection? But, long as he abideth in good case, our rank will never be raised nor shall we be aught of repute; wherefore we shall not fulfil our wish, except we slay him and win to his wealth, nor will it be possible to get his gear save after his death.

So, when we have slain him, we shall become lords and will take all that is in his treasuries of gems and things of price and divide them between us. Then will we send the Caliph a present and demand of him the government of Cufah, and thou shalt be governor of Cufah and I of Bassorah. Thus each of us shall have formal estate and condition, but we shall never effect this, except we put him out of the world!" Answered Mansur, "Thou sayest sooth, but how shall we do to kill him?" Quoth Nasir, "We will make an entertainment in the house of one of us and invite him thereto and serve him with the uttermost service. Then will we sit through the night with him in talk and tell him tales and jests and rare stories till his heart melteth with sitting up when we will spread him a bed, that he may lie down to sleep. When he is asleep, we will kneel upon him and throttle him and throw him into the river; and on the morrow, we will say:—His sister the Jinniyah came to him, as he sat chatting with us, and said to him:—O thou scum of mankind, who art thou that thou shouldst complain of me to the Commander of the Faithful? Deemest thou that we dread him? As he is a King, so we too are Kings, and if he mend not his manners in our regard we will do him die by the foulest of deaths. But meantime I will slay thee, that we may see what the hand of the Prince of True Believers availeth to do. So saying, 345 she caught him up and clave the earth and disappeared with him which when we saw, we swooned away. Then we revived and we reck not what is become of him. And saying this we will send to the Caliph and tell him the case and he will invest us with the government in his room. After awhile, we will send him a sumptuous present and seek of him the government of Cufah, and one of us shall abide in Bassorah and the other in Cufah. So shall the land be pleasant to us and we will be down upon the True Believers and win our wishes." And quoth Mansur, "Thou counsellest well, O my brother," and they agreed upon the murther. So Nasir made an entertainment and said to Abdullah, "O my brother, verily I am thy brother, and I would have thee hearten my heart thou and my brother Mansur and eat of my banquet in my house, so I may boast of thee and that it may be said, The Emir Abdullah hath eaten of his brother Nasir's guest meal; when my heart will be solaced by this best of boons." Abdullah replied, "So be it, O my brother; there is no distinction between me and thee and thy house is my house; but since thou invitest me, none refuseth hospitality save the churl." Then he turned to Mansur and said to him, "Wilt thou go with me to thy brother Nasir's house and we will eat of his feast and heal his heart?" Replied Mansur, "As thy head liveth, O my brother, I will not go with thee, unless thou swear to me that, after thou comest forth of brother Nasir's house, thou wilt enter my house and eat of my banquet! Is Nasir thy brother and am not I thy brother? So, even as thou heartenest his heart, do thou hearten mine." Answered Abdullah, "There is no harm in that: with love and gladly gree! When I come out from Nasir's house, I will enter thine, for thou art my brother even as he." So he kissed his hand and going forth of the Divan, made ready his feast. On the morrow, Abdullah took horse and repaired, with his brother Mansur and a company of his officers, to Nasir's house, where they

sat down, he and Mansur and his many. Then Nasir set the trays before them and welcomed them; so they ate and drank and sat in mirth and merriment; after which the trays and the platters were removed and they washed their hands. They passed the day in feasting and wine-drinking and diversion and delight till nightfall, when they supped and prayed the sundown prayers, and the night orisons; after which they sat conversing and carousing, and Nasir and Mansur fell to telling stories whilst Abdullah hearkened. Now they three were alone in the pavilion, 346 the rest of the company being in another place, and they ceased not to tell quips and tales and rare adventures and anecdotes, till Abdullah's heart was dissolved within him for watching and sleep overcame him.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Eighty-ninth Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Abdullah was a-wearied with watching and wanted to sleep, they also lay beside him on another couch and waited till he was drowned in slumber and when they were certified thereof they arose and knelt upon him: whereupon he awoke and seeing them kneeling on his breast, said to them, "What is this, O my brothers?" Cried they, "We are no brothers of thine, nor do we know thee unmannerly that thou art! Thy death is become better than thy life." Then they gripped him by the throat and throttled him, till he lost his senses and abode without motion; so that they deemed him dead. Now the pavilion wherein they were overlooked the river; so they cast him into the water; but, when he fell, Allah sent to his aid a dolphin[550] who was accustomed to come under that pavilion because the kitchen had a window that gave upon the stream; and, as often as they slaughtered any beast there, it was their wont to throw the refuse into the river and the dolphin came and picked it up from the surface of the water; wherefore he ever resorted to the place. That day they had cast out much offal by reason of the banquet; so the dolphin ate more than of wont and gained strength. Hearing the splash of Abdullah's fall, he hastened to the spot, where he saw a son of Adam and Allah guided him so that he took the man on his back and crossing the current made with him for the other bank, where he cast his burthen ashore. Now the place where the dolphin cast up Abdullah was a well-beaten highway, and presently up came a caravan and finding him lying on the river bank, said, "Here is a drowned man, whom the river hath cast up;" and the travellers gathered around to gaze at the corpse. The Shaykh of the caravan was a man of worth, skilled in all sciences and versed 347 in the mystery of medicine and, withal, sound of judgment: so he said to them, "O folk, what is the news?" They answered, "Here is a drowned man;" whereupon he went up to Abdullah and examining him, said to them, "O folk, there is life yet in this young man, who is a person of condition and of the sons of the great, bred in honour and fortune, and Inshallah there is still hope of him." Then he took him and clothing him in dry clothes warmed him before the fire; after which he nursed him and tended him

three days' march till he revived; but he was passing feeble by reason of the shock, and the chief of the caravan proceeded to medicine him with such simples as he knew, what while they ceased not faring on till they had travelled thirty days' journey from Bassorah and came to a city in the land of the Persians, by name 'Aúj.[551] Here they alighted at a Khan and spread Abdullah a bed, where he lay groaning all night and troubling the folk with his groans. And when morning morrowed the concierge of the Khan came to the chief of the caravan and said to him, "What is this sick man thou hast with thee? Verily, he disturbeth us." Quoth the chief, "I found him by the way, on the river-bank and well nigh drowned; and I have tended him, but to no effect, for he recovereth not." Said the porter, "Show him to the Shaykhah[552] Rájihah." "Who is this Religious?" asked the chief of the caravan, and the door-keeper answered, "There is with us a holy woman, a clean maid and a comely, called Rajihah, to whom they present whoso hath any ailment; and he passeth a single night in her house and awaketh on the morrow, whole and ailing nothing." Quoth the chief, "Direct me to her;" and quoth the porter, "Take up thy sick man." So he took up Abdullah and the doorkeeper forewent him, till he came to a hermitage, where he saw folk entering with many an ex voto offering and other folk coming forth, rejoicing. The porter went in, till he came to the curtain,[553] and said, "Permission, O Shaykhah 348 Rajihah! Take this sick man." Said she, "Bring him within the curtain;" and the porter said to Abdullah, "Enter." So he entered and looking upon the holy woman, saw her to be his wife whom he had brought from the City of Stone. And when he knew her she also knew him and saluted him and he returned her salam. Then said he, "Who brought thee hither?"; and she answered, "When I saw that thy brothers had cast thee away and were contending concerning me, I threw myself into the sea; but my Shaykh Al-Khizr Abu al-'Abbás took me up and brought me to this hermitage, where he gave me leave to heal the sick and bade cry in the city:—Whoso hath any ailment, let him repair to the Shaykhah Rajihah; and he also said to me:—Tarry in this hermitage till the time betide, and thy husband shall come to thee here. So all the sick used to flock to me and I rubbed them and shampoo'd them and they awoke on the morrow whole and sound; whereby the report of me became noised abroad among the folk, and they brought me votive gifts, so that I have with me abundant wealth. And now I live here in high honour and worship, and all the people of these parts seek my prayers." Then she rubbed him and by the ordinance of Allah the Most High, he became whole. Now Al-Khizr used to come to her every Friday night, and it chanced that the day of Abdullah's coming was a Thursday.[554] Accordingly, when the night darkened he and she sat, after a supper of the richest meats, awaiting the coming of Al-Khizr, who made his appearance anon and carrying them forth of the hermitage, set them down in Abdullah's palace at Bassorah, where he left them and went his way. As soon as it was day, Abdullah examined the palace and knew it for his own; then, hearing the folk clamouring without, he looked forth of the lattice and saw his brothers crucified, each on his own cross. Now the reason of this was as ensueth. When they had thrown

him into the Tigris, the twain arose on the morrow, weeping and saying, “Our brother! the Jinniyah hath carried off our brother!” Then they made ready a present and sent it to the Caliph, acquainting him with these tidings and suing from him the government of Bassorah. He sent for them and questioned them and they told him the false tale we have recounted, whereupon he 349 was exceeding wroth.[555] So that night he prayed a two-bow prayer before daybreak, as of his wont, and called upon the tribes of the Jinn, who came before him subject-wise, and he questioned them of Abdullah: when they sware to him that none of them had done him aught of hurt and said, “We know not what is become of him.” Then came Sa’idah, daughter of the Red King, and acquainted the Caliph with the truth of Abdullah’s case, and he dismissed the Jinn. On the morrow, he subjected Nasir and Mansur to the bastinado till they confessed, one against other: whereupon the Caliph was enraged with them and cried, “Carry them to Bassorah and crucify them there before Abdullah’s palace.” Such was their case; but as regards Abdullah, when he saw his brothers crucified, he commanded to bury them, then took horse and repairing to Baghdad, acquainted the Caliph with that which his brothers had done with him, from first to last and told him how he had recovered his wife; whereat Al-Rashid marvelled and summoning the Kazi and the witnesses, bade draw up the marriage-contract between Abdullah and the damsel whom he had brought from the City of Stone. So he went in to her and woned with her at Bassorah till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Severer of societies; and extolled be the perfection of the Living, who dieth not! Moreover, O auspicious King, I have heard a tale anent.

46- MA'ARUF THE COBBLER AND HIS WIFE FATIMAH.

There dwelt once upon a time in the God-guarded city of Cairo a cobbler who lived by patching old shoes.[1] His name was Ma'aruf[2] and he had a wife called Fatimah, whom the folk had nicknamed "The Dung;"[3] for that she was a whorish, worthless wretch, scanty of shame and mickle of mischief. She ruled her spouse and used to abuse him and curse him a thousand times a day; and he feared her malice and dreaded her misdoings; for that he was a sensible man and careful of his repute, but poor-conditioned. When he earned much, he spent it on her, and when he gained little, she revenged herself on his body that night, leaving him no peace and making his night black as her book;[4] for she was even as of one like her saith the poet:—

How manifold nights have I passed with my wife ✿ In the saddest plight with all misery rife:
Would Heaven when first I went in to her ✿ With a cup of cold poison I'd ta'en her life.

Amongst other afflictions which befel him from her one day she said to him, "O Ma'aruf, I wish thee to bring me this night a vermicelli-cake dressed with bees' honey."[5] He replied, "So Allah 2 Almighty aid me to its price, I will bring it thee. By Allah, I have no dirhams to-day, but our Lord will make things easy."[6] Rejoined she,——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ma'aruf the Cobbler said to his spouse, "If Allah aid me to its price, I will bring it to thee this night. By Allah, I have no dirhams to-day, but our Lord will make things easy to me!" She rejoined, "I wot naught of these words; whether He aid thee or aid thee not, look thou come not to me save with the vermicelli and bees' honey; and if thou come without it I will make thy night black as thy fortune whenas thou marriedst me and fellest into my hand." Quoth he, "Allah is bountiful!" and going out with grief scattering itself from his body, prayed the dawn-prayer and opened his shop, saying, "I beseech thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me the price of the Kunafah and ward off from me the mischief of yonder wicked woman this night!" After which he sat in the shop till noon, but no work came to him and his fear of his wife redoubled. Then he arose and locking his shop, went out perplexed as to how he should do in the matter of the vermicelli-cake,

seeing he had not even the wherewithal to buy bread. Presently he came up to the shop of the Kunafah-seller and stood before it distraught, whilst his eyes brimmed with tears. The pastry-cook glanced at him and said, “O Master Ma’aruf, why dost thou weep? Tell me what hath befallen thee.” So he acquainted him with his case, saying, “My wife is a shrew, a virago who would have me bring her a Kunafah; but I have sat in my shop till past mid-day and have not gained even the price of bread; wherefore I am in fear of her.” The cook laughed and said, “No harm shall come to thee. How many pounds wilt thou have?” “Five pounds,” answered Ma’aruf. So the man weighed him out five pounds of vermicelli-cake and said to him, “I have clarified butter, but no bees’ honey. Here is drip-honey,[7] however, which is better 3than bees’ honey; and what harm will there be, if it be with drip-honey?” Ma’aruf was ashamed to object, because the pastry-cook was to have patience with him for the price, and said, “Give it me with drip-honey.” So he fried a vermicelli-cake for him with butter and drenched it with drip-honey, till it was fit to present to Kings. Then he asked him, “Dost thou want bread[8] and cheese?”; and Ma’aruf answered, “Yes.” So he gave him four half dirhams worth of bread and one of cheese, and the vermicelli was ten nusfs. Then said he, “Know, O Ma’aruf, that thou owest me fifteen nusfs; so go to thy wife and make merry and take this nusf for the Hammam;[9] and thou shalt have credit for a day or two or three till Allah provide thee with thy daily bread. And straiten not thy wife, for I will have patience with thee till such time as thou shalt have dirhams to spare.” So Ma’aruf took the vermicelli-cake and bread and cheese and went away, with a heart at ease, blessing the pastry-cook and saying, “Extolled be Thy perfection, O my Lord! How bountiful art Thou!” When he came home, his wife enquired of him, “Hast thou brought the vermicelli-cake?”; and, replying “Yes,” he set it before her. She looked at it and seeing that it was dressed with cane-honey,[10] said to him, “Did I not bid thee bring it with bees’ honey? Wilt thou contrary my wish and have it dressed with cane-honey?” He excused himself to her, saying, “I bought it not save on credit;” but said she, “This talk is idle; I will not eat Kunafah save with bees’ honey.” And she was wroth with it and threw it in his face, saying, “Begone, thou pimp, and bring me other than this!” Then she dealt him a buffet on the cheek and knocked out one of his teeth. The blood ran down upon his breast and for stress of anger he smote her on the head a single blow and a slight; whereupon she clutched his beard and fell to shouting out and saying, “Help, O Moslems!” So the neighbours came in and freed his beard from her grip; then they reproved and reproached her, saying, “We are all content to eat Kunafah with cane-honey. Why, then, wilt thou oppress this poor man thus? Verily, this is 4disgraceful in thee!” And they went on to soothe her till they made peace between her and him. But, when the folk were gone, she sware that she would not eat of the vermicelli, and Ma’aruf, burning with hunger, said in himself, “She sweareth that she will not eat; so I will e’en eat.” Then he ate, and when she saw him eating, she said, “Inshallah, may the eating of it be poison to destroy the far one’s

body."[11] Quoth he, "It shall not be at thy bidding," and went on eating, laughing and saying, "Thou swarest that thou wouldst not eat of this; but Allah is bountiful, and to-morrow night, an the Lord decree, I will bring thee Kunafah dressed with bees' honey, and thou shalt eat it alone." And he applied himself to appeasing her, whilst she called down curses upon him; and she ceased not to rail at him and revile him with gross abuse till the morning, when she bared her forearm to beat him. Quoth he, "Give me time and I will bring thee other vermicelli-cake." Then he went out to the mosque and prayed, after which he betook himself to his shop and opening it, sat down; but hardly had he done this when up came two runners from the Kazi's court and said to him, "Up with thee, speak with the Kazi, for thy wife hath complained of thee to him and her favour is thus and thus." He recognised her by their description; and saying, "May Allah Almighty torment her!" walked with them till he came to the Kazi's presence, where he found Fatimah standing with her arm bound up and her face-veil besmeared with blood; and she was weeping and wiping away her tears. Quoth the Kazi, "Ho man, hast thou no fear of Allah the Most High? Why hast thou beaten this good woman and broken her forearm and knocked out her tooth and entreated her thus?" And quoth Ma'aruf, "If I beat her or put out her tooth, sentence me to what thou wilt; but in truth the case was thus and thus and the neighbours made peace between me and her." And he told him the story from first to last. Now this Kazi was a benevolent man; so he brought out to him a quarter dinar, saying, "O man, take this and get her Kunafah with bees' honey and do ye make peace, thou and she." Quoth Ma'aruf, "Give it to her." So she took it and the Kazi made peace between them, saying, "O wife, obey thy husband; and thou, O man, deal kindly with her.[12]" 5 Then they left the court, reconciled at the Kazi's hands, and the woman went one way, whilst her husband returned by another way to his shop and sat there, when, behold, the runners came up to him and said, "Give us our fee." Quoth he, "The Kazi took not of me aught; on the contrary, he gave me a quarter dinar." But quoth they, "'Tis no concern of ours whether the Kazi took of thee or gave to thee, and if thou give us not our fee, we will exact it in despite of thee." And they fell to dragging him about the market; so he sold his tools and gave them half a dinar, whereupon they let him go and went away, whilst he put his hand to his cheek and sat sorrowful, for that he had no tools wherewith to work. Presently, up came two ill-favoured fellows and said to him, "Come, O man, and speak with the Kazi; for thy wife hath complained of thee to him." Said he, "He made peace between us just now." But said they, "We come from another Kazi, and thy wife hath complained of thee to our Kazi." So he arose and went with them to their Kazi, calling on Allah for aid against her; and when he saw her, he said to her, "Did we not make peace, good woman?" Whereupon she cried, "There abideth no peace between me and thee." Accordingly he came forward and told the Kazi his story, adding, "And indeed the Kazi Such-an-one made peace between us this very hour." Whereupon the Kazi said to her, "O strumpet, since ye two have made peace with each other, why comest thou to me complaining?" Quoth

she, “He beat me after that;” but quoth the Kazi, “Make peace each with other, and beat her not again, and she will cross thee no more.” So they made peace and the Kazi said to Ma’aruf, “Give the runners their fee.” So he gave them their fee and going back to his shop, opened it and sat down, as he were a drunken man for excess of the chagrin which befel him. Presently, while he was still sitting, behold, a man came up to him and said, “O Ma’aruf, rise and hide thyself, for thy wife hath complained of thee to the High Court[13] and Abú Tabak[14] is after thee.” So he shut his shop and 6 fled towards the Gate of Victory.[15] He had five Nusfs of silver left of the price of the lasts and gear; and therewith he bought four worth of bread and one of cheese, as he fled from her. Now it was the winter season and the hour of mid-afternoon prayer; so, when he came out among the rubbish-mounds the rain descended upon him, like water from the mouths of water-skins, and his clothes were drenched. He therefore entered the ‘Ádiliyah,[16] where he saw a ruined place and therein a deserted cell without a door; and in it he took refuge and found shelter from the rain. The tears streamed from his eyelids, and he fell to complaining of what had betided him and saying, “Whither shall I flee from this whore? I beseech Thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me one who shall conduct me to a far country, where she shall not know the way to me!” Now while he sat weeping, behold, the wall clave and there came forth to him therefrom one of tall stature, whose aspect caused his body-pile to bristle and his flesh to creep, and said to him, “O man, what aileth thee that thou disturbest me this night? These two hundred years have I dwelt here and have never seen any enter this place and do as thou dost. Tell me what thou wishest and I will accomplish thy need, as ruth for thee hath got hold upon my heart”. Quoth Ma’aruf, “Who and what art thou?”; and quoth he, “I am the Haunter[17] of this place.” So Ma’aruf told him all that had befallen him with his wife and he said, “Wilt thou have me convey thee to a country, where thy wife shall know no way to thee?” “Yes,” said Ma’aruf; and the other, “Then mount my back.” So he mounted on his back and he flew with him from after supper-tide till daybreak, when he set him down on the top of a high mountain——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

7

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Marid having taken up Ma’aruf the Cobbler, flew off with him and set him down upon a high mountain and said to him, “O mortal, descend this mountain and thou wilt see the gate of a city. Enter it, for therein thy wife cannot come at thee.” He then left him and went his way, whilst Ma’aruf abode in amazement and perplexity till the sun rose, when he said to himself, “I will up with me and go down into the city: indeed there is no profit in my abiding upon this highland.” So he descended to the mountain-foot and saw a city girt by towering walls, full of lofty palaces and gold-adorned buildings which was a delight to beholders. He entered in at the gate and found it a place such as lightened

the grieving heart; but, as he walked through the streets the townsfolk stared at him as a curiosity and gathered about him, marvelling at his dress, for it was unlike theirs. Presently, one of them said to him, “O man, art thou a stranger?” “Yes.” “What countryman art thou?” “I am from the city of Cairo the Auspicious.” “And when didst thou leave Cairo?” “I left it yesterday, at the hour of afternoon-prayer.” Whereupon the man laughed at him and cried out, saying, “Come look, O folk, at this man and hear what he saith!” Quoth they, “What doeth he say?” and quoth the townsman, “He pretendeth that he cometh from Cairo and left it yesterday at the hour of afternoon-prayer!” At this they all laughed and gathering round Ma’aruf, said to him, “O man, art thou mad to talk thus? How canst thou pretend that thou leftest Cairo at mid-afternoon yesterday and foundedst thyself this morning here, when the truth is that between our city and Cairo lieth a full year’s journey?” Quoth he, “None is mad but you. As for me, I speak sooth, for here is bread which I brought with me from Cairo, and see, ’tis yet new.” Then he showed them the bread and they stared at it, for it was unlike their country bread. So the crowd increased about him and they said to one another, “This is Cairo bread: look at it;” and he became a gazing-stock in the city and some believed him; whilst others gave him the lie and made mock of him. Whilst this was going on, behold, up came a merchant riding on a she-mule and followed by two black slaves, and brake a way through the people, saying, “O folk, are ye not ashamed to mob this stranger and make mock of him and scoff at him?” And he went on to rate them, till he drave them away from Ma’aruf, and none could make him any answer. Then he said to the stranger, “Come, O my brother, no harm shall betide thee from these folk. Verily they have no shame.”[18] So he took him and carrying him to a spacious and richly-adorned house, seated him in a speak-room fit for a King, whilst he gave an order to his slaves, who opened a chest and brought out to him a dress such as might be worn by a merchant worth a thousand.[19] He clad him therewith and Ma’aruf, being a seemly man, became as he were consul of the merchants. Then his host called for food and they set before them a tray of all manner exquisite viands. The twain ate and drank and the merchant said to Ma’aruf, “O my brother, what is thy name?” “My name is Ma’aruf and I am a cobbler by trade and patch old shoes.” “What countryman art thou?” “I am from Cairo.” “What quarter?” “Dost thou know Cairo?” “I am of its children.[20]” “I come from the Red Street.[21]” “And whom dost thou know in the Red Street?” “I know such an one and such an one,” answered Ma’aruf and named several people to him. Quoth the other, “Knowest thou Shaykh Ahmad the druggist?[22]” “He was my next neighbour, wall to wall.” “Is he well?” “Yes.” “How many sons hath he?” “Three, Mustafà, Mohammed and Ali.” “And what hath Allah done with them?” “As for Mustafà, he is well and he is a learned man, a professor[23]: Mohammed is a druggist and opened him a shop beside that of his father, after he had married, and his wife hath borne him a son named Hasan.” “Allah gladden thee with good news!” said the merchant; and Ma’aruf continued, “As for Ali, he was my friend, when we were boys, and we always played together, I and he.

We used to go in the guise of the children of the Nazarenes and enter the church and steal the books of the Christians and sell them and buy food with the 9price. It chanced once that the Nazarenes caught us with a book; whereupon they complained of us to our folk and said to Ali's father:—An thou hinder not thy son from troubling us, we will complain of thee to the King. So he appeased them and gave Ali a thrashing; wherefore he ran away none knew whither and he hath now been absent twenty years and no man hath brought news of him." Quoth the host, "I am that very Ali, son of Shaykh Ahmad the druggist, and thou art my playmate Ma'aruf."[24] So they saluted each other and after the salam Ali said, "Tell me why, O Ma'aruf, thou camest from Cairo to this city." Then he told him all that had befallen him of ill-doing with his wife Fatimah the Dung and said, "So, when her annoy waxed on me, I fled from her towards the Gate of Victory and went forth the city. Presently, the rain fell heavy on me; so I entered a ruined cell in the Adiliyah and sat there, weeping; whereupon there came forth to me the Haunter of the place, which was an Ifrit of the Jinn, and questioned me. I acquainted him with my case and he took me on his back and flew with me all night between heaven and earth, till he set me down on yonder mountain and gave me to know of this city. So I came down from the mountain and entered the city, when the people crowded about me and questioned me. I told them that I had left Cairo yesterday, but they believed me not, and presently thou camest up and driving the folk away from me, carriedst me to this house. Such, then, is the cause of my quitting Cairo; and thou, what object brought thee hither?" Quoth Ali, "The giddiness[25] of folly turned my head when I was seven years old, from which time I wandered from land to land and city to city, till I came to this city, the name whereof is Ikhtiyán al-Khatan.[26] I found its people an hospitable folk and a kindly, compassionate for the poor man and selling to him on credit and believing all he said. So quoth I to them:—I am a merchant and have preceded my packs and I need a place wherein to bestow my baggage. And they believed me and assigned me a lodging. Then quoth I to them:—Is there any of you will lend me a thousand dinars, till my loads arrive, 10when I will repay it to him; for I am in want of certain things before my goods come? They gave me what I asked and I went to the merchants' bazar, where, seeing goods, I bought them and sold them next day at a profit of fifty gold pieces and bought others.[27] And I consorted with the folk and entreated them liberally, so that they loved me, and I continued to sell and buy, till I grew rich. Know, O my brother, that the proverb saith, The world is show and trickery: and the land where none wotteth thee, there do whatso liketh thee. Thou too, an thou say to all who ask thee, I'm a cobbler by trade and poor withal, and I fled from my wife and left Cairo yesterday, they will not believe thee and thou wilt be a laughing-stock among them as long as thou abidest in the city; whilst, an thou tell them, An Ifrit brought me hither, they will take fright at thee and none will come near thee; for they will say, This man is possessed of an Ifrit and harm will betide whoso approacheth him. And such public

report will be dishonouring both to thee and to me, because they ken I come from Cairo." Ma'aruf asked:—"How then shall I do?"; and Ali answered, "I will tell thee how thou shalt do, Inshallah! To-morrow I will give thee a thousand dinars and a she-mule to ride and a black slave, who shall walk before thee and guide thee to the gate of the merchants' bazar; and do thou go into them. I will be there sitting amongst them, and when I see thee, I will rise to thee and salute thee with the salam and kiss thy hand and make a great man of thee. Whenever I ask thee of any kind of stuff, saying, Hast thou brought with thee aught of such a kind? do thou answer, "Plenty.[28]" And if they question me of thee, I will praise thee and magnify thee in their eyes and say to them, Get him a store-house and a shop. I also will give thee out for a man of great wealth and generosity; and if a beggar come to thee, bestow upon him what thou mayst; so will they put faith in what I say and believe in thy greatness and generosity and love thee. Then will I invite thee to my house and invite all the merchants 11 on thy account and bring together thee and them, so that all may know thee and thou know them,"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-second Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the merchant Ali said to Ma'aruf, "I will invite thee to my house and invite all the merchants on thy account and bring together thee and them, so that all may know thee and thou know them, whereby thou shalt sell and buy and take and give with them; nor will it be long ere thou become a man of money." Accordingly, on the morrow he gave him a thousand

dinars and a suit of clothes and a black slave and mounting him on a she-mule, said to him, “Allah give thee quittance of responsibility for all this,[29] inasmuch as thou art my friend and it behoveth me to deal generously with thee. Have no care; but put away from thee the thought of thy wife’s misways and name her not to any.” “Allah requite thee with good!” replied Ma’aruf and rode on, preceded by his blackamoor till the slave brought him to the gate of the merchants’ bazar, where they were all seated, and amongst them Ali, who when he saw him, rose and threw himself upon him, crying, “A blessed day, O Merchant Ma’aruf, O man of good works and kindness[30]!” And he kissed his hand before the merchants and said to them, “Our brothers, ye are honoured by knowing[31] the merchant Ma’aruf.” So they saluted him, and Ali signed to them to make much of him, wherefore he was magnified in their eyes. Then Ali helped him to dismount from his she-mule and saluted him with the salam; after which he took the merchants apart, one after other, and vaunted Ma’aruf to them. They asked, “Is this man a merchant?;” and he answered, “Yes; and indeed he is the chiefest of merchants, there liveth not a wealthier than he; for his wealth and the riches of his father and forefathers are famous among the merchants of Cairo. He hath partners in Hind and Sind and Al-Yaman 12 and is high in repute for generosity. So know ye his rank and exalt ye his degree and do him service, and wot also that his coming to your city is not for the sake of traffic, and none other save to divert himself with the sight of folk’s countries: indeed, he hath no need of strangerhood for the sake of gain and profit, having wealth that fires cannot consume, and I am one of his servants.” And he ceased not to extol him, till they set him above their heads and began to tell one another of his qualities. Then they gathered round him and offered him junkets[32] and sherbets, and even the Consul of the Merchants came to him and saluted him; whilst Ali proceeded to ask him, in the presence of the traders, “O my lord, haply thou hast brought with thee somewhat of such and such a stuff?”; and Ma’aruf answered, “Plenty.” Now Ali had that day shown him various kinds of costly clothes and had taught him the names of the different stuffs, dear and cheap. Then said one of the merchants, “O my lord, hast thou brought with thee yellow broad cloth?”: and Ma’aruf said, “Plenty”! Quoth another, “And gazelles’ blood red[33]?”; and quoth the Cobbler, “Plenty”; and as often as he asked him of aught, he made him the same answer. So the other said, “O Merchant Ali had thy countryman a mind to transport a thousand loads of costly stuffs, he could do so”; and Ali said, “He would take them from a single one of his store-houses, and miss naught thereof.” Now whilst they were sitting, behold, up came a beggar and went the round of the merchants. One gave him a half dirham and another a copper,[34] but most of them gave him nothing, till he came to Ma’aruf who pulled out a handful of gold and gave it to him, whereupon he blessed him and went his ways. The merchants marvelled at this and said, “Verily, this is a King’s bestowal for he gave the beggar gold without count, and were he not a man of vast wealth and money without end, he had not given a beggar a handful of gold.” After a while, there came to him a poor woman and he gave her a handful of gold;

whereupon she went away, blessing him, and told the other beggars, who came to him, one after other, and he gave them each a handful of gold, till he disbursed the thousand dinars. Then he struck hand upon hand 13 and said, "Allah is our sufficient aid and excellent is the Agent!" Quoth the Consul, "What aileth thee, O Merchant Ma'aruf?"; and quoth he, "It seemeth that the most part of the people of this city are poor and needy; had I known their misery I would have brought with me a large sum of money in my saddle-bags and given largesse thereof to the poor. I fear me I may be long abroad[35] and 'tis not in my nature to baulk a beggar; and I have no gold left: so, if a pauper come to me, what shall I say to him?" Quoth the Consul, "Say, Allah will send thee thy daily bread[36]!"; but Ma'aruf replied, "That is not my practice and I am care-ridden because of this. Would I had other thousand dinars, wherewith to give alms till my baggage come!" "Have no care for that," quoth the Consul and sending one of his dependents for a thousand dinars, handed them to Ma'aruf, who went on giving them to every beggar who passed till the call to noon-prayer. Then they entered the Cathedral-mosque and prayed the noon-prayers, and what was left him of the thousand gold pieces he scattered on the heads of the worshippers. This drew the people's attention to him and they blessed him, whilst the merchants marvelled at the abundance of his generosity and openhandedness. Then he turned to another trader and borrowing of him other thousand ducats, gave these also away, whilst Merchant Ali looked on at what he did, but could not speak. He ceased not to do thus till the call to mid-afternoon prayer, when he entered the mosque and prayed and distributed the rest of the money. On this wise, by the time they locked the doors of the bazar,[37] he had borrowed five thousand sequins and given them away, saying to every one of whom he took aught, "Wait till my baggage come when, if thou desire gold I will give thee gold, and if thou desire stuffs, thou shalt have stuffs; for I have no end of them." At eventide Merchant Ali invited Ma'aruf and the rest of the traders to an entertainment and seated him in the upper end, the place of honour, where he talked of nothing but cloths and jewels, and whenever they made mention to him of aught, he said, "I have plenty of it." Next day, he again repaired to the market-street where he showed a 14 friendly bias towards the merchants and borrowed of them more money, which he distributed to the poor: nor did he leave doing thus twenty days, till he had borrowed threescore thousand dinars, and still there came no baggage, no, nor a burning plague.[38] At last folk began to clamour for their money and say, "The merchant Ma'aruf's baggage cometh not. How long will he take people's monies and give them to the poor?" And quoth one of them, "My rede is that we speak to Merchant Ali." So they went to him and said, "O Merchant Ali, Merchant Ma'aruf's baggage cometh not." Said he, "Have patience, it cannot fail to come soon." Then he took Ma'aruf aside and said to him, "O Ma'aruf, what fashion is this? Did I bid thee brown[39] the bread or burn it? The merchants clamour for their coin and tell me that thou owest them sixty thousand dinars, which thou hast borrowed and given away to

the poor. How wilt thou satisfy the folk, seeing that thou neither sellest nor buyest?" Said Ma'aruf, "What matters it[40]; and what are threescore thousand dinars? When my baggage shall come, I will pay them in stuffs or in gold and silver, as they will." Quoth Merchant Ali, "Allah is Most Great! Hast thou then any baggage?" and he said, "Plenty." Cried the other, "Allah and the Hallows[41] requite thee thine impudence! Did I teach thee this saying, that thou shouldst repeat it to me? But I will acquaint the folk with thee." Ma'aruf rejoined, "Begone and prate no more! Am I a poor man? I have endless wealth in my baggage and as soon as it cometh, they shall have their money's worth, two for one. I have no need of them." At this Merchant Ali waxed wroth and said, "Unmannerly wight that thou art, I will teach thee to lie to me and be not ashamed!" Said Ma'aruf, "E'en work the worst thy hand can do! They must wait till my baggage come, when they shall have their due and more." So Ali left him and went away, saying in himself, "I praised him whilome and if I blame him now, I make myself out a liar and become of those of whom it is 15 said:—Whoso praiseth and then blameth lieth twice."[42] And he knew not what to do. Presently, the traders came to him and said, "O Merchant Ali, hast thou spoken to him?" Said he, "O folk, I am ashamed and, though he owe me a thousand dinars, I cannot speak to him. When ye lent him your money ye consulted me not; so ye have no claim on me. Dun him yourselves, and if he pay you not, complain of him to the King of the city, saying:—He is an impostor who hath imposed upon us. And he will deliver you from the plague of him." Accordingly, they repaired to the King and told him what had passed, saying, "O King of the age, we are perplexed anent this merchant, whose generosity is excessive; for he doeth thus and thus, and all he borroweth, he giveth away to the poor by handsful. Were he a man of naught, his sense would not suffer him to lavish gold on this wise; and were he a man of wealth, his good faith had been made manifest to us by the coming of his baggage; but we see none of his luggage, although he avoucheth that he hath a baggage-train and hath preceded it. Now some time hath past, but there appeareth no sign of his baggage-train, and he oweth us sixty thousand gold pieces, all of which he hath given away in alms." And they went on to praise him and extol his generosity. Now this King was a very covetous man, a more covetous than Ash'ab[43]; and when he heard tell of Ma'aruf's generosity and openhandedness, greed of gain got the better of him and he said to his Wazir, "Were not this merchant a man of immense wealth, he had not shown all this munificence. His baggage-train will assuredly come, whereupon these merchants will flock to him and he will scatter amongst them riches galore. Now I have more right to this money than they; wherefore I have a mind to make friends with him and 16 profess affection for him, so that, when his baggage cometh whatso the merchants would have had I shall get of him; and I will give him my daughter to wife and join his wealth to my wealth." Replied the Wazir, "O King of the age, methinks he is naught but an impostor, and

’tis the impostor who ruineth the house of the covetous;”——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.



Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-third Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir said to the King, “Methinks he is naught but an impostor, and ’tis the impostor who ruineth the house of the covetous;” the King said, “O Wazir, I will prove him and soon know if

he be an impostor or a true man and whether he be a rearling of Fortune or not." The Wazir asked, "And how wilt thou prove him?"; and the King answered, "I will send for him to the presence and entreat him with honour and give him a jewel which I have. An he know it and wot its price, he is a man of worth and wealth; but an he know it not, he is an impostor and an upstart and I will do him die by the foulest fashion of deaths." So he sent for Ma'aruf, who came and saluted him. The King returned his salam and seating him beside himself, said to him, "Art thou the merchant Ma'aruf?" and said he, "Yes." Quoth the King, "The merchants declare that thou owest them sixty thousand ducats. Is this true?" "Yes," quoth he. Asked the King, "Then why dost thou not give them their money?"; and he answered, "Let them wait till my baggage come and I will repay them twofold. An they wish for gold, they shall have gold; and should they wish for silver, they shall have silver; or an they prefer for merchandise, I will give them merchandise; and to whom I owe a thousand I will give two thousand in requital of that wherewith he hath veiled my face before the poor; for I have plenty." Then said the King, "O merchant, take this and look what is its kind and value." And he gave him a jewel the bigness of a hazel-nut, which he had bought for a thousand sequins and not having its fellow, prized it highly. Ma'aruf took it and pressing it between his thumb and forefinger brake it, for it was brittle and would not brook the squeeze. Quoth the King, "Why hast thou broken the jewel?"; and Ma'aruf laughed and said, "O King 17 of the age, this is no jewel. This is but a bittock of mineral worth a thousand dinars; why dost thou style it a jewel? A jewel I call such as is worth threescore and ten thousand gold pieces and this is called but a piece of stone. A jewel that is not of the bigness of a walnut hath no worth in my eyes and I take no account thereof. How cometh it, then, that thou, who art King, stylest this thing a jewel, when 'tis but a bit of mineral worth a thousand dinars? But ye are excusable, for that ye are poor folk and have not in your possession things of price." The King asked, "O merchant, hast thou jewels such as those whereof thou speakest?"; and he answered, "Plenty." Whereupon avarice overcame the King and he said, "Wilt thou give me real jewels?" Said Ma'aruf, "When my baggage-train shall come, I will give thee no end of jewels; and all that thou canst desire I have in plenty and will give thee, without price." At this the King rejoiced and said to the traders, "Wend your ways and have patience with him, till his baggage arrive, when do ye come to me and receive your monies from me." So they fared forth and the King turned to his Wazir and said to him, "Pay court to Merchant Ma'aruf and take and give with him in talk and bespeak him of my daughter, Princess Dunyá, that he may wed her and so we gain these riches he hath." Said the Wazir, "O King of the age, this man's fashion misliketh me and methinks he is an impostor and a liar: so leave this whereof thou speakest lest thou lose thy daughter for naught." Now this Minister had sued the King aforetime to give him his daughter to wife and he was willing to do so, but when she heard of it she consented not to marry him. Accordingly, the King said to him, "O traitor, thou desirest no good for me, because in past time thou soughtest

my daughter in wedlock, but she would none of thee; so now thou wouldst cut off the way of her marriage and wouldst have the Princess lie fallow, that thou mayst take her; but hear from me one word. Thou hast no concern in this matter. How can he be an impostor and a liar, seeing that he knew the price of the jewel, even that for which I bought it, and brake it because it pleased him not? He hath jewels in plenty, and when he goeth in to my daughter and seeth her to be beautiful, she will captivate his reason and he will love her and give her jewels and things of price: but, as for thee, thou wouldst forbid my daughter and myself these good things." So the Minister was silent, for fear of the King's anger, and said to himself, "Set the curs on the 18 cattle[44]!" Then with show of friendly bias he betook himself to Ma'aruf and said to him, "His highness the King loveth thee and hath a daughter, a winsome lady and a lovesome, to whom he is minded to marry thee. What sayst thou?" Said he, "No harm in that; but let him wait till my baggage come, for marriage-settlements on Kings' daughters are large and their rank demandeth that they be not endowed save with a dowry befitting their degree. At this present I have no money with me till the coming of my baggage, for I have wealth in plenty and needs must I make her marriage-portion five thousand purses. Then I shall need a thousand purses to distribute amongst the poor and needy on my wedding-night, and other thousand to give to those who walk in the bridal procession and yet other thousand wherewith to provide provaunt for the troops and others[45]; and I shall want an hundred jewels to give to the Princess on the wedding-morning[46] and other hundred gems to distribute among the slave-girls and eunuchs, for I must give each of them a jewel in honour of the bride; and I need wherewithal to clothe a thousand naked paupers, and alms too needs must be given. All this cannot be done till my baggage come; but I have plenty and, once it is here, I shall make no account of all this outlay." The Wazir returned to the King and told him what Ma'aruf said, whereupon quoth he, "Since this is his wish, how canst thou style him impostor and liar?" Replied the Minister, "And I cease not to say this." But the King chid him angrily and threatened him, saying, "By the life of my head, an thou cease not this talk, I will slay thee! Go back to him and fetch him to me and I will manage matters with him myself." So the Wazir returned to Ma'aruf and said to him, "Come and speak with the King." "I hear and I obey," said Ma'aruf and went in to the King, who said to him, "Thou shalt not put me off with these excuses, for my treasury is full; so take the keys and spend all thou needest and give what thou wilt and clothe the poor and do thy desire and have no care for the girl and the handmaids. When the baggage shall come, do what thou wilt with thy wife, by way of generosity, and we will have patience with thee anent the marriage-portion till then, for there is no manner of difference betwixt me and thee; none at 19 all." Then he sent for the Shaykh Al-Islam[47] and bade him write out the marriage-contract between his daughter and Merchant Ma'aruf, and he did so; after which the King gave the signal for beginning the wedding festivities and bade decorate the city. The kettle

drums beat and the tables were spread with meats of all kinds and there came performers who paraded their tricks. Merchant Ma'aruf sat upon a throne in a parlour and the players and gymnasts and effeminates[48] and dancing-men of wondrous movements and posture-makers of marvellous cunning came before him, whilst he called out to the treasurer and said to him, "Bring gold and silver." So he brought gold and silver and Ma'aruf went round among the spectators and largessed each performer by the handful; and he gave alms to the poor and needy and clothes to the naked and it was a clamorous festival and a right merry. The treasurer could not bring money fast enough from the treasury, and the Wazir's heart was like to burst for rage; but he dared not say a word, whilst Merchant Ali marvelled at this waste of wealth and said to Merchant Ma'aruf, "Allah and the Hallows visit this upon thy head-sides[49]! Doth it not suffice thee to squander the traders' money, but thou must squander that of the King to boot?" Replied Ma'aruf, "'Tis none of thy concern: whenas my baggage shall come, I will requite the King manifold." And he went on lavishing money and saying in himself, "A burning plague! What will happen will happen and there is no flying from that which is fore-ordained." The festivities ceased not for the space of forty days, and on the one-and-fortieth day, they made the bride's cortège and all the Emirs and troops walked before her. When they brought her in before Ma'aruf, he began scattering gold on the people's heads, and they made her a mighty fine procession, whilst Ma'aruf expended in her honour vast sums of money. Then they brought him in to Princess Dunya and he sat down on the high divan; after which 20 they let fall the curtains and shut the doors and withdrew, leaving him alone with his bride; whereupon he smote hand upon hand and sat awhile sorrowful and saying, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Quoth the Princess, "O my lord, Allah preserve thee! What aileth thee that thou art troubled?" Quoth he, "And how should I be other than troubled, seeing that thy father hath embarrassed me and done with me a deed which is like the burning of green corn?" She asked, "And what hath my father done with thee? Tell me!"; and he answered, "He hath brought me in to thee before the coming of my baggage, and I want at very least an hundred jewels to distribute among thy handmaids, to each a jewel, so she might rejoice therein and say, My lord gave me a jewel on the night of his going in to my lady. This good deed would I have done in honour of thy station and for the increase of thy dignity; and I have no need to stint myself in lavishing jewels, for I have of them great plenty." Rejoined she, "Be not concerned for that. As for me, trouble not thyself about me, for I will have patience with thee till thy baggage shall come, and as for my women have no care for them. Rise, doff thy clothes and take thy pleasure; and when the baggage cometh we shall get the jewels and the rest." So he arose and putting off his clothes sat down on the bed and sought love-liesse and they fell to toying with each other. He laid his hand on her knee and she sat down in his lap and thrust her lip like a tit-bit of meat into his mouth, and that hour was such as maketh a man to forget his father and his mother. So he clasped her in his arms and

strained her fast to his breast and sucked her lip, till the honey-dew ran out into his mouth; and he laid his hand under her left-armpit, whereupon his vitals and her vitals yearned for coition. Then he clapped her between the breasts and his hand slipped down between her thighs and she girded him with her legs, whereupon he made of the two parts proof amain and crying out, "O sire of the chin-veils twain[50]!" applied the priming and kindled the match and set it to the touch-hole and gave fire and breached the citadel in its four corners; so 21 there befel the mystery[51] concerning which there is no enquiry; and she cried the cry that needs must be cried.[52]——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-fourth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that while the Princess Dunya cried the cry which must be cried, Merchant Ma'aruf abated her maidenhead and that night was one not to be counted among lives for that which it comprised of the enjoyment of the fair, clipping and dallying *langue fourrée* and futtering till the dawn of day, when he arose and entered the Hammam whence, after donning a suit for sovrans suitable he betook himself to the King's Divan. All who were there rose to him and received him with honour and worship, giving him joy and invoking blessings upon him; and he sat down by the King's side and asked, "Where is the treasurer?" They answered, "Here he is, before thee," and he said to him, "Bring robes of honour for all the Wazirs and Emirs and dignitaries and clothe them therewith." The treasurer brought him all he sought and he sat giving to all who came to him and lavishing largesse upon every man according to his station. On this wise he abode twenty days, whilst no baggage appeared for him nor aught else, till the treasurer was straitened by him to the uttermost and going in to the King, as he sat alone with the Wazir in Ma'aruf's absence, kissed ground between his hands and said, "O King of the age, I must tell thee somewhat, lest haply thou blame me for not acquainting thee therewith. Know that the treasury is being exhausted; there is none but a little money left in it and in ten days more we shall shut it upon emptiness." Quoth the King, "O Wazir, verily my son-in-law's baggage-train tarrieth long and there appeareth no news thereof." The Minister laughed and said, "Allah be gracious to thee, O King of the age! Thou art none other but heedless with respect 22 to this impostor, this liar. As thy head liveth, there is no baggage for him, no, nor a burning plague to rid us of him! Nay, he hath but imposed on thee without surcease, so that he hath wasted thy treasures and married thy daughter for naught. How long therefore wilt thou be heedless of this liar?" Then quoth the King, "O Wazir, how shall we do to learn the truth of his case?"; and quoth the Wazir, "O King of the age, none may come at a man's secret but his wife; so send for thy daughter and let her come behind the curtain, that I may question her of the truth of his estate, to the intent that she may make question of him and acquaint us with his case." Cried the King, "There is no harm in that; and as my head liveth, if it be proved that he is a liar and an impostor, I

will verily do him die by the foulest of deaths!" Then he carried the Wazir into the sitting-chamber and sent for his daughter, who came behind the curtain, her husband being absent, and said, "What wouldst thou, O my father?" Said he "Speak with the Wazir." So she asked, "Ho thou, the Wazir, what is thy will?"; and he answered, "O my lady, thou must know that thy husband hath squandered thy father's substance and married thee without a dower; and he ceaseth not to promise us and break his promises, nor cometh there any tidings of his baggage; in short we would have thee inform us concerning him." Quoth she, "Indeed his words be many, and he still cometh and promiseth me jewels and treasures and costly stuffs; but I see nothing." Quoth the Wazir, "O my lady, canst thou this night take and give with him in talk and whisper to him:—Say me sooth and fear from me naught, for thou art become my husband and I will not transgress against thee. So tell me the truth of the matter and I will devise thee a device whereby thou shalt be set at rest. And do thou play near and far[53] with him in words and profess love to him and win him to confess and after tell us the facts of his case." And she answered, "O my papa, I know how I will make proof of him." Then she went away and after supper her husband came in to her, according to his wont, whereupon Princess Dunya rose to him and took him under the armpit and wheedled him with winsomest wheedling (and all-sufficient[54] are woman's wiles whenas she would aught of men); and she ceased not 23 to caress him and beguile him with speech sweeter than the honey till she stole his reason; and when she saw that he altogether inclined to her, she said to him, "O my beloved, O coolth of my eyes and fruit of my vitals, Allah never desolate me by less of thee nor Time sunder us twain me and thee! Indeed, the love of thee hath homed in my heart and the fire of passion hath consumed my liver, nor will I ever forsake thee or transgress against thee. But I would have thee tell me the truth, for that the sleights of falsehood profit not, nor do they secure credit at all seasons. How long wilt thou impose upon my father and lie to him? I fear lest thine affair be discovered to him, ere we can devise some device and he lay violent hands upon thee? So acquaint me with the facts of the case for naught shall befal thee save that which shall begladden thee; and, when thou shalt have spoken sooth, fear not harm shall betide thee. How often wilt thou declare that thou art a merchant and a man of money and hast a luggage-train? This long while past thou sayest, My baggage! my baggage! but there appeareth no sign of thy baggage, and visible in thy face is anxiety on this account. So an there be no worth in thy words, tell me and I will contrive thee a contrivance whereby thou shalt come off safe, Inshallah!" He replied, "I will tell thee the truth, and then do thou whatso thou wilt." Rejoined she, "Speak and look thou speak soothly; for sooth is the ark of safety, and beware of lying, for it dishonoureth the liar and God-gifted is he who said:—

'Ware that truth thou speak, albe sooth when said ✿ Shall cause thee in threatenèd fire to fall:
And seek Allah's approof, for most foolish he ✿ Who shall anger his Lord to make friends with thrall.

He said, “Know, then, O my lady, that I am no merchant and have no baggage, no, nor a burning plague; nay, I was but a cobbler in my own country and had a wife called Fatimah the Dung, with whom there befel me this and that.” And he told her his story from beginning to end; whereat she laughed and said, “Verily, thou art clever in the practice of lying and imposture!” Whereto he answered, “O my lady, may Allah Almighty preserve thee to veil sins and countervail chagrins!” Rejoined she, “Know, that thou imposedst upon my sire and deceivedst him by dint of thy deluding vaunts, so that of his greed for gain he married me to thee. Then thou squanderedst 24 his wealth and the Wazir beareth thee a grudge for this. How many a time hath he spoken against thee to my father, saying, Indeed, he is an impostor, a liar! But my sire hearkened not to his say, for that he had sought me in wedlock and I consented not that he be baron and I femme. However, the time grew longsome upon my sire and he became straitened and said to me, Make him confess. So I have made thee confess and that which was covered is discovered. Now my father purposeth thee a mischief because of this; but thou art become my husband and I will never transgress against thee. An I told my father what I have learnt from thee, he would be certified of thy falsehood and imposture and that thou imposest upon Kings’ daughters and squanderest royal wealth: so would thine offence find with him no pardon and he would slay thee sans a doubt: wherefore it would be bruited among the folk that I married a man who was a liar, an impostor, and this would smirch mine honour. Furthermore an he kill thee, most like he will require me to wed another, and to such thing I will never consent; no, not though I die![55] So rise now and don a Mameluke’s dress and take these fifty thousand dinars of my monies, and mount a swift steed and get thee to a land whither the rule of my father doth not reach. Then make thee a merchant and send me a letter by a courier who shall bring it privily to me, that I may know in what land thou art, so I may send thee all my hand can attain. Thus shall thy wealth wax great and if my father die, I will send for thee, and thou shalt return in respect and honour; and if we die, thou or I and go to the mercy of God the Most Great, the Resurrection shall unite us. This, then, is the rede that is right: and while we both abide alive and well, I will not cease to send thee letters and monies. Arise ere the day wax bright and thou be in perplexed plight and perdition upon thy head alight!” Quoth he, “O my lady, I beseech thee of thy favour to bid me farewell with thine embracement;” and quoth she, “No harm in that.”[56] So he embraced her and knew her carnally; after which he made the Ghusl-ablution; then, donning the dress of a white slave, he bade the syces saddle him a thoroughbred steed. Accordingly, they 25 saddled him a courser and he mounted and farewelling his wife, rode forth the city at the last of the night, whilst all who saw him deemed him one of the Mamelukes of the Sultan going abroad on some business. Next morning, the King and his Wazir repaired to the sitting-chamber and sent for Princess Dunya who came behind the curtain; and her father said to her, “O my daughter, what sayst thou?” Said

she, “I say, Allah blacken thy Wazir’s face, because he would have blackened my face in my husband’s eyes!” Asked the King, “How so?”; and she answered, “He came in to me yesterday; but, before I could name the matter to him, behold, in walked Faraj the Chief Eunuch, letter in hand, and said:—Ten white slaves stand under the palace window and have given me this letter, saying:—Kiss for us the hands of our lord, Merchant Ma’aruf, and give him this letter, for we are of his Mamelukes with the baggage, and it hath reached us that he hath wedded the King’s daughter, so we are come to acquaint him with that which befel us by the way. Accordingly I took the letter and read as follows:—From the five hundred Mamelukes to his highness our lord Merchant Ma’aruf. But further. We give thee to know that, after thou quittedst us, the Arabs[57] came out upon us and attacked us. They were two thousand horse and we five hundred mounted slaves and there befel a mighty sore fight between us and them. They hindered us from the road thirty days doing battle with them and this is the cause of our tarrying from thee.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Princess Dunya said to her sire, “My husband received a letter from his dependents ending with:—The Arabs hindered us from the road thirty days which is the cause of our being behind time. They also took from us of the luggage two hundred loads of cloth and slew of us fifty Mamelukes. When the news reached my husband, he cried, Allah disappoint them! What ailed them to wage war with the Arabs for the sake of two hundred loads of merchandise? 26 What are two hundred loads? It behoved them not to tarry on that account, for verily the value of the two hundred loads is only some seven thousand dinars. But needs must I go to them and hasten them. As for that which the Arabs have taken, ’twill not be missed from the baggage, nor doth it weigh with me a whit, for I reckon it as if I had given it to them by way of an alms. Then he went down from me, laughing and taking no concern for the wastage of his wealth nor the slaughter of his slaves. As soon as he was gone, I looked out from the lattice and saw the ten Mamelukes who had brought him the letter, as they were moons, each clad in a suit of clothes worth two thousand dinars, there is not with my father a chattel to match one of them. He went forth with them to bring up his baggage and hallowed be Allah who hindered me from saying to him aught of that thou badest me, for he would have made mock of me and thee, and haply he would have eyed me with the eye of disparagement and hated me. But the fault is all with thy Wazir,[58] who speaketh against my husband words that besit him not.” Replied the King, “O my daughter, thy husband’s wealth is indeed endless and he recketh not of it; for, from the day he entered our city, he hath done naught but give alms to the poor. Inshallah, he will speedily return with the baggage, and good in plenty shall betide us from him.” And he went on to appease her and menace the Wazir, being duped by her device. So fared

it with the King; but as regards Merchant Ma'aruf he rode on into waste lands, perplexed and knowing not to what quarter he should betake him; and for the anguish of parting he lamented and in the pangs of passion and love-longing he recited these couplets:—

Time falsed our Union and divided who were one in tway; ✿ And the sore tyranny of Time doth melt my heart away:

Mine eyes ne'er cease to drop the tear for parting with my dear; ✿ When shall Disunion come to end and dawn the Union-day?

O favour like the full moon's face of sheen, indeed I'm he ✿ Whom thou didst leave with vitals torn when faring on thy way.

Would I had never seen thy sight, or met thee for an hour; ✿ Since after sweetest taste of thee to bitters I'm a prey.

27 Ma'aruf will never cease to be enthralled by Dunyá's[59] charms ✿ And long live she albe he die whom love and longing slay,

O brilliance, like resplendent sun of noontide, deign them heal ✿ His heart for kindness[60] and the fire of longing love allay!

Would Heaven I wot an e'er the days shall deign conjoin our lots, ✿ Join us in pleasant talk o' nights, in Union glad and gay:

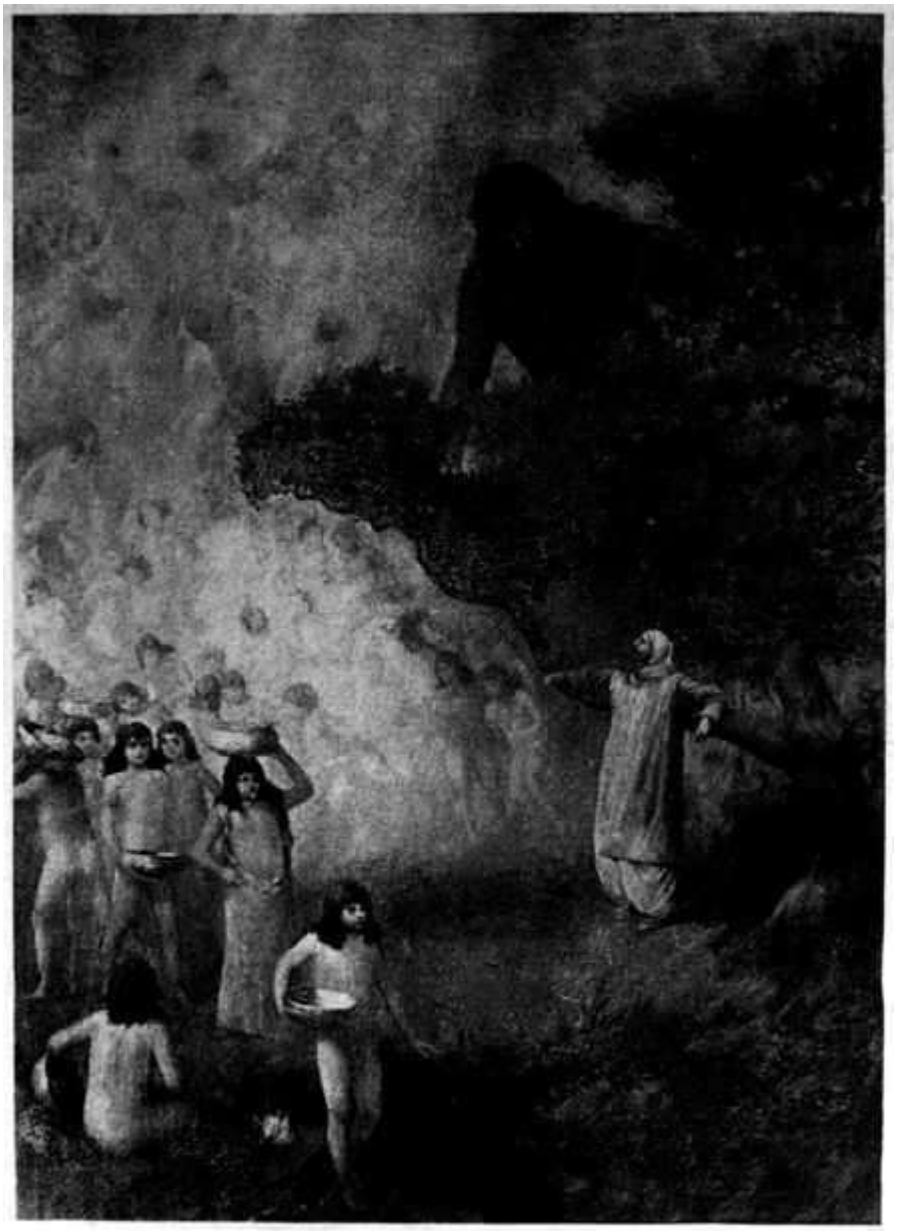
Shall my love's palace hold two hearts that savour joy, and I ✿ Strain to my breast the branch I saw upon the sand-hill[61] sway?

O favour of full moon in sheen, never may sun o' thee ✿ Surcease to rise from Eastern rim with all-enlightening ray!

I'm well content with passion-pine and all its bane and bate ✿ For luck in love is evermore the butt of jealous Fate.

And when he ended his verses, he wept with sore weeping, for indeed the ways were walled up before his face and death seemed to him better than dreeing life, and he walked on like a drunken man for stress of distraction, and stayed not till noontide, when he came to a little town and saw a plougher hard by, ploughing with a yoke of bulls. Now hunger was sore upon him; and he went up to the ploughman and said to him, "Peace be with thee!"; and he returned his salam and said to him, "Welcome, O my lord! Art thou one of the Sultan's Mamelukes?" Quoth Ma'aruf, "Yes;" and the other said, "Alight with me for a guest-meal." Whereupon Ma'aruf knew him to be of the liberal and said to him, "O my brother, I see with thee naught with which thou mayst feed me: how is it, then, that thou invitest me?" Answered the husbandman, "O my lord, weal is well nigh.[62] Dismount thee here: the town is near hand and I will go and fetch thee dinner and fodder for thy stallion." Rejoined Ma'aruf, "Since the town is near at hand, I can go thither as quickly as thou canst and buy me what I have a mind to in the bazar and eat." The peasant replied, "O my lord, the place is but a little village[63] and there is no bazar there, neither selling nor buying. So I conjure thee by Allah, alight here with me and hearten my heart, and I will run thither and return to thee in haste." Accordingly he dismounted 28 and the Fellah left him and went off to

the village, to fetch dinner for him whilst Ma'aruf sat awaiting him. Presently he said in himself, "I have taken this poor man away from his work; but I will arise and plough in his stead, till he come back, to make up for having hindered him from his work.[64]" Then he took the plough and starting the bulls, ploughed a little, till the share struck against something and the beasts stopped. He goaded them on, but they could not move the plough; so he looked at the share and finding it caught in a ring of gold, cleared away the soil and saw that it was set centre-most a slab of alabaster, the size of the nether millstone. He strave at the stone till he pulled it from its place, when there appeared beneath it a souterrain with a stair. Presently he descended the flight of steps and came to a place like a Hammam, with four daïses, the first full of gold, from floor to roof, the second full of emeralds and pearls and coral also from ground to ceiling; the third of jacinths and rubies and turquoises and the fourth of diamonds and all manner other preciousest stones. At the upper end of the place stood a coffer of clearest crystal, full of union-gems each the size of a walnut, and upon the coffer lay a casket of gold, the bigness of a lemon. When he saw this, he marvelled and rejoiced with joy exceeding and said to himself, "I wonder what is in this casket?" So he opened it and found therein a seal-ring of gold, whereon were graven names and talismans, as they were the tracks of creeping ants. He rubbed the ring and behold, a voice said, "Adsum! Here am I, at thy service, O my lord! Ask and it shall be given unto thee. Wilt thou raise a city or ruin a capital or kill a king or dig a river-channel or aught of the kind? Whatso thou seekest, it shall come to pass, by leave of the King of All-might, Creator of day and night." Ma'aruf asked, "O creature of my lord, who and what art thou?"; and the other answered, "I am the slave of this seal-ring standing in the service of him who possesseth it. Whatsoever he seeketh, that I accomplish for him, and I have no excuse in neglecting that he biddeth me do; because I am Sultan over two-and-seventy tribes of the Jinn, each two-and-seventy thousand in number every one of which thousand ruleth over a thousand Marids, each Marid over a thousand Ifrits, each Ifrit over a thousand Satans and each Satan over a thousand Jinn: and they are all under command of me and may not gainsay me. As 29 for me, I am spelled to this seal-ring and may not thwart whoso holdeth it. Lo! thou hast gotten hold of it and I am become thy slave; so ask what thou wilt, for I hearken to thy word and obey thy bidding; and if thou have need of me at any time, by land or by sea rub the signet-ring and thou wilt find me with thee. But beware of rubbing it twice in succession, or thou wilt consume me with the fire of the names graven thereon; and thus wouldst thou lose me and after regret me. Now I have acquainted thee with my case and—the Peace!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-sixth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Slave of the Signet-ring acquainted Ma'aruf with his case, the Merchant asked him, "What is thy name?" and the Jinni answered, "My name is Abú al-Sa'ádát.[65]" Quoth Ma'aruf, "O Abu al-Sa'adat what is this place and who enchanted thee in this casket?"; and quoth he, "O my lord, this is a treasure called the Hoard of Shaddád son of Ad, him who the

base of ‘Many-columned Iram laid, the like of which in the lands was never made.[66]’ I was his slave in his lifetime and this is his Seal-ring, which he laid up in his treasure; but it hath fallen to thy lot.” Ma’aruf enquired, “Canst thou transport that which is in this hoard to the surface of the earth?”; and the Jinni replied, “Yes! Nothing were easier.” Said Ma’aruf, “Bring it forth and leave naught.” So the Jinni signed with his hand to the ground, which clave asunder, and he sank and was absent a little while. Presently, there came forth young boys full of grace, and fair of face bearing golden baskets filled with gold which they emptied out and going away, returned with more; nor did they cease to transport the gold and jewels, till ere an hour had sped they said, “Naught is left in the hoard.” Thereupon out came Abu al-Sa’adat and said to Ma’aruf, “O my lord, thou seest that we have brought forth all that was in the hoard.” Ma’aruf asked, “Who be these beautiful 30 boys?” and the Jinni answered, “They are my sons. This matter merited not that I should muster for it the Marids, wherefore my sons have done thy desire and are honoured by such service. So ask what thou wilt beside this.” Quoth Ma’aruf, “Canst thou bring me he-mules and chests and fill the chests with the treasure and load them on the mules?” Quoth Abu al-Sa’adat, “Nothing easier,” and cried a great cry; whereupon his sons presented themselves before him, to the number of eight hundred, and he said to them, “Let some of you take the semblance of he-mules and others of muleteers and handsome Mamelukes, the like of the least of whom is not found with any of the Kings; and others of you be transmewed to muleteers, and the rest to menials.” So seven hundred of them changed themselves into bât-mules and other hundred took the shape of slaves. Then Abu al-Sa’adat called upon his Marids, who presented themselves between his hands and he commanded some of them to assume the aspect of horses saddled with saddles of gold crusted with jewels. And when Ma’aruf saw them do as he bade he cried, “Where be the chests?” They brought them before him and he said, “Pack the gold and the stones, each sort by itself.” So they packed them and loaded three hundred he-mules with them. Then asked Ma’aruf, “O Abu al-Sa’adat, canst thou bring me some loads of costly stuffs?”; and the Jinni answered, “Wilt thou have Egyptian stuffs or Syrian or Persian or Indian or Greek?” Ma’aruf said, “Bring me an hundred loads of each kind, on five hundred mules;” and Abu al-Sa’adat, “O my lord accord me delay that I may dispose my Marids for this and send a company of them to each country to fetch an hundred loads of its stuffs and then take the form of he-mules and return, carrying the stuffs.” Ma’aruf enquired, “What time dost thou want?”; and Abu al-Sa’adat replied, “The time of the blackness of the night, and day shall not dawn ere thou have all thou desirest.” Said Ma’aruf, “I grant thee this time,” and bade them pitch him a pavilion. So they pitched it and he sat down therein and they brought him a table of food. Then said Abu al-Sa’adat to him, “O my lord, tarry thou in this tent and these my sons shall guard thee: so fear thou nothing; for I go to muster my Marids and despatch them to do thy desire.” So saying, he departed, leaving Ma’aruf seated in the pavilion, with the table before him and the Jinni’s sons attending upon him, in the

guise of slaves and servants and suite. And while he sat in this state behold, up came the husbandman, 31 with a great porringer of lentils[67] and a nose-bag full of barley and seeing the pavilion pitched and the Mamelukes standing, hands upon breasts, thought that the Sultan was come and had halted on that stead. So he stood open-mouthed and said in himself, "Would I had killed a couple of chickens and fried them red with clarified cow-butter for the Sultan!" And he would have turned back to kill the chickens as a regale for the Sultan; but Ma'aruf saw him and cried out to him and said to the Mamelukes, "Bring him hither." So they brought him and his porringer of lentils before Ma'aruf, who said to him, "What is this?" Said the peasant, "This is thy dinner and thy horse's fodder! Excuse me, for I thought not that the Sultan would come hither; and, had I known that, I would have killed a couple of chickens and entertained him in goodly guise." Quoth Ma'aruf, "The Sultan is not come. I am his son-in-law and I was vexed with him. However he hath sent his officers to make his peace with me, and now I am minded to return to city. But thou hast made me this guest-meal without knowing me, and I accept it from thee, lentils though it be, and will not eat save of thy cheer." Accordingly he bade him set the porringer amiddlemost the table and ate of it his sufficiency, whilst the Fellah filled his belly with those rich meats. Then Ma'aruf washed his hands and gave the Mamelukes leave to eat; so they fell upon the remains of the meal and ate; and, when the porringer was empty, he filled it with gold and gave it to the peasant, saying, "Carry this to thy dwelling and come to me in the city, and I will entreat thee with honour." Thereupon the peasant took the porringer full of gold and returned to the village, driving the bulls before him and deeming himself akin to the King. Meanwhile, they brought Ma'aruf girls of the Brides of the Treasure,[68] who smote on instruments of music and danced before him, and he passed that night in joyance and delight, a night not to be reckoned among lives. Hardly had dawned the day when there arose a great cloud of dust which presently lifting, discovered seven hundred mules laden with stuffs and attended by muleteers and baggage-tenders and cresset-bearers. With them came Abu al-Sa'adat, riding on a she-mule, in the guise of a caravan-leader, 32 and before him was a travelling-litter, with four corner-terminals[69] of glittering red gold, set with gems. When Abu al-Sa'adat came up to the tent, he dismounted and kissing the earth, said to Ma'aruf, "O my lord, thy desire hath been done to the uttermost and in the litter is a treasure-suit which hath not its match among Kings' raiment: so don it and mount the litter and bid us do what thou wilt." Quoth Ma'aruf, "O Abu al-Sa'adat, I wish thee to go to the city of Ikhtiyan al-Khutan and present thyself to my father-in-law the King; and go thou not in to him but in the guise of a mortal courier;" and quoth he, "To hear is to obey." So Ma'aruf wrote a letter to the Sultan and sealed it and Abu al-Sa'adat took it and set out with it; and when he arrived, he found the King saying, "O Wazir, indeed my heart is concerned for my son-in-law and I fear lest the Arabs slay him. Would Heaven I wot whither he was bound, that I might have followed him with the

troops! Would he had told me his destination!" Said the Wazir, "Allah be merciful to thee for this thy heedlessness! As thy head liveth, the wight saw that we were awake to him and feared dishonour and fled, for he is nothing but an impostor, a liar." And behold, at this moment in came the courier and kissing ground before the King, wished him permanent glory and prosperity and length of life. Asked the King, "Who art thou and what is thy business?" "I am a courier," answered the Jinni, "and thy son-in-law who is come with the baggage sendeth me to thee with a letter, and here it is!" So he took the letter and read therein these words, "After salutations galore to our uncle[70] the glorious King! Know that I am at hand with the baggage-train: so come thou forth to meet me with the troops." Cried the King, "Allah blacken thy brow, O Wazir! How often wilt thou defame my son-in-law's name and call him liar and impostor? Behold, he is come with the baggage-train and thou art naught but a traitor." The Minister hung his head groundwards in shame and confusion and replied, "O King of the age, I said not this save because of the long delay of the baggage and because I feared the loss of the wealth he hath wasted." The King exclaimed, "O 33 traitor, what are my riches! Now that his baggage is come he will give me great plenty in their stead." Then he bade decorate the city and going in to his daughter, said to her, "Good news for thee! Thy husband will be here anon with his baggage; for he hath sent me a letter to that effect and here am I now going forth to meet him." The Princess Dunya marvelled at this and said in herself, "This is a wondrous thing! Was he laughing at me and making mock of me, or had he a mind to try me, when he told me that he was a pauper? But Alhamdolillah, Glory to God, for that I failed not of my duty to him!" On this wise fared it in the Palace; but as regards Merchant Ali, the Cairene, when he saw the decoration of the city and asked the cause thereof, they said to him, "The baggage-train of Merchant Ma'aruf, the King's son-in-law, is come." Said he, "Allah is Almighty! What a calamity is this man![71] He came to me, fleeing from his wife, and he was a poor man. Whence then should he get a baggage-train? But haply this is a device which the King's daughter hath contrived for him, fearing his disgrace, and Kings are not unable to do anything. May Allah the Most High veil his fame and not bring him to public shame!"——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-seventh Night,

She pursued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Merchant Ali asked the cause of the decorations, they told him the truth of the case; so he blessed Merchant Ma'aruf and cried, "May Allah Almighty veil his fame and not bring him to public shame!" And all the merchants rejoiced and were glad for that they would get their monies. Then the King assembled his troops and rode forth, whilst Abu al-Sa'adat returned to Ma'aruf and acquainted him with the delivering of the letter. Quoth Ma'aruf, "Bind on the loads;" and when they had done so, he donned the treasure-suit and mounting the litter became a thousand times greater and more

majestic than the King. Then he set forward; but, when he had gone half-way, behold, the King met him with the troops, and seeing him riding in the 34 Takhtrawan and clad in the dress aforesaid, threw himself upon him and saluted him, and giving him joy of his safety, greeted him with the greeting of peace. Then all the Lords of the land saluted him and it was made manifest that he had spoken the truth and that in him there was no lie. Presently he entered the city in such state procession as would have caused the gall-bladder of the lion to burst[72] for envy and the traders pressed up to him and kissed his hands, whilst Merchant Ali said to him, "Thou hast played off this trick and it hath prospered to thy hand, O Shaykh of Impostors! But thou deservest it and may Allah the Most High increase thee of His bounty!"; whereupon Ma'aruf laughed. Then he entered the palace and sitting down on the throne said, "Carry the loads of gold into the treasury of my uncle the King and bring me the bales of cloth." So they brought them to him and opened them before him, bale after bale, till they had unpacked the seven hundred loads, whereof he chose out the best and said, "Bear these to Princess Dunya that she may distribute them among her slave-girls; and carry her also this coffer of jewels, that she may divide them among her handmaids and eunuchs." Then he proceeded to make over to the merchants in whose debt he was stuffs by way of payment for their arrears, giving him whose due was a thousand, stuffs worth two thousand or more; after which he fell to distributing to the poor and needy, whilst the King looked on with greedy eyes and could not hinder him; nor did he cease largesse till he had made an end of the seven hundred loads, when he turned to the troops and proceeded to apportion amongst them emeralds and rubies and pearls and coral and other jewels by handsful, without count, till the King said to him, "Enough of this giving, O my son! There is but little left of the baggage." But he said, "I have plenty." Then indeed, his good faith was become manifest and none could give him the lie; and he had come to reck not of giving, for that the Slave of the Seal-ring brought him whatsoever he sought. Presently, the treasurer came in to the King and said, "O King of the age, the treasury is full indeed and will not hold the rest of the loads. Where shall we lay that which is left of the gold and jewels?" And he assigned to him another place. As for the Princess 35 Dunya when she saw this, her joy redoubled and she marvelled and said in herself, "Would I wot how came he by all this wealth!" In like manner the traders rejoiced in that which he had given them and blessed him; whilst Merchant Ali marvelled and said to himself, "I wonder how he hath lied and swindled, that he hath gotten him all these treasures[73]? Had they come from the King's daughter, he had not wasted them on this wise! But how excellent is his saying who said:—

When the Kings' King giveth, in reverence pause ✿ And venture not to enquire the cause:

Allah gives His gifts unto whom He will, ✿ So respect and abide by His Holy Laws!

So far concerning him; but as regards the King, he also marvelled with passing marvel at that which he saw of Ma'aruf's generosity and openhandedness in the largesse of

wealth. Then the Merchant went in to his wife, who met him, smiling and laughing-lipped and kissed his hand, saying, “Didst thou mock me or hadst thou a mind to prove me with thy saying:—I am a poor man and a fugitive from my wife? Praised be Allah for that I failed not of my duty to thee! For thou art my beloved and there is none dearer to me than thou, whether thou be rich or poor. But I would have thee tell me what didst thou design by these words.” Said Ma’aruf, “I wished to prove thee and see whether thy love were sincere or for the sake of wealth and the greed of worldly good. But now ’tis become manifest to me that thine affection is sincere and as thou art a true woman, so welcome to thee! I know thy worth.” Then he went apart into a place by himself and rubbed the seal-ring, whereupon Abu al-Sa’adat presented himself and said to him, “Adsum, at thy service! Ask what thou wilt.” Quoth Ma’aruf, “I want a treasure-suit and treasure-trinkets for my wife, including a necklace of forty unique jewels.” Quoth the Jinni, “To hear is to obey,” and brought him what he sought, whereupon Ma’aruf dismissed him and carrying the dress and ornaments in to his wife, laid them before her and said, “Take these and put them on and welcome!” When she saw this, her wits fled for joy, and she found among the ornaments a pair of anklets of gold set with jewels of the handiwork of the magicians, 36 and bracelets and earrings and a belt[174] such as no money could buy. So she donned the dress and ornaments and said to Ma’aruf, “O my lord, I will treasure these up for holidays and festivals.” But he answered, “Wear them always, for I have others in plenty.” And when she put them on and her women beheld her, they rejoiced and bussed his hands. Then he left them and going apart by himself, rubbed the seal-ring whereupon its slave appeared and he said to him, “Bring me an hundred suits of apparel, with their ornaments of gold.” “Hearing and obeying,” answered Abu al Sa’adat and brought him the hundred suits, each with its ornaments wrapped up within it. Ma’aruf took them and called aloud to the slave-girls, who came to him and he gave them each a suit: so they donned them and became like the black-eyed girls of Paradise, whilst the Princess Dunya shone amongst them as the moon among the stars. One of the handmaids told the King of this and he came in to his daughter and saw her and her women dazzling all who beheld them; whereat he wondered with passing wonderment. Then he went out and calling his Wazir, said to him, “O Wazir, such and such things have happened; what sayst thou now of this affair?” Said he, “O King of the age, this be no merchant’s fashion; for a merchant keepeth a piece of linen by him for years and selleth it not but at a profit. How should a merchant have generosity such as this generosity, and whence should he get the like of these monies and jewels, of which but a slight matter is found with the Kings? So how should loads thereof be found with merchants? Needs must there be a cause for this; but, an thou wilt hearken to me, I will make the truth of the case manifest to thee.” Answered the King, “O Wazir, I will do thy bidding.” Rejoined the Minister, “Do thou foregather with thy son-in-law and make a show of affect to him and talk with him and say:—O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, I and thou and the Wazir but no more, to a flower-garden

that we may take our pleasure there. When we come to the garden, we will set on the table wine, and I will ply him therewith and compel him to drink; for, when he shall have drunken, he will lose his [37]reason and his judgment will forsake him. Then we will question him of the truth of his case and he will discover to us his secrets, for wine is a traitor and Allah-gifted is he who said:—

When we drank the wine, and it crept its way ✿ To the place of Secrets, I cried, "O stay!"
In my fear lest its influence stint my wits ✿ And my friends spy matters that hidden lay.

When he hath told us the truth we shall ken his case and may deal with him as we will; because I fear for thee the consequences of this his present fashion: haply he will covet the kingship and win over the troops by generosity and lavishing money and so depose thee and take the kingdom from thee." "True," answered the King.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-eighth Night,

She resumed, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Wazir devised this device the King said to him, "Thou hast spoken sooth!"; and they passed the night on this agreement. And when morning morrowed the King went forth and sat in the guest-chamber, when lo, and behold! the grooms and serving-men came in to him in dismay. Quoth he, "What hath befallen you?"; and quoth they, "O King of the age, the Syces curried the horses and foddered them and the he-mules which brought the baggage; but, when we arose in the morning, we found that thy son-in-law's Mamelukes had stolen the horses and mules. We searched the stables, but found neither horse nor mule; so we entered the lodging of the Mamelukes and found none there, nor know we how they fled." The King marvelled at this, unknowing that the horses and Mamelukes were all Ifrits, the subjects of the Slave of the Spell, and asked the grooms, "O accursed how could a thousand beasts and five hundred slaves and servants flee without your knowledge?" Answered they, "We know not how it happened," and he cried, "Go, and when your lord cometh forth of the Harim, tell him the case." So they went out from before the King and sat down bewildered, till Ma'aruf came out and, seeing them chagrined enquired of them, "What may be the matter?" They told him all that had happened and he said, "What is their worth [38]that ye should be concerned for them? Wend your ways." And he sat laughing and was neither angry nor grieved concerning the case; whereupon the King looked in the Wazir's face and said to him, "What manner of man is this, with whom wealth is of no worth? Needs must there be a reason for this?" Then they talked with him awhile and the King said to him, "O my son-in-law, I have a mind to go, I, thou and the Wazir, to a garden, where we may divert ourselves." "No harm in that," said Ma'aruf. So they went forth to a flower-garden, wherein every sort of fruit was of kinds twain and its waters were flowing and its trees towering and its birds carolling. There they entered a pavilion, whose sight did away sorrow from the soul, and sat talking, whilst the Minister entertained them with rare tales and quoted merry quips and mirth-

provoking sayings and Ma'aruf attentively listened, till the time of dinner came, when they set on a tray of meats and a flagon of wine. When they had eaten and washed hands, the Wazir filled the cup and gave it to the King, who drank it off; then he filled a second and handed it to Ma'aruf, saying, "Take the cup of the drink to which Reason boweth neck in reverence." Quoth Ma'aruf, "What is this, O Wazir?"; and quoth he, "This is the grizzled[75] virgin and the old maid long kept at home,[76] the giver of joy to hearts, whereof saith the poet:—

The feet of sturdy Miscreants[77] went trampling heavy tread, ✿ And she hath ta'en a vengeance dire on every Arab's head.

A Káfir youth like fullest moon in darkness hands her round ✿ Whose eyne are strongest cause of sin by him inspiritèd.

And Allah-gifted is he who said:-

'Tis as if wine and he who bears the bowl, ✿ Rising to show her charms for man to see,[78]

Were dancing undurn-Sun whose face the moon ✿ Of night adorned with stars of Gemini.

39 So subtle is her essence it would seem ✿ Through every limb like course of soul runs she.

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:—

Slept in mine arms full Moon of brightest blee ✿ Nor did that sun eclipse in goblet see:

I nighted spying fire whereto bow down ✿ Magians, which bowed from ewer's lip to me.

And that of another:—

It runs through every joint of them as runs ✿ The surge of health returning to the sick.

And yet another:—

I marvel at its pressers, how they died ✿ And left us *aqua vitæ*—lymph of life!

And yet goodlier is the saying of Abu Nowas:—

Cease then to blame me, for thy blame doth anger bring ✿ And with the draught that madded me come med'cining:

A yellow girl[79] whose court cures every carking care; ✿ Did a stone touch it would with joy and glee upspring:

She riseth in her ewer during darkest night ✿ The house with brightest, sheeniest light illumining:

And going round of youths to whom the world inclines[80] ✿ Ne'er, save in whatso way they please, their hearts shall wring.

From hand of coynted[81] lass begarbed like yarded lad,[82] ✿ Wencher and Tribe of Lot alike enamouring,

She comes: and say to him who dares claim lore of love ✿ Something hast learnt but still there's many another thing.

But best of all is the saying of Ibn al-Mu'tazz[83]:—

40 On the shaded woody island[84] His showers Allah deign ✿ Shed on Convent hight Abdún[85] drop and drip of railing rain:

Oft the breezes of the morning have awakened me therein ✿ When the Dawn shows her blaze,[86] ere the bird of flight was fain;

And the voices of the monks that with chants awoke the walls ✿ Black-frocked shavelings ever wont the cup amorn to drain.[87]

’Mid the throng how many fair with languour-kohl’d eyes[88] ✿ And lids enfolding lovely orbs where black on white was lain,

In secret came to see me by shirt of night disguised ✿ In terror and in caution a-hurrying amain!

Then I rose and spread my cheek like a carpet on his path ✿ In homage, and with skirts wiped his trail from off the plain.

But threatening disgrace rose the Crescent in the sky ✿ Like the paring of a nail yet the light would never wane:

Then happened whatso happened: I disdain to kiss and tell ✿ So deem of us thy best and with queries never mell.

And gifted of God is he who saith:—

In the morn I am richest of men ✿ And in joy at good news I start up

For I look on the liquid gold[89] ✿ And I measure it out by the cup.

And how goodly is the saying of the poet:—

By Allah, this is th’ only alchemy ✿ All said of other science false we see!

Carat of wine on hundredweight of woe ✿ Transmuteth gloomiest grief to joy and glee.

And that of another:—

The glasses are heavy when empty brought ✿ Till we charge them all with unmixèd wine.

Then so light are they that to fly they’re fain ✿ As bodies lightened by soul divine.

41 And yet another:—

Wine-cup and ruby-wine high worship claim; ✿ Dishonour ’twere to see their honour waste:

Bury me, when I’m dead, by side of vine ✿ Whose veins shall moisten bones in clay misplaced;

Nor bury me in wold and wild, for I ✿ Dread only after death no wine to taste.”[90]

And he ceased not to egg him on to the drink, naming to him such of the virtues of wine as he thought well and reciting to him what occurred to him of poetry and pleasantries on the subject, till Ma’aruf addressed himself to sucking the cup-lips and cared no longer for aught else. The Wazir ceased not to fill for him and he to drink and enjoy himself and make merry, till his wits wandered and he could not distinguish right from wrong. When the Minister saw that drunkenness had attained in him to utterest and the bounds transgressed, he said to him, “By Allah, O Merchant Ma’aruf, I admire whence thou gottest these jewels whose like the Kings of the Chosroës possess not! In all our lives never saw we a merchant that had heaped up riches like unto thine or more generous than thou, for thy doings are the doings of Kings and not merchants’ doings. Wherefore, Allah upon thee, do thou acquaint me with this, that I may know thy rank and condition.” And he went on to test him with questions and cajole him, till Ma’aruf, being reft of reason, said to him, “I’m neither merchant nor King,” and told him his whole story from first to last. Then said the Wazir, “I conjure thee by Allah, O my lord Ma’aruf, show us the ring, that we may see its make.” So, in his drunkenness, he pulled off the ring and said, “Take it and look upon it.” The Minister took it and turning it over, said, “If I rub it, will 42 its slave appear?” Replied Ma’aruf, “Yes. Rub it and he will appear to thee, and do thou divert thyself with the sight of him.” Thereupon the Wazir rubbed the ring and behold forthright appeared

the Jinni and said, “Adsum, at thy service, O my lord! Ask and it shall be given to thee. Wilt thou ruin a city or raise a capital or kill a king? Whatso thou seekest, I will do for thee, sans fail.” The Wazir pointed to Ma’aruf and said, “Take up yonder wretch and cast him down in the most desolate of desert lands, where he shall find nothing to eat nor drink, so he may die of hunger and perish miserably, and none know of him.” Accordingly, the Jinni snatched him up and flew with him betwixt heaven and earth, which when Ma’aruf saw, he made sure of destruction and wept and said, “O Abu al-Sa’adat, whither goest thou with me?” Replied the Jinni, “I go to cast thee down in the Desert Quarter,[91] O ill-bred wight of gross wits. Shall one have the like of this talisman and give it to the folk to gaze at? Verily, thou deservest that which hath befallen thee; and but that I fear Allah, I would let thee fall from a[91] eight of a thousand fathoms, nor shouldst thou reach the earth, till the winds had torn thee to shreds.” Ma’aruf was silent[92] and did not again bespeak him till he reached the Desert Quarter and casting him down there, went away and left him in that horrible place.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Nine Hundred and Ninety-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Slave of the Seal-ring took up Ma’aruf and cast him down in the Desert Quarter where he left him and went his ways. So much concerning him; but returning to the Wazir who was now in possession of the talisman, he said to the King, “How deemest thou now? Did I not tell thee that this fellow was a liar, an impostor, but thou wouldst not credit me?” Replied the King, “Thou wast in 43 the right, O my Wazir, Allah grant thee weal! But give me the ring, that I may solace myself with the sight.” The Minister looked at him angrily and spat in his face, saying, “O lack-wits, how shall I give it to thee and abide thy servant, after I am become thy master? But I will spare thee no more on life.” Then he rubbed the seal-ring and said to the Slave, “Take up this ill-mannered churl and cast him down by his son-in-law the swindler-man.” So the Jinni took him up and flew off with him, whereupon quoth the King to him, “O creature of my Lord, what is my crime?” Abu al-Sa’adat replied, “That wot I not, but my master hath commanded me and I cannot cross whoso hath compassed the enchanted ring.” Then he flew on with him, till he came to the Desert Quarter and, casting him down where he had cast Ma’aruf left him and returned. The King hearing Ma’aruf weeping, went up to him and acquainted him with his case; and they sat weeping over that which had befallen them and found neither meat nor drink. Meanwhile the Minister, after driving father-in-law and son-in-law from the country, went forth from the garden and summoning all the troops held a Divan, and told them what he had done with the King and Ma’aruf and acquainted them with the affair of the talisman, adding, “Unless ye make me Sultan over you, I will bid the Slave of the Seal-ring take you up one and all and cast you down in the Desert Quarter where you shall die of hunger and thirst.” They

replied, “Do us no damage, for we accept thee as Sultan over us and will not anywise gainsay thy bidding.” So they agreed, in their own despite, to his being Sultan over them, and he bestowed on them robes of honour, seeking all he had a mind to of Abu al-Sa’adat, who brought it to him forthwith. Then he sat down on the throne and the troops did homage to him; and he sent to Princess Dunya, the King’s daughter, saying, “Make thee ready, for I mean to come in unto thee this night, because I long for thee with love.” When she heard this, she wept, for the case of her husband and father was grievous to her, and sent to him saying, “Have patience with me till my period of widowhood[93] be ended: then draw up thy contract 44 of marriage with me and go in to me according to law.” But he sent back to say to her, “I know neither period of widowhood nor to delay have I a mood; and I need not a contract nor know I lawful from unlawful; but needs must I go in unto thee this night.” She answered him saying, “So be it, then, and welcome to thee!”; but this was a trick on her part. When the answer reached the Wazir, he rejoiced and his breast was broadened, for that he was passionately in love with her. He bade set food before all the folk, saying, “Eat; this is my bride-feast; for I purpose to go in to the Princess Dunya this night.” Quoth the Shaykh al-Islam, “It is not lawful for thee to go in unto her till her days of widowhood be ended and thou have drawn up thy contract of marriage with her.” But he answered, “I know neither days of widowhood nor other period; so multiply not words on me.” The Shaykh Al-Islam was silent,[94] fearing his mischief, and said to the troops, “Verily, this man is a Kafir, a Miscreant, and hath neither creed nor religious conduct.” As soon as it was evenfall, he went in to her and found her robed in her richest raiment and decked with her goodliest adornments. When she saw him, she came to meet him, laughing and said, “A blessed night! But hadst thou slain my father and my husband, it had been more to my mind.” And he said, “There is no help but I slay them.” Then she made him sit down and began to jest with him and make show of love caressing him and smiling in his face so that his reason fled; but she cajoled him with her coaxing and cunning only that she might get possession of the ring and change his joy into calamity on the mother of his forehead:[95] nor did she deal thus with him but after the rede of him who said[96]:—

I attained by my wits ✿ What no sword had obtained,

And return wi’ the spoils ✿ Whose sweet pluckings I gained.

When he saw her caress him and smile upon him, desire surged up in him and he besought her of carnal knowledge; but, when he approached her, she drew away from him and burst into tears, 45 saying, “O my lord, seest thou not the man looking at us? I conjure thee by Allah, screen me from his eyes! How canst thou know me what while he looketh on us?” When he heard this, he was angry and asked, “Where is the man?”; and answered she, “There he is, in the bezel of the ring! putting out his head and staring at us.” He thought that the Jinni was looking at them and said laughing, “Fear not; this is the Slave of the Seal-ring, and he is subject to me.” Quoth she, “I am afraid

of Ifrits; pull it off and throw it afar from me." So he plucked it off and laying it on the cushion, drew near to her, but she dealt him a kick, her foot striking him full in the stomach[97], and he fell over on his back senseless; whereupon she cried out to her attendants, who came to her in haste, and said to them, "Seize him!" So forty slave-girls laid hold on him, whilst she hurriedly snatched up the ring from the cushion and rubbed it; whereupon Abu al-Sa'adat presented himself, saying, "Adsum, at thy service O my mistress." Cried she, "Take up yonder Infidel and clap him in jail and shackle him heavily." So he took him and throwing him into the Prison of Wrath[98] returned and reported, "I have laid him in limbo." Quoth she, "Whither wentest thou with my father and my husband?"; and quoth he, "I cast them down in the Desert Quarter." Then cried she, "I command thee to fetch them to me forthwith." He replied, "I hear and I obey," and taking flight at once, stayed not till he reached the Desert Quarter, where he lighted down upon them and found them sitting weeping and complaining each to other. Quoth he, "Fear not, for relief is come to you"; and he told them what the Wazir had done, adding, "Indeed I imprisoned him with my own hands in obedience to her, and she hath bidden me bear you back." And they rejoiced in his news. Then he took them both up and flew home with them; nor was it more than an hour before he brought them in to Princess Dunya, who rose and saluted sire and spouse. Then she made them sit down and brought them food and sweetmeats, and they passed the rest of the night with her. On the next day she clad them in rich clothing and said to the King, "O my papa, sit thou upon thy 46 throne and be King as before and make my husband thy Wazir of the Right and tell thy troops that which hath happened. Then send for the Minister out of prison and do him die, and after burn him, for that he is a Miscreant, and would have gone in unto me in the way of lewdness, without the rites of wedlock and he hath testified against himself that he is an Infidel and believeth in no religion. And do tenderly by thy son-in-law, whom thou makest thy Wazir of the Right." He replied, "Hearing and obeying, O my daughter. But do thou give me the ring or give it to thy husband." Quoth she, "It behoveth not that either thou or he have the ring. I will keep the ring myself, and belike I shall be more careful of it than you. Whatso ye wish seek it of me and I will demand it for you of the Slave of the Seal-ring. So fear no harm so long as I live and after my death, do what ye twain will with the ring." Quoth the King, "This is the right rede, O my daughter," and taking his son-in-law went forth to the Divan. Now the troops had passed the night in sore chagrin for Princess Dunya and that which the Wazir had done with her, in going in to her after the way of lewdness, without marriage-rites, and for his ill-usage of the King and Ma'aruf, and they feared lest the law of Al-Islam be dishonoured, because it was manifest to them that he was a Kafir. So they assembled in the Divan and fell to reproaching the Shaykh al-Islam, saying, "Why didst thou not forbid him from going in to the Princess in the way of lewdness?" Said he, "O folk, the man is a Miscreant and hath gotten possession of the ring and I and you may not prevail against him. But Almighty Allah will requite him his deed, and

be ye silent, lest he slay you." And as the host was thus engaged in talk, behold the King and Ma'aruf entered the Divan.——And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.



Now when it was the Thousandth Night,

She continued, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the troops sorely chagrined sat in the Divan talking over the ill-deeds done by the Wazir to their

Sovran, his son-in-law and his daughter, behold, the King and Ma'aruf entered. Then the King bade decorate the city and sent to fetch the Wazir from the place of duresse. So they brought him, and as he passed by the troops, they cursed him and abused him and menaced him, till he came to 47 the King, who commanded to do him dead by the vilest of deaths. Accordingly, they slew him and after burned his body, and he went to Hell after the foulest of plights; and right well quoth one of him:—

The Compassionate show no ruth to the tomb where his bones shall lie ✿ And Munkar and eke Nakír[99] ne'er cease to abide thereby!

The King made Ma'aruf his Wazir of the Right and the times were pleasant to them and their joys were untroubled. They abode thus five years till, in the sixth year, the King died and Princess Dunya made Ma'aruf Sultan in her father's stead, but she gave him not the seal-ring. During this time she had conceived by him and borne him a boy of passing loveliness, excelling in beauty and perfection, who ceased not to be reared in the laps of nurses till he reached the age of five, when his mother fell sick of a deadly sickness and calling her husband to her, said to him, "I am ill." Quoth he, "Allah preserve thee, O dearling of my heart!" But quoth she, "Haply I shall die and thou needest not that I commend to thy care thy son: wherefore I charge thee but be careful of the ring, for thine own sake and for the sake of this thy boy." And he answered, "No harm shall befal him whom Allah preserveth!" Then she pulled off the ring and gave it to him, and on the morrow she was admitted to the mercy of Allah the Most High,[100] whilst Ma'aruf abode in possession of the kingship and applied himself to the business of governing. Now it chanced that one day, as he shook the handkerchief[101] and the troops withdrew to their places that he betook himself to the sitting-chamber, where he sat till the day departed and the night advanced with murks bedight. Then came in to him his cup-companions of the notables according to their custom, and sat with him by way of solace and diversion, till midnight, when they craved permission to withdraw. He gave them leave and they retired to their houses; after which there came in to him a slave-girl affected to the service 48 of his bed, who spread him the mattress and doffing his apparel, clad him in his sleeping-gown. Then he lay down and she kneaded his feet, till sleep overpowered him; whereupon she withdrew to her own chamber and slept. But suddenly he felt something beside him in the bed and awaking started up in alarm and cried, "I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the stoned!" Then he opened his eyes and seeing by his side a woman foul of favour, said to her, "Who art thou?" Said she, "Fear not, I am thy wife Fatimah al-Urrah." Whereupon he looked in her face and knew her by her loathly form and the length of her dog-teeth: so he asked her, "Whence camest thou in to me and who brought thee to this country?" "In what country art thou at this present?" "In the city of Ikhtiyan al-Khutan. But thou, when didst thou leave Cairo?" "But now." "How can that be?" "Know," said she, "that, when I fell out with thee and Satan prompted me to do thee a damage, I complained of thee to the magistrates, who sought for thee and

the Kazis enquired of thee, but found thee not. When two days were past, repentance gat hold upon me and I knew that the fault was with me; but penitence availed me not, and I abode for some days weeping for thy loss, till what was in my hand failed and I was obliged to beg my bread. So I fell to begging of all, from the courted rich to the contemned poor, and since thou leftest me, I have eaten of the bitterness of beggary and have been in the sorriest of conditions. Every night I sat beweeping our separation and that which I suffered, since thy departure, of humiliation and ignominy, of abjection and misery." And she went on to tell him what had befallen her, whilst he stared at her in amazement, till she said, "Yesterday, I went about begging all day but none gave me aught; and as often as I accosted any one and craved of him a crust of bread, he reviled me and gave me naught. When night came, I went to bed supperless, and hunger burned me and sore on me was that which I suffered: and I sat weeping when, behold, one appeared to me and said, O woman why weepest thou? Said I, erst I had a husband who used to provide for me and fulfil my wishes; but he is lost to me and I know not whither he went and have been in sore straits since he left me. Asked he, What is thy husband's name? and I answered, His name is Ma'aruf. Quoth he, I ken him. Know that thy husband is now Sultan in a certain city, and if thou wilt, I will carry thee to him. Cried I, I am under thy protection: of thy bounty bring me to him! So he took me up and flew with me 49 between heaven and earth, till he brought me to this pavilion and said to me:—Enter yonder chamber, and thou shalt see thy husband asleep on the couch. Accordingly I entered and found thee in this state of lordship. Indeed I had not thought thou wouldst forsake me, who am thy mate, and praised be Allah who hath united thee with me!" Quoth Ma'aruf, "Did I forsake thee or thou me? Thou complainedst of me from Kazi to Kazi and endedst by denouncing me to the High Court and bringing down on me Abú Tabak from the Citadel: so I fled in mine own despite." And he went on to tell her all that had befallen him and how he was become Sultan and had married the King's daughter and how his beloved Dunya had died, leaving him a son who was then seven years old. She rejoined, "That which happened was fore-ordained of Allah; but I repent me and I place myself under thy protection beseeching thee not to abandon me, but suffer me eat bread, with thee by way of an alms." And she ceased not to humble herself to him and to supplicate him till his heart relented towards her and he said, "Repent from mischief and abide with me, and naught shall betide thee save what shall pleasure thee: but, an thou work any wickedness, I will slay thee nor fear any one. And fancy not that thou canst complain of me to the High Court and that Abu Tabak will come down on me from the Citadel; for I am become Sultan and the folk dread me: but I fear none save Allah Almighty, because I have a talismanic ring which when I rub, the Slave of the Signet appeareth to me. His name is Abu al-Sa'adat, and whatsoever I demand of him he bringeth to me. So, an thou desire to return to thine own country, I will give thee what shall suffice thee all thy life long and will send thee thither speedily; but, an thou desire to abide with me, I will clear for thee a palace and furnish it with the choicest of silks

and appoint thee twenty slave-girls to serve thee and provide thee with dainty dishes and sumptuous suits, and thou shalt be a Queen and live in all delight till thou die or I die. What sayest thou of this?" "I wish to abide with thee," she answered and kissed his hand and vowed repentance from frowardness. Accordingly he set apart a palace for her sole use and gave her slave-girls and eunuchs, and she became a Queen. The young Prince used to visit her as he visited his sire; but she hated him for that he was not her son; and when the boy saw that she looked on him with the eye of aversion and anger, he shunned her and took a dislike to her. As 50 for Ma'aruf, he occupied himself with the love of fair handmaidens and bethought him not of his wife Fatimah the Dung, for that she was grown a grizzled old fright, foul-favoured to the sight, a bald-headed blight, loathlier than the snake speckled black and white; the more that she had beyond measure evil entreated him aforetime; and as saith the adage, "Ill-usage the root of desire disparts and sows hate in the soil of hearts;" and God-gifted is he who saith:—

Beware of losing hearts of men by thine injurious deed; ✿ For when Aversion takes his place none may dear Love restore:

Hearts, when affection flies from them, are likest unto glass ✿ Which broken, cannot whole be made,—'tis breached for evermore.

And indeed Ma'aruf had not given her shelter by reason of any praiseworthy quality in her, but he dealt with her thus generously only of desire for the approval of Allah Almighty.—Here Dunyazad interrupted her sister Shahrazad, saying, "How winsome are these words of thine which win hold of the heart more forcibly than enchanters' eyne; and how beautiful are these wondrous books thou hast cited and the marvellous and singular tales thou hast recited!" Quoth Shahrazad, "And where is all this compared with what I shall relate to thee on the coming night, an I live and the King deign spare my days?" So when morning morrowed and the day brake in its sheen and shone, the King arose from his couch with breast broadened and in high expectation for the rest of the tale and saying, "By Allah, I will not slay her till I hear the last of her story;" repaired to his Durbár while the Wazir, as was his wont, presented himself at the Palace, shroud under arm. Shahriyar tarried abroad all that day, bidding and forbidding between man and man; after which he returned to his Harim and, according to his custom went in to his wife Shahrazad.[102]

51

Now when it was the Thousand and First Night,

Dunyazad said to her sister, "Do thou finish for us the History of Ma'aruf!" She replied, "With love and goodly gree, an my lord deign permit me recount it." Quoth the King, "I permit thee; for that I am fain of hearing it." So she said:—It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ma'aruf would have naught to do with his wife by way of conjugal duty. Now when she saw that he held aloof from her bed and occupied himself with other women, she hated him and jealousy gat the mastery of

her and Iblis prompted her to take the seal-ring from him and slay him and make herself Queen in his stead. So she went forth one night from her pavilion, intending for that in which was her husband King Ma'aruf; and it chanced by decree of the Decreer and His written destiny, that Ma'aruf lay that night with one of his concubines; a damsel endowed with beauty and loveliness, symmetry and a stature all grace. And it was his wont, of the excellence of his piety, that, when he was minded to have to lie with a woman, he would doff the enchanted seal-ring from his finger, in reverence to the Holy Names graven thereon, and lay it on the pillow, nor would he don it again till he had purified himself by the Ghusl-ablution. Moreover, when he had lain with a woman, he was used to order her go forth from him before daybreak, of his fear for the seal-ring; and when he went to the Hammam he locked the door of the pavilion till his return, when he put on the ring, and after this, all were free to enter according to custom. His wife Fatimah the Dung knew of all this and went not forth from her place till she had certified herself of the case. So she sallied out, when the night was dark, purposing to go in to him, whilst he was drowned in sleep, and steal the ring, unseen of him. Now it chanced at this time that the King's son had gone out, without light, to the Chapel of Ease for an occasion, and sat down over the marble slab[103] of the jakes in the dark, leaving the door open. Presently, he saw Fatimah come forth of her pavilion and make stealthily for that of his father and said in himself, "What aileth this witch to leave her lodging in the dead of the night and make for my father's pavilion? 52 Needs must there be some reason for this:" so he went out after her and followed in her steps unseen of her. Now he had a short sword of watered steel, which he held so dear that he went not to his father's Divan, except he were girt therewith; and his father used to laugh at him and exclaim, "Mahallah![104] This is a mighty fine sword of thine, O my son! But thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head therewith." Whereupon the boy would reply, "I will not fail to cut off with it some head which deserveth[105] cutting." And Ma'aruf would laugh at his words. Now when treading in her track, he drew the sword from its sheath and he followed her till she came to his father's pavilion and entered, whilst he stood and watched her from the door. He saw her searching about and heard her say to herself, "Where hath he laid the seal-ring?"; whereby he knew that she was looking for the ring and he waited till she found it and said, "Here it is." Then she picked it up and turned to go out; but he hid behind the door. As she came forth, she looked at the ring and turned it about in her grasp. But when she was about to rub it, he raised his hand with the sword and smote her on the neck; and she cried a single cry and fell down dead. With this Ma'aruf awoke and seeing his wife strown on the ground, with her blood flowing, and his son standing with the drawn sword in his hand, said to him, "What is this, O my son?" He replied, "O my father, how often hast thou said to me, Thou hast a mighty fine sword; but thou hast not gone down with it to battle nor cut off a head. And I have answered thee, saying, I will not fail to cut off with it a head which deserveth cutting. And now, behold, I have therewith cut off for thee a head

well worth the cutting!" And he told him what had passed. Ma'aruf sought for the Seal-ring, but found it not; so he searched the dead woman's body till he saw her hand closed upon it; whereupon he took it from her grasp and said to the boy, "Thou art indeed my very son, without doubt or dispute; Allah ease thee in this world and the next, even as thou hast eased me of this vile woman! Her attempt led only to her own destruction, and Allah-gifted is he who said:—

53 When forwards Allah's aid a man's intent, ✿ His wish in every case shall find consent:

But an that aid of Allah be refused, ✿ His first attempt shall do him damagement.

Then King Ma'aruf called aloud to some of his attendants, who came in haste, and he told them what his wife Fatimah the Dung had done and bade them to take her and lay her in a place till the morning. They did his bidding, and next day he gave her in charge to a number of eunuchs, who washed her and shrouded her and made her a tomb[106] and buried her. Thus her coming from Cairo was but to her grave, and Allah-gifted is he who said[107]:—

We trod the steps appointed for us: and he whose steps are appointed must tread them.

He whose death is decreed to take place in our land shall not die in any land but that.

And how excellent is the saying of the poet:—

I wot not, whenas to a land I fare, ✿ Good luck pursuing, what my lot shall be.

Whether the fortune I perforce pursue ✿ Or the misfortune which pursueth me.

After this, King Ma'aruf sent for the husbandman, whose guest he had been, when he was a fugitive, and made him his Wazir of the Right and his Chief Counsellor.[108] Then, learning that he had a daughter of passing beauty and loveliness, of qualities nature-ennobled at birth and exalted of worth, he took her to wife; and in due time he married his son. So they abode awhile in all solace of life and its delight and their days were serene and their joys untroubled, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies, the Depopulator of populous places and the Orphaner of sons and daughters. And glory be to the Living who dieth not and in whose hand are the Keys of the Seen and the Unseen!"

54

Conclusion.

Now, during this time, Shahrazad had borne the King three boy children: so, when she had made an end of the story of Ma'aruf, she rose to her feet and kissing ground before him, said, "O King of the time and unique one[109] of the age and the tide, I am thine handmaid and these thousand nights and a night have I entertained thee with stories of folk gone before and admonitory instances of the men of yore. May I then make bold to crave a boon of Thy Highness?" He replied, "Ask, O Shahrazad, and it shall be granted to thee.[110]" Whereupon she cried out to the nurses and the eunuchs, saying, "Bring me my children." So they brought them to her in haste, and they were three boy children, one walking, one crawling and one sucking. She took them and setting them before the King, again kissed the ground and said, "O King of the age, these are thy children and I crave that thou release me from the doom of death, as a dole to these infants; for, an thou kill me, they will become motherless and will find none among women to rear them as they should be reared." When the King heard this, he wept and straining the boys to his bosom, said, "By Allah, O Shahrazad, I pardoned thee before the coming of these children, for that I found thee chaste, pure, ingenuous and pious! Allah bless thee and thy father and thy mother and thy root and thy branch! I take the Almighty to witness against me that I exempt thee from aught that can harm thee." So she kissed his hands and feet and rejoiced with exceeding joy, saying, "The Lord make thy life long and increase thee in dignity and majesty[111]!"; presently adding, "Thou marvelledst at that which befel thee on the part of women; yet there betided the Kings of the Chosroës before thee greater mishaps and more grievous than that which hath befallen thee, and indeed I have set forth unto thee that which happened to Caliphs and Kings and others with their women, but the relation is longsome and hearkening groweth tedious, and in this is all-sufficient 55 warning for the man of wits and admonishment for the wise." Then she ceased to speak, and when King Shahriyar heard her speech and profited by that which she said, he summoned up his reasoning powers and cleansed his heart and caused his understanding revert and turned to Allah Almighty and said to himself, "Since there befel the Kings of the Chosroës more than that which hath befallen me, never, whilst I live, shall I cease to blame myself for the past. As for this Shahrazad, her like is not found in the lands; so praise be to Him who appointed her a means for delivering His creatures from oppression and slaughter!" Then he arose from his séance and kissed her head, whereat she rejoiced, she and her sister Dunyazad, with exceeding joy. When the morning morrowed, the King went forth and sitting down on the throne of the Kingship, summoned the Lords of his land; whereupon the Chamberlains and Nabobs and Captains of the host went in to him and kissed ground before him. He

distinguished the Wazir, Shahrazad's sire, with special favour and bestowed on him a costly and splendid robe of honour and entreated him with the utmost kindness, and said to him, "Allah protect thee for that thou gavest me to wife thy noble daughter, who hath been the means of my repentance from slaying the daughters of folk. Indeed I have found her pure and pious, chaste and ingenuous, and Allah hath vouchsafed me by her three boy children; wherefore praised be He for his passing favour." Then he bestowed robes of honour upon his Wazirs, and Emirs and Chief Officers and he set forth to them briefly that which had betided him with Shahrazad and how he had turned from his former ways and repented him of what he had done and purposed to take the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad, to wife and let draw up the marriage-contract with her. When those who were present heard this, they kissed the ground before him and blessed him and his betrothed[112] Shahrazad, and the Wazir thanked her. Then Shahriyar made an end of his sitting in all weal, whereupon the folk dispersed to their dwelling-places and the news was bruited abroad that the King purposed to marry the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad. Then he proceeded to make ready the wedding gear, and presently he sent after his brother, King Shah Zaman, who came, and King Shahriyar went forth to meet him with the troops. Furthermore, they decorated the city after the goodliest fashion and diffused scents from censers and burnt 56 aloes-wood and other perfumes in all the markets and thoroughfares and rubbed themselves with saffron,[113] what while the drums beat and the flutes and pipes sounded and mimes and mountebanks played and plied their arts and the King lavished on them gifts and largesse; and in very deed it was a notable day. When they came to the palace, King Shahriyar commanded to spread the tables with beasts roasted whole and sweetmeats and all manner of viands and bade the crier cry to the folk that they should come up to the Divan and eat and drink and that this should be a means of reconciliation between him and them. So, high and low, great and small came up unto him and they abode on that wise, eating and drinking, seven days with their nights. Then the King shut himself up with his brother and related to him that which had betided him with the Wazir's daughter, Shahrazad, during the past three years and told him what he had heard from her of proverbs and parables, chronicles and pleasantries, quips and jests, stories and anecdotes, dialogues and histories and elegies and other verses; whereat King Shah Zaman marvelled with the uttermost marvel and said, "Fain would I take her younger sister to wife, so we may be two brothers-german to two sisters-german, and they on like wise be sisters to us; for that the calamity which befel me was the cause of our discovering that which befel thee and all this time of three years past I have taken no delight in woman, save that I lie each night with a damsel of my kingdom, and every morning I do her to death; but now I desire to marry thy wife's sister Dunyazad." When King Shahriyar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced with joy exceeding and arising forthright, went in to his wife Shahrazad and acquainted her with that which his brother purposed, namely that he sought her sister Dunyazad in wedlock; whereupon she answered, "O King of the age,

we seek of him one condition, to wit, that he take up his abode with us, for that I cannot brook to be parted from my sister an hour, because we were brought up together and may not endure separation each from other.[114] If he accept this pact, she is his handmaid." King Shahriyar returned to his brother and acquainted him with that which Shahrazad had 57 said; and he replied, "Indeed, this is what was in my mind, for that I desire nevermore to be parted from thee one hour. As for the kingdom, Allah the Most High shall send to it whomso He chooseth, for that I have no longer a desire for the kingship." When King Shahriyar heard his brother's words, he rejoiced exceedingly and said, "Verily, this is what I wished, O my brother. So Alhamdolillah—Praised be Allah—who hath brought about union between us." Then he sent after the Kazis and Olema, Captains and Notables, and they married the two brothers to the two sisters. The contracts were written out and the two Kings bestowed robes of honour of silk and satin on those who were present, whilst the city was decorated and the rejoicings were renewed. The King commanded each Emir and Wazir and Chamberlain and Nabob to decorate his palace and the folk of the city were gladdened by the presage of happiness and contentment. King Shahriyar also bade slaughter sheep and set up kitchens and made bride-feasts and fed all comers, high and low; and he gave alms to the poor and needy and extended his bounty to great and small. Then the eunuchs went forth, that they might perfume the Hammam for the brides; so they scented it with rose-water and willow-flower-water and pods of musk and fumigated it with Kákilí[115] eagle-wood and ambergris. Then Shahrazad entered, she and her sister Dunyazad, and they cleansed their heads and clipped their hair. When they came forth of the Hammam-bath, they donned raiment and ornaments; such as men were wont prepare for the Kings of the Chosroës; and among Shahrazad's apparel was a dress purfled with red gold and wrought with counterfeit presentments of birds and beasts. And the two sisters encircled their necks with necklaces of jewels of price, in the like whereof Iskander[116] rejoiced not, for therein were great jewels such as amazed the wit and dazzled the eye; and the imagination was bewildered at their charms, for indeed each of them was brighter than the sun and the moon. Before them they lighted brilliant flambeaux of wax in candelabra of gold, but their faces outshone the flambeaux, for that they had eyes sharper than unsheathed swords and the lashes of their eyelids bewitched all hearts. Their cheeks were rosy red and their necks and shapes gracefully swayed and their eyes wantoned like the 58 gazelle's; and the slave-girls came to meet them with instruments of music. Then the two Kings entered the Hammam-bath, and when they came forth, they sat down on a couch set with pearls and gems, whereupon the two sisters came up to them and stood between their hands, as they were moons, bending and leaning from side to side in their beauty and loveliness. Presently they brought forward Shahrazad and displayed her, for the first dress, in a red suit; whereupon King Shahriyar rose to

look upon her and the wits of all present, men and women, were bewitched for that she was even as saith of her one of her describers[117]:—

A sun on wand in knoll of sand she showed, ✿ Clad in her cramoisy-hued chemisette:

Of her lips' honey-dew she gave me drink ✿ And with her rosy cheeks quencht fire she set.

Then they attired Dunyazad in a dress of blue brocade and she became as she were the full moon when it shineth forth. So they displayed her in this, for the first dress, before King Shah Zaman, who rejoiced in her and well-nigh swooned away for love-longing and amorous desire; yea, he was distraught with passion for her, whenas he saw her, because she was as saith of her one of her describers in these couplets[118]:-

She comes apparelled in an azure vest ✿ Ultramarine as skies are deckt and dight:

I view'd th' unparallel'd sight, which showed my eyes ✿ A Summer-moon upon a Winter-night.

Then they returned to Shahrazad and displayed her in the second dress, a suit of surpassing goodliness, and veiled her face with her hair like a chin-veil.[119] Moreover, they let down her side-locks and she was even as saith of her one of her describers in these couplets:—

O hail to him whose locks his cheeks o'ershade, ✿ Who slew my life by cruel hard despight:

Said I, "Hast veiled the Morn in Night?" He said, ✿ "Nay I but veil Moon in hue of Night."

59 Then they displayed Dunyazad in a second and a third and a fourth dress and she paced forward like the rising sun, and swayed to and fro in the insolence of beauty; and she was even as saith the poet of her in these couplets[120]:—

The sun of beauty she to all appears ✿ And, lovely coy she mocks all loveliness:

And when he fronts her favour and her smile ✿ A-morn, the sun of day in clouds must dress.

Then they displayed Shahrazad in the third dress and the fourth and the fifth and she became as she were a Bán-branch snell or a thirsting gazelle, lovely of face and perfect in attributes of grace, even as saith of her one in these couplets[121]:—

She comes like fullest moon on happy night, ✿ Taper of waist with shape of magic might:

She hath an eye whose glances quell mankind, ✿ And ruby on her cheeks reflects his light:

Enveils her hips the blackness of her hair; ✿ Beware of curls that bite with viper-bite!

Her sides are silken-soft, that while the heart ✿ Mere rock behind that surface 'scapes our sight:

From the fringed curtains of her eyne she shoots ✿ Shafts that at furthest range on mark alight.

Then they returned to Dunyazad and displayed her in the fifth dress and in the sixth, which was green, when she surpassed with her loveliness the fair of the four quarters of the world and outvied, with the brightness of her countenance, the full moon at rising tide; for she was even as saith of her the poet in these couplets[122]:—

A damsel 'twas the tirer's art had decked with snare and sleight, ✿ And robed with rays as though the sun from her had borrowed light:

She came before us wondrous clad in chemisette of green, ✿ As veilèd by his leafy screen Pomegranate hides from sight:

And when he said, "How callest thou the fashion of thy dress?" ✿ She answered us in pleasant way with double meaning dight,

"We call this garment *crève-cœur*; and rightly is it hight, ✿ For many a heart wi' this we brake and harried many a sprite."

60 Then they displayed Shahrazad in the sixth and seventh dresses and clad her in youth's clothing, whereupon she came forward swaying from side to side and coquettishly moving and indeed she ravished wits and hearts and ensorcelled all eyes with her glances. She shook her sides and swayed her haunches, then put her hair on sword-hilt and went up to King Shahriyar, who embraced her as hospitable host embraceth guest, and threatened her in her ear with the taking of the sword; and she was even as saith of her the poet in these words:—

Were not the Murk[123] of gender male, ✿ Than feminines surpassing fair,

Tirewomen they had grudged the bride, ✿ Who made her beard and whiskers wear!

Thus also they did with her sister Dunyazad, and when they had made an end of the display the King bestowed robes of honour on all who were present and sent the brides to their own apartments. Then Shahrazad went in to King Shahriyar and Dunyazad to King Shah Zaman and each of them solaced himself with the company of his beloved consort and the hearts of the folk were comforted. When morning morrowed, the Wazir came in to the two Kings and kissed ground before them; wherefore they thanked him and were large of bounty to him. Presently they went forth and sat down upon couches of Kingship, whilst all the Wazirs and Emirs and Grandees and Lords of the land presented themselves and kissed ground. King Shahriyar ordered them dresses of honour and largesse and they prayed for the permanence and prosperity of the King and his brother. Then the two Sovrans appointed their sire-in-law the Wazir to be Viceroy in Samarcand and assigned him five of the Chief Emirs to accompany him, charging them attend him and do him service. The Minister kissed the ground and prayed that they might be vouchsafed length of life: then he went in to his daughters, whilst the Eunuchs and Ushers walked before him, and saluted them and farewelled them. They kissed his hands and gave him joy of the Kingship and bestowed on him immense treasures; after which he took leave of them and setting out, fared days and nights, till he came near Samarcand, where the townspeople met him at a distance of three marches and rejoiced in him with exceeding joy. So he 61 entered the city and they decorated the houses and it was a notable day. He sat down on the throne of his kingship and the Wazirs did him homage and the Grandees and Emirs of Samarcand and all prayed that he might be vouchsafed justice and victory and length of continuance. So he bestowed on them robes of honour and entreated them with distinction and they made him Sultan over them. As soon as his father-in-law had departed for Samarcand, King Shahriyah summoned the Grandees of his realm and made them a stupendous banquet of all manner of delicious meats and exquisite sweetmeats. He also bestowed on them robes

of honour and guerdoned them and divided the kingdoms between himself and his brother in their presence, whereat the folk rejoiced. Then the two Kings abode, each ruling a day in turn, and they were ever in harmony each with other while on similar wise their wives continued in the love of Allah Almighty and in thanksgiving to Him; and the peoples and the provinces were at peace and the preachers prayed for them from the pulpits, and their report was bruited abroad and the travellers bore tidings of them to all lands. In due time King Shahriyah summoned chroniclers and copyists and bade them write all that had betided him with his wife, first and last; so they wrote this and named it "**The Stories of the Thousand Nights and A Night**." The book came to thirty volumes and these the King laid up in his treasury. And the two brothers abode with their were translated to the ruth of Almighty Allah; their houses fell waste and their palaces lay in ruins[124] and the Kings inherited their riches.

Then there reigned after them a wise ruler, who was just, keen-witted and accomplished and loved tales and legends, especially those which chronicle the doings of Sovrans and Sultans, and he found in the treasury these marvellous stories and wondrous histories, contained in the thirty volumes aforesaid. So he read in them a first book and a second and a third and so on to the last of them, and each book astounded and delighted him more than that which preceded it, till he came to the end of them. Then he admired 62 whatso he had read therein of description and discourse and rare traits and anecdotes and moral instances and reminiscences and bade the folk copy them and dispread them over all lands and climes; wherefore their report was bruited abroad and the people named them "**The marvels and wonders of the Thousand Nights and A Night**." This is all that hath come down to us of the origin of this book, and Allah is All-knowing.[125] So Glory be to Him whom the shifts of Time waste not away, nor doth aught of chance or change affect His sway: whom one case diverteth not from other case and Who is sole in the attributes of perfect grace. And prayer and peace be upon the Lord's Pontiff and Chosen One among His creatures, our lord MOHAMMED the Prince of mankind through whom we supplicate Him for a goodly and a godlywives in all pleasance and solace of life and its delights, for that indeed Allah the Most High had changed their annoy into joy; and on this wise they continued till there took them the Destroyer of delights and the Severer of societies, the Desolator of dwelling-places and Garnerer of grave-yards, and they

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